

THE HATE U GIVE

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Based on, *The Hate U Give*

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1 EXT/INT. MAV & LISA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EARLY EVENING 1
(GARDEN HEIGHTS 2010)

CLOSE ON: an African-American man's face, MAVERICK CARTER. He's only 28, but the hard set of his jaw can't mask that he's had it rough. His arms and neck are covered in gang tattoos, but that's his old life. There's a gentleness and vulnerability in his eyes now.

MAV

Now when it happen, don't act mad.
You gotta look calm. Answer their
questions, but don't tell 'em nothin'
extra.

REVEAL that Mav's talking to his children: SEVEN, his ten-year-old son; and STARR, his nine-year-old daughter at the kitchen table.

MAV (CONT'D)

Keep your hands out your pockets. You
drop somethin', leave that shit where
it's at.

LISA (O.S.)

Maverick.

LISA CARTER, 28, gives Mav a look as she holds their one-year-old son, SEKANI. Mav mouths 'sorry' to his wife.

MAV

Leave the stuff where it's at.

Seven and Starr stare directly into his eyes. Attentive.

MAV (CONT'D)

One day, y'all gonna be with me and you
best bet we gon' get pulled over. But
that don't mean I did something bad. I
mighta just made a mistake driving. Or
maybe I ain't do nothin' at all.

Mav places his hands flat on the kitchen table.

MAV (CONT'D)

Y'all gonna see me like this. With my
hands on the dashboard.

He gestures for them to imitate him. Starr studies his stature and copies it. Perfect. Mav winks at his baby girl.

(CONTINUED)

STARR (V.O.)

Starr. Two 'r's.' Daddy named me that.
Don't ask me what the extra 'r' is for.

MAV

Keep your hands posted cause moving make
the police get all nervous.

Lisa watches Starr and Seven both hold their pose. She turns
her gaze to Mav; it's clear the timing of this conversation
was not her idea.

MAV (CONT'D)

If I'm not with y'all, just ask for me.
It can get real dangerous so don't argue
with 'em. But still keep your hands so
they can see 'em. This here is how you
act. We straight?

Starr and Seven nod.

MAV (CONT'D)

Even though we gotta deal with this mess,
don't you ever forget...

Mav straightens up. Standing strong.

MAV (CONT'D)

Being black's an honor cause we come from
greatness. Y'all understand?

Starr and Seven are quick to nod. Mav hands them a
photocopied piece of paper.

MAV (CONT'D)

Here's the Black Panthers' Ten Point
Program. This our own Bill of Rights.
Y'all learn it cause I'm gon' ask y'all
'bout 'em. I'm gonna test you.

LISA

(sighs)

Really, Maverick?

Yep. He refocuses back to his lesson.

MAV

Know your rights, know your worth. Got
any questions?

Little Starr stares at her father with deep, innocent eyes,
trying to grasp it all.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

STARR (V.O.)

I was nine years old when I first got
'the talk.' Seven, my half-brother, was
ten. Sekani was one.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. GARDEN HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING (PRESENT DAY) 2

In a montage, we see Garden Heights waking up. Trash litters every curb. The houses are old, small. TWO JUNKIES argue loudly on a corner as a patrol car cruises past them not giving a damn.

STARR (V.O.)

Mama said we were too young for 'the
talk,' but Daddy said, you gotta stay
ready. Especially in Garden Heights.

3 EXT. GARDEN HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD - PARK - SAME 3

The patrol car continues past a park where thick smoke wafts from the driver's seat of a 2016 BMW 6-Series sitting on black 715s.

STARR (V.O.)

'Cause Garden Heights is always gonna be
ready for you.

Cigar dangling in his mouth sits KING, 40, the gang leader of the KING LORDS.

He carefully watches some of his Gang Members hand a Junkie a BAGGIE in exchange for crumpled dollar bills. Slinging, making paper, and pride is all he's about.

4 EXT. GARDEN HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD - MARIGOLD AVENUE - SAME 4

MR. REUBEN, 55, unlocks the chains to his BBQ joint. MR. LEWIS, 63, opens his barbershop. The lights are on at Top Shelf Spirits and Wine, but they're always on.

STARR (V.O.)

We got Mr. Reuben's BBQ, Mr. Lewis' barbershop, a black-owned car wash, a Saudi-owned gas station, a clown-owned Micky D's, a Walmart thirty-two minutes away and Daddy's store.

5 EXT/INT. CARTER'S GROCERY STORE - SAME 5

MAV, now 35, talks to Mr. Reuben's nephew, TIM, 35; and GOON, 39, who's a real Cedar Grove O.G.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

They're currently sitting on the bench in front of his store, enjoying a laugh. His store is a landmark. So is he. Hell, it's small, but at least it's his. A few KIDS ENTER the store.

STARR (V.O.)

Carter's Grocery is where you get your milk...

As Mav wraps up his laughter with Tim and Goon, the CAMERA follows him INSIDE where the sun shines through the protective bars on the store windows. He's truly the king of his store. Behind the counter, Mav rings up the Kids with their hands full of assorted candy.

STARR (V.O.)

... Newport shorts, hot Cheetos, hot gossip, and anything else you need in a hurry.

6 INT. JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - MORNING

6

Garden Heights Teenagers crowd the hectic hallways of the barracks-like high school. All of them African-American.

STARR (V.O.)

The high school is where you go to get jumped, high, pregnant, or dead. We don't go there. Not since what happened to my friend Natasha. So Mama sent us to another school where everyone's college bound.

7 INT. MAV AND LISA'S HOUSE - MORNING

7

CLOSE ON: a burgundy sweater with an embroidered school crest.

-- STARR'S BEDROOM: STARR, 16, pulls the sweater over her head and pulls her hair back into a strict ponytail. Her big, luminous eyes contain a flickering, dark shadow that even her youth and beauty can't conceal.

8 INT. MAV AND LISA'S HOUSE - SAME

8

-- BATHROOM: Now 8, SEKANI pees missing the toilet bowl... yet again. Starr walks in and groans.

STARR

Sekani! Learn how to aim! Dang!

(calls out)

Mama, Sekani peed everywhere again!

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

Starr marches into the...

9 INT. MAV AND LISA'S HOUSE - SAME

9

-- KITCHEN: Grease pops as Lisa fixes bacon and eggs under the watchful portraits of BLACK JESUS and MALCOLM X. She's careful not to dirty her nurse's uniform.

STARR (V.O.)

Mama and Daddy had me when they were 17. Nana even threw Mama out the house. Said Daddy was no count, just a pusher for a gang. She swore raising the dead was more likely than them making it. They stay proving her and everybody else wrong. And in large part, that means making sure we don't make the same mistakes.

Wrapping a hand around Lisa's waist, Mav tries to take over at the stove.

MAV

You got a long shift ahead. I got this.

LISA

Move, boy.

Lisa playfully pushes him aside with a hip bump.

LISA (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna let you burn this house down trying to make eggs.

MAV

That was yesterday.

LISA

And the day before.

MAV

Why you bringing up old shit? I mighta burnt an egg or two --

LISA

-- The skillet was on fire.

MAV

(smiling)

But I handled it. Messin' up is how folks learn.

(CONTINUED)

LISA

Sit your cute butt down and let me do what I do.

Mav chuckles as he sits. He pulls her onto his lap, wraps his arms around her waist and steals a kiss. Shit, she can't help but to glow.

MAV

(whispers in her ear)
You gon' let me do what I do?

Starr observes the tenderness between her parents as she gets a glass of juice.

SEVEN, now 17, and Sekani come in just as Lisa gives Mav a little smack, which he counters with a kiss.

SEVEN

(to Starr)
Ain't they too old for that?

Seven shakes his head at their romantic antics. Starr gives her brother an affectionate eye-roll.

STARR (V.O.)

Their cuteness can be extra, but they're adorable.

Lisa puts the bacon on a paper towel to soak up the grease while Mav grabs the plates.

STARR (V.O.)

I can't even lie, they're my OTP. One true pairing. I watch them to get an idea of what I want one day.

The morning ride to school. Lisa drives the kids through the rough streets of Garden Heights and into the tree-lined, prosperous boulevards of the suburbs.

All three kids wear hoodies over their regulation uniforms: a plaid skirt for Starr, khaki pants for the boys.

LISA

Seven, don't forget to talk to your chem teacher at break.

SEVEN

I won't.

LISA

You stayin' at your Mama's house tonight or with us?

SEVEN

At Mama's as long as King ain't there.

LISA

Starr, talk to your counselor today about the PSAT, so you're ready.

STARR

Okay, Mama.

Lisa ain't paying attention to the rebuttal. She continues.

LISA

Sekani, remind me what your name means.

SEKANI

JOY!

LISA

Then be just as big a joy at school as you are at home.

SEKANI

OKAY!

LISA

But less loud, baby.

WILLIAMSON SCHOOL, grades K-12, has a manicured lawn and a bell tower. STUDENTS, 95% white, walk eagerly onto campus.

WITH STARR AND SEVEN who pull off their hoodies and straighten their regulation sweaters as they start their morning 'code switching.' Starr takes off her hoodie and stuffs it deep down in her bag. She transitions to an overly sanitized part of herself...

STARR (V.O.)

At Williamson, I become Starr Version 2.

Seven and Starr give each other dap, a quick goodbye, and head off to their separate classes.

12 INT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - HALLWAY - SAME

12

The hallways of Williamson school are wide, clean, top notch. It's apparent their booster club has no problem bringing in money.

STARR (V.O.)

At Williamson, I flip a switch in my brain. 'Williamson Starr' doesn't use slang. If a rapper would say it, she doesn't, even if her white friends do.

A WHITE GIRL passes, greeting her, all 'homie.'

WHITE GIRL

Heeey, boo!

STARR

(white girl style)

Hi, how are you?

Starr keeps walking down the hall.

STARR (V.O.)

Slang makes them cool. Slang makes me 'hood.'

An 11TH GRADE BOY points at her shoes as he passes.

WHITE BOY

Those kicks lit!

STARR

(smiles)

Thanks! They came out Saturday.

13 INT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

13

IN THE LUNCH LINE AT THE CAFETERIA some white 12th Graders mess around, pretending to be 'gangsta.' Starr just smiles and looks ahead.

STARR (V.O.)

'Williamson Starr' is approachable. No stank-eyes or yelling because 'Williamson Starr' is non-confrontational. Basically, 'Williamson Starr' doesn't give anyone a reason to call her ghetto.

A KID cuts in front of her. She makes room. No big deal.

STARR (V.O.)

And I hate myself for doing it.

14 INT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - GIRLS' GYM LOCKER ROOM - DAY 14

All cheekbones and charisma, a pretty white girl, HAILEY, 16, slides her jersey over her head.

HAILEY

Let me at him. I'll kick his ass.

Starr changes, putting on her basketball uniform.

STARR

You're violent, Hailey.

HAILEY

If somebody tries to do some shit to my girl, I have to get 'em.

STARR (V.O.)

(sighs)

Hailey must've watched 'Straight Outta Compton' again last night.

HAILEY

What did you end up saying to him?

STARR

We're not really talking right now.

MAYA, 16, Asian, acerbic, nerdy cute, sits down next to them.

MAYA

Who's 'not really talking' to whom?

HAILEY

Chris lured Starr to his house to study and sprung a condom on her.

MAYA

Ooh, what'd you say? No, no, no... what'd you do?

STARR

You're on a 'need to know.'

MAYA

Okay. And 'I need to know.'

STARR

Look, he's my boyfriend. And eventually I'm gonna get there. But that was not the moment. He just assumed.

(CONTINUED)

MAYA

Assuming. Punishable by death.

Hailey wraps her arm around Starr.

HAILEY

You gonna Taylor Swift this?

MAYA

Does she even rank on the angry girlfriend scale anymore?

STARR

Agreed. I'm gonna Beyoncé him.

STARR (V.O.)

Hell, I really wanna 'Elevator Solange' his ass.

15, A16 OMITTED

15, A16

16 INT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - HALLWAY - LATER THAT DAY

16

GUYS from the BASKETBALL TEAM and other STUDENTS randomly give CHRIS, 16, white, coordinated quick handshakes or dap as he walks down the hallway. Chris could pull any girl at the school, but he's not that kind of guy... a rare gentleman.

STARR (V.O.)

Damn, he's wearing the same Space Jam Elevens as mine.

(lighthearted)

He knows Jordans are my weakness.

Starr sees him too, but pretends as if she didn't. Chris looks over and sees Starr digging in her locker.

STARR (V.O.)

He smells like Axe body spray. His lips are soft.

Chris sneaks up and quickly puts his headphones over her ears. A laid back beat that has a bomb-ass kick to it can be HEARD through the headphones.

STARR (V.O.)

He swear he's DJ Khaled... I can't lie it still gets me every time.

Starr turns around and looks at Chris with the headset still on. Their eyes locked on each other. Starr shakes her head and takes off the headphones.

STARR

Nuh-huh. No. I don't like what you did the other day.

CHRIS

Look, I'm sorry. Okay I messed up. Bad. But, I keep thinking we're getting closer and ask if I can take you out on a Saturday, and you don't say yes.

STARR

I'm busy.

CHRIS

Right. Every time. So I figure you want me to meet your parents first. But whenever I ask you to come over, you don't say yes.

STARR

They're busy too.

CHRIS

Seems like everyone's busy.

Starr can't even entertain the question... he's right. She stubbornly stands her ground; staring at him.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Then I think, how do I get closer to my own girlfriend?

(earnest)

Maybe you want to skip the flowers and chocolate stage and just get right to it.

Starr gestures to her curves. She smiles.

(CONTINUED)

STARR

(still 'Beyoncéing' him)

Chris, you're acting like a damn fool if you think I'm one of these little thirsty girls runnin' around out here that you could hit.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

You're not, Starr. You're way more important than that to me. Okay, we've been dating for almost six months, and if you can't tell that by now I don't know what else you want me to say.

(earnest)

Other than I miss you.

Chris takes the headphones out of the phone jack.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I made that beat for you.

He starts BLASTING the beat from his cell. As she listens Starr looks into Chris' soft eyes. This all feels good, but she can't give in yet.

As the song plays, Starr feigns like she's not feeling the song even though she is.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You gotta tell me that's fire.

Yes it is, but Starr still resists smiling at him.

STARR

(shrugs)

It's alright.

CHRIS

I wanna hear you say it.

STARR

It's okay.

CHRIS

It's okay?

(beat)

Guess that means I gotta test it.

Starr knows where this is going...

STARR

Nuh-huh. Don't you dare!

Chris starts dancing. He's no Magic Mike, but he's not bad at it. A mini-crowd surrounds him laughing WITH him and not AT him. More STUDENTS pass by, cracking up, cat-calling. Shake that ass!

(CONTINUED)

STARR (V.O.)

I'm fully aware that some people would
accuse him of acting black, but this is
just Chris. And he makes me laugh.

Starr dissolves into laughter - he always knows how to do
that. He points at Starr, dancing toward her.

STARR

What's happening here? Is this the Milly
Rock?

CHRIS

Oh, it's the Milly Rock.

STARR

Oh my god. Come here baby.

(CONTINUED)

Starr pulls Chris aside to have some privacy. She gives him a kiss. They're back to being them.

CHRIS
You forgive me now.

STARR
Yeah.

STARR (V.O.)
We get the questions: 'Why is he dating her?' On the real, I sometimes wonder the same thing.

A few RICH GIRLS pass giving Starr the side-eye. 'Mean Girls' is an understatement.

STARR (V.O.)
Now the stares usually come from the rich white girls. But they're way too scared to actually say anything to our faces. Chris acts like those looks don't exist. It's harder for me.

CHRIS
Let me take you somewhere on Saturday.

STARR
To do what?

CHRIS
We can eat burgers. I let you beat me at Foosball. And then we can kiss on a Ferris wheel.

STARR
(pleased)
That's so cheesy!

Yes, it is and she loves it.

CHRIS
That's what I got.

STARR
Okay. Let's do Sunday instead.

CHRIS
I pick you up?

STARR
I'll meet you.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS
Augustine's?

STARR
Three o'clock.

CHRIS
(sarcastic)
So romantic.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (7)

16

STARR
You are a fool.

CHRIS
I'm your fool.

STARR
That's true.

STARR (V.O.)
Chris is the best thing about being Starr
Version 2. And sometimes I think that's
all I want to be...

17 INT. GARDEN HEIGHTS HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

17

LOUD MUSIC and dancing rattle the floor at a HOUSE party in
Garden Heights.

STARR (V.O.)
... until the weekend comes around.

A smoky haze lingers over the room as everyone does the
RAINDROPS to 'Bad and Boujee', singing 'Offset! Woo-woo-woo-
woo-woo!'

STARR (V.O.)
I'm not sure I belong at this party
either.
(beat)
Neither version of me.

Starr squeezes through sweaty, popping and dabbing bodies
following KENYA, 16. With every slither through the crowd,
Kenya's curls bounce past her shoulders. Not a strand is out
of place. She will not leave her bedroom without her make-up
being on point. Starr, on the other hand, is in jeans and a
hoodie.

STARR (V.O.)
Only Black Jesus could save me if mama
found out I was at this party.

Kenya holds up her cup and dances her way through the Crowd,
leading Starr.

KENYA
Every girl in here all laid and slayed,
but you come up in here lookin' basic as
hell.

Kenya eyes Starr from her ponytail down to her Jordans. Kenya
purses her lips at the shoes.

(CONTINUED)

STARR

What?

(re: shoes)

These are the three retros. Classic and comfortable. You'll want 'em when you limping outta here tonight like a broke down gazelle.

KENYA

And ain't that my brother's hoodie?

STARR

Our brother's hoodie.

KENYA

Shit. You dressing like that, got folks thinking you my girlfriend.

