

# OUR HOUSE

Written by

Will Youmans

Drew Leffler/CAA  
Nan Hagan/UWA

INT. RUSTIC KITCHEN - MORNING

A KETTLE starts to whistle.

A JOLLY OLD MAN pours himself a cup of tea, stirring in a dollop of "Moseley's Tupelo Honey" - the jar branded with a drawing of his own face.

He sits at a small kitchen table and opens a large printed MANUSCRIPT. He uncaps a red pen with his mouth and starts flipping through it, making notes in the margins.

He lifts his head from the paper, sips his tea, and gazes out the kitchen window at his domain:

A BEE FARM. Rows and rows of white bee boxes sitting next to a slow moving Florida river. He smiles.

CUE: Velvet Underground's "Sunday Morning".

MONTAGE:

The old man steps into his shed and puts on a beekeeping uniform, topping it off with his BEE VEIL.

He carries a bee smoker out into the field, whistling along the way.

He smokes the bee boxes, sedating the bees inside.

He pulls out a slate of honeycomb, dripping with the good stuff, and scrapes it into a large metal bowl.

The old man sits by the river, removes his bee veil, and takes a bite of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

A lone honeybee lands on the bread. He smiles at it. It flutters its wings, practically smiling back. Then takes off.

Back to work, he smokes down another bee box, removes the lid, then peers in.

His face twitches, noticing something out of the ordinary. He leans in to get a better look.

POOF. A puff of RED NOXIOUS GAS hits him in the face.

Watching from the kitchen window, his note-filled manuscript in the foreground, the bees swarm the jolly old man. He falls onto another bee box, incurring their wrath, taking thousands of stings. Muffled screaming, his body shakes and writhes, then goes limp. Dead.

TITLE CARD: "OUR HOUSE"

INT. GREYHOUND - MORNING

A cemetery of smeared insect corpses painted across the windshield of a GREYHOUND BUS.

A disgruntled BUS DRIVER (60s) puts his mirror down to shield his eyes from the MORNING SUN.

WOMAN (O.S.)  
We'll see. I wouldn't put money on it.

The driver puts in his headphones - Ellie Goulding's "Love Me Like You Do".

Slowly turn to find that young woman, seated at the very front of a mostly empty bus. Dressed in a formal navy pantsuit and flats, she sits up straight, her hair clipped out of her face. This is LEILA (20).

She FACETIMES her family.

DAD  
Are you kidding me?? They're gonna roll out the red carpet for you!

LEILA  
I'm just there to watch.

DAD  
You're giving a speech in the House of Representatives! Your essay is gonna be in the Library of Congress!

LEILA  
It's not that big a deal.

MOM  
Good instincts - under promise, over deliver.

DAD  
"Under promise"?

MOM  
But just know that we are very proud of you. Grandpa would be, too. Whatever happens.

DAD  
"Whatever happens"?

MOM  
Maddie's proud of you too, right  
Maddie?

MADDIE (O.S.)

MOM  
Mads.

Mom hands the phone to MADDIE (13), clearly the first of her friends to dye her hair and get an eyebrow piercing.

MADDIE  
Congratulations. Just don't ask me  
to come to Pedophile Island.

LEILA  
Thanks.

DAD  
Come on, Mads! Your sister has  
worked very hard to get here, you  
could push your cynicism aside for  
five minutes.

Dad takes the phone as Mom kisses him on the cheek.

MOM  
Calm down.

DAD  
I'm serious. You two are a couple,  
I'll say it, Debby Downers!

LEILA  
I should go.

Leila HANGS UP, brushing it off.

She stares down at a handwritten SPEECH sitting in her lap.

LEILA  
(sotto)  
I believe this Democracy was  
planted, not planned, and in order  
for it to grow...to flourish-

She jots down the change.

WOMAN (O.S.)  
Excited?

Reveal a WOMAN sticking her head out from the seat behind. She wears a denim vest and a trucker cap with a flag sticking out of it.

LEILA  
What?

WOMAN  
First time to DC?

LEILA  
Oh, yes. I'm very excited.

The woman hands her an ENERGY BAR.

WOMAN  
Gonna be a lotta walking. Can't have you passin' out.

LEILA  
Oh, wow. Thank you.

MOLLY  
Can I offer you a piece of advice?  
If anyone asks you where you're from, just don't tell 'em Florida.  
They hate us here.

Molly retreats to her seat.

Leila laughs and tucks the energy bar in her bag.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - LATER

B-ROLL of DC. The Lincoln Memorial, The Washington Monument, the Reflecting Pool. Leila looks out the window in awe.

EXT. UNION STATION BUS TERMINAL - MORNING

Leila steps off the bus and is too struck by the stature of Union Station to notice the rest of the passengers filing off behind her, a ragtag group of flag-toting REBELS.

She checks her phone. The time -- 7:58. She opens it and makes a call. After a few rings.

CARTER (V.O.)  
Hey, what's up?

LEILA  
I'm here!

CARTER  
Where?

LEILA  
DC! I made it!

CARTER  
Shit. Right, right.

LEILA  
It's everything I wanted it to be.  
There's just an energy here. I  
can't describe it.  
(then)  
How's Dallas?

CARTER  
Seems like a cool place to die.

LEILA  
When's the funeral?

CARTER  
Tomorrow. But today is the  
rehearsal.

LEILA  
A rehearsal for a funeral? CARMER (CONT'D)  
Babe, I love you so much but  
I gotta go, k?

He hangs up. Angle on Leila, somewhat deflated.

The sound of a muffler-less SEDAN creeps around the corner,  
and a beat up old SATURN stops in front of her.

MAN (O.S.)  
Leila?

LEILA  
Yes!

MAN (O.S.)  
Leila Moseley? From the Bright  
Young Minds Essay Competition?

LEILA  
Yes, yes. That's me.

The window rolls back up and the doors UNLOCK.

INT. SATURN - CONTINUOUS

Leila gets in. ROBBIE (early 30s) sits at the wheel in a wrinkled suit and tie.

MAN

Sorry I'm late. Sydney said a car was coming to get you, but neglected to inform me that I was that car. Robbie.

LEILA

Leila.

ROBBIE

I know. Seatbelt.

Robbie merges onto the HIGHWAY, earning honks.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

Hey could you..

Robbie points at a bagel and cream cheese sitting on the dashboard.

LEILA

Oh, um. Yeah.

She lifts it to his mouth and he takes a bite.

ROBBIE

I suppose I owe you a congratulations. We loved your essay. Tough competition this year, surprisingly.

LEILA

Surprisingly?

ROBBIE

We don't typically get a lot of submissions. Most people your age would rather be out on the picket line than working on The Hill.

LEILA

I'd rather be where the action is.

ROBBIE

Good. Sydney will like that.

He opens his mouth. She gives him another bite.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)  
So you, like, really went to Syria  
and built a cat sanctuary?

LEILA  
What?

ROBBIE  
The Syrian Cat Sanctuary. From your  
essay.

LEILA  
No...

ROBBIE  
Shit. Remind me, what was your--

LEILA  
My grandpa's death.

ROBBIE  
How did he die?

LEILA  
He was a beekeeper. And then one  
day they all just...turned on him.  
Cops said it was super strange.  
To be fair, he worked in non-  
profits his whole life, beekeeping  
was just his retirement, so maybe  
he didn't really know what he was  
doing, but still...

Robbie tunes out. Beat.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
Hey do you think you could  
proofread my-

Jamie SLAMS on the breaks. Ahead of him, a cop redirects  
traffic around a team of Capitol Police setting up  
BARRICADES, clearly preparing for something.

Reveal the cream cheese'd bagel slowly sliding down the  
dashboard.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

A bustling hallway filled with Congress members and other  
Washington operators. The buzz is palpable. Leila is in  
heaven.

ROBBIE  
 (on the phone)  
 Listen if you wanna play chicken  
 then *bawk bawk* because I'm not  
 backing down, I know *Sydney's* not  
 backing down--

They turn into...

INT. SYDNEY AHERN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Congresswoman SYDNEY AHERN (60s) stands behind her desk putting in eyedrops.

SYDNEY  
 Is that Steve? Tell him we're  
 backing down on that.

ROBBIE  
 Y'know, Steve, we discussed it  
 internally and we wanna  
 reconsider...

He exits. Leila watches as Sydney puts in her eye drops, barely acknowledging her.

LEILA  
 Ma'am can I say--

SYDNEY  
 One moment.

Beat. Finally-

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
 Leilaaa -- Leila?

LEILA  
 Yes, ma'am.

SYDNEY  
 Leilaaa. Pleasure to meet you.

LEILA  
 Ma'am the pleasure is all mine--

SYDNEY  
 Y'know your submission was a real  
 tear jerker. All those cats. I've  
 always wondered that about war  
 zones: where are the pets? How do  
 we help them?

LEILA

Actually, ma'am-

SYDNEY

Wait. I'm so sorry. Your essay was about your grandfather.

LEILA

That's right.

SYDNEY

Who died in a beekeeping accident, correct?

LEILA

That's right. 2600 stings.

SYDNEY

And honey bees perish when they lose their stinger, so really there were 2,601 deaths that day.

LEILA

You're thinking of bumble bees, ma'am.

SYDNEY

I'm thinking of the lives lost. So did Robbie give you the rundown for today?

She throws a pod in a Nespresso machine behind her desk. It starts to WHIR.

LEILA

A little bit, but I wanted to ask you about my speech.

SYDNEY

(over the whirring)  
What??

LEILA

My speech! The speech for-

The door opens to reveal ARIANA (20), preppy and peppy, followed by DAMIEN (40s), no nonsense bodyguard.

ARIANA

Damien says we can't be doing any more escorted bathroom breaks, so I'm just going to hold it in.

SYDNEY  
 And weaken your bladder muscles?  
 Absolutely not, by the time you're  
 my age you'll be leaking like a  
 wiffle ball.

Ariana notices Leila standing by the couch.

ARIANA  
 Oh my gosh! Are you Leila?

LEILA  
 Yes.

ARIANA  
 It is so nice to meet you. I  
 absolutely loved your essay.

LEILA  
 About the Syrian cat sanctuary?

ARIANA  
 What? No. About your grandpa. It  
 was simple but devastating. I wish  
 I could write like that. That's why  
 I specifically asked if I could be  
 here today to meet you. So if you  
 need anything - coffee, water, a  
 shoulder to cry on. I'm here.

LEILA  
 Wow. That's--

The door opens again and Robbie enters, spinning his phone  
 like a gunslinger.

ROBBIE  
 Crisis averted. Finley is a lock  
 for next Thursday.

SYDNEY  
 No. Absolutely not. If Finley comes  
 along we lose Richardson and  
 DiMarco. See?

They approach a WHITE BOARD covered in names of lawmakers.

ARIANA  
 (to Leila)  
 Cool, right?

LEILA  
 Totally. What bill is this for?

ARIANA

Oh, no. This is for Allie Stetson's birthday party. Her dad is a big donor.

LEILA

Oh...that's nice.

Sydney turns and CLAPS her hands, commanding the attention of the room.

SYDNEY

Alright, everyone! Before we go I would like to say this: what we do today matters. And if we do it right, it could change the course of history. So look alive. The car is going to be here in one minute. Leila, leave your bag. It'll just weigh you down.

