

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

THE DYING KIND

A project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Masters of Fine Arts in Screenwriting

By

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Date

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## DEDICATION

To all the wonder women, family members and teachers who have occupied my life. I couldn't do this without your love and support.

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ABSTRACT

THE DYIND KIND:  
A SCREENPLAY

By

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Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting

A lowly train operator must play a pivotal role in the labor dispute between the Bay Area Rapid Transit agency's management and its workers after her best friend, who is also the union president, has a debilitating accident.

## The Dying Kind

FADE IN:

ON ALARM CLOCK

Red numbers on a black background. It's 4:59 am and all is quiet until:

The ALARM CLOCK BEEPS.

WOMAN OS

Turn it off.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Pull back to reveal TERESA SMITH, an African American woman in her mid 40's. Her body spreads out across a queen sized bed. She is alone.

TERESA

Eddie!

No one answers. Teresa lifts her head and looks left to right. All she sees are her modest, but elegant furnishings.

TERESA (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Shit.

Teresa gets out of her bed and walks hastily down the hall, past the living room, and into the kitchen. There's a window above the sink where the front yard can be seen. She looks at the driveway. There's no car.

Teresa picks up a cordless house phone and dials a number. Pacing the room, she waits anxiously.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Pick up. Pick up.

The PHONE RINGS until:

EDDIE OS

This is Eddie. I'll call you when I call you.

BEEP.

TERESA

Goddamnit Eddie! You know I have to go to work and Nicky to school. Where the hell are you with my car?

Teresa pushes the END button.

Teresa leaves the kitchen and walks through the hallway. She stops at one of the doors and knocks.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Nicky! Nicky! Get up! We have to get going. Nicky, you hear me?

Not a sound. Teresa opens the door.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A lump of a being lies underneath the covers. Teresa walks over to the lump that is Nicky and nudges her.

TERESA

Nicky!

NICKY

What?

TERESA

You have to get up.

NICKY

No! It's not time yet.

TERESA

Forget that. Eddie has the car. We have to find another way.

Nicky uncovers her head.

NICKY

What?! Ugh, he gets on my nerves.

TERESA

Hey! We don't have time for that.

NICKY

He's always doing stuff like this.

TERESA

Nicky, I have to be behind the wheel in an hour. One hour. Can you do your poor mother a favor and not drive me crazy?

NICKY

Ugh.

TERESA

I'll take that as a yes. Now for the last time. GET UP.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Nicky, still in pajamas, sits at the kitchen where she devours a bowl of cereal. Teresa enters the kitchen with the phone up to her ear. Multitasking, she talks while putting on the rest of her gear.

TERESA

Thank you, Brenda. I don't know what I would do without you. I'll be ready in ten. Just blow your horn when you get here and I'll be out. See you.

Teresa hangs up the phone and looks at Nicky in alarm.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Why are you still in your pajamas? Brenda will be here any minute.

NICKY

I'm catching a ride with Andrea.

TERESA

I don't understand why you can't come with us.

NICKY

Because. I don't want to be at school this early. Who am I going to hang out with? The janitor?

TERESA

I wish you could get a ride with somebody else. You know how I feel about that girl.

NICKY

Well, if someone didn't take off with the car, I wouldn't have to ride with Andrea.

Nicky has a point.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Or if I had a car...

TERESA

Oh, no.

NICKY

Why not?

TERESA

It is hard as is trying to pay for everything now. I can't turn around and buy you a car.

NICKY

Even if I got a job?

TERESA

I don't know. We'll have to see. You do need the work experience, but I don't want anything interfering with your schooling.

NICKY

I promise it won't.

A CAR BEEPS outside. Teresa walks over to the kitchen window. It's BRENDA.

TERESA

What is she doing here? I told her ten minutes.  
(opens window)  
Hey! You're too early.

BRENDA OS

No, you're just late. Hurry your butt up so we can get to work.

TERESA

Alright, alright.

Teresa closes the window and exits the kitchen in hurry. She soon reappears from the back with all of her belongings. Teresa walks over to Nicky and pecks her on the forehead.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I'm off to work. Have a good day in school and stay out of trouble.

NICKY

I will. I'm not a criminal.

TERESA

(rolls her eyes)

I don't know what time I'm going to be back. I was planning on getting a few things for the meeting, but whatever. I'll check up on you later.

NICKY

And what about the job?

TERESA

We'll talk about it when I get back.

NICKY

You promise?

TERESA

Yes.

Teresa leaves.

INT. BRENDA'S CAR - LATER

BRENDA WATSON, an African American woman in her 40's, cruises down the streets. She sports the same uniform as Teresa, but Brenda adorns herself with jewelry and accessories.

BRENDA

What happened to your car?

TERESA

Eddie has it.

BRENDA

Interesting. And where is Eddie with your car?

TERESA

Brenda, can we not do this? I already had this conversation with Nicky.

BRENDA

Uh, excuse me. I just wanted to know what was going on. I mean, I did drive across town at the last minute to pick you up.

Teresa looks at Brenda with a look of disbelief.

TERESA

What are you talking about, “drive across town”? You were at my house in two minutes. I know you were at Tom’s house.

BRENDA

Shut up!

TERESA

(sniffs Brenda)

Smelling like hot sex.

The two women burst in laughter.

BRENDA

The hell I do. If anything, I should smell like butter and popcorn.

TERESA

Whatever you say.

BRENDA

I am serious. Don’t get me wrong. Tom is a nice guy and all, but I’m not trying to get caught up. You know? My number one priority is my family. Everything else can fall back.

TERESA

A little romance wouldn’t hurt. You’re practically glowing.

BRENDA

Glowing. You know what would really make me glow? A raise. Give a little extra for retirement and benefits and you can call me SOUL GLO.

Brenda pulls into the large parking structure for the train station. The “Yard,” where many of the trains are stationed, can be seen in the foreground. Brenda looks for a park.

TERESA

We’ll talk about all of that during the meeting.

Brenda finds a park. She shuts the power off.

TERESA (CONT’D)

But first, let’s get through today.

BRENDA

Lord have mercy. There’s nothing like a Monday.

INT. TRAIN

Teresa sits in the train operator’s compartment in seclusion. Darkness lies ahead of her.

She takes a small picture out of her jacket and places it on the windowsill. The picture displays a happier and younger version of Teresa and Nicky.

Teresa pushes an assortment of buttons and the train comes to life. She drives the train through the dark tunnel until she stops short of the approaching platform.

TERESA

Lord help us.

She drives to the a station’s platform where commuters wait.

AUTOMATIC SYSTEM

The San Francisco/Daly City train is now arriving at platform two.

The doors of the train open and people pour into the train. Teresa opens her side window and peaks her head out so she can watch everybody board safely.

AUTOMATIC SYSTEM (CONT’D)

Doors are closing.

Teresa closes the window once everyone is aboard and returns to her seat. There’s a phone in her compartment that she uses to communicate with the riders.

TERESA

Welcome aboard the San Francisco/Daly City train. Our next stop will be El Cerrito del Norte. Please reserve seats for disabled, pregnant, or elderly persons. I would also like to remind bicyclist, that they can't board with first car with their bikes at this time. Thank you for your cooperation and thank you for taking Bart. Our final destination is Daly City.

She hangs up the phone and starts the train again. It moves from the brightness of the station into the darkness of the tunnel, speed accelerating.

Teresa arrives at the next station and there are even more people than before.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Happy Monday.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

Passengers already break Teresa's rules by the time she reaches the third station (El Cerrito Plaza). Bicyclist enter the first car with their bikes and people don't give up their seats to those who need it.

People squeeze onto the train at the Downtown Berkeley station. There is hardly any room for the doors to close. Teresa tells them to make way or wait for the next train, her words fall on deaf ears. People want to get to work or school.

Police enter the train at the North Berkeley station with their canine dogs. They walk through the trains looking for anything suspicious.

The train arrives at the MacArthur Station, where commuters can transfer to different trains. Teresa trains becomes unbearably crowded.

Teresa stops the train midway to the 19th St./Oakland. There's a man walking the lengths of the tunnel. She has to call for back up and further delay the trip to the commuters' displeasure.

A fight breaks out on the train en route to the 12th St./Oakland station between a homeless man and a business man. A witness calls the incident in. Teresa stops the train at the next station where police officers gather the men. Another delay.

The train makes it to the last East Bay stop before entering San Francisco. There's less people at the platform, but that doesn't alleviate the already crammed and distressed riders. Everyone looks like they have been to war and they haven't reached their destinations yet.

Teresa drives the through the loud and dark corridor to San Francisco.

The train arrives at the Embarcadero Station where passengers exit in droves.

By the time Teresa pulls into the third station (Powell), the majority of passengers are gone.

The rest of the ride is smooth sailing. The remaining commuters sleep in their seats, read books, or listen to music.

Teresa arrives at the last stop, Daly City. Everyone exits the train to her relief.

EXT. RICHMOND TRAIN YARD - LATER

There's one train on both sides of the platform. One train is outgoing and the other is incoming. All the doors to the trains are opened, so the janitors can haul trash and escort any transients. Engineers inspect each car.

The incoming train completes inspection and cleaning. It moves on as another train enters.

INT. TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Teresa pulls the train into the platform and parks it. She pushes the bottom to open all of the doors, before shutting the train down.

She gathers her belongings and leaves her small compartment. Teresa walks to the nearest car door, but it is partially opened. She walks to the end of the train and exits.

EXT. RICHMOND TRAIN YARD - CONTINUOUS

Teresa walks to one side of the platform. She spots a Caucasian man in his late 30s wearing a helmet. This is DANIEL KERR. He stands in a huddle with other men.

TERESA

Hey!

Daniel looks up before returning to his conversation. Teresa, now aggravated, approaches him. The men disperse.

MEN

We'll catch you later Danny.

TERESA

Hello Daniel.

DANIEL

Teresa.

TERESA

Something's wrong with the door on my car. Can you take a look at it?

DANIEL

I will get to it.

Teresa stares at an unmoving Daniel.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Is there anything else I can do for you?

TERESA

I would like for you to look at it now.

DANIEL

I bet you would, but it's not going to happen right now. You might be the president of the train operators, but you aren't the president of the me. I am king in this realm and I say we will get to your car when we get to it.

TERESA

(smirks)

Wow. I didn't know it was like that.

DANIEL

Well, now you know.

TERESA

Remind me of this when you're sitting before a jury, because the door slammed on someone and now they're suing us. I'm sure the ruling will go in your favor, since you're the king of this realm.

DANIEL

Don't you think you're being overly dramatic?

TERESA

You want to see dramatic? How about I go over to the district office and make a formal complaint about the door? I'll bet it will get fixed then.

Daniel doesn't have a word to say. Teresa inches closer to him.

TERESA (CONT'D)

No matter how you feel about me, I am still the boss of this here thing. Take care of the door Daniel. I would hate for you to lose your job.

INT. UNION HALL - NIGHT

There are rows and rows of old blue chairs. Train operators converse with one another at the buffet table behind the seats. The stage up front is empty and bright.

Teresa enters through the large wood doors. Everyone looks in her direction. Brenda is right behind her.