STARR

Kenya, if I knew following you to this party meant I'd be on some Extreme Makeover: Starr Edition mess, I would've stayed home and watched my 'Fresh Prince' reruns.

KENYA

Girl, let the 90's go.

Kenya stops dead in her steps. She taps Starr.

STARR

(a little irritated)

What now?

KENYA

There's that trick. Denasia.

Kenya points across the room at a cute, thick girl, DENASIA, grinding up against a GUY.

KENYA (CONT'D)

Can't stand that heifa. Always talkin' smack 'bout how I'm trying to steal her ugly-ass man.

Starr watches Denasia and the Guy dance. Uninterested.

KENYA (CONT'D)

You lucky you go to that private school. You ain't gotta deal with hoes like that.

(CONTINUED)

STARR

Trust me, my school's just as ratchet.
Hoedom is universal.

KENYA

(targeting Denasia)
Feel my stank eye.

Kenya is giving it to Denasia, bad. Sure enough, Denasia feels it and looks over at Kenya.

KENYA (CONT'D)

Watch, we gon' handle her tonight.

STARR

Hol' up. We?

KENYA

Oh, so now you too good to have my back?
I see how it is.

STARR

Don't even.
(realization)
You only brought me here to tag team a
bitch?

This is classic Kenya.

KENYA

It ain't like you had nobody to roll
with. I'm doing your black ass a favor.

STARR

You do know I have friends, right?

KENYA

Them lil' bougie girls from your school
don't count.

CHANCE (O.S.)

Kenya!

It's CHANCE, 16, a tall boy with a black-and-blond fro. He's with BIANCA, 16, her hair is bone-straight.

BIANCA

(to Kenya, re: Starr)
Now you know you ain't have to bring your
sista out dressed like that?

(CONTINUED)

STARR
(to Bianca)
We ain't sisters.

KENYA
(to Bianca)
Just cuz my mama's baby's daddy is Mav
don't make us blood. She my girl, but
Seven don't make us kin.

Starr hates it when Kenya tries to go through their damn
family tree like she works for ancestry.com.

KENYA (CONT'D)
And leave the girl alone. Starr's just
used to partying amongst the whites.

CHANCE
I bet they be doing Molly and all kinda
pills, don't they? Getting white boy
wasted and shit.

Kenya's gotta co-sign.

KENYA
Listening to Taylor Swift tryin' to sang.

STARR
Okay, that's... somewhat true.

KENYA
Anyway, we 'bout to run up on that thot
Denasia.

BIANCA
Ol' trick. You know she been running her
mouth 'bout you, right?

KENYA
Oh, hell naw!
(to Starr)
You coming?

STARR
Uh, that's a no.

KENYA
Whateva.

They move off, leaving Starr alone at the party. She puts her
hood up, the better to disappear. Then suddenly...

(CONTINUED)

KHALIL (O.S.)

Starr!

Starr turns to find KHALIL, 17, making his way towards her.

STARR (V.O.)

Khalil. Look at the sea of people parting
for you like you a brown-skinned Moses.

Girls crane their neck as he walks through the party; giving
daps to a few Guys.

STARR (V.O.)

Those dimples. What am I supposed to do
with that? And I used to take baths with
you in your grandmama's tub when she use
to babysit me and Seven. Weird what the
sight of Khalil's hazel eyes do to me
now.

Khalil hugs Starr. You can feel the electricity between them
as they let the hug linger.

KHALIL

What's up, girl? Ain't seen you in a
minute.

STARR

School and basketball keep me busy. But
I'm always up at Daddy's store. You the
one nobody sees anymore.

KHALIL

I been busy, too.

Starr takes in the brand-new kicks and the diamonds in his
ears.

STARR

How's your grandmama and Cameron doing?
He just turned ten, right?

KHALIL

They a'ight. Grandmama sick, though.
Doctors say she got cancer or whatever.

STARR

Damn. Sorry, K.

KHALIL

Yeah, she taking chemo. She only worried
'bout getting a wig though.

(CONTINUED)

He nods to the GIRL with a blond wig dancing. Hot mess.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

I'm thinkin' about taking hers.

She already knows the answer, but she asks anyway.

STARR

Is your mama helping with Cameron?

KHALIL

Good ol' Starr. Always looking for the best in people. Now you know she ain't helping.

STARR

She came in the store the other day. She looks better.

KHALIL

(smacks his lips)

Ain't nothing new. She clean a few weeks, then she think she can take one little hit...

(snaps finger)

And she right back at it. Same ol' shit. But Cameron and Grandmama good. That's all that matters.

Starr nods to the beat with everybody on the dance floor.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

What? I woulda thought you was listening to rock or country nowadays since you around all them white kids all the time.

Starr pushes him with her shoulder; his drink splashes onto his shoes. Khalil grabs a napkin and starts wiping off his Jordans.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (6)

17

STARR

Don't scrub! Gentle! Every time a sneaker is cleaned improperly, a kitten dies.

KHALIL

Sneakerheads, man.

STARR

You obviously making big money if you rockin' those.

She's probing, and he knows it. But before he can counter --

A commotion stirs in the middle of the dance floor. LOUD, CUSSING VOICES ARGUE over the music.

Starr cranes her neck to try and see the source of the commotion. She spots Kenya, across the room with Denasia, equally startled and confused by the chaos.

POP! A shot rings out. Starr ducks; Khalil covers her. POP!

The CROWD stampedes for the door. Khalil grabs Starr's hand.

KHALIL

Come on!

Protective, Khalil pulls Starr out the front door.

18 EXT. GARDEN HEIGHTS HOUSE PARTY - SAME

18

Starr and Khalil run outside. Cars speed away. People run into the night, laughing and shrieking. Kenya is one of them. Starr spots her.

STARR

Kenya!

She didn't hear her. Khalil leads Starr to a Chevy Impala parked under a streetlight. He pushes her in through the driver's side.

19 INT/EXT. KHALIL'S CAR - SAME

19

Starr straightens herself up in the passenger seat as Khalil peels out, leaving chaos in the rearview mirror.

KHALIL

Always some shit, man. Can't even have a party without somebody getting shot at.

Starr puts her phone in the pocket of her hoodie. Khalil turns up the radio. It's a TUPAC SONG. He raps along.

(CONTINUED)

STARR

You're all on me 'bout Drake, but you listen to this old stuff?

KHALIL

'Old stuff?' Man, get outta here! Tupac was the truth.

STARR

Yeah, twenty years ago.

KHALIL

Nah, it still is. Like, check this. Pac said Thug Life stood for 'The Hate U Give Little Infants F's Everybody.'
T_H_U_G_L_I_F_E.

STARR

Meaning...

KHALIL

... Meaning what society give us as youth, bites them in the ass when we wild out. Get it?

STARR

Damn. Yeah.

KHALIL

Pac's gon' always be relevant.

Starr looks over at him, damn he looks good. She starts to feel attracted... and worried.

STARR

So you gonna tell me why you really been 'busy?'

Khalil glances at her... she knows him too well.

KHALIL

That McJob I had didn't make nothin' happen. And then Grandmama got fired from her hospital gig when they found out she was sick.

STARR

That's messed up, K. For real.

KHALIL

So we got some needs.

Time for real talk. No more dancing around it.

(CONTINUED)

STARR

If you're selling that stuff --

KHALIL

-- Mind your business, Starr-Starr. Don't worry 'bout me. I'm doing what I gotta do.

Starr shakes her head.

STARR

I swear, you piss me off sometimes.

KHALIL

(laughs)

You pissed off right now?

His dimples make it hard for Starr to stay vexed.

STARR

(flirting)

Maybe. Yeah, I am. I'm real mad.

Khalil pulls over and stops. Starr looks at him, handsome under the warmly lit streetlight.

STARR

Why we stopping?

KHALIL

So I can look at you while we talk. Something wrong with that?

STARR

Not inherently.

KHALIL

Listen to you. That school's messing you up.

(beat)

I saw you one time.

STARR

When?

KHALIL

Y'all were heading there.

(teasing)

You had your little skirt on, and your knee socks, and your 'good girl' book bag.

STARR

Plaid and bad, I know. But what do you mean, 'I saw you one time?' You stalking me now?

For the first time, Khalil has an air of shyness.

KHALIL

I just like seeing you, that's all. We used to see each other damn near every day. Remember when we used to play Harry Potter and shit?

Starr smiles. She remembers perfectly.

KHALIL (CONT'D)

Called ourselves 'The Hood Trio.'

STARR

We were some badass ten-year-old wizards. You still got your wand?

KHALIL

Hell naw, girl.

She studies him, a bit of his dimple shows.

STARR

You do, don't you?!

KHALIL

Nah. I threw it out 'cuz you never let me be Harry.

STARR

'Cuz you were a Ron.

KHALIL

But I was really Harry!

STARR

No, I was. You had Ron, and Natasha was Hermione.

Starr hasn't said her name aloud for so long, it sounds foreign. She pushes the tinge of hurt quickly aside.

KHALIL

So... that first kiss we had --

STARR

-- In the church basement? We were some heathens.

(CONTINUED)

KHALIL

So you really telling me I was kissing Harry Potter?

STARR

Mmm-hmm.

KHALIL

Who am I kissing now?

Khalil leans in to kiss Starr. She's swept up in the moment, surprised and attracted. She allows their lips to softly touch... and then leans away.

STARR

Khalil... I got a boyfriend.

Khalil stops. He slowly leans back.

KHALIL

I heard. Didn't want to... but that's cool.

STARR

It is?

KHALIL

Starr, we've been together all our lives. We got time.

21 INT/EXT. KHALIL'S CAR / EXT. GARDEN HEIGHTS - NIGHT

21

Khalil hits the gas and pulls the car back onto the road. He turns up the music.

JUST THEN -- WHOOP-WHOOP of a police siren. The lights go on in the rearview.

STARR

Damn.

KHALIL

What? What I do?

Starr looks afraid. Khalil grows concerned too as he pulls over to the curb attentively watching the cop car in his rearview mirror. They're on a street of mostly abandoned houses and busted streetlights. No one is around.

The police car stops behind them. A white COP, 32, comes over, shining his flashlight into the car.

Starr puts her hands on the dash.

(CONTINUED)

STARR

Put your hands on the dashboard where he
can see them.

Khalil inches closer to being pissed the fuck off, but...

STARR (CONT'D)

Please, Khalil, just do it.

KHALIL

We ain't done nothing. How far did I even
drive, fifty feet?

Khalil finally puts his hands on the dash. The Cop appears at
the window, shining the light directly onto their faces.

COP

Sir, roll your window down, please.

KHALIL

Here we go.

Khalil lets the window down.

COP

I need to see your driver's license and
registration.

KHALIL

What for? What'd I do?

COP

Sir, license and registration.

Khalil starts to take his hands off the dashboard.

STARR

(to Khalil)

Keep your hands on the dash!

KHALIL

(amused, to Starr)

How'm I supposed to get him my license if
I can't move.

(to Cop)

I wanna know why you pulled me over.

COP

You failed to signal a lane change.

(commands)

Turn your music off.

(CONTINUED)

KHALIL

Why? I can hear you.

STARR

Khalil, please --

COP

-- Turn it off. Now.

KHALIL

This is my car, so why are you --

COP

-- Step out of the car.

KHALIL

Can I reach for my wallet?

COP

(stern)

Out of the car... now.

KHALIL

You ain't got no right to do this.

Starr starts to tremble.

COP

I'm giving you a lawful order, please get out of the vehicle, sir.

KHALIL

For failure to signal a lane change? Or is it cause I failed to turn off my music?

COP

(more forceful)

Sir, get out of the car. Now!

(Khalil doesn't move)

Either you get out of the vehicle yourself or I'll do it for you. Now!

Khalil laughs as he shakes his head to himself. This is ridiculous, but he complies anyway.

Starr grabs her phone as Khalil steps out of the car.

COP (CONT'D)

Drop the phone now!

Starr drops the phone immediately. It falls to the floor.

(CONTINUED)

PRODUCTION NOTE: Everything from here forward is from Starr's point of view in the passenger seat. She hears more than she sees.

Starr HEARS Khalil being pushed up against the car's back driver's-side fender.

KHALIL (O.S.)
Man, just gimme my ticket --

COP (O.S.)
-- Hands against the car!

KHALIL (O.S.)
There's nothing on me.

COP (O.S.)
Can you please take out your driver's license, sir?

Khalil reaches into his pocket and gives the cop his license.

Starr is terrified, breathing in gasps. Starr HEARS the Cop's retreating footsteps.

COP (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Keep your hands on the car! Don't move!

She HEARS the police car door open and close.

Frantically, Starr begins searching for the cell phone she dropped. Looking around the car floor, she finds a drink cup, candy and a HAIRBRUSH. She tosses the items onto the driver's seat as she desperately searches for her phone.

KHALIL (O.S.)
Starr -- you okay?

Starr stops her search as Khalil comes to the driver's side window. He leans in to check up on her.

KHALIL (CONT'D)
You a'right?

STARR
Get back where he told you.

She's shaking violently. Khalil leans farther into the car to comfort her.

KHALIL
He gon' take his damn time.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (4)

21

Khalil reaches for the candy in the seat. He sees the cup and the hairbrush there also.

(CONTINUED)

KHALIL (CONT'D)

And why you messin' up my car?

Khalil leans further into the car to reach the hairbrush.
Starr starts to tear up.

STARR

Please, Khalil. Go back. Do what he says -
-

KHALIL

-- Okay, okay. Calm down, Starr.

Khalil straightens up, pulling back up out of the window
and...

POP! POP! POP! Blood splatters. Khalil drops to the ground.
Starr SCREAMS.

22 EXT. GARDEN HEIGHTS STREETS - SAME

22

Starr jumps out of the car and runs around the front to
Khalil.

The Cop still has his weapon up, pointing Starr's direction.

COP

Stop right there!

Starr freezes. Shaking. Hands in the air as she stares at
Khalil on the ground.

The Cop rushes toward Starr. He violently handcuffs her and
puts her on the ground next to the left front fender. She's
sitting five feet from Khalil. The Cop cues his radio.

COP (CONT'D)

(into radio)

Officer needs help! Shots fired! One
suspect down, the other in custody!
Requesting an ambulance!

STARR

(wails)

Khalil!

(to Cop)

What'd you do?!

COP

Be quiet, ma'am!

STARR

Help him! God, please help him!

(CONTINUED)

Starr tries to scoot her body closer to Khalil's. His blood is gushing onto the pavement.

COP

Stay where you are! Do not move!

STARR

He's bleeding! We gotta stop it!

COP

Where's the weapon?! The gun?

STARR

What gun?!

(to Khalil)

Khalil, I'm here! I'm right here. Look at me. Look at me!

Khalil doesn't look. Starr weeps. The Cop searches for the gun. He finds SOMETHING... it's a HAIRBRUSH. Not a gun. Just Khalil's black hairbrush. Shock washes over the Cop's face.

COP

Shit!

Starr sees the hairbrush too. They look at each other, horrified. In the distance is the sound of SIRENS coming CLOSER.

STARR

(whispers to Khalil)

Khalil... hear that? That's an ambulance. They're gonna help you.

Khalil's eyelids can only flutter.

STARR (CONT'D)

You'll be alright. You're okay. Starr-
Starr is right here. Khalil...

... The breath goes out of him. He's gone. Starr SCREAMS.

3 chairs, table, a window, and 4 walls is all there is. Starr sits in the room, chest tight. Lisa looks up at the clock. 3:00am.

Lisa watches the slow breaths escaping from Starr's closed airways. She squeezes Starr's hand.

LISA

Breathe.

Starr gasps, not realizing she's been holding her breath. Lisa rubs Starr's back in slow circles.

STARR'S POV: In the bullpen, Mav has a heated conversation with an out of uniform AFRICAN AMERICAN COP. It's actually surprising Mav isn't in cuffs the way he's encroaching on the cop's space.

As Starr takes deliberate full breaths, the door finally opens. In walks a Latina Homicide Detective, GOMEZ, and a white male detective, WILKES. Starr can't keep her eyes off the GLOCK 22 in his shoulder holster.

GOMEZ

I'm Detective Gomez and this is my partner, Detective Wilkes.

Starr lets go of Lisa's hand and breathes normally. Time to be strong.

STARR

Starr Carter.

Wilkes gives Starr a warm smile as they sit.

GOMEZ

Can you tell us what happened tonight, Starr?

Starr still looks over to Lisa. Lisa nods; the permission.

STARR

I went to a house party hosted by some guy named Darius. Khalil was there too.

Anxious, she notices she's drumming her fingers on the table. She stops and lays her hands flat to keep them visible.

GOMEZ

Why was Khalil there?

STARR

Same as everyone else. Recreational purposes.

GOMEZ

What 'recreational purposes?'

STARR

Dancing. Hanging out. Catching up on things going on in our lives.

(CONTINUED)

WILKES

What kind of things?

STARR

His grandmother has cancer. I didn't know.

Lisa looks over with concern... she didn't know either.

WILKES

Witnesses at the party stated there was an altercation and gunshots.

GOMEZ

Did Khalil have anything to do with it?

STARR

(hell no)

Nah.

(correcting her slang)

No. The fight broke out while we were talking. He wanted to make sure I got home safely, so he gave me a ride. That's when One-Fifteen pulled us over.

GOMEZ

Who?

STARR

The badge number of the officer who pulled us over for no reason.

The Detectives trade glances.

WILKES

Starr, do you know why Khalil reached into the car?

Guilt creeps on Starr...

STARR

I think he was checking to see if I was okay.

GOMEZ

You think? You don't know?

STARR

No.

GOMEZ

Because?

(CONTINUED)

STARR
Because that's when...
(swallows hard)
... it happened.