Leila drops her bag on the couch, but takes her SPEECH out and puts it in her jacket pocket.

ROBBIE

Why not take the tram?

SYDNEY AHERN

Why not take the bus - are you high?

Damien holds the door as they file out of the office.

ARIANA

Today is going to be so much fun. And I was thinking tonight, after everything, we could go to this awesome bar in Adams Morgan. My friend's dad is DJing.

SYDNEY AHERN

*Cool.*

ARIANA

My friend's dad is Diplo.

SYDNEY AHERN

Seems like everyone is someone's kid.

ARIANA

Tell me about it.

SYDNEY AHERN  
Ari! Come on!

ARIANA  
Coming, mom!

Ariana cheerfully walks off. Leila sucks her teeth in cringe.

EXT. DC STREETS - DAY

The limo travels down Independence Ave towards the Capitol. The street is lined with PROTESTORS on either side.

ROBBIE (V.O.)  
The agenda for today is as follows.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Robbie reads from an iPad as Sydney stares out the window at the crowds of people

ROBBIE  
9:30 - get through security. 9:30  
to 10 - Leila shadows the  
Congresswoman as she mingles with  
other lawmakers in the Marble Room.  
10:15 - session begins with a  
fifteen minute break at 11:30, and  
when it's all over, we head across  
the street for the Bright Young  
Minds Scholarship Luncheon, where  
Leila's essay will be inducted into  
the Library of Congress.

Ariana claps giddily..

LEILA  
When do I give my speech?

SPLAT! A MILKSHAKE smacks into the window. Robbie gets on top of Sydney, shielding her.

ROBBIE  
Everyone get on the ground!! SYDNEY  
Robbie stop! Jesus Christ  
it's a milkshake!

EXT. DC STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The car veers over a median and down a side street, away from the crowds of chanting protestors.

NEWS FLASH:

Wolf Blitzer delivers the news.

WOLF BLITZER

If you're just joining us, events on Capitol Hill are heating up as the crowd of protestors gathered outside is now estimated to be in the tens of thousands. On loan from our friends at the Weather Channel, Jim Cantore is on the scene. Jim?

We cut to JIM CANTORE in the thick of the PROTEST wearing his signature blue wind breaker.

JIM CANTORE

That's right, Wolf. Capitol Police are conflicted about how big this thing might get, but a spokesman says they are prepared for anything.

WOLF BLITZER

And why exactly are these protesters there, Jim?

JIM CANTORE

It's almost certainly connected to the blockage of the Solana Oil Pipeline earlier this week, spearheaded by New York Representative Bruno Diaz. But one thing is clear: this is about a lot more than a pipeline. These are people with a lot of pent up anger, and they are here to vent that frustration.

WOLF BLITZER

Very insightful, Jim. But everyone's wondering: how's the weather down there?

Wolf dons a shit-eating grin.

JIM CANTORE

I'm going to pretend I didn't hear that, Wolf.

INT. CAPITOL HILL SECURITY - DAY

It's pandemonium as the entire Capitol Hill workforce squeezes itself through security.

LEILA  
Is it usually this crazy?

ROBBIE  
No, but everyone has to use this one entrance today to avoid the crowds.

Robbie steps through the metal detector, then Leila. It BEEPS.

SECURITY OFFICER  
Arms out, legs apart.

Leila assumes the position as the officer wands her down.

SYDNEY  
Excuse me, what's going on here?

SECURITY OFFICER  
Standard procedure, ma'am.

SYDNEY  
I promise, if this little girl blows us all to smithereens, I will ensure you receive the Presidential Medal of I Told You So, but we have places to be.

BEEP BEEP. The wand goes off over Leila's chest. She pulls out a gold NECKLACE. Tasteful, classic.

LEILA  
Oh, so sorry. From my grandpa.  
Forgot I had it.

SYDNEY  
What do you think, officer?  
Guantanamo or Abu Ghraib?

Sydney pulls her through, the security officer sheepishly standing aside.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
Don't let anyone put their hands on you. If you give 'em an inch, they'll take a mile.

Leila smiles. Real advice from a real politician.

INT. MARBLE ROOM - DAY

Leila and Ariana step out into a room of 200 or so people. Politicians, aides, lobbyists, all jockeying for position.

ARIANA

Don't be nervous. They're just human beings.

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)

At least most of us are.

They turn to see HENRY KERN (25). Slicked back hair and a red tie.

ARIANA

Henry! Henry this is Leila, Leila - Henry.

Leila's face immediately SINKS, recognizing him.

HENRY

Pleasure to meet you.

ARIANA

Leila is the winner of the Bright Young Minds Essay Competition.

HENRY

Oo, fresh meat.

ARIANA

You should come to the luncheon later. She's having her essay inducted into the Library of Congress.

HENRY

Wouldn't miss it for the world.

(then)

Well, I should circulate. Lovely meeting you, Leila.

Henry takes her hand and kisses it, then walks off.

LEILA

That guy is your friend?? Do you realize who that is??

ARIANA

Henry Kern...

LEILA

Yes. As in the son of *Ted Kern*, the most evil guy on the planet. The guy wants to turn Yellowstone into an oil field. He wants to ban paper straws.

ARIANA

Well...

LEILA

Ariana.

ARIANA

I know, I know, but Henry is his own person. Besides, just *talking* to someone doesn't mean you endorse everything they've ever done. I mean, look.

Ariana points across the room to *SYDNEY*, who is drinking cucumber water with *TED KERN*, 60s. As evil-looking as Leila says he is.

Sydney waves Leila over.

ARIANA (CONT'D)

Go over there!

LEILA

I can't--I won't--

ARIANA

Everyone is a friend until you make them an enemy, that's what my mom always says.

LEILA

But my speech, no one has read it and I'm about to--

ARIANA (CONT'D)

(pushing her off)  
Go go go go--

ARIANA (CONT'D)

Have fun!

MOMENTS LATER

Sydney wraps her arm around Leila, presenting her to *TED*.

SYDNEY

Ted I want you to meet Leila, the winner of the Bright Young Minds Essay Competition.

TED  
Congratulations, young lady.

LEILA  
Thank you.

SYDNEY  
Leila why don't you ask Congressman Kern what you asked me in the car?

Leila has no idea what she's talking about.

LEILA  
Um...

SYDNEY  
Leila wants to know: what's one piece of advice you would offer to someone who wants to work in politics one day?

TED  
Ugh. Great question. Great question...I would say the most important thing is to define your principles and stick to them, because sometimes you don't really know what you believe until your back is against the wall.

SYDNEY  
That is such good advice. Isn't it Leila?

LEILA  
Mhm.

SYDNEY  
Alright we'll see you inside, Ted.

Sydney smiles at Ted departs.

LEILA  
Ma'am, respectfully, I never asked you that question and I would never ask it of Ted Kern.

SYDNEY  
Ted is a friend of mine.

LEILA  
How? He represents everything you stand against.

SYDNEY

I'm sorry, I thought you were  
shadowing me - am I wrong?

LEILA

Y-yes. I'm sorry.

SYDNEY

Today could be big for you. Don't  
blow it.

A loud CLICK as the doors to the House Gallery are opened and  
a commotion washes over the crowd.

Robbie, Ariana, and Damien approach.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

Leila and I are about to head in.  
You guys will wait for us in the  
McCarran room and we'll meet up at  
break.

The group nods.

LEILA

What about my speech?

ROBBIE

What speech?

Leila pulls out her SPEECH from her breast pocket.

LEILA

The speech. Part of the contest is  
you get to deliver a speech on the  
floor of congress. I spent two  
weeks working on it and I would  
love if someone could read it.

SYDNEY

Robbie, what is she talking about?

ARIANA

(showing her phone)  
She's right.

Robbie grabs Ariana's phone. He reads it, mumbling it aloud.

ROBBIE

OK. I see. It says the contest  
winner will deliver a speech on the  
floor of Congress, but it doesn't  
say whose speech.

He grabs Leila's handwritten speech.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)  
This is way too long. Try this.

He hands Leila's speech to Ariana, then pulls out a notebook and pen.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)  
(to Leila)  
What would you say in an audience with the King?

LEILA  
I-um-

ROBBIE  
Don't overthink it.

LEILA  
Thank you for inviting me, this is a great honor.

ROBBIE  
(jotting it down)  
What else?

LEILA  
I'm very grateful and I hope to rise to the occasion.

He tears the page off and gives it to her.

ROBBIE  
Try this.

LEILA  
(reading)  
Thank you for inviting me, this is a great honor. I am very grateful and I hope to rise to the occasion.

SYDNEY  
Great work, Robbie. See you all on the other side.

The group breaks apart, Leila stares at her new speech, crushed.

INT. HOUSE GALLERY - DAY

Two decks of seating all arranged around a dais in the center of the room. You recognize it from CSPAN.

SYDNEY

Don't be nervous. Think of it like high school. All the same forces of the universe are at play. See?

We look to a group of schlubby representatives with mustard on their lapels pouring over a document.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

The nerds. Policy wonks. Guys who lose the forest for the trees because they never get outside.

WHIP TO a group of pristine looking MEN with barrel chests and tight slacks.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

The jocks. All went to the same schools, rushed the same frats, caught the same chlamidya. They make it look easy because for them it is.

FIND another group of Congress people. Younger, more diverse.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

And the cool kids.

Focus on BRUNO DIAZ (38), the coolest English Professor at Vassar. The edges of a neck tattoo visible above his collar.

LEILA

That's Bruno Diaz.

SYDNEY

Yup. Everyone hates him.

LEILA

What - why?

SYDNEY

Fake. The type to leak your nudes just so he can defend you and make himself look like a hero. Plus, all he does is obstruct. He's the one stopping the Solana Pipeline.

LEILA

That's a good thing. We need him.

Leila and Sydney take their seats.

SYDNEY

Tell that to the people outside.

INT. MCCARRAN ROOM - DAY

An ornate, historical, glorified waiting room. Ariana sits in a loveseat READING.

Robbie and Damien stare out a large window at the National Mall, filled by a sea of PROTESTORS.

ROBBIE

It's just like...what are they even mad about? I mean look - that guy down there has a sign about second amendment stuff, but then right behind him there's a guy with an anti-circumcision banner. Get on the same page, y'know?

(then)

The anti-circumcision guy has a point, though. I have a friend who got circumcised later in life, and he says he lost like half the sensation in his penis. He thought they botched the surgery, but that's just how it is as a circumcised man. Isn't that crazy? I'm fine being circumcised, but if I knew what it could feel like? If I saw through the looking glass like that? Torture. Absolute torture.

Beat. Damien doesn't respond.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

Good talk, good talk.

INT. HOUSE GALLERY - DAY

An AGED CONGRESSMAN finishes his speech.

AGED CONGRESSMAN

What's wrong with a pipeline? I remember when the pipeline came to my town in 1954, it was like Christmas morning. We played on it. Ate on it. And when the time came, many of us were gifted our manhood on it. It wasn't weird. Not at all.

Leila looks down at the SPEECH Robbie wrote for her. Drivel. She sighs.

Sydney ELBOWS her. Pay attention.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Leila finds an empty hallway. She pulls her phone out and makes a call.

CARTER (V.O.)  
You've reached the voicemail of  
Carter Heinz, leave me a message--

LEILA  
Come on. Come on.