TERESA

All right everyone. Let's settle down. We have work to do.

TRAIN OPERATORS

Here we go...Oh no...The party's over...I'll talk to you later.

TERESA

Come on now. You can take your food with you.

Everyone makes their way to their seats. Teresa heads to the bright stage where there is a podium on the stage. She approaches the podium and places a manila folder on the podium.

Brenda takes a seat on stage next to the podium.

TERESA (CONT'D)

(to Brenda)

Record the time.

BRENDA

It's November 15th, 2013. The time is 8:04pm.

TERESA

Thank you, Brenda. Let this meeting convene.

Teresa slams a [hammer] on the podium.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Okay, everybody. We all know why we are here. We've been working under our current contract...

AUDIENCE MEMBER ONE OS

Shitty contract.

TERESA

For four years now. It's time to negotiate for a new one. As we all know, the agency has experienced a surge in ridership, which means more money.

AUDIENCE MEMBER TWO OS

We want a raise!

AUDIENCE MEMBER THREE OS

What about our pensions?!

AUDIENCE MEMBER FOUR OS

The health care...

The room erupts with shouts and calls. The words are unintelligible.

Teresa motions with her hands for the audience to quiet down.

TERESA

Hey, everybody take a seat. Quiet down now. This is still a meeting. Sit down.

The audience members quiet down and take their seats. Teresa resumes.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I know everyone is frustrated, but we aren't going to get anywhere acting like animals.

DANIEL OS

You're right.

Everyone looks towards the entrance. Daniel makes his way to the stage.

DANIEL

Absolutely right. We're not going to get anywhere behaving like a pack wolves. They already think lowly of us. That's why we've been given the short end of the stick time after time.

TERESA

Thank you for your input...

DANIEL OS

In order for us to get those long lost raises and those contributions to our pensions and health benefits, we must be poised and civilized like them. Give them the impression that they're dealing with one of their own.

TERESA

Once again, thank...

Daniel walks up the stairs leading to the stage.

DANIEL

But most importantly, we need a leader that's on the level. Someone who's learned and sophisticated. Someone they can see as their equals.

Teresa and Daniel stand face to face now.

DANIEL OS

Do you think you're up for it?

TERESA

That's why I am here.

DANIEL OS

That's right. Please, continue.

Daniel moves to Teresa's side. The audience members look on in confusion.

TERESA

Like I was saying, there are more ridership, which means there is more money...

INT. BRENDA'S CAR - NIGHT

Brenda and Teresa ride in silence. The exterior is dark with the exception of the street lights.

TERESA

That son of a bitch.

BRENDA

Girl, don't even trip about him. He's just mad it's you and not him.

TERESA

He came in there and made me look like a damn fool.

BRENDA

No he didn't.

TERESA

Yes, he did. You saw how everyone looked at me. They probably think I am so ghetto hood rat who don't know what they are doing.

BRENDA

Tee, that's crazy. Why would they elect you if they felt that way?

TERESA

Talking about "learned." I went to college. I just didn't finish.

BRENDA

Don't go there. You're doing exactly what he wants you to do. Don't start questioning and doubting yourself. He'll take the thrown if you do.

I/E BRENDA'S CAR - LATER

Brenda pulls the car in front of Teresa's house. There's a car in the driveway.

BRENDA

Well, I'll be damned.

TERESA

(sighs)

Oh, here we go.

BRENDA

Go handle your business.

Teresa opens the door and gets out with her belongings.

TERESA

Hey. Thanks for the ride and everything.

BRENDA

Please, you know I got your back.

TERESA

Nice to know somebody does.

BRENDA

Tee, don't get down on yourself. I need you here.

Brenda puts her index finger at her temple.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Are you with me? Here.

TERESA

Yes, here.

BRENDA

Good, because you're no good to us somewhere else. Now get in there and get some sleep.

TERESA

Excuse me? I thought I was the president.

BRENDA

Yeah, but I am your advisor and everyone knows it's the advisor who's really in charge.

TERESA

Oh my goodness.

BRENDA

Now get in there and get some sleep like I said.

TERESA

Bye crazy woman.

Teresa shuts the car door and walks up the entrance to her house.

BRENDA

Oh, one last thing.

TERESA

What?

BRENDA

Whoop his ass.

Brenda drives off.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Teresa opens the front door and enters. Nicky and EDDIE, a muscular African American man in his late 30s, have a heated argument in the living room.

EDDIE

I am the man of this house and you're going to do what I tell you to do.

NICKY

I don't have to listen to you. You're not my daddy.

EDDIE

You're sure not any daughter of mine. I wouldn't let any of my kids talk to me like that.

NICKY

How would you know? You don't even see you're kids.

Eddie walks towards Nicky. Teresa scurries over to the stand off and places herself between Nicky and Eddie.

TERESA

Whoa, whoa, whoa. What the hell is going on here?

NICKY

Mr. Macho Man came in here acting crazy when my friends were over.

EDDIE

The girl needs to learn some manners.

NICKY

Manners? You're the one who took the car and left us stranded.

Teresa raises her hands to the ceiling.

TERESA

Enough! Enough from the both of you. I already have to deal with this at work. I don't want to deal with this when I get home.

(to Nicky)

(MORE)

TERESA (CONT'D)

You, you already know you're not supposed to have people. Go to your room.

NICKY

What? That's not fair. We weren't even doing noting.

TERESA

That's not the point. No guests, means no guests. Now go to your room.

Nicky remains still.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I'm not going to tell you again.

NICKY

You're always picking his side.

She walks away.

EDDIE

(yells to Nicky)

That's right. She's my wife and I'm her husband. We are one. Ain't nothing stronger than that.

TERESA

Will you be quiet? Neighbors probably think I'm running a crazy house.

Eddie walks over to Teresa and starts kissing her neck.

EDDIE

I'm sorry baby. I didn't mean for that to happen.

TERESA

Where were you?

EDDIE

(between kisses)

At...work...

TERESA

You didn't come home last night.

EDDIE

Friend's...house...

Teresa pushes Eddie off of her.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What? You mad?

TERESA

Don't play with me Eddie. You said you were going somewhere for a minute and didn't come back until the next day. We had to get rides from other people, because of you.

EDDIE

I'm sorry baby.

TERESA

Where were you?

EDDIE

I already told you.

TERESA

You must think I am stupid, huh? You think I was born yesterday?

EDDIE

Here I am trying to make up with you and you kill the mood as usual. I'm turning in.

TERESA

The hell you are. This discussion isn't over. You still haven't answered my question.

EDDIE

What do you want me to say? I was at some other woman's house? I'm messing around? Is that what you want to hear?

TERESA

I want to know the truth.

EDDIE

Man, watch out.

Eddie goes to the nearest closet by the door and takes out a jacket.

TERESA

Where do you think you are going?

EDDIE  
Somewhere peaceful and quiet.

TERESA  
Uh huh, well give me my keys.

EDDIE  
What?

TERESA  
You heard me.

Teresa extends an open hand. Eddie stares at it. He puts on his jacket and takes the keys out. Eddie drops them in her hand.

EDDIE  
This is a mistake.

TERESA  
Tell her I said hi.

Eddie grabs a bag out of the closet and exits the house. Teresa stands still at the door.

INT. TERESA'S CAR - DAY

Teresa and Nicky reflect the outside environment. Both are colorless and silent.

I/E TERESA'S CAR - LATER

The car stops in front of a high school. There are other students being dropped off.

TERESA  
Well, have a good day. I'll see you later after the meeting.

NICKY  
How long is he going to be gone this time?

TERESA  
I don't know.

NICKY  
Suspected infidelity...that's about three days to a week, wouldn't you say?

TERESA

Nicky, I have to get to work.

Nicky gets out of the car with her backpack.

NICKY

Love you. Have a great day.

TERESA

Yeah, love you too.

Teresa reaches over to the passenger door and shuts it herself. She drives off.

INT. YARD - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Bart personnel stand by old and rusty gray lockers as they talk and prepare for a long day of work.

Teresa stands before an open locker where she puts her belongings in. Brenda saddles up to Teresa's locker.

BRENDA

Well, I see someone got their car back.  
Congratulations. You must of whooped that ass like  
I told you.

Teresa closes her locker. Without saying a word, she walks away. Brenda follows.

TERESA

Brenda, I have an important preliminary meeting  
coming up. I don't have time for this.

BRENDA

And you're absolutely right. You are a boss. You  
don't have time for no loser.

Teresa turns around quick, stopping Brenda in her tracks.

TERESA

No, I don't have time for this shit.

BRENDA

Hold on. I know you're angry. I'm just trying to  
help.

TERESA

Yeah, some help. You always got something to say about mine, what about your's.

BRENDA

What about mine?

TERESA

Acting like you're some expert on family and relationships.

The other workers become silent observers.

BRENDA

I ain't no expert.

TERESA

Yeah, I know.

BRENDA

But I know when something's broken and that sham of a marriage is as broken as they come.

TERESA

How are you going to comment on something you don't know and never had, huh? You think you can put your two cents and you don't even have a penny. Get some change and then we can talk.

Teresa exits the locker room.

INT. RICHMOND YARD - TRAIN - DRIVER'S BOOTH - LATER

Brenda pushes the button that opens the doors, before shutting off the train completely.

She grabs her belongings and exits the driver's booth.

TRAIN

The first exit is slightly ajar.

BRENDA

This. If ain't one thing, it's another.

She puts her things on a seat and walks over to the door. She struggles to open it completely.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Come on, come on.

The door gives away a little.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Well, that's the best I can do.

Just when she is about to let go, the door closes on her arm.

Brenda SCREAMS a horrid cry.

EXT. RICHMOND TRAIN YARD - PLATFORM - LATER

E.M.Ts put Brenda on a gurney and take her away. Teresa tries to run past police officers and other E.M.Ts trying to get to Brenda. One of the police officers catches her.

POLICE OFFICER ONE

I'm sorry miss. You can't go over there.

TERESA

What are you talking about? She's my friend. I'm the president.

POLICE OFFICER ONE

Only family members.

TERESA

We are family members.

POLICE OFFICER ONE

I can't let you back there.

Teresa maneuvers and pushes her way through to no avail.

TERESA

Let go of me.

POLICE OFFICER ONE

Ma'am I going to need you to remain calm.

TERESA

Brenda! Brenda!

EXT. RICHMOND YARD - PORTABLE - DAY

There are a few men and women standing outside the portable. Some of them sport suits, while others have their work uniforms on.

Teresa watches them all as she grasps onto her leather bound folder.

INT. RICHMOND YARD - PORTABLE - CONTINUOUS

The portable is a makeshift meeting area. There is a long rectangular table made of pine, coupled with old wooden chairs.

Teresa enters the room, where the men and women wearing suits converse quietly with one another.

She spots a Caucasian woman in her early 50s sitting at the table. This is Christine Wilson, another union president.

Teresa seats herself in the empty chair next to Christine.

CHRISTINE

This is a surprise. I didn't think you would show.

TERESA

Why wouldn't show? I still have a job to do.

CHRISTINE

I heard about the accident. I am sorry about your friend.