She can't hold them back; tears chase each other down her cheek. She quickly wipes them away with her sleeve.

GOMEZ
Did you --

LISA
(to Gomez)
-- Could you please give her a second?

Lisa rubs Starr's fragile and broken face.

LISA (CONT'D)
Whenever you're ready, baby.

WILKES
We understand this is hard right now.
Take your time.

Starr nods.

GOMEZ
Did you drink alcohol at the party?

STARR
I don't drink.

GOMEZ
Did Khalil?

STARR
Not that I saw.

WILKES
(sugary, sympathetic)
Did you ever see Khalil sell narcotics?

LISA
What does that have to do with anything?

GOMEZ
The more information we have, the faster
this goes.

Starr straightens up, looks both Detectives in their eyes.

(CONTINUED)

STARR

I never personally saw him sell drugs or do drugs.

WILKES

But you knew he did?

Starr diverts her eyes as Lisa jumps in.

LISA

You haven't asked my child one thing about that cop.

WILKES

We just want the whole picture, Mrs. Carter. That's all.

STARR

One-Fifteen killed him. And Khalil wasn't doing anything wrong. How much of a bigger picture do you need?

The African-American cop that Mav was arguing with, CARLOS, approaches. He doesn't bother to knock, entering with authority.

CARLOS

She's done here.

Both Starr and Lisa look up.

WILKES

We're still questioning the witness, Montgomery.

GOMEZ

Aren't you supposed to be off duty?

CARLOS

(to Lisa)

Let's go.

(to Starr)

Come with me, Starr.

Starr and Lisa rise. The Detectives look at each other.

GOMEZ

You know her?

CARLOS

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (5)

23

Carlos puts a hand on Starr's back as he guides her out of the room.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

She's my niece.

24 INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - BULLPEN - SAME

24

Carlos shepherds Starr and Lisa protectively past the others. Mav joins them, equally defensive and stone-faced. Starr trembles as she notices EVERY COP staring at her as the front doors close behind them.

25 INT. MAV AND LISA'S HOUSE - STARR'S BEDROOM - DAWN

25

Sunlight shines on STARR'S FACE. Suddenly, from the clutches of a nightmare, Starr jolts awake with a huge GASP.

MAV (O.S.)

I'm here.

REVEAL: Mav sitting vigil next to Starr's bed. Suddenly, Starr retches, but Mav's prepared... he GRABS A TRASH CAN for her. He holds her hair back as she vomits.

MAV (CONT'D)

Let it out.

He wipes Starr's mouth with a wet cloth. He hands her a glass of water to rinse and the trash can to spit. She leans over and buries her face in his chest as he holds her tightly.

26 INT. MAV AND LISA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

26

-- ANGLE ON: a platter of pancakes. Cheesy eggs. Buttered toast. Bacon. Hash browns. Lisa's cooking up a storm. Grief and food go together like a lawyer and lies.

Lisa offers a plate of bacon to Starr. A small hand tries to sneak in, but Lisa defends it from Sekani.

LISA

Starr first. Let her eat, Sekani.

Starr, not really hungry, takes a tentative bite as she eats surrounded by her quiet family. It's not awkward, just a silent unconditional support. Starr puts her fork down. One bite is enough. Mav laments, knowing he can never take away the pain, just arm her with hope.

MAV

Everybody ain't got a superpower like you, baby.

(CONTINUED)

Starr's eyes meet his, emotionally beaten.

MAV (CONT'D)

Use your light. I ain't name you 'Starr'
on accident.

Finished with his plate, Seven awkwardly leans over Starr's chair and gives her a hug from behind. His heart in the right place it's just a new move for him.

Mav and Lisa glance at one another, slight smiles on their faces. Love may not be in the world, but it is in this home.

SEVEN

Love you.

Starr shrugs him off. She doesn't want the pity.

Suddenly, Sekani finally manages to steal the bacon off Starr's plate.

SEKANI

(re: Seven's 'love you')
I don't.

Sekani takes a bite of the bacon. Starr can't help but to giggle, allowing everyone to crack a much-needed smile.

27 INT. MISS ROSALIE'S HOUSE - DAY

27

CAMERA FOLLOWING: a pan of LASAGNA, as it's carried across a room filled with DOZENS of FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS. Lisa leads the family in to pay their respects.

TAMMY, 36, Khalil's aunt and Miss Rosalie's daughter, greets the Carter family, taking the lasagna from Lisa. Lisa gives Tammy a long hug.

LISA

You just get in?

TAMMY

Yeah... Barely with all the delays at
LaGuardia.

(beat)

Hate that this is the reason I'm back
home.

MAV

(looks around)
Your sista ain't here?

(CONTINUED)

TAMMY

No. Brenda probably don't even know about her baby.

LISA

You can't find her?

TAMMY

(shaking her head 'no')

I tried every number she ever had.

A flicker of anger graces Starr's face as she murmurs to Seven.

STARR

Ain't nothing new about that.

Suddenly, EVERYONE TURNS as MISS ROSALIE, 60s, Khalil's grandmother, ENTERING. Khalil's baby brother, CAMERON, 10, holds Miss Rosalie's hand; he leads her into the living room. Even in her housecoat, Miss Rosalie can still hold court... a pure African Queen.

Miss Rosalie locks eyes with Starr. She opens her arms to her, Starr rushes in. They both take a seat on the couch.

MISS ROSALIE

You the only real friend that boy ever had.

STARR

He was mine too, Miss Rosalie.

MISS ROSALIE

(quietly)

Police came by. Was you with him, Starr?

STARR

(quietly)

Yes, ma'am.

MISS ROSALIE

(quietly; teary)

Thank God he didn't leave this world alone. You been by his side from day one and you stayed all the way to the end.

Starr can't hold back the tears. She just never thought she'd see Khalil's end. And certainly not this soon.

(CONTINUED)

MISS ROSALIE (CONT'D)

(turns to Mav)

He was selling that stuff, you know?
Can't be for nobody but King.

Starr closes her eyes. She fucking hates she was right in thinking Khalil was dealing. Big Mav turns to Lisa. His gaze says it all: that no good nigga... King.

MISS ROSALIE (CONT'D)

Khalil was buying those sneakers...
helping me with my prescriptions. I pray
the Lord forgive me for just now seeing
it. I shoulda put it together long ago.

Suddenly, the screendoor creaks. The room falls quiet as -- Carlos ENTERS, in uniform. He's with his wife, PAM. She may be a top notch doctor who can rock a pair Louboutins, but she can Vaseline it up for a fight if necessary.

NEIGHBOR

(sotto)

He got some nerve comin' in here.

Carlos stands straight, deflecting the prickly hostility in the room. Clocking the antagonism towards her uncle, Starr gets up and takes his hand. Mav, tinge of jealousy on his face, glares as Starr leads Carlos, with Pam, to the middle of the room.

Carlos respectfully puts his hat in hand. Pam smiles warmly.

CARLOS

Miss Rosalie, I came to tell you how
sorry I am for your loss. Pam and I have
been praying for you.

MISS ROSALIE

Thank y'all.

(so everyone can hear)

We appreciate all the good police like
you, Carlos.

Some in the room are chastised while others murmur approval. The judgement smothers Carlos. Pam lovingly grabs his hand.

MISS ROSALIE (CONT'D)

Long as I'm breathing, you always welcome
here... in our community.

CARLOS

Thank you, Miss Rosalie.

28 INT. MISS ROSALIE'S HOUSE - SAME 28

Starr's phone VIBRATES. It's a text from Chris.

INSERT CHRIS' TEXT: YOU COMING?

Starr looks sick as she realizes...

INTERCUT WITH:

29 EXT. AUGUSTINE'S - SAME 29

... that she stood Chris up. He stands outside AUGUSTINE'S, phone in hand, pacing.

INSERT STARR'S TEXT: OMG SO SO SORRY. CAN'T COME.

Chris is disappointed with a color of irritation.

INSERT CHRIS' TEXT: NOT AGAIN!

Chris takes a moment to settle his disappointment as he takes in this news.

INSERT STARR'S TEXT: DEEP FAMILY STUFF. DEATH IN THE...

She stops. She stares at the word 'death.' She quickly DELETES it. INSERT STARR'S TEXT: An ANGUISHED EMOJI and KISSING LIPS. Then: STILL WANNA SEE U.

Chris sighs, puts the phone down, and walks away.

30 EXT. MISS ROSALIE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER 30

Sekani and a few KIDS play in the backyard, oblivious to Mav, Lisa, Starr, and Carlos huddled in the corner of the yard.

Suddenly, a car blasting music passes by. Two men branded with King's tattoo slowly lurk past the house. Mav and Carlos take them in as Lisa gives a worried look. The car keeps moving.

MAV

So what up? His ass in jail?

CARLOS

They placed him on paid administrative leave.

STARR

(outraged)

That's all? After he killed Khalil?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mav puts a hand on Starr's shoulder to steady her.

CARLOS

Starr... there will be a full
investigation.

(CONTINUED)

MAV
(incredulously)
Cops investigating cops, huh?
(beat)
They shoulda charged his racist ass with
murder. But that ain't happenin' is it,
Uncle Carlos?

Carlos hates that dig.

CARLOS
Nothing like this has happened with this
officer before.

MAV
(sarcastic)
A first-timer. Let's cut 'em a break.

LISA
Carlos, you're going to help with the
investigation, right?

CARLOS
I can't. We hand situations like this
over to the DA.

MAV
(ahead of the game)
Damn, we headed for a Grand Jury.

CARLOS
Most likely.

MAV
And lemme guess... they gon' ask Starr to
testify.

Starr jolts with apprehension.

LISA
I don't want the whole world knowing
Starr's the witness. She doesn't need
that kind of attention.

Starr's legs are weak, but somehow she's still standing.

STARR
(to all of them)
This is my fault. I didn't say the right
things. I screwed up.

MAV
Naw, baby. This ain't 'bout you.

(CONTINUED)

Starr looks nervously between Mav and Lisa. Carlos stands close by to jump in and help.

CARLOS
You said the right things.

LISA
Should we get a lawyer?

CARLOS
Witnesses don't need attorneys.

MAV
Starr ain't just a witness, 'Los. She a voice for the truth.

CARLOS
If you don't trust the system, can you at least trust me? Starr's just like my daughter.

MAV
But she ain't.

Oh, shit. Now we're at the heart of the angst.

CARLOS
Didn't seem that way when you were locked up.

He straightens up and so does Mav. The tension is boiling until Lisa steps in the middle.

LISA
Stop it. Both of you.

Starr aimlessly walks away, worried. She watches Sekani playing with another BOY in the backyard. Their fingers are guns. Fake POW! POW!

She looks over and sees some KIDS SPRAY PAINTING the words: JUSTICE FOR KHALIL! on the wall of the alley next door.

PULLING UP to a HIGH ANGLE until we get a view of the wall and the street around us.

CUT TO:

32 INT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - GIRLS' BATHROOM - MORNING 32

SILENCE. Starr stares at her reflection in the mirror in the bathroom, her hands on either side of the basin. Someone ENTERS. Starr quickly gathers herself.

STARR (V.O.)

The switch to Starr Version 2 is hard today.

33 INT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - LATER 33

SCHOOL LUNCH. Starr forces a smile as her Friends laugh and tease around her, stealing FRIED CHICKEN off each other's plates. Chris walks by. She looks over at him. She apologizes with a nod.

His hesitance unnerves Starr. She can't lose him too. To Starr's relief, Chris gives a tight nod.

34 INT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING 34

The girls have basketball practice. Hailey, Maya, and Starr play against OTHER GIRLS from the school.

Hailey passes Starr the ball. The ball goes off the tip of Starr's fingers, causing a turnover. She's just not into it today. The Opposing Player gets an easy lay-up.

STARR

Damn.

MAYA

(to Hailey)

It's her food baby. We ate too much at lunch.

(patting her own stomach)

Here's mine. Cute, right?

They start playing again. Hailey does a bounce pass toward Starr, but it's ripe for another turnover. Shit!

HAILEY

Dammit, Starr! Just pretend the ball is a piece of fried chicken.

Starr COMES TO A STOP on the court.

STARR

What was that?

(CONTINUED)

All of the action stops on the court.

HAILEY
What? It's game talk.

STARR
Fried chicken's game talk? Never heard
that one.

Starr just stares at Hailey. Serious. Hailey gets it.

HAILEY
Holy shit, Starr. It was a joke.

The tension is thick. Starr takes a breath. Relents.

STARR
Okay.

Starr walks toward the baseline, but Hailey holds her back.

HAILEY
What's going on, girl? I mean, you know
me. And I know you... better than anyone.

If she only knew.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
You okay?

STARR
Yeah. We're cool. I'm just tired.

Starr gives an uncomfortable smile as she in-bounds the ball.

36 OMITTED 36

37 EXT/INT. REUBEN'S BBQ - LATER 37

Starr and Kenya ENTER Reuben's; the neighborhood joint with BLUES SONGS in the air and celebrity photos on the walls. A bulletproof partition separates the Customers from the cashier. Some Regulars, including Mr. Reuben's nephew, Tim, eat at the counter.

Kenya sees Starr's preoccupied and nervous as Mr. Reuben puts lunch orders together. He smiles at them.

(CONTINUED)

MR. REUBEN

Starr and Kenya. Imma put Mav's hot links on the grill; a lil burnt on top and crispy on the sides. Y'all go ahead and take some pound cake while y'all wait.

STARR

Thanks, Mr. Reuben.

KENYA

Thanks.

The girls take the pound cake and move to wait. There's a BOX TV in the corner.

INSERT TV: The NEWS is on showing DASH-CAM FOOTAGE from the police car. Khalil reaches into his car and comes back out with something in his hand. VIDEO ANIMATION draws a circle around his hand.

WHITE NEWS ANCHOR

(on the TV)

... dashcam footage, where the officer thought he was going for a weapon, which turned out to be a hairbrush.

KENYA

(to news anchor on the TV)

You the one who need a hairbrush.
What's that shit on your head?

INSERT TV: An apparent Junkie talks to a Reporter. It's BRENDA, 32, Khalil's mother.

BRENDA

(on TV)

My son ain't never done anything wrong. Why did they have to do that him? What did this happen for, huh? You can't even brush your hair and walk down the street. Can't even brush your hair!

Starr cringes.

STARR

Now she finally shows up for him?

KENYA

Why they puttin' Brenda's ass on TV? That ain't gon' help Khalil.

NEWS ANCHOR

(on the TV)

There is a witness to the shooting who'll be called to testify in front of the Grand Jury --

(CONTINUED)

KENYA

-- You famous now.

37 CONTINUED: (3)

37

STARR
 (off guard)
 What?

Kenya purses her lips.

KENYA
 Please. I saw you with Khalil. And you
 been acting all jumpy and shit. So don't
 even lie. It's you, Starr.

Fuck. Starr stares at Kenya, frozen.

STARR
 You think anybody else know?

KENYA
 (re: Mr. Reuben and Tim)
 You mean, do I think they talkin' 'bout
 your shit right now?

Starr looks over at Mr. Reuben and Tim. They're looking at
 Starr, murmuring.

KENYA (CONT'D)
 Don't trip. Only half of everybody know.
 The other half ain't gonna know for at
 least five more minutes.

38 EXT. REUBEN'S BBQ - MOMENTS LATER

38

Starr and Kenya walk out with their take-out in their hands.
 Kenya waits for the GROUP of GIRLS going past them to clear.

KENYA
 You ready to stir some shit up?

STARR
 Like what?

KENYA
 You were there. You gotta tell everybody
 what happened.

Starr glances at Kenya.

KENYA (CONT'D)
 You gon' stand up for Khalil, ain't you?
 Brenda can't be the only one talkin'. You
 know K woulda stood tall and spoke for
 you.

(CONTINUED)

Before Starr can answer, a gray BMW pulls up beside them, bass THUMPING, jarring the car.

The driver's side window rolls down, it's King. As he rubs his manicured goatee, Starr can't help but to look at the two tears tattooed underneath his left eye.

KING
What up, Queens?

KENYA
Hey, Daddy!

KING
Y'all get in.
(to Starr)
I'll take you to Big Mav.

Kenya happily gets in the back. Starr... not so much.

King looks over his shoulder at the take out bags. He pulls out a roll of CASH and reaches it back.

KING
To make up for what y'all spent.

Kenya ain't waiting, she takes the money. Starr doesn't.

STARR
Nah, I'm good, thanks.

King looks at Starr in the rearview.

KING
(sympathetic)
Heard you was with that boy when he got himself killed. That's some hard shit to see. Believe me, it hard to forget, too.

Starr stays silent, but King reads the worry on her face. In a warm voice, King takes on a fatherly role. Starr's never seen this side of him.

KING (CONT'D)
I ain't gon' lie and say that that shit don't hurt. I been in the Heights from the jump, so trust I been where you at. Hurt like this ain't gon' never leave you, but you gotta push on. Feel me?

CONTINUED:

In the back seat, Kenya gives Starr a nudge, prompting her to answer.

Catching King's eyes in the rearview mirror, she nods even though it's a lie. Kenya pops open her soda, changing gears.

KENYA
Mama at the house?

KING
(shrugs)
Ain't my house. Iesha wherever she at.

KENYA
What 'bout Seven?

KING
(to Starr)
Where your daddy and Iesha come up with a name like 'Seven?'

King cracks up.

KING (CONT'D)
What his middle name? Eight?

Seven's an old wound for King; one that hasn't healed in a decade. King whips his car around the corner.

40 EXT. CARTER'S GROCERY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

40

King's car pulls over to the curb. Mav sits on the bench outside chopping it up with Mr. Lewis.

Starr gets out the back of the car. Mav goes to King's car and leans against the car window, passenger side. He and King exchange a complicated handshake.