She tries again, but has to JUMP out of the way of a squad of CAPITOL POLICE running in formation, riot shields and batons at the ready.

The phone RINGS.

CARTER (V.O.)  
You've reached the voicemail of  
Carter Heinz, leave me a message--

LEILA  
(sotto)  
Goddammit.

She keeps moving, calling once more, but almost immediately COLLIDES with the chest of Henry Kern.

HENRY  
Whoa, slow down there, Tow Mater.

LEILA  
Ha.

She side steps him, he gets in her way, trapping her in conversation.

HENRY  
So. First time on the Hill?

LEILA  
Mhm.

HENRY  
Nothing like it.

LEILA  
Yup.

HENRY  
First time I came here I was six  
months old. I sucked on the  
President's finger.

LEILA  
Impressive.

HENRY  
Some people pay a lot of money to  
do that.

LEILA  
Can I go now?

HENRY  
So why are you *really* here? Who's  
your dad?

LEILA  
No one. I won a contest.

HENRY  
Come on. No one gets here without  
someone pulling the strings.

LEILA  
Maybe you're just jealous.

HENRY  
Maybe you're just naive.

He touches her forearm.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
And maybe I can fix that.

She SHOVES him aside and walks off. Angle on Henry - next  
time.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Leila looks into the mirror, fighting back tears. She  
breathes deeply.

Ariana enters.

ARIANA  
Hey.

LEILA  
(hiding her crying)  
Sup.

ARIANA  
Are you ok?

LEILA

Mhm.

Ariana looks at her with a disarming sincerity.

LEILA (CONT'D)

(dabbing her eye)

Today is just not going how I hoped.

ARIANA

Because of your speech?

Leila nods. Among other things.

Ariana thinks, then pulls out Leila's ORIGINAL SPEECH from her jacket pocket.

LEILA

Where did you get this?

ARIANA

Robbie handed it to me before you guys went in. I read it. It's great. Really.

LEILA

Thank you.

ARIANA

But it's not meant to be read, is it?

Leila looks back at her. The light bulb coming on.

INT. HOUSE GALLERY - LATER

Leila enters to find Ted and Sydney shmoozing at the desk.

TED

Hello, young lady. Ready for your speech? I've heard good things.

SYDNEY

Short and sweet, right?

LEILA

Mhm. Short and sweet.

TED

People say the same thing about me, y'know...

SYDNEY  
(hitting him playfully)  
Ted...

Ted saunters off as Leila tries to not vomit.

Sydney eyes Leila as a GAVEL announces that the House is back in session. The Speaker takes the podium.

SPEAKER  
Good afternoon. Let's lighten things up shall we? I offer the floor to the gentlewoman from Florida, Ms. Sydney Ahern.

Sydney approaches the podium.

SYDNEY  
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year the Bright Young Minds Essay Competition celebrates the next generation of American writers. The winner often goes on to make great contributions to the field of American rhetoric, and this year's winner, I'm certain, will be no different. Without further ado, please welcome to the floor Miss Leila Moseley.

A smattering of applause and a pat on the back from Sydney as Leila takes the podium. She breathes deeply.

LEILA  
Hello. My name is Leila Moseley, and it is a tremendous honor to be here today.

Sydney smiles, then notices something on her desk -- a stray piece of NOTEBOOK PAPER.

INT. MCCARRAN ROOM - SAME TIME

Damien stares out the window at the protest. RADICALS violently grapple with Capitol Police, who are vastly outnumbered.

Robbie and Ariana are glued to the TV playing CSPAN.

INT. HOUSE GALLERY

LEILA

In writing, there are planners and planters. Those who know exactly what they want to say, and those who take a risk, put it all on the page, and wait to see what grows. I believe the United States was planted, not planned.

Sydney flips over the stray paper: Robbie's two sentence SPEECH, discarded.

INT. MCCARRAN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Robbie's face slowly goes from content to concerned. Ariana smiles.

ROBBIE

This isn't my speech. What's she doing??

Out the window, Damien watches the battle rage on.

INT. HOUSE GALLERY

LEILA

Now many of my generation believe the only course of action is to tear the plant out by its roots and start again somewhere else. But I disagree.

Sydney looks up at Leila, realizing she SWITCHED the speeches. She can't help but grin - game recognize game.

INT. MCCARRAN ROOM

Damien startles as Capitol Police turn their backs and RUN, the protestors CHARGING up the stairs.

INT. HOUSE GALLERY

LEILA

I believe that a democracy is only broken when no one is willing to fix it, and--

The MIC cuts out. Leila startles. The LIGHTS TURN OFF.

INT. MCCARRAN ROOM

The TV goes dark. The room now lit only by gray sunlight.

ROBBIE  
Did she switch the speeches?? Are  
you *kidding* me?

ARIANA  
What happened to the lights?

Damien moves to the door. He stares down the hall,  
expectantly. In the distance...an ominous CHANTING.

INT. HOUSE GALLERY

Sydney grabs Leila off the podium.

LEILA  
What's going on??

SYDNEY  
I don't know.

The GENERATOR kicks on, the lights coming back.

Heads turn as a faint CHANTING can be heard through the  
gallery doors...

INT. MCCARRAN ROOM

The chanting gets closer. Damien stares down the hall.

ARIANA  
Damien. What's going on. Damien?

INT. HOUSE GALLERY

Sydney looks around.

SYDNEY  
Not today. Of all days, not today.

LEILA  
I'm sorry I switched the speeches,  
I just couldn't read that piece of--

SYDNEY  
*Shh. Let me think.*

Sydney eyes TED cowering across the room. She gets an idea.

INT. MCCARRAN ROOM

The chanting finally reveals itself from down the hall as a crowd of RADICALS stampedes down the hall.

RADICALS  
WHOSE HOUSE - OUR HOUSE! WHOSE  
HOUSE - OURS HOUSE!

Damien locks the doors.

ARIANA ROBBIE  
What is that?? Oh my god. Oh my god.

INT. HOUSE GALLERY

The CHANTING gets closer and closer. A beat of silence before-  
BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! The protestors start POUNDING at the  
Gallery Doors.

SYDNEY  
Leila. I need you to listen very  
closely to what I'm about to say.

Sydney leans in and WHISPERS something into her ear. Leila  
looks back at her - are you kidding me?

LEILA  
Why me??

SYDNEY  
Just do it. Please.

Leila hesitates. Then-

MOMENTS LATER

Find TED cowering behind his desk. Leila crawls up to him.

LEILA  
Congressman Kern. I have an idea.

TED  
There is no room in my head for  
ideas right now.

LEILA  
Ted -- Mr. Kern -- I really think  
you ought to hear me out. You might  
be the only one who can fix this.

Beat. He's listening.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
You need to go out there and talk  
to them.

TED  
Are you crazy??

The gallery doors start to BUCKLE as the crowd forces their way in.

LEILA  
These people are not zombies,  
they're your constituents. They can  
be reached. Tell them what you told  
me about principles, remind them we  
are all Americans.

Ted nods, buying in.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
Just an hour ago you said you don't  
really know who you are until your  
back is against the wall -- so who  
are you? To me, you're a leader. So  
do your job. Lead.

Ted takes off his gas mask, on the verge of tears. He hugs her.

TED  
Thank you.

He gets up and approaches the gallery doors.

TED (CONT'D)  
(to security officers)  
Let them in. I can talk them down.

BRUNO DIAZ yells from behind his desk.

BRUNO  
Oh no. HELL no. What are you  
thinking, Ted??

TED  
These people are not zombies!  
They're our constituents. They can  
be reached.  
(to security officer)  
Let me do my job. Let me lead.

The security officers look at each other a moment before hesitantly opening the doors.

TED (CONT'D)  
My fellow citizens! Allow me to introduce myself. My name is--

SSCHHIING. A FLAG POLE bursts through Ted's shoulder blades covered in blood and guts, skewering him. Shocked expressions from Congress as Ted Kern falls to the floor, dead.

A RADICAL with a "don't tread on me" flag puts a heavy boot on Ted's chest, pulling his flag from his sternum.

A beat, before ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE.

The room floods with RADICALS as congress members run and hide for their lives. Guns go off, aides and consultants are trampled, chaos takes the House.

In the corner, a set of EXIT DOORS gently close.

INT. HALLWAY - SECONDS LATER

Sydney and Leila sprint down the hallway - a successful getaway.

LEILA  
--OH MY GOD OH MY GOD OH MY GOD--

They hang a right only to see another group of RADICALS marching down the hall.

They reverse course. Sydney eyes a MAINTENANCE CLOSET.

INT. MAINTENANCE CLOSET

They stuff themselves into the closet.

LEILA  
Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god.

SYDNEY  
Good work back there.

LEILA  
Was that real?? Was that our fault??

SYDNEY  
We? You did all the talking.

Sydney puts a phone to her ear. No service.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
Fuck.

LEILA  
You said it would be a good  
distraction!! I didn't know it  
would kill him!

SYDNEY  
Leila. LEILA.

Sydney grabs her face.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
This is going to get worse before  
it gets better so I need to know I  
can trust you. Can I trust you?

Leila paralyzed.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
Can I *trust* you.

Leila nods.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
Good. Leila, you are smart and  
ambitious. You have what it takes.  
And if you play your cards right  
today, you will come out of this a  
lot better than you came in, I  
promise.

LEILA  
What do you mean?

Sydney grabs Leila's NECKLACE from her grandfather, showing  
it to her.

SYDNEY  
Don't give up. Don't let him down.

FOOTSTEPS approach the broom closet. They FREEZE. The KNOB  
starts to turn and the door opens...

It's ROBBIE.

ROBBIE  
Oh thank God.

Robbie, Damien and Ariana enter the closet, packing everyone in like sardines.

ARIANA  
You're ok!

She throws her arms around Leila, who stands there, still mulling over Sydney's "promise".

ROBBIE  
We have to get out of here.

ARIANA  
And go where?? The Mall is crawling with them - we can't set foot outside, can we??

LEILA  
Maybe we can blend in.

SYDNEY  
No chance. These people can tell one of us from one of them.

ROBBIE  
We can dress up, we can play the part, we can-

SYDNEY  
Robbie, your teeth are stained from too much coffee telling me you work long hours on The Hill. Ariana, your perfect blowout tells me you go to Drybar once a week, but judging by your lack of wrinkles your parents are the ones footing the bill. I'm a recognizable figure, not to mention my arches are fucked up from only wearing heels for twenty years, and Leila...maybe you could pull it off. But the rest of us. We cannot blend.

Angle on all three of them, feeling insecure.

LEILA  
Then there must be a plan, right? A bunker or something?

ROBBIE  
Fort McNair.

LEILA

Great. What's that?

SYDNEY

No, we have to go to the Library of Congress for Leila's induction ceremony.

ARIANA

What??

LEILA

What??

ROBBIE

Ma'am, I mean this in the most respectful way: are you having hot flashes?

ARIANA

Mom. It's cancelled.

SYDNEY

No, it isn't.

LEILA

Ma'am, it's just a luncheon, we can afford to miss-

SYDNEY

It's not just a luncheon.

(beat, then:)

Every twenty years a summit is held in DC called Melloncamp.

It always takes place under the auspices of something else -- a retreat, an awards show, a luncheon. It's held in secret so that world leaders can meet in secret without the pressure of something like a Davos or a G7. And this year I was invited.