TERESA

Thanks.

An older Caucasian man in his 60s enter the room. All becomes still. This is MR. THOMPSON, director of the board. He heads to the table and all the people in suits follow.

Teresa and Christine stand up.

MR. THOMPSON

Nice to see you ladies.

CHRISTINE

It's nice to see you as well, Mr. Thompson.

TERESA

Nice to see you.

MR. THOMPSON

(to Teresa)

You have my sympathies.

TERESA

Thank you. Shall we start.

MR. THOMPSON

Yes.

Everyone takes a seat.

TERESA

I like to thank everyone for coming to this meeting. I know you all are busy individuals and I appreciate it that you took time out of your day to come and speak with us.

MR. THOMPSON

The pleasure is all ours.

TERESA

As you know, uh...

CHRISTINE

The contract is going to expire in two months time and we need a new contract as soon as possible so service can continue uninterrupted.

Teresa looks at Christine then at Mr. Thompson.

TERESA

Yes.

MR. THOMPSON

Of course. We wouldn't want the trains to stop.

CHRISTINE

And neither do we.

TERESA

Our current contract was made right at the beginning of the economic downfall and we all took major concessions...

CHRISTINE

That was four years ago. Now things have changed. The economy is recovering and we have more ridership than we ever had. It's time that we start talking reinstatement.

Teresa remains calm as she takes papers out of her leather binder.

TERESA

Here's some of our conditions. Let me remind you that this is a rough draft. Things will surely change during negotiation.

MR. THOMPSON

No need for that just yet. We have to figure things out on our end before we start exchanging papers.

TERESA

Okay.

MR. THOMPSON

This is just a meeting of acknowledgement. We're simply recognizing the situation to come.

TERESA

I'm sorry, I don't want to come off as being curt with you, but if this is just a meeting of acknowledgment, why couldn't we do this over the phone? It's cheaper and less time consuming.

MR. THOMPSON

It is, but we must stick with formalities for legal reasons.

TERESA

My constituents want to bargain.

MR. THOMPSON

And bargaining is what they are going to get when we're ready.

TERESA

Oh, I see.

CHRISTINE

What have you got under those sleeves?

MR. THOMPSON

Christine, you've been through this. A magician never gives away their secrets.

Mr. Thompson stands up.

MR. THOMPSON (CONT'D)

We shall be in correspondence soon. Good day ladies.

All the suits leave the room. Teresa remains in her seat flabbergasted.

INT. TERESA HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

It's late at night and an exhausted Teresa sits at the kitchen table. A mountain of paperwork lies before her. Still in her uniform, Teresa sifts through the paperwork.

Nicky enters the dining room with her pajamas on. She rubs sleep out of her eyes.

NICKY

Hey.

TERESA

Hey baby. What are you doing up so late? You have school tomorrow.

NICKY

Today's Saturday mom.

Teresa sees the worry on Nicky's face.

TERESA

Well, don't just stand there. Help me.

Nicky sits down in an adjacent chair.

NICKY

What is all this?

TERESA

Surveys. There's no point in fighting for something that nobody wants. Separate the yes from the nays. I'll tally them up later.

Mother and daughter work in silence for a moment.

TERESA (CONT'D)

So, how's school?

NICKY

It's okay.

TERESA

Okay. It's always just okay.

NICKY

School is fabulous mother. I'm having a grand old time there. I can't wait to return.

TERESA

Hey, you better watch it.

NICKY

It's school. What do you want me to say?

TERESA

I don't know. It wouldn't hurt to show some enthusiasm.

NICKY

Sorry mom. We can't all be high school rock stars like you were.

TERESA

You can. You just need to focus and get your priorities straight. Stop chasing them boys and hanging out with that girl.

Nicky rolls her eyes and leans back in her seat.

TERESA (CONT'D)

She is nothing but trouble. I keep telling you that and you still hang out with her. I don't get it.

NICKY

She's not as bad as you think.

TERESA

No, she's worse. And she's going to let you down if you're not careful.

NICKY

How's Brenda mom?

Silence.

NICKY (CONT'D)

When was the last time you saw your friend?

TERESA

You know what? I can do this by myself. You can go back to bed.

Nicky stands up and heads toward the hallway. She looks back at her mother.

NICKY

You might not like Andrea, but at least she's there for me.

Teresa watches Nicky as she exits.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - DAY

WAITING ROOM

The waiting room is typical with its white walls, bright lights, uncomfortable looking chairs and tired guests.

Teresa enters the waiting room with a bouquet of flowers. She walks over to the MEDICAL RECEPTIONIST, a Latina in her 30s.

MEDICAL RECEPTIONIST

Hi, how may I help you?

TERESA

I'm here to see Brenda Watson.

CORRIDOR

With the bouquet of flowers in hand, Teresa walks the length of the hallway until she reaches room 139.

There's a sign that reads: BRENDA WATSON.

Teresa takes a deep breath before she turns the door's knob and opens the door.

BRENDA'S ROOM

Brenda lies unconscious in her hospital bed. There are tubes everywhere.

The only sound in the room is BRENDA'S shallow BREATHING and the HEART MONITOR'S BEEP.

Teresa enters the room. There are other bouquets and cards on the adjacent table. Teresa finds a space to put the flowers. She then takes a seat next to Brenda's bed.

TERESA

You always said I was late. I guess you're right.

BEEP.

Teresa looks at everything around the room except for Brenda.

TERESA (CONT'D)

This is something new. I get to talk and you have to listen. We should have you induced more often.

(laughs)

I'm sorry. That's not funny. Forget I said that.

BEEP.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I apologize for um, not coming sooner. I got caught up with all the union and contract stuff. You know how that is.

BEEP.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I'm not making up excuses. I just want you to know where I was...

(eyes well up)

When I should have been here. Forgive me.

Teresa turns away and breaks down crying. She wipes away her tears and gathers herself before turning back.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I'm such a bad friend. You've been there for me all this time and I couldn't be here for you. I was just being selfish. I didn't want to see you like this. Not you.

BEEP.

Teresa stands up and grabs Brenda's hand. Teresa looks directly at Brenda for the first time.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I'm going to make it up to you, okay? I'm going to make things right. But you have to promise me that you're going to get out of this funk, okay? You're going to wake up and come back to us. This is my one condition. I won't fight if you won't.

BEEP.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Sleep on it. I'll come back soon.

Teresa bends down and kisses Brenda on the forehead.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I love you.

Teresa exits the room.

Brenda moves her index finger.

EXT. BART HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

Teresa looks toward the sky. The building is immense. She takes in the large structure before entering.

INT. BART HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY - LATER

Everything in the lobby sparkles from the marble floors to the floor length glass windows.

Teresa approaches the FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST, 20s, sitting in a raised mahogany desk.

TERESA

Hello. I need to speak to one of the managers. Is anyone available?

The front desk receptionist looks in the direction of the conference room. Teresa takes notice.

FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST

Do you have an appointment?

TERESA

What's going on in there?

FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST

They're not available at this time. Would you like to leave a message?

Teresa walks towards the conference room.

FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

You can't go back there.

TERESA

Watch me.

The front desk receptionist goes after Teresa.

FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST

Don't make me call security.

CONFERENCE ROOM

The MANAGERS sit at a large oval conference table. There are memos in front of them and a projected image on a screen. A MAN stands to the side of the screen with a pointer.

Teresa bursts in.

TERESA

What is going on?

FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry. She just came in. Should I call security?

An older man, MR. THOMPSON, waves the receptionist away.

MR. THOMPSON

No, we'll be fine.

The receptionist exits.

MR. THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Mrs. Smith, how are you? We were just talking about.

TERESA

I bet. What is this?

Teresa looks at the figures on the screen. The displayed information has to do with the contract.

TERESA (CONT'D)

You're going on without me?

MR. THOMPSON

Not at all. We're doing preliminary work.

TERESA

Sure you are.

The MAN with the pointer extends his hand.

MAN

Hello Mrs. Smith.

TERESA

(to Mr. Thompson)

Who is this?

MR. THOMPSON

This is Benford Wilks. He will be mediating the negotiation.

BENFORD WILKS/MAN

How do you do?

TERESA

Wow. I see you brought out the big guns.

MR. THOMPSON

We want to make sure the process goes by smoothly.

TERESA

You must think I am stupid. This isn't caution.

Teresa eyes everyone in the room.

TERESA (CONT'D)

This is something else.

INT. UNION HALL - DAY

Teresa sits before a panel consisting of union officers, Daniel (VICE PRESIDENT), CHRISTIAN BATES (FINANCIAL SECRETARY), MARSHA GRAY (RECORDING SECRETARY), MIKE BROWN (ASST. BUSINESS AGENT) and WALLACE LEE (ASST. B/MAINTENANCE/CLERICAL, STORES.)

The lower ranking union officers wait for Daniel to respond, but he remains quiet and unmoved.

WALLACE breaks the silence.

WALLACE

(sighs)

Well, I'll say it, if nobody else does. I don't like this. Don't like it one bit. Talks haven't even begun and they're already lying.

CHRISTIAN

Lying is a strong word.

WALLACE

Did you know they hired a lawyer before this?

CHRISTIAN

No.

WALLACE

Then they lied.

MIKE

You don't know that. Maybe the plan was to tell us in a few days or so.

WALLACE

Okay, say that was the case. Why didn't they tell us they wanted a middle man in the first place?

CHRISTIAN

It would have caused suspicion.

WALLACE

No more than this.

MIKE  
(to Daniel)  
What do you think?

Daniel doesn't hear the question. All of his attention is on Teresa. A smile spreads across his face.

She turns around to see what he is looking at. There's nothing behind her.

CHRISTIAN  
Daniel?

DANIEL  
(to Teresa)  
I know what you're trying to do.

TERESA  
Excuse me?

DANIEL  
The headquarters yesterday, the hall today...what's it going to be tomorrow?

TERESA  
What are you talking about, Daniel?

DANIEL  
It looks like you have a personal agenda.

TERESA  
A personal agenda? No. I'm only trying to help.

DANIEL  
That's interesting, because I don't recall asking for your help.  
(to union officers)  
Did any of you ask for her help?

Silence.

DANIEL (CONT'D)  
That's what I thought.

TERESA  
Daniel...

DANIEL

I don't know what you did for Brenda and quite frankly, I don't care. From now on, I want you to stay out of union business. This office is more than capable of handling things without your help. Understood?

Teresa doesn't respond.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Do you hear me?

TERESA

Loud and clear.

DANIEL

Good. If you really want to help, I hear the community organizers are always looking for volunteers. Someone has to pass out those fliers and make those posters.

TERESA

I'll remember that.

DANIEL

Good. Does anyone have any comments or questions?

No.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Good. This meeting is adjourned.

Everyone gets up to leave, except for Marsha, the recording secretary. She watches as Teresa walks away.

**I**NT. UNION HALL - CORRIDOR - DAY

Teresa stands in front of a poster.

ON POSTER

It's a sign up sheet for the upcoming volunteer orientation.

BACK TO TERESA

She looks at the poster long and hard.

TERESA  
Fucking, Daniel.