KING
How that domestic life treatin' ya, man?

Mav cracks a small grin.

MAV
If you go head and put a ring on Iesha,
you gon' find out.

King chuckles.

KING
(genuine; envy)
Iesha ain't no Lisa.

King watches several Customers walk inside Mav's store.

(CONTINUED)

KING (CONT'D)

I see business goin' good. Maybe I shoulda bought this store for me instead of you.

King turns his gaze to meet Mav's as if he's holding something over his head. The grin leaves Mav's face.

MAV

But you didn't.

King takes a longer drag from his cigar.

KING

I heard what happened to Starr's homeboy.

MAV

You know how it go. They shoot first and ask questions later.

King rubs his beard as he watches Starr and Mr. Lewis talk.

KING

You really should make sure she stay outta trouble.

MAV

Trouble?

KING

Best if she don't talk to the 5-0, you feel me?

The two men lock eyes.

MAV

You don't need to worry 'bout Starr.
(nods toward Kenya)
Take care of your girl and I'll handle mine.

KING

So it's like that?

MAV

It's exactly like that.

King looks at Mav. At his store. He laughs to himself before hollering after Starr.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

KING

Keep pushin' on and 'member what I told
you... keep pushin' on. Put that shit in
the rearview, a'ight?

King drives off, leaving Mav worried.

41 INT. MAV AND LISA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

41

Lisa changes into her dress and heels.

(CONTINUED)

LISA

He was threatening her, Maverick!

MAV

He ain't gon' hurt her.

LISA

He will if he thinks Starr's telling the police Khalil worked for him. Then he'll rope you right back in. 'Once a King Lord, always a King Lord?'

MAV

When you spend three years in lockup doin' somebody else's time, ain't no ropin' back in. He let me out. That was our deal.

LISA

(frustrated)

We're moving.

Mav stops.

MAV

Baby, we was both born up the street at County. Our first kiss was up in Reuben's. Haven Acres projects where we made Starr. And now you wanna bounce? We can change stuff 'round here.

LISA

You wanna help our people... I do too. Why do you think I'm busting my butt everyday up at that clinic for? But I also want our kids to enjoy their life.

MAV

And our life is here. I like our life. I thought you did too.

LISA

Where you live does not define who you are, Maverick.

This lands on Mav, but he sticks to his guns.

MAV

Baby, listen to me --

LISA

-- No, you listen. It's okay to make sacrifices for your family.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LISA (CONT'D)

You think my mama moved Carlos and me out of Garden Heights and to that Catholic school to learn how to pray? I'm gonna make sure my kids at least have it better than me, otherwise what's the point?

MAV

That's why we send them to that school.

LISA

And what do you think they'll do at that school when they find out Starr was with Khalil? Those white folks love to boast about how 'diverse' that school is, but this is too much diversity for them.

(beat)

I just don't feel right. I'm worried.

-- ANOTHER ANGLE: Starr's just outside the bedroom door. She's been listening to them the entire time. She KNOCKS and ENTERS, agitated by what she's overheard.

STARR

I don't feel good. I'm not going.

LISA

None of us feel good, baby, but we pressing on anyway.

Starr nods, her face a mask of pain. She EXITS. Mav and Lisa look at each other with concern in their eyes.

MAV

I got her. You get the boys.

42 INT. MAV AND LISA'S HOUSE - STARR'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER 42

Starr's changed into her navy dress. As she looks for shoes in the closet, she accidentally knocks a BOX onto the floor. It opens. She kneels to pick it up.

-- ANGLE ON: THE WAND BOX. TWO "HARRY POTTER" WANDS hang out of the box. They are both labeled with adhesive stickers. One carries the name 'Natasha;' the other label says 'Starr.'

Starr kneels down and stares at the wands. Remembering.

-- AT THE DOOR: Mav sticks his head in worried, gentle.

MAV

Can I come in?

Starr nods. He ENTERS, noticing the wands on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

MAV (CONT'D)

Maybe when we get back we can watch that
'Harry Potter and the Goblet of Half-
Blood Gumble Ghosts.'

Starr doesn't have the energy to correct him.

STARR

That's okay. You're the worst person to
watch Harry Potter with. The whole time
you're sayin,'

(she deepens her voice)

'Harry Potter's 'bout gang theory.'

MAV

It is! Hogwarts Houses got they own
colors, they own hideouts. And they
always ridin' for each other. Now how
that ain't 'bout gangs?

Starr knows Mav's trying to lift her spirits. She manages a
small grin as she closes the wand box.

MAV (CONT'D)

Ain't no lyin', y'all had y'all's own
lil' Harry Potter gang.

(looks at wand box)

Now Natasha and Khalil both gone. And you
still here... tryin' to make sense out of
it.

STARR

(deflated)

It's THUG LIFE.

Mav looks at Starr, taken aback.

STARR (CONT'D)

'The Hate U Give Little Infants --

MAV

-- F's Everybody.' I know what it stand
for. What you think it mean?

STARR

I think it's about more than youth. I
think it's about us, period.

MAV

Us who?

(CONTINUED)

STARR

Black people, poor people, everybody at the bottom.

MAV

You on it. Pac was tryin' to school us on how the system's designed against us. Why else you think so many folks in our neighborhood deal?

STARR

They need the money.

MAV

And ain't no other real jobs 'round here, so we fall into the trap.

STARR

What trap?

Sekani BURSTS in wearing black dress pants and a white button down shirt. His tie's draped over his neck. Mav helps Sekani tie his purple tie while Starr ties his shoelaces.

MAV

Drugs' a multi-billion dollar industry. Brothas like me and Khalil get caught up cause it look like a way out. That shit's flown into our communities and I don't know nobody with a private jet, do you?

STARR

No.

SEKANI

Me neither.

MAV

Then they trap us when we end up going to prison... another billion dollar hustle. Movin' us through prison like we on a conveyor belt. How else did I end up in prison with my own daddy?

SEKANI

(to Mav)

You were in jail with your daddy?

Mav nods, but there's no pride in it. Rather shame.

(CONTINUED)

MAV

But when I caught up with him in prison,
there wasn't nothin' he could do to help
me. He was just a weak old man with
regrets. His life and light extinguished.
I swore then that'd never be me. Y'all
know why?

STARR

Why?

No.

SEKANI

MAV

To break this damn cycle... for my
children.

Starr's gotten a bit of her determination back. Just enough
to get back on the saddle, but not quite ready to ride.

Lisa ENTERS with Seven, who's also wearing a suit and tie.

LISA

Everybody ready?

She sees Starr in her dress and suddenly her eyes water. Mav
puts his arms around her comfortingly.

MAV

I know you fed up, baby. But keep yo'
head up.

(sings badly)

'You gotta keep your head up...'

The singing is horrible. The kids LAUGH as Lisa melts.

STARR

Daddy, you couldn't carry a tune if it
came in a box.

MAV

(opening his arms)

Get in here.

SEKANI

I'm in the middle!

They all embrace. Mav kisses Lisa's head.

MAV

(to Lisa)

See? We okay. I got you. And look how
pretty our kids clean up.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (4)

42

LISA

Yeah. They clean up real nice. For a funeral.

43 INT. CHURCH - DAY

43

CLOSE ON: a white casket on a church dais. The PIANO plays as PEOPLE line up to view the body. Starr's entire family is just behind Miss Rosalie's family. Miss Rosalie cries.

ON STARR: as she nears the casket. Lisa instinctively wraps her arms around her. With each step, Starr's knees weaken and her breathing quickens.

-- AT THE CASKET: Starr forces herself to look at Khalil. His corpse is dressed in a white suit. Starr stares, transfixed.

STARR (V.O.)

I'm not ready to see Khalil as a soulless mannequin. His lips are too pink. And he doesn't have his dimples.

Starr FLASHES on Khalil's face from the night of the shooting: His smile in his car. His green eyes. His dimples. The kiss they shared in his car.

LISA

Move on, baby. Keep on walking.

Starr doesn't move. She's rooted, looking at the mannequin version of Khalil.

STARR

It ain't him, Mama.

Before Lisa can stop her, Starr slightly touches Khalil's hand... cold as ice, hard. She recoils instantly. Her world begins to spin as tears stream down her face. Seven holds her up as she begins to slump.

SEVEN

You a'right?

Starr couldn't be further from being alright.

44 INT. CHURCH - LATER

44

The CONGREGATION claps along with the GOSPEL CHOIR. PASTOR ELDRIDGE dances in the front, shouting 'Joy!' Lisa, Miss Rosalie and Tammy wave their hands, singing 'Praise Him!'

Seven, glancing around, leans over to Starr.

(CONTINUED)

SEVEN

Where's K's mom at? You see her?

STARR

No, but I see yours.

Seven looks around the church and sees: IESHA in her skin-tight hoochie dress that barely covers her thighs. With her gold wig and foot-long eyelashes, once you see her you'll never forget.

Iesha's five-year-old daughter, LYRIC, is with her. They're in the back with Kenya, King, and a bunch of HIS BOYS sporting their gray clothes and bandanas.

IESHA

Seven! C'mon! You over here on my side!

A DOZEN CHURCH-GOERS turn to look at Iesha. Seven cringes. Iesha waves to an ashamed Seven who quickly whips back around, ignoring her. Lisa places a firm hand on Seven.

LISA

Go join your mother, Seven.

Starr turns around too, only to see King staring right at her. A subtle reminder. She turns away.

The song ends. Everyone CLAPS and SHOUTS 'Hallelujah!'

PASTOR ELDRIDGE

We have a speaker today. The Harris Family wants us all to listen to what she's gotta say. Come on up, Sister April Ofrah.

APRIL OFRAH, 40, in a professional skirt and a 'R.I.P. Khalil' T-shirt, steps onto the dais.

APRIL OFRAH

This is the last place I wanted to be today. And I know I'm not alone.

'Humm-humms' emerge from the Congregation.

APRIL OFRAH (CONT'D)

But here we are again. Violence. Brutality. It's the same story just a different name.

An affirming response RESONATES from the People.

APRIL OFRAH (CONT'D)

Today's name is Khalil Harris. Another unarmed, young, black man. What does that tell us?

(beat)

Shamell Bell said it best: 'It is impossible to be unarmed when our blackness is the weapon they fear.'

SHOUTS of agreement.

APRIL OFRAH (CONT'D)

I'm April Ofrah. A lawyer with Just Us for Justice. Just before the service, I was informed the police have no intentions of arresting the officer who murdered this young man, despite having a credible eyewitness.

MURMURS emerge from the crowd.

APRIL OFRAH (CONT'D)

We won't give up. The Harris family and I ask you to join us after the service for a peaceful march past the police station.

Heads nod. She's speaking the truth and there's no turning your back on it.

APRIL OFRAH (CONT'D)

Division is how they win. Unity is how they crumble. See you outside, after the service.

The Congregation APPLAUDS for Miss Ofrah. As she returns to her seat, she spots Starr sitting in the crowd. April nods to her meaningfully, eyebrows raised as if to say 'let's talk.' Lisa and Mav exchange troubled glances.

LISA

(wary, to Mav)

See that? How does she even know?

MAV

Gotta be Miss Rosalie.

Starr sinks down in the pew.

CUT TO:

45 EXT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

45

The church doors open and the casket comes out. Seven is one of the Pallbearers. Starr follows, supported by Lisa on one side and Mav on the other.

It's already a MEDIA ZOO. HUNDREDS OF PROTESTORS, DOZENS OF REPORTERS fill the street. People congregate around April, who holds up a 'Just Us for Justice' sign.

APRIL OFRAH
(to the gathering)
Remember... this is going to be a
peaceful march!

MAV
(to Lisa)
I ain't too sure 'bout that.

-- ANGLE ON: The POLICE stand nearby as a group of MEN glare at them. The COPS try to control the Crowd but their mere presence causes tension; ready to push this rally in the wrong direction.

With the environment consumed with this brewing rowdiness, peace may not happen. Some POLICE PUSH BACK a group of DEMONSTRATORS, but they're met with resistance. The Crowd YELLS back at them.

Mav sees where this march is going... not a good place.

MAV (CONT'D)
We gotta leave.

The Crowd heads toward the POLICE STATION. The air grows in rowdiness.

Nervous and feet bolted to the ground with fear, Starr closes her eyes and prays under her breath.

MAV (CONT'D)
Let's go.
(calling out)
Seven! C'mon!

Seven joins his family. With the SOUNDS of 'JUSTICE FOR KHALIL!' coming from every direction, Mav hustles the kids around the corner.

-- CORNER: A POLICE CAR zips by, ready to handle the People's building agitation.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

Turmoil simmering, Mav and Lisa guide Starr, Seven, and Sekani swiftly through the crowd and to their car.

NEWSCASTER (PRE-LAP)

A peaceful protest following the funeral for Khalil Harris, a young black man killed by an unnamed police officer, turned violent today as protestors and the police clashed.

46-47 OMITTED

46-47

A48 INT. CHRIS BEDROOM - NIGHT

A48

Chris is doing homework at his desk when he looks up and notices something on the TV.

48 INT. MAV AND LISA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

48

ON TV: COVERAGE of the tense FUNERAL as they march away from the church. FROM UP HIGH: We see a wide shot of People in the street.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

After no charges were brought forward against the unnamed Officer who has been placed on paid administrative leave until all evidence can be evaluated.

The Cops and the Protestors' frustration increase. A TV NEWSCASTER interviews the rightfully rage fueled Protestors.

MALE PROTESTOR

(to Newscaster)

This is bullshit! That cop shot that boy in cold blood. For NO damn reason. Innocent black men keep getting killed by the police time and time again. It's not right. The whole damn system is guilty as hell! But we ain't going nowhere.

A small group of Protestors RALLY, angrily chanting on the neighborhood corner.

Cops at the police station try to divide the Crowd as they violently arrest the individuals. The Protestors will not be silenced... until the Police throw TEAR GAS into the Crowd. It causes them all to scatter into the street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BACK TO SCENE

Faintly in the distance is a TINY POP! A WOMAN'S HAND flips a light SWITCH. An annoying routine, Lisa has turned off the last lamp in the house.

LISA

Bullets don't know where they're supposed to go.

A well-known signal to go dark and stay low. She rejoins Mav, Seven, Starr, and Sekani sitting on the floor, watching the madness unfold on TV. Now the crowd THROWS WATER BOTTLES and CANS at the Police in order to protect themselves from the attack of tear gas and aggressive Officers. Sekani buries his head in Lisa's lap.

SEKANI

Are they mad cause Khalil died?

LISA

Yeah, baby. We all are.

-- ON STARR: on her laptop. She wants to do something...

She picks up her cell, finds KENYA'S name and blasts off a quick text... looking for approval.

INSERT TEXT: CHECK MY TUMBLR. THOUGHTS?

INSERT KENYA'S TEXT: IT'S... A'RIGHT.

Not the approval she was looking for. Starr taps a key on her laptop, frustrated.

INSERT LAPTOP: POSTS PHOTOS TO HER TUMBLR: Tamir Rice. Sandra Bland. Eric Garner. Emmett Till's disfigured and destroyed face.

Starr's cell phone RINGS.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CHRIS' HOUSE - CHRIS' BEDROOM - SAME

Chris' eyes are glued to the TV. Fervor boiling, Members of the CROWD talk to a NEWSCASTER with intensity.

Chris closely watches another Protestor being arrested. People HURL objects at cops onto the TEAR GAS engulfed street.

(CONTINUED)

STARR
(on the phone)
Hey.

CHRIS
(on the phone)
Are you and your family okay? I'm
watching the news.

Starr winces, caught between her two worlds again.

STARR
We're good. Completely safe.

CHRIS
Are you sure? It doesn't look too safe.

JUST THEN -- they HEAR a KNOCK at the front door.

LISA
Don't answer it, Maverick.

STARR
(on the phone)
I gotta go.

Starr hangs up the phone at the sight of Mav heading to the front door with caution.

CHRIS
(on the phone)
Starr? Starr?

Chris looks at his cell like it wronged him.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Shit!

Mav looks through the peephole. He relaxes and opens the door... it's April Ofrah.

Lisa hands April a cup of coffee. April looks ragged. It's clear she's been out there all night. Starr and Seven sit at the table with Mav, Lisa, and April.

APRIL OFRAH
Khalil can't speak for himself. He needs
a voice. Starr's it.

Starr looks at her parents, frightened, shaking her head.

(CONTINUED)

LISA

I don't like this already --

MAV

-- Lisa, just hear her on out.

APRIL OFRAH

Starr, do you understand what a Grand Jury is?

STARR

Where they decide if something should go to court or not.

APRIL OFRAH

Right. They'll decide if charges should be brought against Officer Macintosh.

LISA

Will they indict him?

APRIL OFRAH

99% of the time the grand jury indicts.

MAV

What about that 1% they don't?

April can't lie about it.

APRIL OFRAH

Those cases almost always involve a cop.

The bristling behind Mav's face says it all. This cop has a better chance than the 99%.

STARR

But that won't happen this time. I saw it all happen.

APRIL OFRAH

Did you really?

Starr looks confused.

APRIL OFRAH (CONT'D)

When Khalil was shot, where were you... exactly?

STARR

In the passenger seat.

(CONTINUED)

APRIL OFRAH

And you could see everything from there?
You could see the cop? You could see
Khalil's every move?

She's made her point. Starr looks at Mav and Lisa. Troubled.

APRIL OFRAH (CONT'D)

(gentle)

Do you have any proof of what you saw?
Did you record it on your phone?

The wind's taken out of Starr.

STARR

(guilt)

No. The cop said to drop it.

April lowers her eyes... no visual evidence. Seven doesn't miss a beat.

SEVEN

So Khalil will never get his day in court
all cause a cop shot him?