ARIANA

You?

SYDNEY

Yes, me, thank you for the vote of confidence. And I might not get invited again, so I can't afford to miss it.

LEILA

Can't they reschedule?

SYDNEY

They won't. It goes by USPS rules: rain, sleet or snow. It didn't stop for 9/11, it didn't stop for the Cuban Missile Crisis, and it's not stopping for this.

ROBBIE

Who else is going?

SYDNEY

I don't know, Robbie, there wasn't a fucking Facebook event. But if my gut is correct, I might be one of only a few Congress members who even knows the thing exists.

LEILA

What are we talking about?? We're talking about risking our lives for what - a conference?

SYDNEY

It's where I need to be, it's where we all need to be. And if I'm honest, it might be the only safe place in DC right now.

LEILA

What do you mean?

ROBBIE

She means when the shit hits the fan everyone is a red shirt.

LEILA

A what?

ARIANA

Expendable.

They group looks around.

ARIANA (CONT'D)

Fine. Let's do it.

Robbie and Damien agree. Angle on Leila. She looks down at the NECKLACE her grandfather gave her. Don't let him down.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The group storms out of the closet and sprints down the hallway. But something catches Leila's eye on the ground. The plastic wrapper of a very familiar ENERGY BAR.

WOMAN (V.O.)  
Blood sugar, everybody! It sneaks  
up on you!

INT. HOUSE GALLERY - DAY

The Gallery is swarming with RADICALS. With the place to themselves, they wander the room taking selfies with paintings and generally causing a ruckus.

We recognize the WOMAN with the energy bars from the bus. This is MOLLY (40s).

MOLLY  
Can't have you passin' out, people!

She approaches a KID sitting in the corner of the room, biting his nails and tapping his foot.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
Hungry?

KID  
No thanks.

MOLLY  
You ok?

KID  
I didn't think it was gonna be like this. I thought we were gonna do some yelling, maybe some marching- I didn't think...

He looks down at Ted Kern's DEAD BODY on the floor next to him.

MOLLY  
Don't look there, look at me. Hey - how old are you?

KID  
Nineteen.

MOLLY  
What's your name?

KID  
Alec...ander.

MOLLY  
Alecander? That's your real name?

Alecander nods.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
Well. You did a good thing today.  
You made history. And we're gonna  
look out for you, ok?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Molly! Over here.

Molly gives him a comforting shoulder squeeze.

She approaches the dais. A group of radicals rifle through  
papers at the command JAMIE (30s). Wearing a Davy Crockett  
outfit, we recognize him the bus window in the opening scene.

JAMIE  
Who's the kid?

MOLLY  
Alecander.

JAMIE  
Alecander?

MOLLY  
It's a fake name, he's just  
nervous.

JAMIE  
Is he a mole or something? Is he  
CIA?

MOLLY  
Jamie. He's a kid.

JAMIE  
Yeah well maybe a kid shouldn't be  
here.

MOLLY  
He wasn't planning on it - were  
you?

JAMIE  
Uh, yeah?? The whole time! I kept  
the faith, and now look where we  
are, Molly.  
(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
 We're in the House Chamber. We took  
 the Capitol! I mean come ON!

"On" echoes throughout the room.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
 And this is just the beginning,  
 Mol. Just the beginning.

ALECANDER  
 What's next?

Jamie eyes the kid, sheepishly sitting in the back of the room.

JAMIE  
 I'll tell what what's next if you  
 tell me your real name.

Jamie dismounts the dais and walks up the aisle, getting in Alecander's grill.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
 Who are you, kid?

ALECANDER  
 Alecander. That's my name.

JAMIE  
 And how did you get here?

ALECANDER  
 The train.

JAMIE  
 I mean what brought you here?

ALECANDER  
 The--the train.

JAMIE  
 Why are you here, son??

ALECANDER  
 Because...  
 (gulp)  
 I believe in America.

Jamie looks him up and down. A smile crosses his face.

JAMIE  
 Well you know what, Alecander?  
 You're alright.

Alecander breathes a sigh of relief.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Now what do you know about tunnels?

ALECANDER  
Tunnels?

JAMIE  
Tunnels. Burial pits. Satanic  
Churches. Blood sacrifice. I'm  
talking about the vast network of  
elites that sacrifice the young and  
drink their blood while they plot  
the downfall of Western  
civilization. I'm talking about the  
largest human trafficking network  
ever conceived, right under our  
noses.

Jamie digs into his rucksack and pulls out a PAINTING: an eerie oil pastel of a bunch of young men and women running through a tunnel wearing RED SHOES.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
I found this painting in the art  
collection of a very high profile  
DC politician.  
(then)  
Is this the world you wanna live  
in?

ALECANDER  
N-no.

JAMIE  
And you'd do anything to free these  
young men and women, wouldn't you?

ALECANDER  
Yes.

JAMIE  
Wouldn't you??

ALECANDER  
YES.

JAMIE  
Well then...Alecander. Go find me  
some tunnels. And not just tunnels.  
Pentagrams, secret doorways -  
anything. It's all here, we just  
gotta find it.

Alecander stands up.

ALECANDER  
Yes, sir.

The kid charges up the aisle and out of the gallery. The rest of the room focuses on Jamie.

JAMIE  
You heard me! Get gone!

Everyone scatters to scour the building for any evidence of a Satanic cult.

Jamie smiles to himself, taking a bite of an energy bar.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Leila, Sydney, Ariana, Robbie and Damien shuffle down a long stairwell as Robbie explains the plan.

ROBBIE  
The Capitol Hill tramway is our best bet. It connects all the major federal buildings and is only accessible to members of Congress and their staff.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

They charge onto the platform for the CAPITOL TRAMWAY, ten or so open top carts resembling the Disney World People Mover.

ROBBIE  
Now the tramway doesn't run everywhere, but if we take it to the Russell Senate Office Building we should be able to cut through the maintenance tunnels and wind up in the basement of the Library of Congress.

Sydney eyes Robbie, admittedly impressed.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)  
What?

SYDNEY  
Nothing.

Damien finds a circuit breaker on the wall, flips a couple switches and the tram comes to life.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL - MINUTES LATER

Leila faces backwards. She looks at Damien in the rear cart, playing conductor.

LEILA  
(whispering to Ari)  
Does he ever talk?

ARIANA  
Sometimes. I heard he used to be a  
mercenary and it kind of messed him  
up.

Robbie SCOFFS.

ARIANA (CONT'D)  
What? You have a better theory?

ROBBIE  
Not a theory. He told me.

LEILA  
So was he? A mercenary?

ROBBIE  
I can neither confirm nor deny.

LEILA  
How did he end up here?

ROBBIE  
You want his whole life story?

LEILA  
The Cliffs Notes.

ROBBIE  
Ask him yourself.

ARIANA  
He doesn't know.

ROBBIE  
Yeah I do, but he told me not to  
tell anyone because he's a private  
person.

LEILA  
It would be kinda fucked up if he  
was like a Blackwater guy or  
something.

ROBBIE

What's wrong with Blackwater?

LEILA

What's wrong with *Blackwater*?

ROBBIE

They're not pirates, they're  
bodyguards.

LEILA

Who kill people with impunity.

ROBBIE

They're no worse than the American  
military.

LEILA

Agreed.

ROBBIE

And both contribute to the world  
being a safer, more stable place.

LEILA

Which world are you talking about?

ROBBIE

This one!

Sydney chuckles.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

Look, there are bumps along the  
road, but overall we live in the  
most prosperous period in human  
history. The arc of history is long  
and it bends towards me not getting  
shot in the face, ok?

HENRY

EVERYBODY DOWN ON THE GROUND!!

HENRY pops up from the adjacent car and points a HANDGUN  
right in Robbie's face.

A brief moment of CHAOS as everyone SCREAMS and cowers.

SMASH CUT TO:

CNN INTRO SEQUENCE.

NEWSFLASH:

Wolf gives us an update.

WOLF BLITZER

We are now officially in the third hour of the occupation of DC, and one question is on everybody's mind: where is the military? Where is the National Guard? For more, Jim Cantore is still kicking. Jim?

JIM CANTORE

Thanks, Wolf. Things on the ground are very unclear, but what some sources are saying is the sheer number of protestors has made the situation untenable, forcing the National Guard to employ a "wait and see" strategy.

WOLF BLITZER

Truly unprecedented, Jim. And it begs the question: with this behavior, can we even call them protestors? Similarly, can we even call you a journalist?

Wolf chuckles.

WOLF BLITZER (CONT'D)

Anyway, that was Jim Cantore  
with--

JIM CANTORE

(hot mic)  
That guy can choke and die  
for all I care.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - LATER

Ariana feeds quarters into a vending machine, getting snacks for the group.

HENRY

The lights went out. I heard the chanting. I heard a scream. I looked out the window. I can't believe I hadn't looked out the window *before* - how often do you guys look out the window?

ROBBIE

It varies.

HENRY

Then...I hid. I feel bad but I hid. Eventually I made a dash for the tramway, but one of 'em stopped me. He looked like he was on meth or something. I thought I was dead. But then he gave me a gun and told me to keep up the fight. I guess he mistook me for one of them.

SYDNEY

You got the look.

HENRY

Anyway, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to get all crazy back there. I thought you might've been -- I don't know what I was thinking.

ARIANA

Don't worry about it.

Ariana hands Henry a packet of Sun Chips.

LEILA

What's your plan?

HENRY

Fort McNair. The Congressional bunker. Dad always said if shit hit the fan and we got separated - go to Fort McNair. You guys haven't heard from him have you?

ARIANA

No. That's probably where he is. He'll be happy to see you.

Sydney and Leila exchange a glance.

HENRY

You guys are going too right? Maybe we can go together. Strength in numbers.

He looks around, sensing hesitance.

HENRY (CONT'D)

That *is* where you're going, right?

ROBBIE

Not currently.

HENRY

What? Why?

ROBBIE

Can't tell you.

HENRY

What - yes you can. Where are you going?

SYDNEY

Go to Fort McNair. It will be safe there.

HENRY

Hold on, if you guys are going somewhere secret then I'm coming because that's where my dad is.

SYDNEY

Your dad is at Fort McNair.

HENRY

No he's not. Fort McNair is a distraction, isn't it? That's where they send the red shirts while all the people with real power hole up in their secret bunker and wait out the storm.

(then)

Please. I just wanna see my dad.

Leila hangs her head, overcome with guilt.

SYDNEY

Henry--

LEILA

Let's take him.

SYDNEY

What?

LEILA

Maybe he can be an asset.

ARIANA

She's right. It doesn't hurt.

Sydney looks at Leila.

SYDNEY

Fine. But none of that.

Sydney points at Henry's gun. Damien approaches, putting his hand out.

Henry places the gun in Damien's hand. But can't seem to let go. He tries, straining, nearly breaking a sweat.

ROBBIE  
Come on, man.

HENRY  
It's harder than it looks, ok??

He finally manages to let go of the gun. Damien tucks it in his waist.

INT. HOUSE GALLERY - DAY

POV: bleary eyes open to the sight of MOLLY, snapping her fingers at us.

MOLLY  
Wakey-wakey, eggs and bakey.

Reveal BRUNO DIAZ, slowly gaining consciousness, his hands and legs tied together.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
How many fingers am I holding up?