INT. UNION HALL - CLASSROOM - LATER

SHANIECE WALKER, a bubbly Black woman in her early 40s, stands in front of a small group of union members numbering in the low teens.

SHANIECE  
Hello everyone and welcome to the local volunteer orientation. Woo hoo!

Nobody shares Shaniece's enthusiasm.

SHANIECE (CONT'D)  
I see this is a tame group. I'm going to have to loosen some of you up.

Shaniece looks at the uninspired crowd.

SHANIECE (CONT'D)  
Maybe another time. Anyway, the purpose of this meeting is to introduce you to the work we do. As a volunteer for this local union, you have the opportunity to...

Two female UNION MEMBERS whisper to one another, two rows from where Teresa is seated.

UNION MEMBER ONE  
(re: Teresa)  
Isn't that what's her name?

UNION MEMBER TWO  
Who?

UNION MEMBER ONE  
Her over there.

UNION MEMBER TWO  
Oh. Umm...that's, uh, Brenda's friend? What is her name?

UNION MEMBER ONE  
How would I know? I asked you.

UNION MEMBER TWO  
I don't know what her name is. Her name is  
Brenda's friend.

The two women snicker. Shaniece notices them.

SHANIECE  
Is there a problem ladies?

UNION MEMBER TWO  
Excuse me. I was choking.

SHANIECE  
Do you need to go out and get some water?

UNION MEMBER TWO  
No, I'm fine.

SHANIECE  
Okay. As I was saying, there are a variety of...

The two women laugh to themselves.

UNION MEMBER ONE  
What is she doing here? She's supposed to be with  
the big dogs.

UNION MEMBER TWO  
You don't know? Miss Know It All got into some  
serious.

UNION MEMBER ONE  
For real?

UNION MEMBER TWO  
She did something shady. I heard Daniel is trying to  
kick her out for good.

Teresa's eyes widen.

UNION MEMBER ONE  
That's cold.

UNION MEMBER TWO

They might as well. She's nothing without Brenda.  
Go ahead and put her out of her misery.

EXT. BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE - AFTERNOON

Teresa stands at the front steps. Students of various ages and ethnic groups enter and exit the tall glass building.

INT. BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE - ADVISOR'S OFFICE - LATER

LUZ HARMON, a Filipino woman in her early 50s, sits at a computer desk. She is paying close attention to her computer screen.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

It's a high school transcript. The majority of the grades are good, until the student reached their senior year.

BACK TO Luz.

LUZ

I don't get it, honey. You were a good student. What happened?

Teresa sits in a chair across from Luz's desk.

TERESA

Well, you know. Life.

Luz stares at Teresa. She wants a real answer.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I uh...there was a complication.

LUZ

I see.

TERESA

Yeah.

LUZ

Why it take you so long to come back?

TERESA

I went to work.

LUZ

And?

TERESA

I was by myself. There wasn't any time.

LUZ

What about your family? No one could...

Teresa sighs and shakes her head.

LUZ (CONT'D)

Okay...let's get you set up.

TERESA

Thank you.

LUZ

What's your goals? Do you want a two year degree or do you want to transfer?

TERESA

I just want to take one class.

LUZ

That's it?

TERESA

Yes.

LUZ

Our school offers many programs for working adults like you. We offer classes at night so...

TERESA

I want to take a speech class. Can I get that?

LUZ

Speech class...I have to look. Those classes fill up fast.

Luz types and clicks away.

LUZ (CONT'D)

Hmm, all the classes are...

Teresa prepares to get up.

LUZ (CONT'D)

Wait! There's a few seats left in one class. You want this?

TERESA

(exhales)

Yes.

INT. TERESA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nicky and Fred sit on opposite sides of the couch. Both of them stare at Teresa, who stands in front of the television set.

FRED

A speech class. What do you need a speech class for? You're trying to be a preacher?

Fred laughs at his own joke. Nicky looks at Fred with a look of disgust.

TERESA

Thanks, Fred. I'm glad you find this news funny.

FRED

Oh, come on. Y'all take everything too seriously. I was only joking.

TERESA

That's the problem, Fred. You're always joking. Can't you be serious for once? Jesus!

FRED

Fine. Go ahead and tell us about your little speech class.

Teresa loses what little confidence she had and resorts to looking down at the floor.

TERESA

Like I was saying...um, I'll be taking a speech class at BCC. It's only once a week, so it shouldn't cause too many problems.

FRED

(under his breath)

Good.

TERESA

I do, however, need everybody's help. I haven't done this in a long time and it would be nice if I got a little help around the house.

Fred shakes his head a little.

NICKY

I'll help you.

Teresa looks up.

TERESA

What?

NICKY

I'll help you.

TERESA

You will?

NICKY

Yeah. I think it's cool that you're going back to school. I'm in.

Teresa walks over to Nicky and hugs her.

FRED

Yeah, uh, I'll help out too. I guess.

Nicky and Teresa ignore Fred.

It's time for Teresa to go to school and everything goes wrong. Fred take off in her car again and leaves her stranded.

INT. BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE - CLASSROOM NIGHT

A sweaty and out of breath Teresa arrives to class late. She looks for an empty seat in the back of a packed class.

The TEACHER, a handsome Black man in his 30s lectures.

TEACHER

Has anybody seen this episode? Let me get a raise of hands if you know what I am talking about.

The class is mostly young, so only a few hands go up. Teresa still looks for a seat.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Nobody watches Seinfeld?

Silence.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

You have to be kidding me. It's one of the greatest...

Teresa trips over a student's backpack, almost falling.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Shows ever.

Everyone turns their attention to Teresa.

TERESA

(to student)

I'm so sorry.

TEACHER

(to Teresa)

You alright back there?

Teresa stands up straight.

TERESA

Yes, I am fine. Please continue.

TEACHER

There's a seat in the front if you like.

TERESA

Thank you.

She makes the long silent walk to the empty seat in the front.

TEACHER

As I was saying, there's an episode of Seinfeld, where he talks about the fear of public speaking. According to a study, public speaking is the number one fear. Anyone want to guess what number two is?

The room is quiet.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Anyone takers?

No. His looks at Teresa.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

(to Teresa)

How about you?

TERESA

Me?

TEACHER

Yes, you. What do you think people's second biggest fear is?

TERESA

Uh, I don't know. Heights?

TEACHER

Heights? Okay.

FEMALE STUDENT raises her hand.

STUDENT ONE

Bugs.

TEACHER

Okay, not bad. Women do make up over half of the human population.

Some of the students laugh. Others hiss.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

I'm kidding ladies. I'm kidding. Please don't report me to human resources. Please. That would be my greatest fear.

(pause)

Any other suggestions. Let me get a male's perspective.

MALE STUDENT raises his hand.

MALE STUDENT

Marriage.

More laughs.

TEACHER

Spoken like a true man. Anymore suggestions?

No.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Okay. Those were all good guesses, but the correct answer is death. Dying comes second to public speaking. As Mr. Seinfeld said in his bit, people would rather be in the casket, than give the eulogy. How many of you have this fear? Give me a show of hands.

Over have the class raises their hands, including Teresa.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Interesting. Well, over the course of this semester, I hope to alleviate your fears of public speaking. Notice, I said alleviate and not erase. I am a teacher, not a miracle worker.

There's a stack of handout on his desk. He picks it up and hands it to a student for distribution

TEACHER (CONT'D)

(re: paper)

This will be your first assignment.

The STUDENTS GIVE a NOISE of DISCONTENT.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Aww...don't be like that. It will be fine. All you have to do is write a short paragraph. Tell me why are you afraid to speak in front of others? How does it make you feel? Write about an experience you had. Whatever.

Teresa looks at instructions. She looks a little worried.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Does everyone have the assignment?

Yes.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Good. Now, let's breath.

EXT. BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE - NIGHT

Teresa walks down the gray steps. The Teacher is not far behind.

TEACHER

Hey!

She doesn't pay him any attention, since there are other students around.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Hey! Late girl. Girl who tripped in class today.

Teresa turns around. He approaches her.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

I thought that would get your attention.

TERESA

That was so embarrassing.

TEACHER

It wasn't that bad.

TERESA

I was late and loud. I promise I'll be on time for next class, Professor...

TEACHER

Come on. You know it.

She thinks long and hard. The Teacher clutches his heart, mimicking a heart attack.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Oh, the tragedy!

TERESA

I'm sorry. I didn't catch your name.

TEACHER

I went to high school with you.

TERESA

Really?

TEACHER

Yes. I was a couple grades under you.

TERESA

That explains it. I don't remember anybody, who wasn't in my grade.

TEACHER

God, this hurts. I loved you so much and you don't even know my name.

Teresa is taken a back. She checks the time on her phone.

TERESA

Well, look at the time. I have to get going. It's getting a little late.

TEACHER

I can give you ride, if you like.

TERESA

No, that's okay. I can get there by myself.

TEACHER

I scared you, didn't I? You can tell me. My feelings won't be hurt.

TERESA

No, it's not you. I just have to get home. But thanks for the offer.

TEACHER

Alright. Whatever you say.

TERESA

Goodnight professor...

TEACHER

Marcus. Marcus Evans.

TERESA

Goodnight Professor Evans.

She walks away.

TEACHER/MARCUS  
(to himself)  
Call me Marcus.

EXT. TERESA'S HOME - NIGHT

Teresa stands in front of her house.

The kitchen light is on, revealing the outline of a man's body.

TERESA  
Bastard.

Teresa grabs her phone out of her purse.

ON CELL PHONE

Her thumb connects an arrangement of dots. The password is in the form of a house.

Icons show up on the screen. There are no new notifications.

BACK TO TERESA

She lets out a loud sigh and puts her cell phone back into her purse.

INT. TERESA'S HOME - LATER

Teresa opens the door slowly, trying not to make a sound.

The SOUND of RUNNING WATER comes from the KITCHEN.

She closes the door midway when:

The DOOR CREAKS.

The WATER TURNS OFF.

Teresa pauses.

After a brief moment, the SOUND of RUNNING WATER returns.

Teresa closes the door quietly, but quickly.

Facing the door, Teresa unzips her coat slowly when:

A HAND APPEARS on her SHOULDER.

Teresa nearly jumps out of her skin.

TERESA  
(screams)  
Oh my God!

She turns around. Fred stands before her with a small pot in his hand.

FRED  
(laughing)  
I'm sorry babe. I'm sorry.

TERESA  
What are you trying to do, kill me?

FRED  
I heard the door creak and thought someone was trying to break in. It was about to go down in here.

TERESA  
Jesus Christ.

FRED  
I'm sorry. I'm sorry, but your face...

TERESA  
It's not funny, Fred.

FRED  
I know it's not. I'm sorry. Just come into the kitchen with me. I'll make it up to you. Come on.

Fred exits the living room.

INT. TERESA'S HOME - DINING ROOM - LATER

Teresa sits at the table with a glass of wine in her hand. Her mind appears to be else where.

Fred notices Teresa hasn't touched her plate.

FRED  
What's wrong with you?

TERESA  
Nothing, I'm just not hungry.

FRED

Well, you should at least eat something. You don't drink on an empty stomach.