APRIL OFRAH

That's why our trial is now. On the
streets. In the media. Starr is Khalil's
only witness.

MAV

Where do we start?

APRIL OFRAH

With a TV interview.

Starr's eyes fill with fear. Lisa stands, apprehensive.

LISA

I understand what you're fighting for.
But I fight for Starr. I won't put her at
risk.

It's final. Mav sighs deeply. April rises.

APRIL OFRAH

Alright, then.

Before April can leave the table, Starr blurts out...

STARR

My other best friend was murdered when we
were both ten.

(CONTINUED)

April turns back around, startled. Mav, Lisa and Seven all look at Starr KNOWING THE STORY.

STARR (CONT'D)

We were playing in a busted fire hydrant. Then this car rolled by and a tatted hand pulled out a gun. I don't know who they were trying to get, but me and Natasha must've been in the way of whoever he was trying to shoot.

Tears fill Starr's eyes.

STARR (CONT'D)

Three shots and she was on the ground. I could see that she was scared cause she was about to find out what happens after you die.

She can hardly speak the next words:

STARR (CONT'D)

And I know who did it.

MAV

What?!

LISA

You never told us that!

STARR

It was one of the King Lords.

Mav closes his eyes, taking the guilt for another's action.

STARR (CONT'D)

He missed me once and I didn't want him to get another chance. I wasn't gonna snitch. He got killed a few months later, so I just let it go.

Starr looks up at April, her eyes distressed.

STARR (CONT'D)

Now tell me Miss Ofrah, what kinda friend is that?

APRIL OFRAH

You can't blame yourself for that. You were young. You are young.

MAV

You been carryin' this all this time?

STARR

I wanna be a better friend for Khalil.
But going on TV? I don't know about all
that.

Starr crumples. Lisa holds her hand. Mav takes her other.

APRIL OFRAH

(hands her card to Mav)
If you need legal advice or change your
mind, I'm here.

April heads for the door, but turns back to Starr.

APRIL OFRAH (CONT'D)

Starr... it's only in the struggle that
we learn who we really are.

Starr swallows, taking in her words, as April EXITS.

51 OMITTED

51

52 INT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

52

Students run down the corridor, excited, FLYERS in hand.

STUDENTS

No school! Come on!

-- ON STARR: surprised, getting bumped by STUDENTS running
counter to her.

She stops in her tracks. Maya walks up to her.

MAYA

School's out. Protesting's in.
(sighs)
And I was so ready for that history test
this morning.

Hailey walks up to them.

HAILEY

(to Starr)
Hey! Where you been? Everyone's ditching.
Girl, c'mon.

Hailey shoves a FLYER into Starr's hands.

INSERT FLYER: It's a photo of Khalil.

Starr looks at it like a foreign object; she hands it back.

(CONTINUED)

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Really? I thought you'd love this considering what you've been putting up on Tumblr.

STARR

Love it?

HAILEY

Well, not love it, but yeah. I mean, you care, right? It's your neighborhood and I thought you might even know the guy.

Starr looks trapped, searching for the words as LAUGHING STUDENTS run the halls holding FLYERS with Khalil's face covered on it.

PROTESTING STUDENTS

Justice for Khalil!

LAUGHING STUDENTS

Free day!

STARR

I just don't think it's, you know, cool to use this situation as an excuse for getting out of school.

HAILEY

(frustrated)

What the hell, Starr? This isn't just an excuse to cut school. It's a good cause that also happens to be a good excuse to cut school.

(scoffs)

I really don't want to see our math teacher's face today. Do you?

Hailey leads Starr and Maya out with the CROWD. Starr's reluctant, but she finds herself following them.

Starr, Hailey, and Maya walk to the school's front yard. The entire STUDENT BODY, 95% white, participate in more of a party than a demonstration. It's a disturbing sight that Starr can't comprehend.

WHITE KIDS in their sopped up convertibles drive by, stopping to pump loud hip-hop. The other KIDS dance, laugh, and groove to the music.

A few WHITE STUDENTS chant BLACK LIVES MATTER! JUSTICE! A BULK of the STUDENTS walk away... time to skip.

STARR
This isn't right.

HAILEY
What? Who else is going to speak up for our people, girl? Us!

What the fuck did she just say?!

STARR
'Our people?'

Starr turns to Hailey with disgust, but she doesn't even notice. This is too damn surreal for Starr. She backs away.

MAYA
Where you going?

-- ON STARR WALKING AWAY: Storming through this bad protest. She forcefully takes down her ponytail and pulls up the top of her hoodie.

She passes Chris. He falls in step with her.

CHRIS
I've been looking for you.

STARR
I'm going home. I don't feel well.

CHRIS
What's wrong?

Starr's revolted.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(putting things together)
You knew him, didn't you, Starr? The kid who got killed?

Starr doesn't answer, just cinches her hoodie tight.

STARR
No. And I'm okay. Just give me some space for a bit, okay?

Starr begins to walk away. Chris's frustration grows... he can't stand her shutting him down like this.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

Why don't you tell me what's going on?
Starr!

Starr turns around, considering Chris for a moment, but she can't get herself to open up. Not yet. She walks off with her cell phone to her ear.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Starr!

Rejected, Chris is mad as hell.

STARR

(on the phone)

Can you come get me?

54 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET / INT. CARLOS' CAR - LATER (PARKED) 54

Around the corner of the school, Starr rises off the curb as Carlos' non-patrol car rolls to a stop.

She gets inside looking at Carlos dressed in his street clothes.

CARLOS

(skeptical)

Cramps, huh?

STARR

Yeah. People cramps.

Starr looks at Carlos' FRESHLY BANDAGED HAND.

STARR (CONT'D)

How'd you hurt your hand?

CARLOS

People cramps.

She takes in Carlos' regular clothes. She puts it together.

STARR

Somebody face run into your fist?

Carlos looks at Starr, incredulous that she nailed it.

STARR (CONT'D)

No uniform.

CARLOS

Macintosh came in the station and we had a few words.

(a beat of realization)

I got put on leave faster than he did... without pay, of course.

STARR

I'm sorry, Unc.

(CONTINUED)

CARLOS

Nothing for you to apologize for. You didn't do it.

(hold on)

Does your Mama know I'm dropping you at the hospital?

STARR

I thought I'd let it be a surprise.

CARLOS

(sarcastic)

Great. She loves those.

Carlos grabs his cell.

CUT TO:

Lisa, wearing her nurse's uniform, stands defiantly over Starr with a critical eye.

LISA

Just cause some dumb, privileged kids skip class, you decide that it gives you a reason to leave school too? Well, guess what?

STARR

(anticipating her reply)

'It is what it is.'

(beat)

They were acting like Khalil died just so they can miss a chem test.

Lisa lightens.

STARR (CONT'D)

And I didn't do anything about it.

Lisa can't deny her little girl's pain, she holds her. Lisa looks at Starr, as if into her soul. Starr means this...

STARR (CONT'D)

I gotta speak for him, Mama.

Lisa inhales, reluctant. But she feels the certainty and gravity of Starr's decision.

56 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

56

JOHN, 28, a preppy white guy with a clipboard and a Starbucks cup, greets Starr, Mav, Lisa, and April in a hotel lobby.

JOHN

Let me guess. You're Starr!
(sipping coffee)
I'm John, Diane's associate producer.
Starr, thank you so much for having the
courage to do this!

STARR

You're welcome?

Mav and Lisa exchange looks. They follow John into the elevator.

JOHN

Diane is so excited to have you. We've
even bumped a segment to make sure yours
airs tonight.

The elevator doors close. There's no going back now.

57 INT. HOTEL - ELEVATOR - SAME

57

John pushes the button marked "Penthouse." Starr tenses.

LISA

(anxious, to April)
You make sure that thing we talked about
is happening?

APRIL OFRAH

It's arranged. They've agreed to blur
Starr's face.

Overhearing, John jumps in.

JOHN

Mrs. Carter, we'll give Starr the full
witness protection treatment. No one
watching will ever know it's her. I
promise.

Lisa looks doubtful.

58 INT. HOTEL - PENTHOUSE SUITE - LATER

58

The set for the taping is lit. Starr sits under the lights in the chair across from DIANE CAREY. The CAMERAS are recording.

(CONTINUED)

Diane Carey leans in, concern on her face.

DIANE CAREY

You're the only witness to the shooting death of a young, unarmed black man by a police officer. Millions of people around the country have now heard the name Khalil Harris. Who was he to you?

STARR

We knew each other since we were babies. If he was here, he'd point out that he was five months, two weeks, and one day older than me.

DIANE CAREY

He was a kid.

STARR

Yes.

DIANE CAREY

What do you think about people who focus on the not-so-good aspects of Khalil? That he sold drugs.

STARR

If people knew why, they wouldn't talk about him that way.

DIANE CAREY

Why did he sell them?

Starr is ready for this.

STARR

Khalil's mom loved him, but she's an addict. There wasn't anyone to bring in money to help his little brother and his grandma, who has cancer. He took the only available job in the neighborhood that paid enough for him to help them.

DIANE CAREY

Available job?

Mav and Lisa shake their heads 'NO.' Starr ignores them.

STARR

Dealing for the biggest drug dealer in Garden Heights.

CUT TO:

59 INT. MR. LEWIS' BARBERSHOP - SAME 59

Mr. Lewis watches Starr's blurred face on TV in his barbershop. His jaw drops.

60 INT. REUBEN'S BBQ - SAME 60

Mr. Reuben and his Customers watch the TV in his restaurant.

INSERT TV: They watch the girl with the blurred out face. Something about her feels familiar to Mr. Reuben.

DIANE CAREY

(on TV)

One dealer controls your neighborhood?
Tell me about that.

MR. REUBEN

(sotto)

Don't.

STARR

(on TV)

Why are you only asking me about that?
Next week I'll be called to testify in a Grand Jury Investigation. But no one wants to hear that. Everyone wants to know what he did, what he said, what he didn't do, like it's his fault.

61 OMITTED 61

62 INT. IESHA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME 62

Lounging on Iesha's couch, King can't believe what he's hearing. Kenya splits her attention between the TV and King. Nothing but anger comes from him.

STARR

(on TV)

I didn't know a dead person could be charged with his own murder.

63 INT. HOTEL - PENTHOUSE SUITE - SAME 63

Diane Carey leans back, glances at her notes.

DIANE CAREY

If Officer Macintosh were sitting here,
what would you say to him?

Starr's leg starts bouncing with trepidation. She takes in a deep breath and lets out her truth.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

STARR

I'd ask him if he wished he'd shot me
too.

64 INT. GARDEN HEIGHTS' DINER - NIGHT

64

The Carters sit in a booth, eating burgers and fries. The
WAITRESS puts down their drinks.

WAITRESS

Y'all need anything else?

MAV

(smiling at the family)
We got everything we need right here.

Mav leans over and kisses Lisa. The kids groan, embarrassed.

SEVEN

Y'all really gotta be bood up like that?

MAV

How else you think I pulled her?

Lisa pushes him as they chuckle. Mav takes Lisa and Sekani's
hands, Seven and Starr join in. They close their eyes.

MAV (CONT'D)

Lord, thank you for the blessing of this
food. And thank you for helping Starr
shine today.

LISA

And please, Lord, help her stay focused
on her studies.

STARR

Thank you for my family.

Mav and Lisa open their eyes. Proud.

SEKANI

That's what I was gonna say!

SEVEN

(earnest)
Me, too.

MAV

Amen.

LISA

Amen.

They pass plates of food to one another and dig in. Suddenly,
music comes from the parking lot. Mav looks out the window.

(CONTINUED)

-- MAV'S POV: KING and two KING LORDS lean against Mav's car. They're watching the family.

Mav gets up from the table.

MAV

Stay here.

Lisa follows his gaze, anguished. Starr stops eating.

65 INT/EXT. DINER - SAME

65

Mav walks out of the diner, with purpose, toward King.

KING

Thought y'all had some smart youngins.
But your Starr did some stupid shit
today.

Mav's face transforms. He gets harder, more threatening.

MAV

Keep my kids out your mouth, King.

KING

Starr hardheaded. Hard head means a soft
ass for whoopin'.

MAV

(snarls)
You comin' damn close to gettin' your
own.

KING

(laughs)
You gon' try it?

King pushes Mav in the chest. Mav's anger and strength rise. Mav pushes back.

-- INSIDE THE DINER: Lisa, Seven, Starr and Sekani are horrified watching Mav and King, SHOUTING, about to go to blows until --

-- ON THE STREET: WHOOP! WHOOP! A PATROL CAR pulls over screeching to a halt next to Mav and King.

-- ON KING: His boys already have their car running. KING JUMPS IN AND THEY ESCAPE.

-- ON THE COPS: One WHITE, one BLACK. They're out of the car in seconds, batons drawn. Mav puts his hands up immediately.

(CONTINUED)

BLACK OFFICER

We got a problem here?

MAV

No, sir, Officer.

WHITE COP

What was that?

MAV

I'm having dinner with my family.

BLACK OFFICER

Until you came out to score?

Mav literally bites his tongue about this unfounded allegation.

WHITE OFFICER

Up against the wall.

Mav obediently puts his hands up against the window. His face is right next to the glass that separates him from his family. The White Cop frisks him.

-- IN THE DINER: Lisa, Starr, Seven, and Sekani stand stunned and horrified. Through the window, Mav makes eye-contact with Starr. His eyes try to communicate - *stay calm*. This NOT how he wants his family to see him.

-- WITH MAV: The White Officer turns him around to face them.

WHITE OFFICER (CONT'D)

He's clean.

BLACK OFFICER

Take out your ID.

MAV

My wife's got my wallet.

BLACK OFFICER

Where is she?

LISA (O.S.)

Right here.

-- ANGLE ON: Lisa, Starr, and the Boys. They've come out onto the sidewalk behind the Cops.

Lisa shields Sekani behind her and hands Mav's ID to the White Officer. Watching the Black Officer resting his hand on his holster, Starr starts shaking.

(CONTINUED)

STARR

Daddy --

MAV

-- It's okay.

The White Cop checks Mav's ID. Recognizes him.

WHITE COP

(to the Black Officer)

Maverick Carter. Sound familiar?

(to the family)

Go back inside. Now.

LISA

No thank you, Officer. I'm staying right here until you release my husband.

WHITE OFFICER

I said to go back inside.

SEVEN

No, sir. My father didn't do anything wrong.

WHITE OFFICER

(to Seven)

Show me your ID.

LISA

He's a child. You want his school ID or his Learner's Permit?

WHITE OFFICER

Ma'am, get back inside. Now.

Lisa and the Kids don't move.

(CONTINUED)

SEVEN

He didn't do anything! I know you saw
that other car drive off! Go after them!

Seven steps forward in defiance. The White Officer reaches
for his handcuffs when...

... Mav instinctively pulls away from the Black Officer's
hold, trying TO GET BETWEEN THE WHITE OFFICER AND SEVEN.

The Black Officer TWISTS MAV'S ARM and drops him on the
ground.

BLACK OFFICER

Face down, hands behind your back!

Mav puts his hands behind his back, his fingers interlocked.
The Black Officer puts his knee in the middle of Mav's back,
starting to cuff him.

-- ON STARR: hands shaking, she pulls her PHONE out of her
back pocket. She starts to record. The Black Cop orders
gruffly --

BLACK OFFICER (CONT'D)

Put that down! Now!

STARR

(defiant, yet scared)

I have a right to record this.

The Black Officer stares hard at Starr... he recognizes her.

BLACK OFFICER

(to the White Officer)

She's the witness. She's the one who got
Mac put on leave.

-- ANGLE ON: Starr RECORDS THE SCENE with TWENTY PEOPLE FROM
THE RESTAURANT, gathering behind her. They take out their
phones as well. They are ALL ON THE STREET, bearing witness.

The White Officer notices the CROWD of CELL PHONES.

WAITRESS

We see y'all and these cameras do too. Go
on and show everybody how you really
treat us.

It's time to de-escalate the situation.

(CONTINUED)

WHITE OFFICER
(to the Black Officer)
Let him go.

The Black Officer looks up at the Crowd. He takes his knee off Mav's back. Mav finally can breathe. The White Officer yanks Mav to his feet.

WHITE OFFICER (CONT'D)
Consider this a warning.

The Officers get into their car and drive away.

Starr, Sekani, Lisa, and Seven rush to Mav. He clenches and unclenches his hands as he looks at his family, their scared faces. Powerless to protect them or himself, Mav struggles to keep his emerging tears away.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (5)

65

SEKANI

Why they do that to Daddy?

66 INT./EXT. MAV'S CAR / EXT. MAV AND LISA'S HOME - LATER

66

The family car parks in the driveway. Everyone inside is traumatized. Silent. Mav keeps checking the rearview, looking at Starr. Finally, Starr whispers...

STARR

I'm sorry, Daddy.

(cries)

This is my fault. I never shoulda gone on TV. I shoulda stayed quiet. All these cops know I was the one who saw Khalil get killed.

MAV

Everybody out. Now.

Lisa looks at him, but they all do as he says. Seven, Sekani, Starr, Lisa -- all out of the car, line up for Mav.

Mav stands before his family. The leader, the father, the man that he is.

MAV (CONT'D)

Starr... Point seven of the Ten Point Program. Say it.

Starr's still crying.

MAV (CONT'D)

(commanding)

Stop cryin' and say it.

STARR

(sniffles)

'We want an immediate end to police brutality'...

MAV

Finish it.

STARR

... 'and the murder of Black people and other people of color and oppressed people.'

MAV

By what means?

(CONTINUED)

STARR
By any means necessary.

(CONTINUED)

MAV

So why you ever gon' be quiet?

Mav rolls up his shirt sleeve, revealing something tattooed in script on his bicep.