She holds up three.

BRUNO  
(groaning)  
Uhh...

MOLLY  
Groan for each finger.

BRUNO  
uhh...uhh...

JAMIE  
He's ready.

MOLLY  
That was only two, you have JAMIE (CONT'D)  
to- It's fine, Molly.

Molly steps aside and is replaced by JAMIE, holding a hot coffee and a bagel.

He pulls up a stool and removes Bruno's makeshift handcuffs.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Hungry?

He holds out the coffee and bagel. Bruno seems suspicious.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Just breakfast. I promise. I'm  
Jamie.

Bruno takes the coffee and sips it as if it were his last.

BRUNO DIAZ  
Bruno.

JAMIE  
I know. You mind if I ask you a  
couple questions, Bruno?

BRUNO  
If it's about the pipeline...

JAMIE  
It isn't.  
(then)  
Have you ever heard of the Red Shoe  
Society?

BRUNO  
The what?

Jamie pulls out the PAINTING from his rucksack.

JAMIE  
This look familiar to you?

BRUNO  
N--no.

JAMIE  
It's a painting. You know where I  
found it?

Bruno shakes his head.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Molly, do our man a favor here and  
heat up his coffee.

Molly steps in and takes the coffee from Bruno's hand.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

This painting comes from the personal collection of a very powerful DC operative who, for a variety reasons, I cannot name. But the point is: why on Earth would someone like that own a painting like this?

BRUNO

I don't know.

JAMIE

Here's what I think. I believe these young men and women are running from the clutches of an evil society of human trafficking Satanists that run the world and preserve their youth by drinking human blood.

BRUNO

*That's a theory.*

JAMIE

Let me ask you something-

BRUNO

No let me ask you something.

Jamie sits back.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

Say it was all true. All that shit about the Satanists and the blood -- say it was all true. Why do this? Why not leave and go live somewhere better?

JAMIE

Because America is the greatest country on Earth.

BRUNO

How can that be true? If everything you say is going on, how is America the greatest country on Earth?

JAMIE

Two things can be true, Diaz. You gotta understand, this is not about facts and reason - it's about *feeling*.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Y'know when you're arguing with your lady about who did the dishes? "I did 'em tonight" - "well I did 'em yesterday" - "no you didn't" - and before you know it you forgot what you're evening arguing about. That's because you're tryna deal in the realm of facts, when this is a battle of *feeling*.

(then)

You lizard freaks keep tellin' us we're wrong, when this isn't about wrong or right. This is about how we feel. You understand?

Bruno sighs.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

So whaddya say, can you help us out?

Bruno looks down at the painting.

BRUNO

You're fucking crazy.

Molly returns with the now piping hot coffee and hands it to Jamie.

JAMIE

I had a feeling you'd say that.

(then)

Open his mouth, Molly.

MOLLY

Jamie.

JAMIE

Do it.

MOLLY

NO.

JAMIE

*Fine.*

Jamie uses one hand to pry open Bruno's mouth and the other to pour boiling hot coffee into it. Bruno SCREAMS and gurgles. Molly looks away.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Where's the shit, Diaz?? Where is it??

## INT. MAINTENANCE TUNNELS - DAY

Damien leads the way through a nexus of hallways running parallel to the DC subway system. Old pipes, wet floor signs, flickering lightbulbs.

HENRY

And then I start reeling it in, and remember this is the Persian Gulf who *knows* what's swimmin' around in there! But I finally get the thing out of the water I see a fucking otter on the other end of it, hanging on by his teeth! I'm in a tug of war with a marmot over a fish!

ROBBIE

I thought you said it was an otter.

HENRY

Otter - marmot. They're interchangeable.

ROBBIE

No they're not. They're different things.

HENRY

Have you caught one?

ROBBIE

No. I've also never caught a crocodile or an alligator but I still know the difference.

HENRY

What's the difference?

ROBBIE

I'm not telling you.

HENRY

Because you don't know.

ROBBIE

Yes I do, but I don't want to rob you of a learning opportunity.

HENRY

Ok, Temple Grandin.

ROBBIE

That doesn't even make any sense--

Their bickering continues in the background. Go to Leila and Sydney at the front of the pack.

LEILA

When are we gonna tell him?

SYDNEY

Tell him what?

LEILA

About his dad.

SYDNEY

What about his dad?

LEILA

Sydney.

SYDNEY

Did you drive a flagpole through  
the guy's sternum? Because I  
didn't.

LEILA

He deserves to know.

SYDNEY

He'll find out eventually. We might  
as well let him live a few more  
hours in blissful unawareness.

LEILA

I can't keep a secret like that.  
Not with him right there.

SYDNEY

Then maybe you should't have  
brought him along like a lost  
puppy!

LEILA

We couldn't let him go alone.

SYDNEY

We could've sent Robbie with him.

LEILA

Or me.

SYDNEY

No! Absolutely not. You're coming  
to Melloncamp.

LEILA

What if I don't want to?

Sydney grabs her wrist.

SYDNEY

Do you realize the opportunity you have here? I would KILL to be where you are at your age. Most people in this town spend decades climbing the ladder and you have a chance to skip the line. Unless you want to be knocking doors for some idiot in Illinois who thinks he can be mayor. Do you? No. Of course not. If you're like me, you'll get through today because what comes tomorrow is worth it.

LEILA

Maybe I'm not like you.

SYDNEY

You are, Leila. Accept it.

Sydney walks off. Angle on Leila, concerned.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

The gang emerges into the bottom floor of another STAIRWELL.

ROBBIE

Where are we?

Damien examines a FIRE MAP on the wall, then starts up the stairs.

HENRY

I love it when he gets that look in his eye.

ROBBIE

What look in his eye? You just met, how would you know?

Robbie and Henry race each other up the stairs in pursuit of Damien.

Sydney, Leila and Ariana bring up the rear, panting and sweating as they go up three, four, five stories, finally emerging onto the floor of...

INT. THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS - CONTINUOUS

The Main Hall.

High, barrel-vaulted ceilings over a large lobby made of two floors of marble columns and arches, the walls adorned with murals and frescoes depicting scenes from American history and the development of knowledge and learning.

LEILA

Whoa.

ARIANA

Pretty cool, huh.

LEILA

It's huge.

SYDNEY

It's empty.

Sydney walks off.

HENRY

What exactly are we looking for?

LEILA

Don't worry about it.

HENRY

I wasn't asking you.

Leila walks off.

ARIANA

Y'know you owe her one. She brought you here. She saved your life.

HENRY

Bullshit. If I'm alive it's because I choose to be.

ARIANA

You're kind of an idiot, you know that?

HENRY

And you're kind of hot.

Ariana walks off.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I said *kind of*.

INT. WHITTHALL PAVILION

An ornate banquet hall within the library.

Sydney stands in the middle of an abandoned LUNCHEON. Tables, buffer, podium, and a project, but without a soul in attendance.

Leila, Ariana, Robbie, Damien, and Henry enter.

SYDNEY

This was it! Where is everybody??

ROBBIE

Looks like the Rapture hit a Bar Mitzvah.

SYDNEY

Where did they GO??

ARIANA

Maybe it was postponed.

SYDNEY

That would be like postponing a birthday.

ROBBIE

We postponed my birthday last year when my friends couldn't make it.

SYDNEY

No, Robbie, they just didn't want to come.

HENRY

I'm sorry, but what are we talking about? What is this all for?

Ariana picks up a LEAFLET sitting on a table. It reads "Bright Young Minds Luncheon - 2022" accompanied by a headshot of Leila.

Henry looks over her shoulder.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You gotta be kidding me. THIS is what we're here for?? I thought we were going somewhere important! Some secret underground bunker! Not this!

LEILA

What's wrong with this?

HENRY

It's a pity party! It means nothing!

LEILA

I wrote an *essay* which is being inducted into the Library of Congress.

HENRY

Yeah, you know what else is in the Library of Congress?

LEILA

The Declaration of Independence.

HENRY

A dictionary with seven different spellings of the word "slut".

LEILA

The Gutenberg Bible.

HENRY

Thomas Edison's sneeze rag.

LEILA

The Emancipation Proclamation--

HENRY

A seven dollar bill minted while the Treasury Secretary was on METH. There are 173 million things in the Library of Congress. You might as well put your essay in a bottle and chuck it into a landfill.

Ariana KICKS Henry in the groin from behind, sending him to the mat.

ARIANA

You're a fucking ASSHOLE, Henry.

Ariana walks off, taking Leila with her.

Ignoring it all, DAMIEN paws through a stack of documents at the podium. He turns over a *prix-fix MENU* to find the letters "A-C" scrawled on the other side in red pen.

He finds Sydney, busy staring out a window, and hands her the menu.

SYDNEY  
If you're hungry you can find a  
vending machine.

He flips it over in her hand. Sydney reads "A-C".

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
What is this? Where did you find  
it?

He points to the podium.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
A-C.

She looks back out the window. There, across the Potomac, is  
a large, ornate CEMETERY.

INT. MAIN ROTUNDA, SECOND FLOOR - LIBRARY OF CONGRESS - SAME

Ariana drags Leila by the hand, scanning a BOOKSHELF that  
seems to never end.

ARIANA  
Geography, geology, geometry...

LEILA  
Where are you taking me?

ARIANA  
Mathematics, mineralogy,  
neurology...

LEILA  
Ariana. ARIANA.

ARIANA  
Call me Ari -- Renaissance, rare  
books, science fiction...ah!

Ariana reaches into her breast pocket and pulls out a LEAFLET  
from the table at the luncheon.

ARIANA (CONT'D)  
Speeches and rhetoric.

She grabs a STEP LADDER, reaches to the top shelf and sticks  
the leaflet between two books.

ARIANA (CONT'D)  
When this is all over, this is  
where your essay will go. You  
deserve it. You won.

Leila looks at her, genuinely touched.

SYDNEY (O.S.)  
GIRLS! Get down here!

They lean over the railing of the rotunda to see Sydney, Henry, Damien, and Robbie.

INT. MAIN ROTUNDA, FIRST FLOOR - CONT

Leila and Ari descend a staircase onto the first floor.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
They moved it.

LEILA  
Moved what?

SYDNEY  
The--  
(glancing at Henry)  
The luncheon. They moved it, see?

Sydney hands her the menu with "A-C" scrawled on the back of it.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
Damien found it on the podium.

LEILA  
What is A-C?

ARIANA  
Air conditioning.

LEILA  
Alligator crocodile.

ARIANA  
But it's A dash C -- the alligator  
to crocodile pipeline? Is that a  
thing?

SYDNEY  
ARLINGTON CEMETERY. It's across the  
river and it's the one place these  
freaks won't go. It's sacred.  
They'd sooner move to China than  
step on a veteran's grave.

Angle on Leila.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
What?

LEILA  
Seems like a stretch.

SYDNEY  
A stretch?

LEILA  
It's two letters written on the  
back of a menu. It could mean  
anything. I know you said that the  
luncheon could never be cancelled.  
But...maybe you're wrong.

SYDNEY  
Yeah. Maybe. Figure it out for  
yourselves, then.

She gets close to Leila.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
Or did you forget my promise? You  
have a very bright future, Leila.  
Don't be afraid of it.

INT. CAPITOL HILL - DAY

In QUICK CUTS:

-Alecander leans under a desk looking for evidence of a Satanic cult. He shakes his head.