TERESA

I'm fine, Fred.

The SOUND of the DOOR OPENING.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Nicky!

NICKY OS

I'm coming. I'm coming.

Nicky enters the dining room. Her smile disappears when she sees Fred.

NICKY

Hey, mom.

TERESA

What time is it?

NICKY

Ugh! I know, I know.

TERESA

Am I crazy or did we not just have a conversation about you helping me out? Please let me know, so I can get checked out.

NICKY

Fine. I will come home straight from school and do my homework and clean up and cook and stop hanging with that girl for a week. How does that sound?

Teresa puts her glass down and stands up.

TERESA

How many times are we going to do this?

NICKY

Mom, I know that you're...

TERESA  
HOW MANY TIMES ARE WE GOING TO DO  
THIS?

Nicky and Fred stare at Teresa in disbelief.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
My first day back ...you two are so fucking selfish.

Fred opens his mouth to say something.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
Quiet.

His mouth closes.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
I am tired. I am so tired. I put up with everyone's  
shit and get nothing in return, but more shit.  
(pause)  
Today was the last day. I'm not doing this anymore.

Teresa exits the dining room. Nicky and Fred look at one another.

TERESA OS  
Anymore.

The next day, Teresa gets in contact with Shaniece. Teresa decides she is going to work her way up to a community organizer.

Montage Sequence or Series of Scenes: Teresa starts off by making posters. She then passes out fliers at a station. The latter position allows her to open up more. However, Teresa's family becomes worried, when her volunteering consumes her time.

After her second class session, Teresa talks a little more with Marcus, who reminisces about the past and encourages Teresa to become more vocal. She isn't sure she is ready yet.

At a community event, where Teresa is volunteering, the speaker doesn't show up. Teresa finally steps up to the plate and speaks publicly. It is rocky at first, but she manages to give a great speech. Everyone applauds her.

EXT. RICHMOND TRAIN YARD - PARKING LOT - DAY

Teresa walks through the maze of cars when:

WOMAN OS

TERESA!

Teresa turns around. It's MARSHA GRAY, the union's recording secretary.

Marsha jogs to catch up with Teresa.

MARSHA/WOMAN OS

Whoa! You're a hard one to catch up with.

TERESA

What can I do for you?

MARSHA

First off, I wanted to apologize for the other day.

TERESA

There's no need.

MARSHA

No, I have to. You gave us important news and that Daniel shot you down. He's a cruel boy, that one.

TERESA

That's one way of saying it.

MARSHA/WOMAN OS

It was very rude of him. Brenda would never do anything like that.

TERESA

No she wouldn't.

Teresa's her car in the distance.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I'm actually over there. It was nice talking to you, Marsha. I'll catch up with later.

Teresa turns to walk away, but Marsha grabs her arm.

MARSHA/WOMAN OS

Wait a minute.

TERESA

Marsha, let go of my arm.

MARSHA/WOMAN OS

I'm going to tell you something very important and you have to promise not to tell anyone.

TERESA

Okay. I promise. Just let me go.

Marsha loosens her grip on Teresa's arm.

MARSHA/WOMAN OS

There's going to be an opening coming up and you need to take it.

TERESA

An opening? What opening?

MARSHA/WOMAN OS

Time is running out and this is the only way to get you in.

Teresa stands motionless.

TERESA

Who....what position?

MARSHA/WOMAN OS

We don't want to bring too much attention, so it will have to be a lowly position. However, the job does require an essential skill set and you, my darling, are the only other person who has it.

TERESA

This is insane, Marsha. We just had elections.

MARSHA/WOMAN OS

Never mind that. This is more important.

TERESA

You heard what he said.

MARSHA/WOMAN OS

Listen to me. I don't give a hoot about Daniel. This whole thing has been a ego trip for him and the union can't afford that flight. There's too much at stake. That's why you need to be there. Brenda was on our side and you're the closest thing we have to her.

TERESA

I'm not her. I can't...

MARSHA/WOMAN OS

No, you're not.

Marsha leans in.

TERESA

You are better than her.

Marsha turns around and walks away.

MARSHA/WOMAN OS

Think about it and let me know.

INT. TERESA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Teresa lounges on the couch with a lap top in hand. She's typing frantically.

Nicky comes into the living room and sits on the couch. From her point of view, Teresa has gone crazy.

NICKY

Um, mom?

TERESA

Yes?

NICKY

Uh, I, ah, wanted to apologize for last night. I should have called and let you know I was going to be running late. I'm sorry.

Teresa barely acknowledges Nicky. Teresa is too wrapped up in her typing.

TERESA

Oh, thanks baby.

NICKY

I also wanted you to know...

TERESA

(to herself)

Damn it!

NICKY

That my school is giving a field trip to Washington D.C. and I was hoping I could go.

TERESA

That's good honey.

NICKY

Mama, you're not even listening to me.

TERESA

Yes, I am.

Teresa looks up from the computer.

TERESA (CONT'D)

You said, "Sorry, but can I have some money?"

NICKY

That is not what I said. What are you doing anyway?

TERESA

Homework.

NICKY

What do you have to do?

TERESA

Write a paragraph.

Nicky rolls her eyes.

NICKY

About?

TERESA

Mind your business.

NICKY

That's not fair. I tell you what I am working on.

TERESA

Like you have a choice.

NICKY

Come on. Let me see it.

TERESA

No.

Teresa brings the lap top close to her body.

NICKY

Fine.

Nicky exits the living room.

Teresa lowers the lap top and begins to type slowly. Her typing speed increases gradually.

Just when she reaches top speed, Nicky runs into the living room and jumps on her mother.

NICKY (CONT'D)

I want to see it.

TERESA

Nicky, you better get off of me.

Teresa and Nicky wrestle over the laptop, until Nicky seizes it all together.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Nicky, no!

Nicky stands up and reads some of the lines a loud.

NICKY

“My fear of public speaking.” Oh, this is going to be good.

TERESA

Please don't.

NICKY

“I am afraid to speak publicly, because...”

Teresa watches Nicky's face in horror. Her daughter's devious smile disappears.

Nicky stands still with the lap top in her hands for a moment.

TERESA

You never listen.

Nicky places the lap top on the couch and exits.

Teresa cries on the living room floor.

The next day, Teresa finds out there is going to be an important union meeting.

At the meeting, Marsha steps down from her position and nominates Teresa for her position. Daniel wants Teresa to run for the position, but there's simply no time. There is a quick vote by hands. Teresa gets the recording secretary position.

Back at home, Teresa prepares for the upcoming meeting. As she is getting ready, Fred voices his discontent. Teresa doesn't pay Fred too much mind.

Teresa has a brief strategy meeting with Daniel, before they go into the meeting. She gives him vital information and advice. He agrees to go along.

Everything goes wrong at the meeting. Instead of following Teresa's advice, Daniel does his own thing, which backfires. The board members via Benford Wilks, reject all of the union's offer and sends them back to the drawing board.

EXT. BART HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Numerous media outlets line the side walk with their vans, cameramen, and news reporters.

Around 20 union members in union apparel wait along with the reporters.

All of the union representative, including Teresa and Daniel, exit the building.

News reporters rush over to them. A female ABC NEWS REPORTER thrusts her microphone in front of Daniel's face.

ABC REPORTER

Can you tell us the results of this meeting? Did you accept the final deal or will you go on strike?

DANIEL

Uh, well, we're still working on a deal, okay? These things do not take place overnight. We need to solidify some numbers and hammer out the details...

Teresa moves the reporters microphone in her direction.

TERESA

But in the meantime, we will be going on strike effective tomorrow.

A male KRON REPORTER directs his microphone at Teresa.

KRON REPORTER

Why has negotiations dissolved in such a manner?

DANIEL

Like I was saying...

TERESA

You can't dissolve something that was never solid in the first place. We've been coming to these meetings day after day and week after week. All they have ever done is said no and sent us back to the drawing board. No explanations and no suggestions. We were simply supposed to figure it out on our own.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A MYSTERIOUS MAN sits in a dark English style office. He is seen only from the neck down.

The Mysterious Man has a small glass of scotch in his hand. He takes a sip, while watching T.V.

ON TV

Teresa is on the news.

TERESA

And now they want us to take this final deal or else? I don't think so. We will not be bullied into a contract.

CBS REPORTER OS

How long do you think the strike will last?

TERESA

As long as it needs to. I have no further comments.

Teresa walks off screen.

BACK TO MYSTERIOUS MAN

He puts down his drink and takes his phone out of his pants pocket. He dials a number and puts the phone on speaker.

INT. BART HEADQUARTERS - CORRIDOR - DAY

Benford Wilks walks down the hallway until:

His CELL PHONE BUZZES.

He pulls his phone out of his jacket and looks at the caller id. A smile creeps on his face. He answers it.

BENFORD

Hello.

INTERCUT CALL

MYSTERIOUS MAN

You devil. The pieces fell into place like you said it would. How'd you pull that off?

BENFORD

Years of practice.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

Well, I be damned. You're playing like a pro out there. I love it.

BENFORD

Thank you.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

I love it so much, I decided to give you a gift.

BENFORD

A gift. What kind of gift?

MYSTERIOUS MAN

Oh, just a little something to expedite the process.

BENFORD

I look forward to it.

The call ends.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Fred and Nicky sit on the couch. Teresa stand in front of them.

FRED

(sighs)

Jesus, woman. How am I supposed to get to work tomorrow in all of that traffic?

TERESA

I don't know, Fred. Catch the bus, carpool,  
whatever.

FRED

Catch the bus? Everybody and their mama is going  
to be on the bus.

NICKY

Ew...I hate when hella...

TERESA

Watch it!

NICKY

Hecka people be on the bus. Can I stay home?

TERESA

No, you can not.

NICKY

Well, I tried.

FRED

Shit, I wish I could stay home. Do you know how  
early I'm going to have to wake up? I might as well  
stay up.

TERESA

Hmm...not if you're going to talk the whole time.

Nicky chuckles. He gets up and walks away.

NICKY

Aww...his little feelings got hurt. Oh, well.

TERESA

He's always mad about something. Can't be happy  
for anybody.

NICKY

Well, if you it makes you happy, you looked great on  
T.V.

TERESA

Thanks, honey.

NICKY

I'm serious. You were a total M.I.L.F.

TERESA

M.I.L.F.? I don't like the sound of that.

NICKY

It's not bad. It's a mother I'd like to...

Nicky moves her eyebrows seductively.

TERESA

Nicky!

NICKY

I'm just saying.

Teresa burst out laughing.

TERESA

Girl, you are so crazy.

NICKY

I get it from my mama.

TERESA

Don't say that.

Nicky and Teresa share a precious mother and daughter moment.

STRIKE MONTAGE

INT. BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Teresa rushes down the corridor with her shoulder bag.

She reaches the classroom door and stops for moment. Her breaths are heavy and fast. She opens the door and enters:

CLASSROOM

Everyone turns in their seat. Marcus in front of his desk. He claps slowly.

Teresa stands in the back of the classroom looking confused. Another student joins in Marcus' clap, which gains pace. Then another student joins in, then another until:

All the students are clapping rapidly. She receives a standing ovation.