MAV (CONT'D)

What it say?

Starr doesn't need to look. She's seen it her whole life.

STARR

'Something to live for, something to die for.'

MAV

You, your brothers, your mama are my somethin' to live and die for.

Mav fights to hold in his tears of anger, hurt, fear for his family, unnecessary shame...

MAV (CONT'D)

I gave each of you power in your names. Seven: perfection. Starr: light. Sekani: joy. Use it.

One tear streams down Mav's face... he can't hold it in. He doesn't wipe it away. Lisa takes in his pain and conviction.

MAV (CONT'D)

If you ready to talk, you talk. And don't you ever let nobody make you be quiet.

Starr looks into her father's impassioned face.

Starr, Hailey, and Maya play a BASKETBALL VIDEO GAME on Maya's flat screen. Starr stares at Hailey... something's bothering her and her face can't hide it. Hailey and Maya talk back and forth as they play.

INSERT GAME: Hailey's player makes a three pointer.

Hailey celebrates as she throws Starr a look for her to join in. But Starr's lost in thought. Hailey rolls her eyes.

Hailey turns the TV off. Looks at Starr, hands on her hips.

HAILEY

What's up with you?

STARR

Nothing.

HAILEY

Oh, so I'm tripping? You haven't said more than five words since we've been here.

STARR

I'm talking right now. What more do you want me to say?

Hailey stares at Starr, taken aback and confused.

(CONTINUED)

Maya turns the TV back on and flips through the channels.

INSERT TV: A singing competition, reality show, One-Fifteen --

STARR (CONT'D)

-- Wait! Go back!

Maya goes back to One-Fifteen.

INSERT TV: Pictures flash on screen. One-Fifteen smiles with his arms draped around a blurred-out woman.

Starr's stomach churns as she stares at it.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

Officer Brian Macintosh, Jr. has been on the force for five years, a majority of those years serving in Garden Heights: a neighborhood notorious for gangs and drug dealers.

Starr tenses as footage of her neighborhood is shown. The worst parts. She feels Hailey's and Maya's eyes on her. She can't look at them.

INSERT TV: Brian Macintosh's FATHER comes on screen.

BRIAN MACINTOSH'S FATHER

Brian's a good boy. People are making him out to be a monster. He's afraid to go out in public, even for a gallon of milk. There have been threats on his life, our family's lives.

Starr's breath catches. She can't let out the anger and hurt inside; she can't breakdown in front of them.

HAILEY

That's awful. That poor family.

Starr blinks several times.

STARR

What?

HAILEY

His son was only trying to do his job and protect himself. His life matters too, you know?

Starr stands up, her fist clenched.

STARR

What the --
(calming herself)
-- I need to... yeah.

Starr heads for the door, but Maya grabs her arm.

MAYA

Whoa. You guys haven't worked this out yet.

HAILEY

That cop's life matters also, you know? You going to be mad cause I said that too?

STARR

Yeah. Cause you think his life matters more than the person you said you were protesting for. That's a problem!

HAILEY

A *problem*?

MAYA

Please, you guys. C'mon.

Starr turns to face Hailey.

STARR

You unfollowed my Tumblr after the protest. Why?

HAILEY

I didn't stop following you.

STARR

You did. Was it Emmett Till's picture that did it?

Hailey stands up. Looks to Maya for help. She gets none.

(CONTINUED)

STARR (CONT'D)

Did you sympathize with his 'poor family'
before you looked away?

Hailey continues looking at Maya, wanting backup.

HAILEY

Do you hear her? Now she's calling me a
racist.

STARR

No, I just asked you a question.

Silence comes between them.

HAILEY

Unbelievable.

Hailey grabs her jacket and starts for the door.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

I don't know who the hell you are
anymore, Starr. That's the real reason I
unfollowed you.

Hailey SLAMS the door on her way out leaving Maya and Starr
standing together. Maya glances over to Starr.

STARR

Hailey only cares about Hailey. She
always wants to make it about her. We
can't let her get away with that anymore.

Maya nods in agreement.

MAYA

Remember when she asked if my family ate
a cat for Thanksgiving?

Starr looks at Maya and shakes her head in disgust; both of
them silenced and melancholy. It's taken them too long to
accept the reality about their 'friend.'

Suddenly, Starr's cell BUZZES. It's a TEXT from Chris.

INSERT TEXT: WHAT COLOR IS YOUR PROM DRESS?

Starr looks at Maya - she'd forgotten all about it.

STARR

Damn!

68 INT. IHOP - DAY

68

CLOSE ON: A BLACK DRESS being straightened on a hanger. Brand new. Lisa and Starr have been shopping.

LISA

You can never go wrong with black. It's always elegant.

A Waitress sets down a stack of PANCAKES in front of Starr. Starr smiles weakly and starts poking at the pancakes. With a single look, Lisa sees there's something else.

LISA (CONT'D)

What's bothering you?

Starr looks up at Lisa. A mother knows their child.

STARR

Me and Hailey got into it.

Lisa cuts her eyes.

STARR (CONT'D)

Mama, you've never liked her.

LISA

No, I never liked how you follow her around like you can't think for yourself. There's a difference.

(taking a bite)

Like last year when you begged me to let you dye your hair purple.

STARR

I wanted --

LISA

-- No. Why? The real why, Starr.

STARR

Because Hailey wanted me, her and Maya to have matching hair.

LISA

That's what I'm talking about.

(beat)

So what happened between y'all now?

STARR

Some of the stuff she says makes me wonder why we're friends in the first place.

(CONTINUED)

LISA

You gotta get real with yourself and ask if this friendship is even worth it.

STARR

I'm so mad I don't know.

LISA

You can't be worried about all that. You're behind in school and you ain't studying for your SATs. You need to just forgive and move on.

STARR

Is that what you did with Daddy? After Iesha got pregnant with Seven? Forgive and move on?

LISA

Yeah, I'm not gonna lie and say it was easy. Even though your daddy and I had broken up when he got tangled up with Iesha, it still hurt.

STARR

I love Daddy, but I woulda put him out on the curb.

(retreating)

Sorry.

LISA

No need. This ain't the first time I've heard those words. People said I 'didn't have the sense the good Lord gave me' because I went back to your daddy.

(remembering)

Your Nana was always on me. Saying no way 'wild Lisa' is gonna be a good mama, let alone mess with Mav and raise some other woman's child.

Starr sits up. Lisa... wild? Starr didn't see this coming.

LISA (CONT'D)

When your Daddy got locked up, I knew I had to decide if his mistakes were bigger than the love I had for him.

Starr parts her mouth to speak, but Lisa cuts her off --

(CONTINUED)

LISA (CONT'D)

(already knowing)

And no, Seven's not a mistake. I love him
just like he was mine.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (3)

68

LISA (CONT'D)
(back to the point)
But the love your daddy and I share
outweighs all of his past mistakes.

STARR
Even with crazy Iesha in our lives?

LISA
(chuckles)
Even with crazy Iesha.
(beat)
If the good outweighs the bad, keep
Hailey in your life. If it doesn't, let
her go, baby.

Starr's mind is heavy as she processes this.

69 EXT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - NIGHT

69

HIP HOP MUSIC BLARES and a swirl of disco lights come through
the windows of the school. It's PROM. KIDS and their dates,
dressed to the nines, come in and out.

Starr, prom dress and coordinating Jordans, steps out of her
Lyft ride. She walks upstairs... clocks everyone looking at
her.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

69

Just as Starr's about to go inside, Chris walks out. He's not sporting his usual smile; there's pain. She stops him.

STARR
Can we go talk?

70-71 OMITTED

70-71

72 INT. LIMO - LATER (PARKED)

72

-- CLOSE ON A PHONE: A CLIP of STARR IN HER TV INTERVIEW, her face blurred.

-- PULL BACK: to find Chris holding up the phone. A disappointed and hurt look across his face. Starr sits next to him, tightening.

CHRIS
It's you, right?

There's no sense in denying it. Chris looks straight into Starr's eyes knowing he's right; sincerity on his face.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You told me you didn't know Khalil.

STARR
Yeah, I knew him. I was there.

CHRIS
Did you not think I'd find out. Were you just going to hide everything from me?

STARR
It's not like that.

CHRIS
(hurt)
Then what's it like? I'm your boyfriend, Starr. That's what I'm here for.

Starr's lips tremble, her voice is small.

STARR
It's not like I don't trust you.

CHRIS
Then what's it like? Tell me.

(CONTINUED)

STARR

Chris, I don't live at Williamson. If I had told everybody, I would've been 'poor Starr' who saw her friend get killed, or 'Starr the charity case' who lives in the ghetto.

CHRIS

Do you think people really care about where you live?

STARR

Yes, I do.

(CONTINUED)

He doesn't get it.

STARR (CONT'D)

Chris. Have you ever seen somebody die?

CHRIS

No.

STARR

Well, I have... twice. It's why my parents put me and my brothers in Williamson. To protect us. And now it's like I have to hide who I am everyday.

(hard to finally say it)

In Garden Heights, I can't be too Williamson. When I'm here, I can't be too Garden Heights...

Chris absorbs this, taken aback by everything he's hearing.

Starr releases a deep, painful exhale.

STARR (CONT'D)

... Khalil was my first crush. My first kiss. He was going through so much shit and I didn't even know cause I wasn't there for him anymore.

Chris puts his hand on top of hers. Not knowing what to say.

STARR (CONT'D)

I turned my back on him. I turned my back on all my people... do you even know what that's like?

CHRIS

No.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Starr. I really am. But, white, black, orange, purple... doesn't matter no one gives a shit. We're all the same.

STARR

But we're not. Y'all wanna 'act black,' but you get to keep your white privilege.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STARR (CONT'D)

You think playing ball and jumping in some lame ass Williamson cypher makes you black? Well, it doesn't.

CHRIS

(trying to understand her)

I told you Starr, I don't see color. I see people for who they are like I see you.

STARR

If you don't see my blackness, you don't see me.

Chris gently grabs her face, looks dead into her...

CHRIS

I see you. I'm here, okay?

Starr looks uncertain. She's hesitant to believe him.

He senses this and kisses her. She remains still and reluctantly kisses him back. When...

TWO LOUD KNOCKS against the glass interrupt this moment. Seven's face appears.

SEVEN

Y'all bet' not be doin' nothing! I ain't playin'.

Not anymore. Starr lets out a subtle grin as she and Chris sit in silence for a moment.

Starr looks around the limo. She notices the champagne and the flowers for the first time.

STARR

(to Chris)

Aw baby. I'm sorry prom got ruined.

CHRIS

I don't give a shit about prom.

(delicate smile)

What I do give a shit about are the burgers we're gonna eat after prom.

STARR

And the milkshake.

CHRIS

And the milkshake. And the next part.

(CONTINUED)

STARR

What next part?

Chris chuckles and grabs her hand.

CHRIS

I take you home and I'm going to meet
your father.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: (5)

72

Starr closes her eyes and shakes her head. Oh, fuck!

CUT TO:

73 OMITTED

73

74 EXT. MAV AND LISA'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - LATER

74

Chris escorts Starr to the door, taking in her neighborhood for the first time. Chris and Starr turn to one another, uneasy about what's about to follow. Seven follows behind.

SEVEN

(to Chris)

I suggest you get some color real quick.

CHRIS

I've got color. On the inside, where it counts.

Starr laughs - nervous. Seven stops Chris.

SEVEN

Alright, man. Well, I think it's time to test your 'black card.' Which one for Thanksgiving? Pumpkin or Sweet potato pie?

CHRIS

Sweet potato pie all day.

STARR

(he's correct)

Ding! Ding!

Chris goes to take a step toward the house.

SEVEN

Hold up, we're not done. Mac and cheese. Full meal or side dish?

CHRIS

Full meal.

Starr tries to hold in her laughter.

STARR

Whomp, whomp, whomp.

SEVEN

That ain't no full meal.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

C'mon now. It's a meal! In a box.

Seven and Starr protest with 'Hell, naw.'

STARR

Oh no baby, it comes out of the oven, all bubbly and cheesy and crispy on top.

They get to the front door.

CHRIS

No, macaroni and cheese is a protein. You put breadcrumbs on top...

SEVEN

Breadcrumbs?

STARR

With what?!

SEVEN

(looks at them both)

Nah! That ain't gon' cut it. Y'all both dead.

The front door opens before they even reach it. Mav and Lisa stand there; Seven sneaks by them and lurks in the background.

MAV

Thanks for bringin' her home.
(tipping Chris)
Here you go.

STARR

Uh, Daddy -- he doesn't need a tip.

MAV

You gotta tip the chauffeur.
(to Chris)
You better get outta here before someone steals your ride.

Starr and Lisa trade looks.

LISA

(hugs Chris)

So nice to finally meet you, Chris. How was prom?

MAV

Who this?

STARR

Daddy, this is Chris.

(CONTINUED)

MAV

Who's Chris?

STARR

Chris is my boyfriend.

MAV

You got a boyfriend?

LISA

Well, who did you think she went to prom with?

CHRIS

Nice to meet you, Mr. Carter.

(CONTINUED)

Mav's still trying to comprehend this.

MAV
You got a white boyfriend?

LISA
Maverick!

STARR
Daddy, he's not my white boyfriend. He's just my boyfriend.

MAV
That boy is white.

LISA
Okay! Well I'm sure everyone is tired. Chris, thank you so much for bringing Starr home safely. I look forward to seeing more of you soon.

CHRIS
No problem, Mrs. Carter. Good night, Mr. Carter. Good night, Starr.

MAV
Yeah. Good night.

Chris tries to give Starr a peck, but Mav stands in the way. Chris looks back to Starr who mouths 'I'm sorry' to Chris. Another obstacle between these two. Chris walks back to the limo. The Carters go inside.

INT. MAV AND LISA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

As the family sit in the living room, Mav leans in his recliner, stoic. He remains befuddled.

MAV
(to Lisa)
You knew 'bout this boy?
(to Seven)
You knew 'bout this?

They nod.

MAV (CONT'D)
Who the hell else know 'bout this?
(a moment of realization)
Hol' up. Does Sekani know?

Starr bites her lip.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

MAV (CONT'D)

What the hell, Starr? You got a white
boyfriend and everybody know, but me?

(CONTINUED)

LISA
Wonder why that is.

MAV
What's that boy's name?

STARR
He told you. His name is Chris.

MAV
Chris. What kinda plain-ass name is that?

Mav lets out a heavy sigh. He takes a beat.

MAV (CONT'D)
(to Starr)
Girls usually go with boys who look like
they daddy.

Mav ain't talking about looks, but race. Starr knows this.

MAV (CONT'D)
Guess I ain't set a good example of a
black man for you. I --

STARR
-- No, you didn't.

Mav can't hold his head up.

STARR (CONT'D)
You set a good example of what a man
should be. Duh.

He raises his head, looking at Starr proudly. She comes and
rests her head on his shoulder. He lovingly kisses the top of
Starr's head. His baby girl.

MAV
(teasing)
But if this lil' boy got you saying
'duh', he might have to go, though.

The rest of the family laughs.

Suddenly... POP! POP! POP! The living room window SHATTERS.

MAV (CONT'D)
Get down!

Lisa, Seven, and Starr hit the floor as BULLETS rip through.
POP! POP! POP! LAMPS EXPLODE, PILLOWS BURST, THE WALLS SHRED.
GLASS flies everywhere as BULLETS SPRAY. POP! POP! POP!

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (3)

75

Mav GRABS HIS GLOCK.

LISA
Get down, Maverick!

He doesn't, instead he...

76 EXT. MAV AND LISA'S HOUSE - SAME

76

... runs out the front door. A CAR speeds away, already at a distance, lights off. Impossible to hit. Mav drops his gun to his side, and runs back inside.

MAV
Y'all a'ight?

Lisa looks up at him from the floor, her body covering Starr and Seven, both cowering.

77 EXT. CARLOS' HOUSE - LATER

77

Mav's car pulls up outside Carlos' calm, suburban house.

AT THE FRONT DOOR: Carlos, his face heavy with worry, comes out to help. He lifts Sekani into his arms.

CARLOS
Come on, Starr. Inside.

Envious and a little pissed, Mav watches as Starr follows Carlos. Lisa grabs their bags from the car; holds a sleeping Sekani in his arms. Carlos consoles Starr as they head for the front door. Suddenly, Lisa looks over her shoulder to find Mav heading back to the car.

MAV
I'm goin' back.

LISA
What?

MAV
Don't nobody mess with my family.
'Specially not King's boys.

LISA
Your family's here. And this family's moving, Maverick. I don't wanna hear one word about it. We're moving.

That's final. Mav just gets in the car.

(CONTINUED)

SEVEN

I'm going with Daddy.

Seven hops in the passenger side of the car.

LISA

Seven, get in this house! Maverick, don't go back there. What if King comes back?

Mav shoots Lisa a determined look.

MAV

I hope he do.

LISA

Maverick! You promised me!

Starr breaks away from Carlos just as Mav cranks the car. He quickly pulls off preventing Starr from reaching the car.

STARR

Daddy!

Starr stares at the car disappearing around a corner.

EXT. MAV'S AND LISA'S HOUSE - LATER

Mav stands guard in front of his house, ready for action. Seven comes outside and stands beside him.

Mav looks at Seven, his arms across his chest... he's a part of this.

A CAR appears at the top of the street, BLARING MUSIC into the night.

Mav and Seven tense as the car approaches. Mav's hand goes behind his back as he walks to the street, ready to draw. No fear. Seven tries to match Mav's fearlessness, but the cracks in his armor are apparent.

The TWO KING LORDS inside the car stare at Mav. This isn't the gentle man we've come to know. He's back to being crazy Big Mav, intimidating as fuck. The Lords accelerate away.