-He parts two books on a shelf. Nope.

-He examines all sides of a Rubik's Cube sitting on someone's desk. Nothing Satanic here.

-He pushes a BUST of John Adams hoping to reveal a secret button, but instead it crashes to the ground, startling him.

INT. HOUSE GALLERY - DAY

Alecander opens the gallery doors.

ALECANDER  
Jamie, I don't know what we're  
looking for but it's not here,  
maybe if we check under the floor  
boards or something, but...

The entire room is gathered around the DAIS, where Molly yells at Jamie.

MOLLY

How can we be sure??

JAMIE

It says right here! "To be inducted  
into the *Library of Congress*."  
That's where they are!

MOLLY

Where even is that? If we spread  
ourselves too thin we risk losing  
what we have.

JAMIE

Molly, you're very helpful but  
there is a reason Florence  
Nightingale was a nurse, not a  
general.

Alecander approaches. Molly hesitates to get him involved.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Show him.

Molly hands Alecander the piece of paper - it's LEILA'S SPEECH.

ALECANDER

What is this?

JAMIE

It's a speech. From a young woman  
who was brought here today for  
winning an essay contest.

MOLLY

And that's all it is.

JAMIE

Except that this contest is clearly  
a front! This girl is going to be  
murdered. She's going to be  
sacrificed. We need to find her,  
not only to save her life, but to  
prove to the world that *this* is  
what's going on.

MOLLY

You're grasping at straws, Jamie.

JAMIE

I'm not, Molly. This could be the  
proof that we need. Besides, it's  
not like we've had much luck *here*.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

(then)

Alecander - did you find anything?

ALECANDER

N-nothing.

JAMIE

Nothing! Anyone else? Any discoveries?

A mumbling of "nothing" from the room.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

No! Of course not! It would be too obvious! The Natural History Museum doesn't put real dinosaur bones on display - they're replicas! The *actual* Mona Lisa isn't inside the Louvre! Banks don't keep their money in the safe!

Off Molly - yes they do.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

That's because the *real* shit is in places you would never expect. In storage facilities and maintenance closets. It's in the plumbing, the filing cabinets, the air vents. And according to this speech, it's in the Library of Congress.

MOLLY

This speech is not proof.

JAMIE

No. It's not. But it's proof that proof *exists*. So let's find it!!

CHEERS.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Whose house??

CROWD

Our house!!

The cheers build into chanting as Molly glances at Alecander, who is still fixated on the speech in his hands.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

DAMIEN breaks into a valet booth. He starts grabbing KEYS from the key rack, pressing buttons and waiting for an alarm to go off. Eventually a HONK in the distance.

EXT. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS - DAY

An SUV breaks through the parking garage barrier gate and exits out onto 2nd Street.

INT. SUV

Sydney drives while Ariana sits in the front seat.

ARIANA

Why isn't the GPS working?

SYDNEY

We don't need it.

In the backseat, Robbie tries using phone.

ROBBIE

I've got no service.

SYDNEY

Feds probably knocked it out to keep the Defectives from talking to each other. It's protocol. Lock your doors, shelter in place, wait for the storm to blow over.

Leila looks out the window at DC in disarray. Empty streets, save for the occasional roving band of radicals.

The car comes to a stop.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

Shit.

The road is blocked by debris. In the distance, a group of RADICALS blast Luke Bryan having a full on hoot-nanny.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

I'm going to take Independence.

ROBBIE

Ma'am, I don't know about that...

She veers down an alleyway and out onto...

EXT. INDEPENDENCE AVE - DAY

They travel alongside the National Mall, crawling in RADICALS.

INT. SUV

SYDNEY

Everyone down.

Everyone crouches down in their seats. Sydney squeezes the wheel and slows down to avoid suspicion.

After a moment of silence-

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Ari.

Ari looks up at her.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

I need you to leave Leila alone.  
She doesn't need any distractions.

ARIANA

Distractions?

SYDNEY

I see you two. She's not here to make friends, she's here to do something great. Don't get in her way.

ARIANA

We're friends.

Sydney doesn't dignify that with a response. Ariana sinks.

In the backseat, Leila, Robbie and Damien are crouched beneath the windows, except for HENRY, who sits upright staring out the window.

LEILA

Henry! Get down!

HENRY

Take me back.

LEILA

What??

HENRY

I want to go to Fort McNair. I want to see my dad.

ROBBIE

Are you kidding me?? Now??

LEILA

I thought you wanted to be where the important people are!

HENRY

You people aren't important. You people are crazy. Take me back. Now.

Henry unlocks the door and goes to open it. Damien STOPS him.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Get off me.

ROBBIE

Just wait.

HENRY

No! I'm done waiting!

He slaps Damien's hand away and OPENS the door.

SYDNEY

What's going on back there???

Damien TACKLES Henry, restraining him.

HENRY

Get off me!! My dad will have you all jailed for this!! This is kidnapping!!

ROBBIE

CUT IT OUT!!

LEILA

STOP IT!

HENRY

FUCK you guys!! I'm going to see my dad!!

LEILA

Your dad is DEAD, HENRY!!

That stops everything.

HENRY

What?

Sydney stares daggers at Leila through the rear view mirror. Leila fesses up.

LEILA

He was killed in the House Chamber.  
I saw it happen.

HENRY

You're lying.

LEILA

I'm not. Sydney saw it too.

HENRY

No. That's impossible.

Sydney glares at Leila in the rear view mirror.

HENRY (CONT'D)

No. You're lying, you people are  
disgusting! You would lie about  
something like that?? Get off me!

Henry elbows Damien in the face and reaches over the driver's seat and GRABS THE WHEEL.

SYDNEY

GET OFF!

ARIANA

What are you DOING!!

EXT. INDEPENDENCE AVE - SAME

The SUV weaves back and forth.

INT. SUV

Leila, Damien, and Robbie JUMP onto Henry, trying to restrain him, causing him to WRENCH the wheel to the right.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE AVE - CONTINUOUS

BOOM! The car VEERS off the road, weaves through a forest of trees and snack carts, tearing up the lawn of the National Mall, and then--

BANG!! The SUV collides head on with the KOREAN WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL, stopping hard.

EXT. KOREAN WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL - CONTINUOUS

Smoke and steam leak out of car. Leila stumbles out, followed by Damien and Robbie.

Sydney, still in the driver's seat, opens her eyes to see that the windshield is shattered with a giant hole in it.

HENRY lies facedown in the fountain, not moving.

LEILA

Oh my god.

Leila gets into the water and flips Henry's body over.

LEILA (CONT'D)

He's not breathing.

Robbie pushes her aside and puts his hands on Henry's chest.

ROBBIE

I know CPR.

He does a couple compressions.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

Wait, no I don't.

DAMIEN gets in there. After a couple compressions and some mouth to mouth, still nothing.

LEILA

What do we do? What do we do??

SYDNEY

You fucking IDIOT!

Sydney stomps into the fountain, screaming at an unconscious Henry.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

You FUCKED us! You FUCKED us!

(to Leila)

This is your fault!

LEILA

How is it my fault??

SYDNEY

You voted to bring him along!

LEILA

It was the right thing to do!

SYDNEY  
And look where that got us. We have  
to go! Now!

RADICAL #1  
Coming through!

From the woods emerges a small group of RADICALS, one with a First-Aid kid, who kneels and starts tending to Henry.

Another RADICAL emerges and points a SHOTGUN at the group.

RADICAL #2  
You're Sydney Ahern, right?  
(into a WALKIE)  
Ground Hog to Lap Dog - we got a  
live one.

INT. MAIN ROTUNDA - LIBRARY OF CONGRESS - DAY

Alecander wanders the Library of Congress before seeing a piece of PAPER sticking out of a shelf.

He finds a step ladder and pulls out...

The LEAFLET that Ariana stuffed in there. On it is a picture of LEILA and a brief description of the luncheon.

He sheepishly looks around before stuffing it in his pockets.

DON'T TREAD ON ME  
Get down here!

The RADICAL with the "Don't Tread on Me" flag pulls Alecander off the step ladder and takes the leaflet from him. He reads it, then looks at Alecander with contempt.

INT. MAIN ROTUNDA, FIRST FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

His whole hand wrapped around his arm, Don't Tread On Me brings Alecander to the first floor and shows JAMIE the leaflet.

DON'T TREAD ON ME  
Kid found this stuffed between the  
shelves on the second floor. That's  
her, isn't it?

Jamie looks at the leaflet. A picture of LEILA on it.

JAMIE  
Yes it is.

DON'T TREAD ON ME  
He shoved it in his pocket. Clearly  
he didn't want us finding it.

ALECANDER  
That's not true! I was going to  
bring it down here!

DON'T TREAD ON ME RADICAL  
Bullshit.

JAMIE  
That's enough. Thank you.

Don't Tread On Me gives an exasperated huff before EXITING.

ALECANDER  
Jamie. I promise I wasn't hiding  
it.

JAMIE  
You know what makes you different,  
Alecander?  
(leaning in)  
You're not like the others. Most of  
these guys, they're soldiers. Once  
the dust is settled, they'll be  
useless. But not you. You got a  
good head on your shoulders.  
(then)  
But I need to know I can trust you.  
Can I?

ALECANDER  
Yes.

JAMIE  
Then what's your fucking..name...

MOLLY (O.S.)  
Jamie.

Molly emerges from another room with a WALKIE in her hand.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
You should hear this.

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - AFTERNOON

The sun hangs low in the sky over an empty, almost apocalyptic DC. The sounds of buses and commuters have been replaced by the hoots and hollers of roving radicals.

WOLF BLITZER (V.O.)

We are entering the ninth hour of the occupation of Washington DC.

NEWSFLASH:

WOLF BLITZER

DC locals have either evacuated or are sheltering in place as the National Guard declares no other option than to wait it out. As Americans, we all thought nothing like this could happen here. And yet, it has. Still on loan from the Weather Channel, Jim Cantore is on the scene. Jim? Are you there?

JIM CANTORE, still in his signature blue windbreaker, stands on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

JIM CANTORE

I am, Wolf, and the feeling on the ground here is enough to make even the most cynical American weep for his nation. Our only hope is that in moments like these, we are brought closer together and...

(then)

Wolf, I'm sorry for what I said before.

WOLF BLITZER

That's alright, Jim.

JIM CANTORE

No. It isn't. Telling another journalist to choke and die is never ok, and I owe you an apology.

WOLF BLITZER

I forgive you, Jim. You weren't in the right state of mind. Real journalism can take a toll.

Jim takes a long breath, trying to tamp down his anger.

JIM CANTORE

...yup.

EXT. RADICALS CAMP - NATIONAL MALL - AFTERNOON

An acre-wide stretch of land occupied by tents, camper vans, pick up trucks, and tailgates. A MONSTER ENERGY FLAG flies high in the air.

We focus in on a CHEAP RV parked near the Reflecting Pool.

Outside on a small COT, Molly tends to an unconscious Henry. She glances at the RV.

INT. CHEAP RV

Leila, Ariana, Robbie, and Damien are spread out on chairs and couches, kept in place by a pair of ARMED GUARDS.

Sydney sits at a small dinner table across from Jamie.

JAMIE

You fancy yourself a pretty good liar, don't you?