Teresa is dumbfounded. She just stands there. Her eyes brim with tears. Marcus walks up to her.

MARCUS

You did good today. I'm very proud of you.

He grabs a stiff Teresa by the arm and leads her slowly to the front of the class.

She sits in her seat, dumbfounded.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Alright everybody. Let's settle down and give Ms. Smith some time to recover.

Some of the student's laugh. The claps ceases gradually. Everyone takes a seat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Shall we begin?

EXT. BERKELEY STREET - NIGHT

Marcus and Teresa walk side by side down a low lit street.

MARCUS

So, how are you feeling?

TERESA

Uh...a little nervous.

MARCUS

Just a little?

TERESA

Very nervous.

MARCUS

I don't blame you. You have big challenge a head of you.

TERESA

Yeah.

MARCUS

I mean....momentous. Do you realize how big this is?

Teresa turns to him, eyebrows furrowed.

TERESA

I have an idea.

MARCUS

You're going up against one of the largest transportation agencies in the country. They have money and power...

TERESA

Alright, I get it.

MARCUS

Hey, I'm letting you know. These things can be difficult.

TERESA

I know that, but hopefully it won't last too long. We got the people on our side and the people need their trains. How bad can it be?

Marcus taps Teresa's hand to stop her. He looks directly into her eyes.

MARCUS

This situation can get very ugly, very quick, if you're not careful.

TERESA

Marcus...

MARCUS

Listen to me now. You have a great start with the strike, okay? Tomorrow is going to be hell. But what's your plan after that?

TERESA

I don't know. I thought we'd strike for a day or two, before they buckle and give us what we want.

He brushes his hand against her cheek.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Don't do that.

MARCUS

(sighs)

You see? Getting what you want is never easy. You have to be strong and persistent...

TERESA

I am with somebody.

MARCUS

No matter what. I'm in it to win it, Ms. Smith. The question is, are you.

FIRST PART OF THE STRIKE, WHEN EVERYTHING WORKS TO HER ADVANTAGE

INT. DONUT SHOP - MORNING

Early morning commuters stand in a long line, waiting to buy donuts. Teresa is towards the end of the line.

An ELDERLY MAN at a near by table, flips through his newspaper. Teresa glances at the newspaper and does a double take.

ON NEWSPAPER

BART EMPLOYEE SALARIES: THE ACTUAL FIGURES

BACK TO TERESA

She steps out of line and walks over to the Elderly Man.

TERESA

Excuse me?

He looks up.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Can I take a look at that?

ELDERLY MAN

Hey! You're the woman from the article.

TERESA

What? They have my picture in there? Let me see that.

He brings the newspaper closer to his body.

ELDERLY MAN

Get your own paper. You can afford it.

The Elderly Man returns to his paper.

Teresa walks to the front of the line and grabs a newspaper. She flips through the pages until she reaches the article. Her eyes scan the page until:

TERESA

What?

INT. UNION HALL - MEETING ROOM - LATER

Teresa watches Marsha closely as she reads the same newspaper.

Marsha folds the newspaper back up and places it on the table.

TERESA

Well?

MARSHA

This is plain awful.

TERESA

Can they do this? Half the stuff in here isn't true.

MARSHA

I know it isn't.

TERESA

We need to reach out to the media and let them know what's really going on. They can't get away with this.

Marsha rubs her eyes.

MARSHA

My darling, there is nothing we can do. The damage has already be done.

TERESA

What? No! We can fix this. We just have to make a few calls and send out some e-mails. They have to listen.

MARSHA

That's not going to do any good. They've already seen the numbers. They're not going to forget it even if we tell them it's a lie.

TERESA

So, what am I supposed to do?

MARSHA

I can't tell you, dear. That's something you have to figure out on your own.

Marsha gets up to leave.

TERESA

Hold on! Wait a second! You put me in this role and now you're leaving me when I need you most?

MARSHA

Yes.

TERESA

You are so wrong.

MARSHA

An animal has you cornered. There's no way to go. What do you do, when there's no way to go.

Teresa thinks about.

MARSHA (CONT'D)

Sleep on it. Better yet, watch the Animal Channel.

Marsha exits.

TERESA ARRIVES THE HOSPITAL WHERE THE NURSE GIVE HER AN UPDATE ON BRENDA'S HEALTH.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

NURSE

Wait here.

The Nurse opens the door to Brenda's room and lets herself in. Teresa waits patiently in the hallway.

NURSE OS

(slow and loud)

Hi, Brenda. How are you feeling today?

BRENDA OS

How many times do I have to tell you? I lost my arm, not my hearing. You don't have to talk to me like I'm stupid. Now, what the hell you want?

NURSE OS

There's a visitor here to see you, but if you're not up to it...

BRENDA OS

Who is it?

NURSE OS

Ms. Teresa Smith.

BRENDA OS

Teresa!

TERESA OS

Yeah?!

BRENDA OS

Bring your butt in here.

Teresa shakes her head.

INT. HOSPITAL - BRENDA'S ROOM - LATER

Brenda sits up in her bed eating strawberry jello. Teresa tries to keep her eyes off of Brenda's missing arm.

TERESA

Brenda, you ought to be a shamed of yourself.  
Acting up in the hospital. You're going to mess  
around and get the wrong dosage.

BRENDA

Now, why would say something like that?

TERESA

It's the truth. You better be nice to her.

BRENDA

I don't have to do nothing but be black and die.

The last word hangs in the hair.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

You want to talk about the negotiation?

TERESA

No, not really. You want to talk about...

Teresa looks at the stub.

BRENDA

No.

TERESA

Okay.

Brenda and Teresa sit in silence.

BRENDA

So, now were going to sit in here and not talk?

TERESA

What else is there to talk about? The weather?

BRENDA

(sighs)

I lost my right arm. What do you want me to say?

TERESA

I don't know. Say, this is just a roadblock and that  
we'll get pass.

(MORE)

TERESA (CONT'D)

That this is just a test and God would never put us through something we couldn't make it through. That this is only temporary. Say something. I'm dying here.

Teresa breaks down crying. Brenda reaches over with her left hand. Teresa take her friend's arm and squeezes it tightly. A single tear rolls down Brenda's face.

INT. BAR - DAY

Teresa sits at dive bar alone drinking whiskey. Benford Wilks enters, unnoticed.

BENFORD

Interesting. I didn't take you as a whiskey drinking woman. But then, you're a different breed altogether. Do you mind if I sit down.

She looks up from her drink.

TERESA

You got some damn nerve coming in here after what you've done.

BENFORD

Oh, don't take it personal.

He sits in the empty bar stool next to Teresa.

BENFORD (CONT'D)

I'm only doing my job.

TERESA

Don't take it per...  
(to BARTENDER)  
Excuse me?

The BARTENDER looks up. He's drying a glass with a towel.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Close my tab, so I can get out of here.

BARTENDER

Okay.

Teresa puts on her coat.

BENFORD

Don't be dramatic. I only want to talk.

TERESA

Unless you're about to give me what I want, we don't have nothing to talk about.

The Bartender places a receipt and a pen on the counter. Teresa signs the receipt and turns to leave before:

Benford grabs Teresa by the arm.

BENFORD

Now, you wait a second.

TERESA

You better get your hands off of me.

BENFORD

I have a lot of important friends, Teresa. A lot. And these important friends of mine want this silly strike to end.

Teresa tries to wrestle herself free, but Benford brings her closer.

BENFORD (CONT'D)

Stop it. Stop it right now and nobody will get hurt.

He releases her. Teresa rubs her arm.

TERESA

You're fucking crazy.

BENFORD

You haven't begun to see crazy.

Benford stands up, takes a napkin out of his front pocket, and dusts himself off.

BENFORD (CONT'D)

Be a good girl and come back home. Who knows? There might be some scraps left for you under the table.

TERESA

I don't eat nobody's scraps.

BENFORD

You will or you want have nothing at all.

He tucks his napkin back into his coat pocket.

BENFORD (CONT'D)

Think about it.

TERESA GOES BACK TO THE TABLE, WHERE THEY TRY TO SCREW HER OVER.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Teresa waits at the front desk. A SCHOOL CLERK, 50s, ruffles through some papers, completely oblivious to Teresa.

TERESA

Excuse me?

SCHOOL CLERK

One minute, please.

The school clerk continues ruffling through pages. Teresa is agitated.

TERESA

Excuse me? I'm in a little bit of a rush. I want to put some money down for a trip, but I have a few questions.

The school clerk looks up.

SCHOOL CLERK

Don't I know you from somewhere?

TERESA

My daughter attends the school, so you've probably seen me around.

SCHOOL CLERK

No, I know you from somewhere else.

TERESA

How do you want the money? The brochure didn't say...

SCHOOL CLERK

You that little union girl who be on TV.

Teresa lowers her head a little.

TERESA

Like I was saying...

SCHOOL CLERK

I knew it was you. When y'all going to stop all this nonsense? Got me getting up early in the morning to get here. You have any idea how long it take me to...

TERESA

D.C. trip. Do you have the information or not?

SCHOOL CLERK

There's no need to have an attitude, okay? I was only letting you know what I have been through since your little strike.

TERESA

Oh my God.

SCHOOL CLERK

And I don't know what you are talking about. There ain't no trip to D.C.

TERESA

No, that's impossible. I have the flier right here.

Teresa takes out the flier and give it to the school clerk.

TERESA (CONT'D)

See?

SCHOOL CLERK

This isn't us.

INT. BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

There are more empty seats than there are students. The students who are in attendance look exhausted.

Teresa arrives to class late as Marcus is giving a lecture. He sees Teresa and motions for her to come in.

Some of the students turn their attention to Teresa. Not everyone is happy to see her. A YOUNG FEMALE STUDENT rolls her eyes.

She takes a seat in the back of the class.

MARCUS

Since attendance is low tonight, how about we get into one large circle and have a discussion?

Nobody objects.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I'll take that as a yes. Let's get moving.

Everyone gets up and arranges desks into a circle. When the job is complete, everyone takes a seat.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Okay. How is everyone feeling about their final project?

Silence and a few shrugs.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Anybody making progress?

Nothing. Marcus looks to Teresa.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(to Teresa)

What about you?

TERESA

What about me?

MARCUS

Do you feel like you're making any progress?

TERESA

Maybe. Maybe not. I don't really want to talk about it.

A YOUNG FEMALE STUDENT snickers.

MARCUS

That's fine. You don't have to talk about it if you don't want.

TERESA

(to Young Female Student)

Is there a problem?

YOUNG FEMALE STUDENT

I know you're not talking to me.

TERESA

I'm looking dead at you. You've been looking at me like I'm crazy, sucking in your teeth. If you got something to say, say it.

MARCUS

Ladies, uh, let's not do this here.

YOUNG FEMALE STUDENT

I thought this was supposed to be a speech class. Can't I express myself?

MARCUS

Yes, you can express yourself, but this isn't...

TERESA

Let her talk...I want to hear what she has to say.

Young Female Student clears her throat.