INT. CARLOS' HOUSE - DEN - MORNING

PAM, Carlos's wife, and Lisa sit on the couch with their children, watching morning cartoons. Sekani is restless. Lisa rubs Sekani's back.

80

INT. CARLOS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

80

Carlos cooks Starr pancakes; she nervously bites her nails.

CARLOS

Someone's trying to scare you about the Grand Jury tomorrow. Did it work?

Starr's anxious face shows the answer.

STARR

What do I do tomorrow?

CARLOS

You tell the truth.

STARR

Why do we even need a Grand Jury to decide if this should go to trial?

CARLOS

Some people don't see it as a crime. They see it as 'a traffic stop gone wrong.'

STARR

(taken aback)
How?!

CARLOS

A lot goes through a cop's mind when they pull someone over. Especially if they have to get into a pissing contest with the driver about why they stopped them.

Carlos keeps making the pancakes for Starr.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

It sets off an alarm. The officer thinks: are they hiding something? Is the car stolen?

(flipping a pancake)

Now if there's a girl in the passenger seat, like you. Does she look alright, has she been beaten? Or raped?

Carlos plates the pancakes.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

If they start talking to each other and not the officer, we figure they might be trying to distract. What are they hiding in the car? Drugs? A weapon?

(CONTINUED)

Carlos slides a plate over to Starr. He sits down.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Now if the driver starts to insult the officer, we try to verbally get control of the situation. But if they still won't comply, we use force.

STARR

But you still don't know if they did anything wrong.

CARLOS

That's why we search them to make sure they don't have a weapon. We run their license and instruct them not to move. But if they open the door or reach through an open window, they're probably going for a weapon. So if I think I see a gun... I don't hesitate. I shoot.

STARR

You shoot? Because you think you see a gun? You don't say something first? Like, 'Put your hands up?'

CARLOS

Depends. Is it night? Can I see? Am I on duty alone?

STARR

What if you weren't in Garden Heights, but out here? Near a white neighborhood and you stop a white man in a suit driving a Mercedes. He could be a drug dealer.

CARLOS

He could.

Carlos nods in agreement.

STARR

But if he reaches through the window and you 'think' you see a gun, do you shoot? Or do you say 'Put your hands up?'

Carlos looks at Starr with anguish. Her eyes demand the truth. A long moment passes as Carlos has to be truthful.

CARLOS

I say, 'Put your hands up.'

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED: (2)

80

STARR
(recoils, shocked)
What? Do you hear what you just said to
me?

Every word. Pained, Carlos hangs his head low.

CARLOS
We live in a complicated world.

STARR
Doesn't seem too complicated for me.

Disappointed in Carlos, Starr pushes the plate away and
leaves the table.

81 EXT. CARLOS' NEIGHBORHOOD / EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - SAME 81

Starr quickly walks out of the house and grabs a bicycle from
the garage. She pedals away, full of exploding emotions.

82 OMITTED 82

83 OMITTED 83

84 EXT. COURTHOUSE - MORNING 84

Outside the COURTHOUSE, there's a FRENZY of REPORTERS, 'JUST US' ACTIVISTS and POLICE SUPPORTERS. VARIOUS CHANTS GO ON:
'NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE, NO RACIST POLICE!' 'LOCK HIM UP!'
'BLACKNESS IS NOT A CRIME!'

85 INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER 85

A door with a brass plate reads: GRAND JURY ROOM. April Ofrah walks with Starr as everyone else ENTERS through the side door just down the hallway.

APRIL OFRAH

I'll be out here the whole time. If you need to ask me something, you have that right. Your parents will be waiting for you.

85 CONTINUED:

85

Lisa looks into Starr's frightened eyes. She has to arm her with something... something to empower Starr... something to empower herself.

LISA

Brave doesn't mean you're not scared. It means you go on even though you're afraid. And you're doing that.

Mav wraps his arms around Starr before she walks in. Starr takes in their faces... her parents and April. She knows she's about to cross a harrowing bridge... without them.

86 INT. GRAND JURY COURTROOM - SAME

86

Starr walks into the Grand Jury room. The CLICKING of her heels on the tile floor makes the only sound. Facing Starr are 15 JURORS occupying a u-shaped table. Male and female. Some are black, but most aren't. Starr takes her seat at a table facing them.

MR. MONROE, the DA, approaches Starr and starts talking. In SLOW MOTION, we don't HEAR what he says; although we SEE his lips moving. The whole scene has a dream quality and plays in VOICE OVER.

STARR (V.O.)

'State your name.' My name is Starr Amara Carter and I am 16 years old.

PANNING: STARR AND THE DA, as he paces and asks questions.

STARR (V.O.)

'I will be asking you for a factual account of what you saw the night that Khalil Harris was killed.' Ask me. I will tell you anything I can.

PANNING: OVER THE JURORS, ONE BY ONE.

STARR (V.O.)

'I would like you first to tell us about Khalil.' I will tell you everything. I will tell you everything and more.

PANNING: THROUGH THE JURY until the CAMERA settles on a young man at the end of the row -- KHALIL.

Khalil sits, watching Starr as if he were participating. Like he was alive. He looks straight at Starr and smiles, as sexy and charismatic as he ever was. She looks back at him.

PUSHING IN: ON KHALIL AND STARR

(CONTINUED)

STARR (V.O.)

Khalil wanted to be Harry Potter, but I only let him be Ron. Khalil loved to sing even though he couldn't. Khalil lost his mother to crack. Khalil ate at our house for five years. Khalil never cried. Khalil wanted to go to Egypt. Khalil kissed me twice; once on that night. Khalil didn't own a gun. Khalil owned a hairbrush. Khalil died holding his black hairbrush.

87

INT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

87

STARR (V.O.)

And if Khalil were still alive, he would be graduating high school.

"Pomp and Circumstance" plays. SENIORS, nearly a sea of white Kids wear their cap and gowns, parading across the stage. One of the few black faces, Seven, beams in his graduation regalia.

-- ON THE CARTER FAMILY: They sit together on the other side of the amphitheater.

Lisa starts recording Seven with her phone.

LISA

He's almost up!
(glances at Mav)
You're not crying already are you, Big Mav?

MAV

(wiping his eyes)
Naw. Think I got a cold comin'.

Suddenly, a commotion is HEARD at the end of their row. It's Iesha, in her tight and short dress, sidling down the row.

IESHA

'Cuse me! I'm comin' through!

Surprised but welcoming, The Carters make room for her.

MAV

I ain't know you was comin'.

IESHA

And miss our baby's big day? Nuh-uh.

(CONTINUED)

LISA

(proud)

Congratulations, Iesha, on your son's graduation.

Iesha gives Lisa a look, surprised at the acknowledgement. She finds only respect in Lisa's eyes. Two mothers, who despite their uncomfortable connection, got the job done. They know what it takes. Iesha gives Lisa a gracious nod.

-- ON STAGE: The HEADMASTER announces Seven's name and he walks across the stage to receive his diploma. The Carter family HOOTS and CLAPS. Iesha stands up, SHOUTING the loudest.

IESHA

Go on, baby! That's right!

Iesha's big behavior draws amused attention from the WHITE AUDIENCE. Starr STANDS UP NEXT TO IESHA, clapping. Her eyes fixed on the Audience... bring it on. There's something new and hard in Starr's eyes. She's had enough of this shit.

ON THE STAGE: Seven isn't embarrassed. He actually smiles at Iesha cheering him on. Tears stream down Iesha's face as Seven beams at her. Mav is proud. Lisa's proud. The family finally gets a win with Seven walking toward his bright future. A success. Proof this family is finally doing it right.

88 OMITTED

88

89 EXT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - QUAD - DAY

89

Happy STUDENTS give each other yearbooks to sign, high-fiving: school's out tomorrow!

Starr walks out into the quad, her posture is tall. She throws her hoodie over her head without hesitation... 'code-switching' in reverse. Starr sits outside, alone. Remote. A SHADOW falls over her.

Starr looks up to find Hailey standing in front of her. She casually puts her overstuffed purse over her shoulder. Hailey comes hat in hand, genuine.

HAILEY

So, I guess you're not going to get over it any time soon.

Starr stands. STUDENTS are gathering now, sensing a confrontation. Maya nervously watches Starr and Hailey.

(CONTINUED)

STARR

Get over... 'it?'

HAILEY

Yes, get over it!

STARR

You can't even see you're acting racist.

HAILEY

Cause I'm not.

STARR

It's all 'our,' 'us,' and 'black lives matter' until you clutch your purse when you're in the elevator with a black person. You don't have to say the 'N-word' or use a fire hose on black people to be a racist.

HAILEY

You're different, Starr.

STARR

Different? Oh, so I'm the non-threatening black girl?

HAILEY

Yeah, you are. Your friend wasn't. He was a drug dealer. Somebody was probably gonna kill him eventually.

Maya moves closer to Starr.

MAYA

Are you serious, Hailey?

HAILEY

Yes. The officer did see a weapon.

STARR

He saw a hairbrush.

HAILEY

That looked like a weapon.

Starr looks at Hailey's opened purse. She SNATCHES THE HAIRBRUSH sticking out and holds it up --

STARR

What's in my hand right now? You gonna tell me this looks like a weapon?

(CONTINUED)

HAILEY

In his hand, yes.

STARR

And how does it look in my hand?

ENRAGED, Starr BRANDISHES THE HAIRBRUSH. She whips it through the air, intentionally missing Hailey's face by a fraction of an inch. Then again. And again.

Hailey cowers. Starr screams at her, a tower of rage.

STARR (CONT'D)

(violent rage)

Get on the ground! Now! Down on the ground! Before I shoot you with it!

Hailey drops to her knees and cowers.

HAILEY

Don't hurt me!

Hailey covers her face with her hands and bursts into tears.

Starr stands over the sobbing girl. She lowers the hairbrush, the rage draining out of her. Chris cuts through the crowd and sees the commotion.

STARR

Hailey.

Hailey looks up at Starr through her tears.

STARR (CONT'D)

That's what it's like.

Starr drops the hairbrush on the ground and strides away.

Starr runs away from campus.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Starr! Stop!

She whips around, still full of adrenaline.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Wait!

She finally turns around --

STARR

What do you want?

He takes in her hard face, her anger.

CHRIS

I'm here for you. I'm not going anywhere.

She softens as she feels his empathy, his unconditional love. This guy isn't going anywhere.

INT. CHRIS' CAR - SAME (PARKED)

Chris and Starr sit in silence. Suddenly, Starr beats his dashboard. PUNCHING IT over and over! Chris tries to catch her hand --

CHRIS

You're gonna hurt yourself.

Starr pulls her hoodie over her mouth and SCREAMS... the pain of her world coming out.

She allows Chris to gently put his hand on her back. He sees her pain. Starr eventually lets Chris hold her. Chris' eyes are glossy; he's never seen her this hurt.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I got you.

And he does... ride or die. Starr's cell phone CHIMES. Starr stops crying and comes back out of her sweatshirt. Snot-nosed. Cheeks covered in tears. She looks at her phone to see a TEXT, surprisingly from Kenya.

INSERT TEXT: COME GET SEVEN. NOW! HE GOT JUMPED!

INT. IESHA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Starr and Chris swiftly ENTER the front door with urgency. Chris takes in Iesha's place: somebody's watched too much "Superfly" and "Pimps Up, Hoes Down." Gaudy black leather seating coupled with white wall-to-wall carpeting and a big tropical fish tank fill the room.

They continue stealthily into the house. FOOTSTEPS approach them... in the hallway is Lyric, Seven's half-sister.

STARR

(whispers)

Where's Seven, Lyric?

Lyric points to the closed door behind Starr with frightened eyes. Starr pushes through the door and finds...

-- KENYA AND LYRIC'S BEDROOM: A badly beaten Seven groans on the floor. Kenya's beside him, clueless on how to help. Starr kneels by Seven checking his injuries. Chris bends down and takes everything in. This entire new world.

SEVEN

Y'all leave before King comes back from
the sto'.

STARR

We're all leaving.

Starr looks up and sees... IESHA IN THE DOORWAY, sipping from
a red plastic cup.

STARR (CONT'D)

Iesha, what happened?

IESHA

What happened? You snitched and earned an
ass whooping. My boy took it for you.

(takes a sip)

Boy bleeding on my carpet and shit. Get
him outta here. Take Kenya and Lyric too.

KENYA

Take Lyric? What --

It hits all of them... Iesha's trying to save them.

IESHA

G'on! Y'all bothering me. I'm tryin' to
get my drunk on, shit.

Chris and Starr leap into action, lifting Seven off the floor
when... the sound of a CAR PULLING UP is heard. Panic washes
over Iesha's face.

IESHA (CONT'D)

Shit, King back.

Once Seven's arms are draped over Starr and Chris... the
SOUND of King closing his car door creeps through Iesha's
open screen door.

IESHA (CONT'D)

Y'all go out the back.

Chris and Starr lead Seven to the back door as he winces and
cusses under his breath. Kenya puts Lyric on her hip.

-- AT THE BACK DOOR: Starr looks into Iesha's eyes.
Connecting.

STARR

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: (3)

92

IESHA

This ain't for you. This for your Mama.
She the only real woman 'round here. Tell
her I said so.

STARR

I will.

They RUN OUT. Iesha, sighs relief, as she shuts the door
behind them.

93 INT/EXT. CHRIS' CAR/GARDEN HEIGHTS' STREETS - LATE AFTERNOON 93

They drive down the street from Iesha's house. Starr rides
shotgun, Kenya, Lyric and Seven are in the back.

SEVEN

Think he broke my rib.

CHRIS

We need a hospital.

STARR

Make a left up here.

Before Chris can make the turn, he stops at the STOP SIGN.
They take in the sight before them: NEIGHBORS, some clutching
protest signs, crossing the street... upset.

CHRIS

What is going on?

Cars pass by HONKING, Drivers YELLING out in support.

PROTESTORS

Justice for Khalil!

With the Neighborhood's fists in the air and rushing down the
street, they chant along with the Drivers.

STARR

(yelling out of her window)

Excuse me! What's going on!?

MARCHING NEIGHBOR

Protest at City Hall!

Starr and Chris trade looks. They grab their phones and check
Twitter.

-- CLOSE ON STARR: as her face registers shock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chris looks in shock. He sees the hurt all over Starr, Seven and Kenya's faces.

CHRIS
I'm so sorry, Starr.

This is the moment he finally sees her.

STARR
Let's go. I wanna go. Now.

-- CLOSE ON STARR: Hurt mounting, anger swelling... searching for some kind of power in this tragedy.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Chris pulls around a corner and SLAMS on the brake. They see a ton of PROTESTORS blocking their path on the street. Starr BURSTS out of the car.

CHRIS
Starr!

She marches up the street and comes alongside some PROTESTORS.

STARR
Is it true?

WOMAN PROTESTOR
Cop goes free! No trial. Nothing.

WOMAN PROTESTOR 2
The Grand Jury didn't indict!

Starr's stricken, disappointed, no breath left in her. Hell, her proverbial balloon might as well have been popped and deflated with a cleaver instead of a needle. Seven, Kenya, Chris, and Lyric approach Starr.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Starr!

Starr turns around. GANG MEMBERS march past the kids.

GANG MEMBER
Man, they kilt Khalil over nothin'!
That's some bullshit!

Kenya notices the growing tension. Lyric clings to Kenya, frightened.

(CONTINUED)

SEVEN

Lyric shouldn't be here.

KENYA

Yeah c'mon Lyric, let's get outta here.

STARR

Seven, you need to go with her.

SEVEN

No, I'm staying right here.

STARR

You sure?

SEVEN

Yeah, I'm sure.

Chris looks around at the people marching forward, taking in all the pain and anger. He wants to do something. *

Starr CAN'T move. Stuck. Replaying that night with Khalil. *

Chris looks to Starr. He sees Starr. A look of determination etched on her purpose-fueled face. Chris sees her exactly as she is. *

Chris puts his hands on her assured shoulders. Their eyes locked on each other.

CHRIS

What do you need me to do, Starr? I want to help.

STARR

Take Kenya and Lyric somewhere safe. *

Chris nods. He grabs Kenya's hand and guides her and Lyric away from the protest leaving Starr and Seven standing in the midst of the crowd.

Starr spots a bus stop bench, she and Seven head towards it.

They climb up to get a better view. The intersection is crowded. They can see the head of the demonstration moving down the street. It's full of Just Us for Justice Organizers... Neighbors follow their lead.

Starr hops off the bench to follow the Protesters.

Suddenly, a POLICE CAR ZOOMS down the street, counter to the Protestors, causing them to quickly splinter.

(CONTINUED)

Combating the COP'S antagonistic attempt, a GANG MEMBER swings a baseball bat into the WINDSHIELD, SHATTERING the glass. The car comes to a HALT. The COP abandons the car.

Another GANG MEMBER KICKS out the front window of another parked police car on the opposite side of the street.

GANG MEMBER
Flip that shit!

They flip the police car upside down.

PROTESTOR
Watch out!

A MOLOTOV COCKTAIL sails towards the flipped car. WHOOMP! It bursts into flames. The Crowd CHEERS.

AA95 EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - STORE FRONT - SAME AA95

A garbage can is thrown into a window.

AB95 EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - SAME AB95

Starr and Seven turn the corner.

They see the front of the protest where a giant JUST US FOR JUSTICE sign is displayed.

The Crowd turns the corner headed to CITY HALL.

A95 EXT. CITY HALL STREET - SAME A95

Approaching... A LINE OF COPS IN RIOT GEAR marching down the street. TWO TANKS with bright lights follow nearby. LARGE POLICE BUSES, parked behind the tanks, sit in anticipation of the inevitable arrests coming their way.

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)
You're in violation of the city code. You have three minutes to disperse or you will be arrested.