Sydney gives him nothing.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

You probably think you can talk your way in and out of a fine kettle of fish. And maybe you're right. But I don't just talk, baby girl.

Jamie puts his GUN on the dining table.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Now I know you're headed to your Satanist lair with all your Satanist friends, so my question is simple: where you goin', Sydney?

Sydney chuckles.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Keep laughin'. I can wait.

SYDNEY

Can you? How long do you think you can hold this place, hm? It's just a matter of time before the country demands action.

JAMIE

They already have, Sydney. This is it.

Sydney scoffs.

Jamie gives a nod to one of the GUARDS, who lifts a kettle of boiling water off the kitchen stove and brings it to him.

SYDNEY  
What are you doing?

The GUARDS grab Sydney and put her arms behind her back.

JAMIE  
Thought you might be thirsty.

They pry her mouth open.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Where you goin' Sydney?? Where's  
the SHIT??

Just as Jamie is about to start pouring, Sydney BITES the finger of one of the guards, who recoils, knocking into Jamie and spilling the water all over the floor.

Jamie SLAPS her across the face.

He then eyes the rest of the gang sitting in the corner.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
(to guards)  
Line 'em up.

The guards grab Leila, Robbie, and Ariana and put them on the ground.

Jamie takes his gun from the table puts it to Robbie's head.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Tell me where you're going or I'll  
kill one of 'em.

Sydney stays steely.

He SHOOTS the ground next to Robbie's head. Sydney doesn't flinch.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Fair enough.

Jamie moves the gun to Damien's head.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Duck.

Then Leila.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Duck.

Then Ariana. Sydney suddenly seems sacred.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
Goose.

He presses the gun to Ariana's head.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
You got ten seconds. Ten. Nine.  
Eight. Seven...

Sydney stays silent.

ARIANA  
Mom.

JAMIE  
Six...five...four...

Jamie squeezes the trigger. Sydney looks the other way.

ARIANA  
*Mom!*

JAMIE  
Three...two...

LEILA  
MELLONCAMP.

Jamie takes his finger off the trigger.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
Malloncamp. It's a summit. Where  
world leaders can meet in secret.  
That's where we're going.

JAMIE  
Where is it?

LEILA  
Arlington Cemetery. Just across the  
river.

JAMIE  
see? How hard was that?

Jamie tucks his gun in his waist and exits the RV, followed  
by the guards.

EXT. CHEAP RV - CONTINUOUS

Molly breaks from tending to Henry.

MOLLY  
What happened in there, Jamie?  
*Jamie.*

Jamie walks off, ensconced by his guard.

EXT. BONFIRE - RADICALS CAMP - NIGHT

Jamie holds court around a raging BONFIRE made of debris, dry leaves, and scrap wood.

JAMIE  
It is my pleasure to inform you all...that the shit...has been found.

CROWD  
YEAHH!!!

JAMIE  
It's called Melloncamp. It's where the rich and powerful to run the world from behind the scenes, and I imagine maintain their youth by drinking the blood of the young.

CROWD  
YEAH!!

JAMIE  
And it's right over the river at Arlington Cemetery!

The crowd quiets down, hesitance building.

JAMIE (CONT'D)  
I know, I know. Believe me, I don't wanna bust down the doors of a scared place like that any more than you do, but you must realize something: THAT is precisely why they put it there - to keep us out!

CROWD  
YEAHH!!!

Jamie sees ALECANDER in the crowd, a look of worry growing across his face.

JAMIE

Now I want everyone to take a deep breath.

They all breathe deep.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

That my friends, is the smell and taste of a new America. And if we do our job tonight, tomorrow morning our brothers and sisters across the country will awake to the same sensation.

(beat)

WHOSE HOUSE??

CROWD

OUR HOUSE!

JAMIE

WHOSE HOUSE??

CROWD

OUR HOUSE!!

As the chanting escalates, Jamie looks back into the crowd to see that Alecander is GONE.

INT. CHEAP RV - NIGHT

The sound of chanting in the distance. Morale lower than ever.

ROBBIE

That's it. I'm not dying like this. When I was in the womb my mother had my fortune read by a woman who said I would die surrounded by friends and family. This is NOT what she meant.

Robbie goes to the door.

LEILA

Don't!

ROBBIE

Why??

LEILA

The guards are right outside. If they catch you trying to leave, they'll kill you.

ROBBIE

They can't, they need us.

SYDNEY

No they don't. Leila told them all about Melloncamp. What do they need us for?

LEILA

What did you want me to do?? He was going to kill her!

SYDNEY

No. It was a game. You lost.

LEILA

Not everything is a game, Sydney. This is real.

SYDNEY

You made it so far, only to cave at the last second. You could have been great.

LEILA

By doing whatever you tell me to?? You keep dangling this carrot - "you can come out of this better than you came in" - how, Sydney??

SYDNEY

I had such high hopes for you. So did your parents. Your grandfather. I mean, you used the man's death to win an essay contest - you might as well get something out of it. Don't you owe him that?

LEILA

I did not use his death...

SYDNEY

Didn't you? You could've written about anything. But you knew there are only two stories that anyone cares about: stories of incredible achievement or dramatic loss. And it's not like you had any achievements to celebrate.

LEILA

Fuck you.

SYDNEY

You see? There's the fight! Keep that! That's how you win!

ARIANA

Oh my god SHUT UP.

Angle on Sydney, taken aback.

ARIANA (CONT'D)

Just shut up, mom!! No one cares! She's not like you! No one is like you! You believe everyone thinks like you do but they don't! And thank god! Because if everyone thought like you, everyone would be an asshole!

SLAP! Sydney STRIKES Ariana across the face.

A beat of silence. Did that just happen?

Leila PUNCHES Sydney, sending her to the floor.

SYDNEY

You see? I'm not wrong.

LEILA

We're getting out of here.

SYDNEY

Good. Take her. I don't want her.

Ariana bursts into tears before throwing the door open and BURSTING out of the RV.

EXT. RADICALS CAMP - CONTINUOUS

The two GUARDS stand by the Reflecting Pool, 30 or so yards away from the RV.

In the background, Ariana storms out of the RV followed by Leila. The guards turn just in time to see nothing.

GUARD #1

Anyway, I was thinking of doing a bit about dating in your forties, just about how hard that is.

GUARD #2

Yeah, that could be funny.

EXT. WOODS - NATIONAL MALL - CONTINUOUS

Leila follows Ari into a small wooded area. In the distance, RADICALS line Independence Ave.

LEILA  
Hey. Hey hey hey--

ARIANA  
FUCK her, man--

LEILA  
I know--

ARIANA  
No FUCK her! Like who even IS  
that?? I don't KNOW that person!

Leila lets her go.

ARIANA (CONT'D)  
She acts like I'm not even her  
daughter! Like I'm her assistant or  
something!

LEILA  
But she loves you.

ARIANA  
No. She loves you. She loves you  
because...I don't know! What's so  
great about you!

Leila takes no offense.

Ari stares at her, beaten and broken. Angry at the world.  
Then, picking the wrong moment, moves to KISS HER.

Leila freezes, her eyes remaining open. After a second-

ALECANDER (O.S.)  
Leila.

Ariana backs off.

Leila looks over to see ALECANDER standing ten feet away. Her  
face turns white as a ghost.

ALECANDER (CONT'D)  
Am I interrupting something?

LEILA  
...Carter?

\*Alecander will now be referred to as Carter.

CARTER  
Just let me explain-

LEILA  
No. No no no. This isn't real.

She gives his outfit a once-over, clearly with *them*.

LEILA (CONT'D)  
Come ON CARTER!! Come ON!!! You  
gotta be KIDDING ME!!

ARIANA  
Who's this?

CARTER  
Will you give me a second to  
explain?

LEILA  
You're supposed to be in Dallas!!  
At your Aunt's FUNERAL! Are you  
shitting me??

CARTER  
Please just let me explain, I want  
to help.

LEILA  
Explain *WHAT* Carter?? There's  
nothing to explain!

CARTER  
I didn't know it was going to be  
like this! I thought we were going  
to do some chanting and flag waving  
- I didn't think this was some sort  
of paramilitary occupation!

LEILA  
Bullshit, don't play dumb with me.

CARTER  
I'm not. Now let me help you--

LEILA  
Do you believe what they believe?

CARTER  
These people don't believe  
anything, Leila.

LEILA

Fuck you.

CARTER

I'm serious. They're just angry.

LEILA

And are you angry?

CARTER

What?

LEILA

Are you *angry*?

CARTER

...Who isn't?

Leila looks at Carter in a moment of understanding before--

JAMIE (O.S.)

*There you are.*

Jamie emerges from behind a tree wielding his GUN.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Good work, Alec. Like my little  
attack dog.

LEILA

*Alec?*

JAMIE

Short for Alecander, isn't that  
right?

Angle on Carter looking ashamed before he SPRINTS OFF back to camp.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

He's a good kid. Not the best with  
fake names, though, is he?

(then)

Let's take a walk.

EXT. REFLECTING POOL - NIGHT

Jamie walks Leila and Ariana to the edge of the Reflecting Pool.

JAMIE

Get in.

They step into the shallow pool, their shoes filling with ice cold water.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I owe you a thank you, Leila, for giving me what I need. But what I don't need is you two causing me anymore problems. And that got me thinking - I don't need you at all.

Jamie cocks the gun.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Your country thanks you for your service.

He points the gun at them before --

VWOOM!! In the distance, a plume of FIRE shoots into the sky over the Radicals Camp.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

(distracted)  
...what the--

LEILA

AHH!!

Leila CHARGES at Jamie and tackles him to the ground, knocking the GUN out of his hand.

She starts PUNCHING him, to little effect, as he catches her fist and throws her on her back, both of them landing in the WATER.

He pushes her head under the surface. She starts to choke and gargle, until she manages to get a pair of fingers onto his eyes, SCRATCHING him across the face.

JAMIE

AGH!!

VWOOM!! Another plume of FIRE explodes from across camp. Radicals run to put out the flames.

Jamie PUNCHES Leila across the face, knocking her dizzy as he once again shoves her head under the water. Bubbles rise to the surface, then less, then less.

Underwater, Leila watches her grandfather's NECKLACE float out of her blouse and up to the surface.

BANG! A BULLET clips Jamie's shoulder, throwing him onto his back.

Leila BURSTS from the water, gasping for air.

Reveal ARIANA, gun in hand. Sydney comes up from behind, putting her hand on her shoulder.

SYDNEY  
Go ahead, sweet.

Ariana trains the gun on Jamie's forehead.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
Do it.

Ariana's hand shakes, overwhelmed by fear. She closes her eyes and squeezes the trigger...but can't do it.

Sydney SIGHS, takes the gun from her daughter and without a second thought puts a BULLET in Jamie's head.

INT. CHEAP RV - MOMENTS LATER

Robbie and Damien look out the window at the chaos.

The DOOR flies open, and Sydney throws Ariana into the RV, keeping Leila behind her.

SYDNEY  
(nearly rabid)  
Let me be very clear with you all.  
I gave you an opportunity. A chance  
to finally have a seat at the  
table. And you squandered it. Leila  
and I are going to Melloncamp, and  
none of you can stop me. It's been  
a pleasure working with you.

She slams the door, taking Leila with her.