YOUNG FEMALE STUDENT

I watch the news. I saw how much you make. Train drivers make over \$50,000...\$50,000 without a degree. More if you work overtime. There are people, hundreds and thousands of people, who have graduated from college and can't get that, but you do. And now you want to get more? That's ludicrous. You should be happy with what you have.

Some of the other students nod in agreement.

TERESA

\$50,000 divided by 12 is a little over \$4,000 a month. Take out federal and state taxes and your left with something in the mid to high three's. If you have medical and dental, you have even less. All of this and you haven't gotten your check yet.

Pause.

TERESA (CONT'D)

What's the first thing you have to pay on the first of the month?

A YOUNG MALE STUDENT raises his hand midway.

YOUNG MALE STUDENT

Rent.

TERESA

Lodgings, exactly. And since we live in one of the most expensive places in the United States, we're expected to shell out from \$1200 and up for rent and over \$2000 for mortgage. And these are just the low figures.

Teresa stands up and circles the room.

TERESA (CONT'D)

After you pay your high rent or mortgage, you have to pay the utilities: PG&E, water, and garbage. If you're fancy, you'll have a cell phone, internet and maybe cable. What comes after that?

The students look at one another. OLDER MALE STUDENT shouts out.

OLDER MALE STUDENT

Car.

TERESA

Okay...

YOUNG FEMALE STUDENT

Not everyone has a car, obviously.

TERESA

That's true. Tell me how people get around.

YOUNG FEMALE STUDENT

Some bike or walk. Other's carpool...

TERESA

And most take the bus or BART. That costs. That can cost from \$50 to \$100 a month.

The Young Female Student looks down at her desk.

TERESA (CONT'D)

So let's recap. We paid for our for our housing, bills, transportation...

Another YOUNG FEMALE raises her hand.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Yes?

YOUNG FEMALE

We haven't eaten yet.

TERESA

(laughs)

That is absolutely right. Here I am going on about this other stuff and I haven't begin to talk about food...or toiletries or clothes. We haven't even talked about family.

Teresa stops at the Young Female Student's desk.

TERESA (CONT'D)

How does that \$50,000 look now?

YOUNG FEMALE STUDENT

There are still people who make less than that. They somehow make out.

TERESA

Making it? Is that what you call it? Living pay check to pay check. Always one step away from being in the poor house. That's not making it. That's barely surviving and I will not take part in that.

She walks over to her desk and pick ups her belongings.

TERESA (CONT'D)

You can say what you want about me, I will not stop. I'm going to keep fighting until we get what we deserve and if that means we have to bring the whole Bay Area to its knees, so be it. I refuse to be someone's sucker for the rest of my life, and if anybody had any sense, they would too. Good Day.

MARCUS

Teresa, wait.

TERESA  
I said, Good Day.

Teresa leaves.

INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Teresa sits in the dining room with the brochure and flier in her hand.

The SOUND of the DOOR UNLOCKING and OPENING.

TERESA  
Nicky? Is that you?

NICKY OS  
Yeah.

TERESA  
Come here.

Nicky enters the dining room. She still has on her coat.

NICKY  
What's up?

TERESA  
Nothing. I was just reading the materials you gave me. It looks really nice.

NICKY  
I know. That's why I want to go.

TERESA  
Yeah, this would've been nice, if it we're real.

Nicky eyes widen.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
I went to your school today.

NICKY  
Mom, I can explain.

TERESA

(tearing up)

I was going to make a down payment...and then I came home. Started thinking. Why would Nicky need this kind of money?

NICKY

I'm so sorry.

Tears roll down Nicky's face.

TERESA

I want you to go to your room and pack your things.

NICKY

Pack...where am I going?

TERESA

I don't know. You figure it out.

NICKY

But mama...

TERESA

Get out!

NICKY

I'm not leaving!

Teresa gets up and pushes Nicky towards the door.

TERESA

Oh, you're getting out of here.

NICKY

Mama stop!

Nicky and Teresa grapple with each other from the DINING ROOM to the:

LIVING ROOM

Teresa pinches Nicky repeatedly as they make their way to the front door.

NICKY (CONT'D)

You're hurting me!

TERESA

Good. Now you know how I feel.

Teresa opens the door and waits for Nicky to leave.

Nicky looks at her mother for a moment, before picking up her bag and walking onto the porch.

NICKY

Mama, please!

Teresa slams the door in Nicky's face.

Nicky stares at the door a minute. She raises her hand to knock, but stops short. Instead, she walks.

Teresa stands closely at the door with her face pressed against it. She descends slowly to the ground, crying the whole way down.

EXT. MARKESHA'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Teresa walks pass a few doors until she stops at APT 232.

The SOUND of CHILDREN SCREAMING and RUNNING COME from the apartment.

She knocks on the screen door.

MARKESHA OS

Would y'all cut it out? Damn!...Who is it?

TERESA

It's me, Teresa.

The noises ceases.

POTENTIAL FRIEND OS

Uh, just a minute.

Teresa puts her ear to the door. She can HEAR HUSHED VOICES AND SHUFFLING FEET. She knocks on the door again.

MARKESHA OS

I'm coming.

Markesha opens the door. She is a little sweaty.

POTENTIAL FRIEND

Hey, girl!

TERESA

Hey.

Teresa enters the apartment.

**INT. MARKESHA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

Markesha shuts the door.

MARKESHA

Go ahead and have a seat.

FAMILY AREA

Teresa takes a seat on a small couch. She notices Markesha trembling lips and fidgety hands.

MARKESHA (CONT'D)

You want something to drink? I got some juice if you like.

TERESA

No, no thank you.

Markesha sits down on an adjacent couch. There are boot marks on her legs.

MARKESHA

I wish you had of told me you were coming over. I would have gotten myself together.

TERESA

Well, I've been calling you for the last few days, but you never got back to me.

MARKESHA

Girl, it's these kids. I can't take my eyes off them for one second. They would tear up the house.

TERESA

(laughs)

I know how that is.

Pause.

TERESA (CONT'D)

So, what have you been up to?

MARKESHA

Nothing much. Just taking care of the kids. I decided to give my wallet a break and watch them myself. There ain't no point in sending them off if I ain't working.

TERESA

I hear you. How have you been holding up?

MARKESHA

Barely, but we'll make it.

TERESA

Yes, you will.

MERCEDES, a small four year old girl in pajamas, enters the family room through the hallway.

MERCEDES

Mama. I'm thirsty.

MARKESHA

(to Teresa)

See what I am talking about?

(to Mercedes)

What did I tell you to do? I told you to stay in your room.

MERCEDES

But I'm thirsty.

TERESA

You go ahead and get her something to drink. I have to head out.

MARKESHA

You sure?

TERESA

Yeah, I have some business to take care of. I just wanted to come by and check on you.

Teresa and Markesha stand up and walk towards the door.

MARKESHA

Alright. Well, it was good seeing you.

TERESA

Same here. I will get in contact with you later. You'll call me if you needed anything, right?

MARKESHA

You know I don't like to ask for stuff.

TERESA

Even so. You call me if you need anything, okay?

MARKESHA

Okay.

Markesha motions to the back. There are indents on her arms where fitted clothes would be.

INT. CAR/EXT. STREET - MORNING

Teresa's car is parked across the street from the empty Richmond Yard's parking lot.

She nearly lies in her reclining driver's seat, trying not to be seen. She watches the gate to the parking structure carefully.

A blue S.U.V. pulls up to the gate. It is Daniel. He gets out of his vehicle and unlocks the gate for the three other cars behind him.

INT. UNION HALL - AUDITORIUM - MORNING

Daniel enters the auditorium with a shoulder bag in tow. The dark circles around his eyes reveal his exhaustion. He walks down the aisle.

Teresa sits in the front of the room, alone. Her back is to Daniel.

TERESA

It must have been rough growing up with those stompers.

Daniel slows his pace.

TERESA (CONT'D)

You're so heavy footed. You can't get away with nothing.

DANIEL

I could if I wanted to. But who's to say I want to?

TERESA

I say. Why else would you be at the yard in the middle of a strike?

He puts his bag down and sits a few seats away from Teresa.

DANIEL

If you must know, I was doing maintenance work.

TERESA

Maintenance work.

DANIEL

There were some problems on the Concord line.

TERESA

And the problem couldn't wait. It had to be fixed.

DANIEL

What better time to fix it then now?

Teresa laughs to herself.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

What? What's so funny?

TERESA

Just when I thought you couldn't get any lower...

DANIEL

I'm trying to get us back to work!

TERESA

You're teaching the managers how to do our jobs. How on God's green earth is that supposed to help us?

DANIEL

We need to repair our damaged image.

TERESA

We're going to look like a bunch of punks if we return to work a second time without a new contract.

DANIEL

I beg to differ. This is going to make me a hero.

TERESA

(sighs)

Daniel, I'm warning you. You better not run those trains. You'll regret it.

DANIEL

The decision has been made.

TERESA

Suit yourself.

Teresa stands up.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I don't know what they promised you, but you're not going to get it. They're going to lose this battle and when they do, they're going to send you back to the train.

INT. HOSPITAL - BRENDA'S ROOM - DAY

Brenda sits up in bed as Teresa helps her put on a button up shirt.

The TV. is on in the background.

BRENDA

It's a damn shame.

TERESA

Stop moving so much.

BRENDA

I can't help it! He got me all worked up.

TERESA

Well, you better calm down. You know they have to take your blood pressure.

BRENDA

Ugh!

Brenda takes deep breaths.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Tee, what are we going to do?

TERESA

WE are going to put this shirt on and get ready to get out of this hospital.

BRENDA

Be serious. I mean Daniel.

TERESA

What do you want me to do? Shoot him? I can't do anything about him. If he wants to be a little whore, that's his business. I just wish he didn't bring others down with him.

Teresa finishes buttoning up Brenda's.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Alright, let's see how you look.

Brenda stands up in front of her hospital bed. Teresa steps back to get a better look of Brenda.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Okay. We can work with this.

BRENDA

This is not sexy.

TERESA

It's not supposed to be...okay. Let me use the bathroom real quick and then we'll head out.

Teresa goes to the bathroom within the room

Brenda sits back on her hospital bed and glances up at the TV. set, which is on mute.

ON TV

A FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR reports the news in regular fashion until:

She pauses for a moment. It is clear something surprising has come up on the unseen Teleprompter.

A red "Breaking News" filler appears on the screen for a few seconds, before returning to the Female News Anchor.

There's now a smaller screen within the screen, featuring a FEMALE REPORTER.

The Female News Anchor says a few words and then the smaller screen becomes full.

The Female Reporter stands in front of the CONCORD BART STATION.

The bottom of the screen reads: BART ACCIDENT: ONE DEAD

BACK TO BRENDA

She searches frantically for the remote control.

BRENDA

Tee! Tee!

TERESA OS

What?

BRENDA

I need the remote. Somebody's dead.

Teresa opens the bathroom.

TERESA

What did you say?

BRENDA

The TV.

Teresa looks at the TV. screen.

TERESA

Oh my God.

INT. RICHMOND YARD - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Teresa walk is hard and fast. She finds Daniel who is shocked.

TERESA

Who was it?

DANIEL

Teresa, I...