A95 CONTINUED:

A95

Starr and Seven continue marching with the crowd as a MILITARY TANK barrels down the street. The NATIONAL GUARD moves in, but the PROTESTERS don't back down as they throw rocks and bottles. It's a FACE OFF! Starr and Seven move forward.

95 EXT. CITY HALL STREET - SAME

95

Standing stoically in the middle of the chaos is... Miss Rosalie wearing her church crown, dress, and gloves. She lifts up something over her head... a FRAMED PHOTO OF KHALIL. She doesn't even blink as the tank rolls closer.

96 EXT. CITY HALL STREET - MOMENTS LATER

96

Starr and Seven push through a CHANTING Crowd. Starr suddenly stops in her tracks.

She looks at many people holding a makeshift MEMORIAL. People carrying candles, dead flowers, handwritten tributes. Protestors hoist up placards with Khalil's smiling face on it.

Protestors CHANT 'This is what democracy looks like!', the Assata chant, and 'Hell you tom bout!' A VOICE speaking over a bullhorn pulls Starr out of her daze. She recognizes it...

STARR

Miss Ofrah! Over here!

(CONTINUED)

April Ofrah pushes through the Crowd to meet her. April takes in Seven's beaten body. She extends a BULLHORN to Starr.

APRIL OFRAH

You ready to use your weapon?

Starr takes the bullhorn into her trembling hands. She looks at the bullhorn.

STARR (V.O.)

It's as heavy as a gun. If One-Fifteen had traded his weapon for this one Khalil would still be alive.

Starr marches toward a Police car. TWO of April's COWORKERS lift Starr on top. The Crowd watches her expectantly. She slowly lifts the bullhorn to her lips.

STARR

My-- my name is Starr!

(beat)

I'm the one who saw what happened to Khalil! And it wasn't right!

The Crowd's packed with the young, the old, White, Black, Asian, and Latino... a microcosm of what America really looks like. CHEERS and CLAPS swell as some yell out 'Speak!' 'Amen!'

STARR (CONT'D)

I'm the witness, but y'all are too!

(points into Crowd)

We're all witnesses to injustice!

A bunch of 'Yeahs,' and 'Preach' emerge from the Crowd.

STARR (CONT'D)

Everybody wants to talk about how Khalil died. This isn't about how Khalil died. He lived. His life mattered. Khalil lived!

A line-up of COPS are upon them.

OFFICER

You have until the count of three to disperse! One --

STARR

Khalil lived!

The crowd CHANTS 'Khalil lived!' with Starr.

(CONTINUED)

OFFICER

Two!

STARR

Khalil lived!

THREE! A CAN OF TEAR GAS is hurled toward the Protestors, landing beside the car. Starr jumps off and picks up the can. SMOKE WHIZZES out. Starr SCREAMS at the top of her lungs, and THROWS the tear gas at the Cops. It explodes, consuming them in a cloud.

All hell breaks loose. Starr and Seven turn back to face the line of approaching Cops.

ON THE LINE-UP OF COPS: They move forward as one, full riot gear, intimidating the Protestors from behind their shields. The line opens up then sucks in a few protestors who are arrested as they're pushed behind the line of cops. Tear gas and more FLASH BANGS are thrown at the Protestors, causing them to scramble.

Smoke immediately envelops the Crowd as Others stagger in the street. Some People haphazardly run and stumble onto the sidewalk, curbs... anywhere to steady themselves. NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS are left to look on at the madness. Some People cover their faces with masks, but it's not enough to help. Eyes watering, ears ringing, sight obscured by the smoke, the Police try to disband the Protestors.

Suddenly, a series of FLASH BANGS explode in the middle of the crowd. Starr and Seven jump back and run away.

A Police Officer stands on a military truck, shotgun in hand... he shoots RUBBER BULLETS at a BYSTANDER near him, knocking him to the ground, writhing in pain.

People with their cameras aimed at the Cops along with News Reporters, are pushed backward. Starr and Seven struggle to find their way out of this ruckus.

- 97 EXT. DOWNTOWN - STREET - NIGHT 97
 - The CROWD pushes back against the police into the downtown street. The riot is at a fever pitch.
 - ANGRY YOUTHS throw garbage cans trying to halt the Cops' assault.
- 98 EXT. DOWNTOWN - STREET - NIGHT 98
 - PROTESTORS chant 'Black Lives Matter!' and hold up their hands.
- 99 EXT. DOWNTOWN - STREET - NIGHT 99
 - COPS in riot gear arrest Protestors.
- 100 EXT. DOWNTOWN - STREET / STORE - NIGHT 100
 - Angry youths throw a garbage can through a store window.
- A101 EXT. DOWNTOWN - STREET / CLOTHES STORE - NIGHT A101
 - Looters run out of the store with clothes.
- 101 EXT. DOWNTOWN - STREET - NIGHT 101
 - A terrified MAN spray-paints 'Black Owned' on the side of his store.
- 102 EXT. DOWNTOWN - STREET / INT. GREEN TRUCK - NIGHT 102
 SCREAMS and LOUD POPS come from every direction. Seven grips Starr's arm tightly as they pass Others who are choked by the stifling smoke.

SEVEN

Shit, I can't breathe!

BRIGHT LIGHTS barrel down the street through the smoke. A GREEN PICK-UP TRUCK stops beside them. The window rolls down.

CEDAR GROVE KING LORDS with their ponytails are inside. The DRIVER'S got a GREEN bandana over his nose and mouth.

DRIVER

Get in the back!

(CONTINUED)

TWO CEDAR KING LORDS wearing green bandanas over their faces help them into the back of the truck. A WHITE REPORTER and a LATINO CAMERAMAN also climb in.

As they climb inside, the driver pulls down his green bandana... it's Goon. (*He was on the bench in front of Carter's store talking with Mav and Tim.*)

GOON

Ain't y'all Mav's kids?

Starr nods as she and Seven sit in the bed of the truck. Seven grimaces as he puts on a strong face.

There's nothing but SMOKE and CHAOS engulfing the streets. Starr goes into a coughing fit too. The Reporter hands her his dampened handkerchief.

REPORTER

Put it against your nose and breathe through it.

SEVEN

My eyes are on fire!

GOON

We need milk.

Starr, eyes watering also, is confused.

GOON (CONT'D)

It's the only thing that work.

STARR

(thinking)

Go to my dad's store!

*

103

OMITTED

103

104

EXT. CARTER'S GROCERY STORE - MINUTES LATER

104

The green truck screeches to a stop in front of Mav's store. The boarded up store's in one piece; spray-painted with 'Black Owned' on it. The neighborhood has transformed. Businesses ransacked. The streetlights are out. Multiple fires keep everything from falling into complete darkness. Trash blanketing the ground. People run in and out of various stores' broken windows and kicked down doors. They loot anything from food to clothes to televisions.

Starr rushes to open Mav's store door with her key. Everyone, including the Cameraman, Reporter, and the DRIVER rush inside.

105 INT. CARTER'S GROCERY STORE - SAME

105

Eyes shut, Seven staggers with Starr helping him. She starts coughing uncontrollably as she rubs her stinging eyes.

Goon runs toward the refrigerator. He grabs a gallon of milk and hands some to the Driver.

He rushes back and pours it onto Starr's face. The Driver pours some on Seven and then on himself. They cough and sputter.

The store FILLS WITH PEOPLE pouring milk onto their faces, getting relief from the stinging gas.

Goon grabs a bunch of cartons, ready to head back out.

GOON

(to Starr)

Thanks, lil' homie. If I see y'all's pops again, I'll tell him where y'all at.

STARR

You saw our daddy?

GOON

Yeah. He was lookin' for y'all.

Goon heads for the door.

CAMERA MAN

Can we ride along?

Goon gestures for them to follow him as they all run out.

Starr and Seven sit alone in the store. They're surrounded by pools of milk. Starr fishes for her phone.

She plays her voicemails on speaker. They are ALL from Lisa.

LISA (V.O.)

Starr, baby, call me as soon as you get this, okay?

(next - worried)

Starr Amara, I know you're getting these messages. Call me. I'm not playing.

(next - angrier)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LISA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Carlos and I are heading out the door right now, and you better pray to God we don't find you!

(next - furious)

Oh, so you can't return my calls, but you can lead protests and throw tear gas on TV! I swear I'm gon' snatch the life out you if you don't call me!

SEVEN

We in some deep shit, Starr. 'Bout time we move to Mexico.

STARR

That ain't far enough for our mama.

The front door CREAKS catching their attention. Something thuds onto the floor. It's a MOLOTOV COCKTAIL! WHOOMF!

The store's suddenly lit bright orange. FLAMES lick the ceiling and BLOCK THE FRONT DOOR.

SEVEN

The back door! Quick!

Starr and Seven rush down the narrow hall to the back door. Smoke's already filling the hall. Seven pushes the door. He rams his shoulder against it. It won't budge.

Starr tries her keys. *

STARR *

None of these keys work! *

SEVEN

Shit!

106 EXT/INT. CARTER'S GROCERY STORE - SAME

106

Mr. Lewis, limps down the street with a baseball bat in each hand. He squints through the store's door. He sees the FLAMES nearing Starr and Seven.

MR. LEWIS

(screaming out)

Oh, Lord! Help! These kids stuck up in here! Help!

The fire takes out another shelf. Starr and Seven gasp for air. The flames are growing fast.

Mr. Lewis and Mr. Reuben try to make it through the front door, but the flames are too much.

107 EXT. CARTER'S GROCERY STORE - ALLEY - SAME 107

TIRES SCREECH as A CAR comes FLYING down the alley. It's Mav. He jumps out and runs up to the back door, screaming at Mr. Reuben and Mr. Lewis.

MAV

Watch out!

Mav fumbles for his keys. He sticks one in the lock.

MAV (CONT'D)

Please, God. Please.

The KNOB TURNS and the door flies open. Starr tugs at Seven. They stumble out into the back alley.

108 EXT. CARTER'S GROCERY STORE - ACROSS THE STREET - SAME 108

King and his BOYS casually lean against a car across the street, watching the flames eat at the roof of the store with satisfaction. A CAR screeches up. Lisa and Carlos jump out in a rush.

-- ANGLE ON: Mav, Mr. Lewis, and Mr. Reuben helping Starr and Seven out of the alley and into the street. Lisa and Carlos run to them. Lisa holds Starr.

LISA

Oh, my God! Breathe, breathe!

ON MAV: Through the smoke he spots King. Mav fills with rage and storms towards King.

MAV

You son of a bitch. Imma kill your punk ass.

King rises.

KING

(taunting)

Come get it, Big Mav.

Mav charges into King.

LISA

Maverick!

King readies himself for Mav's tightened fists. Mav reaches in the back of his waistband. Shit! His gun's not there.

(CONTINUED)

SEKANI
(to King)
Leave my daddy alone!

SEKANI has Mav's gun. He points it directly at King.

MAV
Drop the gun, Sekani!

-- TIME SLOWS DOWN:

STARR (V.O.)
T.H.U.G. L.I.F.E. This is it. "The Hate
You Give Little Infants F's Everybody."
Look at Sekani. He's the Little Infant.
The result of the Hate...

ON SEKANI: scared, with a Glock shaking in his hand.

STARR (V.O.)
... and he is about to fuck everybody.

King reaches for his gun, but just as he is about to pull it out... WHOOP! WHOOP! The COPS come in hot, screeching to a stop. Their hands snug on their holsters, ready to draw.

Lisa SCREAMS.

LISA
Don't shoot! He's just a baby!

CARLOS
Stand down! I'm a cop!

-- ON STARR: Watching this upcoming tragedy unfold.

STARR (V.O.)
It's not the hate you give. It's the hate
we give. We gotta end this cycle. Because
we're all the result of the hate.

Starr slowly STEPS toward Sekani with her hands still raised.

LISA
(nearly in tears)
Starr!

She slowly stands in front of Sekani, shielding him. Starr's placed herself in the center of this life-threatening conflict.

Starr takes in the alert and anxious eyes of every Cop surrounding her...

(CONTINUED)

all it takes is for one of them to unholster their gun and she'll suffer the same fate as Khalil.

STARR

NO! HOW MANY MORE PEOPLE HAVE TO DIE
BEFORE Y'ALL GET IT?!

Her power and fury are enough to cause them all to hesitate.

STARR (CONT'D)

NO MORE!

Sekani shakes with fear. Starr lowers the gun in his hand and places it on the concrete. Lisa and Mav watch, frightened beyond words.

But the Cops slowly loosen their grips on their holsters; no more ready to shoot. King moves his hand away from his gun.

Carlos has managed to get his badge as the COPS lower their weapons. He steps in front of Mav, preventing his arrest. King walks away with his Boys.

Nothing but love surrounds Mav, who still stands tall as he watches his family. Lisa rushes in to hold Sekani. Starr still stands in the middle of it all. Mav, Seven, Carlos, Lisa, the Cops all stare at her -- this girl. The girl who got the power to make them all see.

FADE TO BLACK.

109 EXT. GARDEN HEIGHTS - STREETS - MORNING 109

THE NEIGHBORHOOD is a smoldering mess. Smoke rises from burned-out buildings. Glass litters the streets.

110 EXT. GARDEN HEIGHTS - STREETS - MORNING 110

CLOSE ON: a STREET SHRINE to Khalil. Battered, but still intact after the riots. Deflated balloons and petals blow in the breeze.

Starr kneels down in front of the street shrine with flowers in her hand. Chris watches as she places the bouquet in front of Khalil's photo.

111 EXT. CARTER'S GROCERY STORE - DAY 111

Mav, Mr. Lewis, and Neighbors stand in front of the blackened store. People pat Mav on the back, offering support.

STARR (V.O.)

'Rebuild.' The riots weren't more than
two hours behind us before Daddy said
those words. And I knew we would...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

STARR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
especially with King going down for
setting the fire.

AA112 INT. IESHA'S HOUSE - DAY

AA112

TWO COPS walk King down the hallway, his hands cuffed.

STARR (V.O.)
Everybody spoke up about what happened.
Mr. Reuben, Mr. Lewis and even Daddy said
something.

A112 EXT. IESHA'S HOUSE - SAME

A112

People gather in the streets to watch. The whole community
witnesses King's fall.

STARR (V.O.)
Snitchin' rules no longer apply. Cops
took down King and his boys thanks to the
whole community.

The cops put King into the police car. King stares out the
window as he sits alone. All the neighbors glaring.

112 EXT. MAV AND LISA'S HOME - FRONT YARD - DAY

112

Mav struggles to plant roses in the yard. Seven and Sekani
help, with laughter. Lisa and Carlos laugh with them as Starr
watches.

STARR (V.O.)
We're a family again. Even Daddy and
Uncle Carlos stopped beefing. Mama and
Daddy are working on getting us out of
Garden Heights. Even Daddy's saying, 'the
suburbs don't make you any less black
than living in the hood.'

Seven picks up Sekani and swings him around, squealing.

STARR (V.O.)
Seven's still 'perfect.' After heeling
some broken ribs. Next week he's off to
college.

Sekani runs around the garden, spraying the garden hose on
Mav and Seven.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

STARR (V.O.)
Sekani's no doubt gonna live up to his
name. 'Joy.' He's still got it...
somehow.

CUT TO:

113 OMITTED

113

114 INT. WILLIAMSON SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - LATER

114

Starr's about to eat her lunch when BUZZ! BUZZ!

HAILEY, sitting across the cafeteria, looks at Starr with
nervous hope.

114 CONTINUED:

114

Starr sees Hailey offering her a small, hesitant smile. Starr merely gives her a nod AND TURNS AWAY.

STARR (V.O.)

Mama said forgive and move on. I don't need a one-sided friendship, not when I have real ones. And Chris... we finally see each other.

Starr, Maya, and Chris continue to talk leaving Hailey alone. Starr grabs Chris' hand. He leans over and kisses her.

CUT TO:

115 INT. MISS ROSALIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

115

Miss Brenda, looking fragile but cleaned-up, plays with Cameron. Starr smiles at the sight.

STARR (V.O.)

Miss Brenda, got into a program they run at Mama's new hospital job.

Miss Rosalie ENTERS the living room.

MISS ROSALIE

Starr, I'm cleaning out Khalil's room for Brenda. You gon' in there and take what you like.

116 INT. MISS ROSALIE'S HOUSE - KHALIL'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER 116

Starr looks around Khalil's old room. It's full of memories. She idly opens a drawer. SURPRISE registers on her face. It's KHALIL'S HARRY POTTER WAND. He had it all along. A smile appears on her face.

Starr pulls her knapsack off her back and opens it. She puts the wand in her pack.

117 INT/EXT. MAV AND LISA'S HOME - STARR'S BEDROOM - DAY

117

Starr opens her knapsack, reaches inside, and pulls out...

KHALIL'S HARRY POTTER WAND. A worn label with his name in faded ink still adheres to the shaft.

STARR (V.O.)

'Khalil.' I found out that name means something too. 'Friend.'

Starr opens her old Wand Box, to reveal her and Natasha's wands.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:

117

STARR (V.O.)
I'll never forget. I'll never be quiet.

(CONTINUED)

She carefully adds Khalil's wand to the box, placing it next to Natasha's. She smiles.

STARR (V.O.)

I can't change where I come from or what
I've been through, so why be ashamed of
what makes me, me?

Starr takes out her own wand. It's been a long time since she's held it.

STARR (V.O.)

And I'm gonna keep on being 'Starr.' No
Version 2, just Starr. Daddy says my name
gives me my own superpower. To use it.
And that's what I'm gonna do.

Starr taps the wand thoughtfully in her hand. The sunlight streams in through the window, illuminating the beauty and determination in her young face.

STARR (V.O.)

Light up the darkness.

FADE OUT.