TERESA  
WHO WAS IT? WHO DID YOU GET KILLED?

DANIEL  
[Name of Potential Friend]

She takes a step back. Her eyes tear up. She shakes her head.

TERESA  
No...no.

DANIEL  
We...we couldn't see. It was so dark down there.

TERESA  
Mercedes...

DANIEL  
I'm sorry.

Daniel takes a step forward.

TERESA  
Don't! Don't you take another step.

He stands in his place. Teresa wipes the tears off of her face.

TERESA (CONT'D)  
This is all your fault. I told you not to send them  
down there. Now look. What a mess.

DANIEL  
What do you want me to do? I'll do whatever you  
want. Whatever. Tell me how to fix this.

TERESA  
You already know what you have to do.

INT. BART HEADQUARTERS - DAY

HALLWAY

Teresa and Brenda lead a pack of union representatives down a maze of corridors.

She reaches the front door to the conference room and walks straight through.

CONFERENCE

BART'S board members stand up from their seats upon seeing Teresa and her crew. Eyes widen and mouths drop at the sight Brenda.

Union members make their way to their seats. Teresa pulls out the middle chair for Brenda.

BRENDA  
(whispering)  
What are you doing?

TERESA  
I'm getting you your seat.

Brenda takes the seat next the middle chair, making Teresa sit directly across from Mr. Thompson. Teresa sits down slowly.

MR. THOMPSON  
(to Brenda)  
Well, this is a surprise. We weren't expecting to see you back so soon.

BRENDA  
Hey, what can I say? I can't stay away for too long.

MR. THOMPSON  
Good to see, Brenda. Welcome back.

BRENDA  
Thank you. It's good to be back. I only wish it was under better circumstances.

MR. THOMPSON  
I agree.

Teresa eyes scan the room. Something is missing.

TERESA  
Where's Mr. Wilks?

MR. THOMPSON  
(clears throat)  
Mr. Wilks had some personal obligations to attend to. He won't be joining us until further notice.

TERESA  
I see.

MR. THOMPSON

Shall we begin?

Teresa looks to Brenda, who looks right back at her. Teresa turns her attention to Mr. Thompson.

TERESA

Yes.

MR. THOMPSON

Good. On behalf of the board, I would like to thank each and everyone of you for coming out today. We greatly appreciate your continued cooperation during this difficult time.

Pause

MR. THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Bart would also like to extend a helping hand to Ms. Johnson's family. She was a valued employee and we would like to help her loved ones in any way we can.

TERESA

That's very kind of you Mr. Thompson. I am sure her family could use the help since she was the sole provider.

MR. THOMPSON

Yes, of course. Please let her family know our intentions.

TERESA

I will.

Pause

MR. THOMPSON

The last time we were sitting at this table, we were discussing the numbers for health care benefits and pension. I believe we should resume that conversation.

TERESA

Uhm umm.

MR. THOMPSON

Excuse me?

TERESA

That conversation is over. It died the same day Markesha was hit by that train.

Everyone turns and looks at Teresa.

MR. THOMPSON

And what is that supposed to mean Ms. Smith?

TERESA

You know exactly what it means. You need to give us what we asked for or we can wait for the results of the investigation. It's up to you.

MR. THOMPSON

I don't take kindly to threats.

TERESA

I don't like when people waste my time.

MR. THOMPSON

I can't believe this. Using someone's death as leverage.

TERESA

That's one way of looking at it.

MR. THOMPSON

That's the only way of look at it.

TERESA

Look, I'm not about to argue with you about how things look. This is what the situation is. We won and you lost. You tried to make us look stupid and worthless and it backfired. Give us what we want and this will all go away. Don't you want this to end?

Everyone turns their attention to Mr. Thompson.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Women and men dressed in black ascend the stairs leading to the church.

The SOUND of an ORGAN spews out of the church's opened doors.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

A LARGE WOMAN, 40s, Black, sings a rendition of "Goin Up Yonder." The uniformed CHOIR backs her.

People sitting in the pews and standing on the walls wipe tears off their faces as they listen to the song.

LARGE WOMAN

I'm going up yonder...

CHOIR

Going up yonder...

LARGE WOMAN

I'm going up yonder...

CHOIR

Going up yonder.

LARGE WOMAN

I'm going up yonder to be with my Lord. Oh, oh,  
then I'm going up yonder, I'm going up yonder,  
yeah, yeah, I'm going up yonder to be with my lord.

The Large Woman finishes the song. Some people stand up and clap their hands. Others wave their hands in the air.

She leaves the podium and returns to her seat. The PASTOR, 60s, Black, takes over the pull pit.

PASTOR

Yes, yes, lord. Markesha has gone up yonder to be with our lord. Hallejulah! Thank you Jesus. Do not weep for her because she's home with our heavenly father. She will never feel pain again. She'll never weep. No more worries. We should rejoice! I know you miss her, but it'll be alright. If you do right by him, you'll see her on the other side. Can I get an Amen?

CONGREGATION

Amen!

PASTOR

Let me get an Amen.

CONGREGATION

Amen!

PASTOR

Yes, Lord. We're going to open up services at this point in time for those who want to share a few words about Markesha.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

Teresa walks to the podium.

TERESA

Hello everyone. My name is Teresa and I, uh, met Markesha while I was volunteering for the union. Well, I shouldn't say we met there. We knew of each other, but never talked. I heard from the grapevine that she didn't like me, so I did what any other adult would have done. I decided I wasn't going to like her back.

Some of the CONGREGATION LAUGH.

TERESA (CONT'D)

It was a shame. Two grown women acting like a bunch of middle school girls. It wasn't until I was sent to detention, also known as volunteering, that we began to talk and form a relationship. During our time in the hole, I learned what a wonderful person Markesha was. She could be stubborn and mean when she wanted to be, but that was nothing compared to her virtues. Markesha was a very loyal and loving individual. She loved her job, her friends...

Teresa looks directly at Mercedes, who sits in the front row. An older woman embraces the child. Teresa holds back tears.

TERESA (CONT'D)

(to Mercedes)

And her baby girl. She loved you more than anything. You don't even know how much she really loved you. You were...are her greatest joy. I know you are too young to understand what's going on right now, but you will when you get older. People are going to say other things, but don't worry about that. Just know that she would do anything for you, because she loved so.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

Brenda and Teresa stand on the periphery of the burial ground where Markesha will be laid to rest.

They watch as Mercedes stands in front of the plot. An older woman holds Mercedes' small hand.

TERESA

What is she going to do, Brenda? She's so damn young.

BRENDA

We're all too young when we lose our mothers.

TERESA

You know what I mean.

BRENDA

I don't know what to tell you. She'll definitely struggle. You can believe that. But in the end, she'll make it.

TERESA

I hope so.

BRENDA

Don't worry about it. She has family to watch over her. The only person you need to worry about is Nicky.

TERESA

Why'd you have to bring that up?

BRENDA

Because you need to talk the talk and walk the walk.  
You can't worry about somebody else's child when  
you've...

Brenda stops short of the word "abandon." Teresa walks away. Brenda tries to catch up.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

TERESA

I am not having this conversation with you right  
now.

BRENDA

Why not?

TERESA

Because I don't want to. That's why.

Teresa speeds up her pace.

BRENDA

Teresa, stop being so god damn hard headed.

TERESA

You're always bringing up shit.

BRENDA

I'm just trying to help you.

Teresa comes to an abrupt stop and turns around.

TERESA

Brenda, I don't need you to remind that I am a bad  
mother, okay? I know that I am a bad mother. I left  
my daughter hanging when she needed me the most  
and it makes me feel sick to my stomach.

BRENDA

Good. So what the hell are you going to do about?

INT. BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Students exits the classroom. Teresa walks up to Marcus' desk which is littered with  
students' papers. He doesn't acknowledge her at first.

TERESA

Marcus?

MARCUS

Mr. Evans.

TERESA

(sighs)

Mr. Evans. Can we talk?

MARCUS

I am busy at the moment. You can come to my office hours if you like. Otherwise, I am not available.

Marcus' stands up and gathers his papers.

TERESA

It will only take a minute.

MARCUS

I am sorry Ms. Smith. I don't have a minute.

TERESA

Then make time. You've done it before.

MARCUS

I must go.

Teresa puts her hands on top of the papers and leans forward.

TERESA

Stop it, will you?

MARCUS

What do you want?

TERESA

I need your help with the final speech.

MARCUS

(sarcastically)

Okay.

TERESA

I want to deliver this speech to a special someone, but in order to do that I must go off campus during the day. I would really appreciate it, if you would be there to give me moral support.

Marcus gives her a confused look.

MARCUS

I don't get it. I thought your speech was about...

TERESA

It is, but it's not that simple.

He sees the sincerity in Teresa eyes. A part of him melts.

MARCUS

Alright.

TERESA

Thank you very much. I will send you the details.

MARCUS

Whatever you say.

Teresa walks away. Just when she is about to exit the class, she turns her class.

TERESA

Marcus, I mean, Mr. Evans.

MARCUS

Yes.

TERESA

It's not too late for us.

MARCUS

Get out of here.

The thought brings a small smile to his face. Teresa laughs and exits the classroom.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Nicky lays her head down on her desk. The rest of her classmates are active and converse with one another.

The SCHOOL BELL RINGS.

MR. BROWN, White, 50s, nerd looking, stands in front of the class.

MR. BROWN

Alright everybody. Settle down. Sit your bottoms in your seats. The announcements are going to come on any second now.

INTERCOM

Hello Eagles. Here's your announcements for April 3rd, 2013...

NICKY'S PERSPECTIVE

The WORDS DROWN out. Everything is one big slur until...

INTERCOM (CONT'D)

...Teresa Smith.

BACK TO CLASS

Nicky sits up quickly.

NICKY

What?

INTERCOM/TERESA OS

How does this work?... Is it on... Oh, okay...

Nicky's classmates turn to her. She gets out of her seat and leaves the class.

INTERCOM/TERESA OS (CONT'D)

Nicky, I know you are going to be embarrassed, but I don't care. You're my baby and I love you.

HALLWAY

NICKY takes off in a sprint.

INTERCOM/TERESA OS (CONT'D)

A couple of weeks ago, you read a passage I wrote for a class that you weren't supposed to read. I was so mad at you, because you only saw a part of something and not the finished product. If you had snuck and read the paper when it was done, you would have read something different. You would have learned that you are the greatest thing I created. I didn't even think I could create something so beautiful and bold and bright.

(MORE)

INTERCOM/TERESA OS (CONT'D)

You were the strength I never I had and I constantly  
try to capture your radiance.

HALLWAY

Nicky sees Teresa and Marcus inside the office.

TERESA

We've had our difficult time, but I want you to know  
that I will always love you. I pick you over  
everything.

Nicky comes into the office. Tears come down her face. She stands in front of Teresa and  
just stares at her.

Teresa grabs her and gives her a bear hug.

TERESA (CONT'D)

I am so sorry. Please forgive me. I love.

Nicky finally hugs her mother back.

NICKY

I am so mad at you.

TERESA

I know.

Mother and daughter embrace. Marcus stands back and watches.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END