EXT. CHEAP RV - CONTINUOUS

A pair of CRUTCHES sit beside a still unconscious Henry. Sydney grabs one and uses it to jam the RV door, locking Ariana, Damien, and Robbie inside.

She points the gun at Leila.

SYDNEY  
Move.

EXT. RADICALS CAMP - SAME TIME

Carter douses a BBQ grill in gasoline.

Emerging from the chaos, MOLLY stops him as he lights a match.

MOLLY  
Alecander!! What are you doing!!

CARTER  
Jamie's a HACK, Molly! He's a hack!

MOLLY  
Alec!! Stop!!

CARTER  
My name! Is not! Alec!!

Carter tosses the match on the BBQ grill -- VWOOM!

He then hops up on the bed of a pick up truck and looks over at the Reflecting Pool.

He sees Leila and Sydney running off, believing his DISTRACTION has worked.

Carter looks around him to find the rest of the RADICALS surrounding his pick up truck.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
Don't you see?? You're just angry!  
And I get it! So am I! We want a new world! But people like Jamie take advantage of that, and use it to build the same world again with themselves at the top.

The radicals look to each other, buying in.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
If we want to build a new world, we have to start again...again.

The radical with the "don't tread on me" flag pipes up.

DON'T TREAD ON ME  
So what do you suggest we do?

Carter thinks. He looks at Molly.

CARTER  
Burn it down?

MUMBLING from the crowd.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
I mean - *burn it down!!*

CROWD  
Yeaah!!!

The radicals drop their water buckets and start burning down their own camp.

Carter looks at Molly, whose face suddenly sinks as she REMEMBERS something.

EXT. CHEAP RV - MOMENTS LATER

As the flames quickly consume the whole camp, Molly slaps awake a still sleeping HENRY.

MOLLY  
Hey, kid-kid--get up. We're getting out of here.

HENRY  
Hnngg...

Molly reaches for the pair of crutches she set out in advance, but notices one is MISSING.

Carter looks around, sees the other CRUTCH jamming the RV door shut. Behind the door, POUNDING and YELLING.

Carter PULLS the crutch from the door and Ariana BURSTS out.

ARIANA  
Where is she?? Where's Leila??

CARTER  
I thought she was with you! I tried to create a distraction, I thought you all left-

ARIANA  
We have to go.

CARTER  
Go where??

ARIANA  
My mom is not to be trusted. We need to move! Now!

Ariana runs off. Robbie emerges from the RV.

ROBBIE

(to Carter)

Hey, I heard your speech through  
the window, have you ever  
considered a career in politics? I  
work for--

ARIANA (O.S.)

COME ON!!

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Sydney rushes Leila down a steep hill at gunpoint.

Sydney looks over at the Arlington Memorial Bridge up the river, swarming with radicals holding tiki torches.

EXT. POTOMAC BOAT HOUSE - NIGHT

They come to a small BOAT HOUSE - Georgetown University's crew rowing facility.

INT. POTOMAC BOAT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sydney shoots the lock on the door and opens it.

Inside: racks of KAYAKS adorn the walls.

EXT. POTOMAC RIVER - MOMENTS LATER

Leila waits in the kayak as Sydney pushes it off shore, then stumbles through the water to hop inside.

Gun in hand, she tosses a set of paddles to Leila.

LEILA

Row.

NEWSFLASH:

Wolf Blitzer delivers the news once again.

WOLF BLITZER

The fire that has erupted on the National Mall outside the Korean War Veterans Memorial continues to spread. Against all odds, Jim Cantore is still with us. Jim - can you hear me?

Throw to JIM CANTORE standing in the middle of the burning RADICALS CAMP. He now wears war paint and a fur pelt over his shoulders.

JIM CANTORE  
Loud and clear, Wolf.

WOLF BLITZER  
Jim, can I ask, what are you wearing?

JIM CANTORE  
This is my new skin, Wolf. The primal inside me has been unleashed as the vision of a new Utopia has emerged.

Jim tucks his mic under his arm as he lights a MOLOTOV COCKTAIL.

JIM CANTORE (CONT'D)  
The storm is brewing, Wolf, and it's a Nor'easter!

He tosses the molotov cocktail at a GOLF CART, setting it aflame.

JIM CANTORE (CONT'D)  
HOO-ra!

EXT. SHORE OF THE POTOMAC - NIGHT

The kayak approaches the other side of the river. Leila, exhausted, sets the paddles down.

SYDNEY  
Keep rowing. We're almost there.

LEILA  
I can't...I can't...

Sydney huffs in frustration.

SYDNEY  
Fine.

Sydney hops out of the kayak and swims the ten yards to shore.

In a brief moment, Leila looks down the river. This is her chance, she could paddle away and be done with--

BANG! Sydney SHOOTS a HOLE in the kayak. It quickly starts to fill with water.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
Come on, Moseley! It's refreshing!

EXT. ARLINGTON CEMETERY - NIGHT

Leila and Sydney emerge from a thicket of swampy foliage and find themselves on a small gravel road. The place is quiet, untouched.

SYDNEY  
No, no no. Where is everybody?? A-C, A-C, what else could that mean??

LEILA  
Air conditioning! Athletic Club!  
Accounting Clerk! There are  
thousand things it could stand for!  
But you were so obsessed that you  
couldn't see straight!

SYDNEY  
This was my chance. My one chance.

LEILA  
It wasn't anything, Sydney. It was  
never anything. They don't care  
about you. Face it. When the shit  
hits the fan, you're a fucking red  
shirt.

Sydney fumes and stumbles around. Sopping wet and freezing, her hair filled with twigs, face covered in dirt and sweat.

SYDNEY  
You...you...

She points the gun at Leila.

Leila stands like a deer in headlights until--  
A pulsing, RED AND BLUE LIGHT blinds them both. It looks like emergency lights.

LEILA  
Oh thank god.

Beaten and bloodied, Leila follows the pulsing light across the cemetery.

EXT. MEMORIAL AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

A large, marble amphitheater in the middle of the cemetery. As they approach, the light changes from red and blue to green, then aqua, then purple, then yellow, accompanied by HARDCORE TECHNO MUSIC -- Lip Critic's "The Loan".

They step into the amphitheater to find...

A SEA OF DANCERS dressed in masks, harnesses, leather pants, and other strange attire.

SYDNEY

Yes. YES...

LEILA

Where are we??

Sydney grabs her by the wrist and takes her into the crowd.

SYDNEY

I'm here!! Hey!! We're here!! I got her!!

They make their way to the amphitheater STAGE, where a DJ plays music behind large dais covered in LEDs.

Behind him, a large neon sign reads...

**WELCOME TO MELLONCAMP**

On Leila - no fucking way.

INT. STAGE WINGS - CONTINUOUS

Sydney drags Leila up a small flight of stairs where they are met by a masked HYPE MAN.

HYPE MAN

Where were you?? What happened?

SYDNEY

I'm sorry, we got held up at the...

HYPE MAN

It's a joke. Don't worry. We're just glad you could make it.

(shaking Leila's hand)

You're Leila right? Pleasure to meet you, truly.

Leila shakes with a limp, confused hand.

HYPE MAN (CONT'D)  
So. Let's get the show started,  
shall we?

The hype man charges back on stage, cueing the DJ to CUT the music.

EXT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

HYPE MAN  
Hello, Melloncamp! Thank you all  
for your patience, let's get this  
party started!

Tremendous CHEERS.

BACKSTAGE:

Sydney preps herself in a small mirror to be brought on stage.

LEILA  
I thought this was supposed to be a  
meeting.

SYDNEY  
It is.

ONSTAGE:

HYPE MAN  
But first let me welcome to the  
stage our existing Board Members!

Six VIPs emerge from backstage and sit in a row of large CHAIRS, with one chair left EMPTY.

From the wings, Leila takes note of their RED LEATHER SHOES.

HYPE MAN (CONT'D)  
Now, you might notice the empty  
chair on the end here. With the  
passing of our former treasurer  
this year, we thought Melloncamp  
might have to be cancelled for the  
first time in its 200 year history.

A wave of solemnity overtakes the crowd.

HYPE MAN (CONT'D)  
 But it is our pleasure to announce  
 the seat has been filled. Now would  
 you please welcome, our newest  
 board member...

Sydney straightens up and prepares to take the stage.

HYPE MAN (CONT'D)  
 Leila Moseley!!

The stagehands grab Leila by the shoulders and bring her on stage.

SYDNEY  
 What...what...NO! NOO!!

ONTSTAGE:

The stagehands guide her in the seventh chair.

HYPE MAN  
 It's a pleasure to once again have  
 Moseley blood in our midst. And  
 now, a moment to remember our  
 fallen forefather.

A PROJECTION screen rolls down from the ceiling and a slide show starts to play accompanied by a swell of SAD MUSIC.

Sitting behind the screen, Leila can read the first slide backwards: "In Memoriam".

LEILA  
 What the...

Leila feels a rustling on the floor. A small, hunched COBBLER removes her flats and starts measuring her feet.

COBBLER  
 Sorry. This will just take a  
 minute.

The Hype Man approaches Leila.

HYPE MAN  
 Comfortable?

LEILA  
 What's going on??

SYDNEY (O.S.)  
 HEY!!

Sydney storms the stage. The Hype Man awkwardly signals to the stage hands.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)  
 You fucking LIAR!! That's MY seat!!  
 You said if I brought her I would  
 finally become Board Member! I've  
 paid my dues! I've done the work!  
 But she just gets to skip the  
 line??

HYPE MAN  
 A little help over here?

The STAGEHANDS apprehend her, carrying her off.

SYDNEY  
 NO. No no no--

HYPE MAN  
 Apologies, I imagine you might need  
 some filling in.  
 (chuckling, then)  
 The Red Shoe Society was founded in  
 1817 as the world's premier  
 diplomatic organization, with  
 Melloncamp as our vicennial  
 flagship event--

LEILA  
 The what??

HYPE MAN  
 Questions at the end, please.  
 Anyway, when your grandfather took  
 the mantle in the late 1980s, he...

The hype man's voice turns into Charlie Brown wah-wahs as Leila looks up at the PROJECTION SCREEN.

A SLIDESHOW of her GRANDFATHER plays over sad music. Pictures of him meeting world leaders, brokering deals, posing with fellow elites. A secret life all lived in RED SHOES.

Leila can barely process what's going on.

HYPE MAN (CONT'D)  
 So you see, we couldn't let your  
 grandfather release a book like  
 that - detailing all the inner-  
 workings of our organization. Not  
 because we're doing anything wrong,  
 per se, but because the world just  
 wouldn't understand.

LEILA

So you killed him.

HYPE MAN

Not me *personally*, no, but--

LEILA

Why?

HYPE MAN

Like I said, there must be a *blood link* between all existing board members and the Society's original founding members.

LEILA

Why not my mom? Why not my sister?

HYPE MAN

Oh, that's easy. We read your essay. We loved it. You have a true gift.

LEILA

I--I--

HYPE MAN

I know. It's a lot. Let me put it this way: money doesn't make the world go 'round. We do. And you're one of us. This is a once in a life time opportunity. Cherish it.

Leila looks to the VIPs seated beside her. They stare back at her with a possessive affection.

The slideshow ends as the projection screen rolls back into the ceiling.

COBBLER

Done!

The cobbler at her feet finishes tightening and refitting a pair of RED LEATHER SHOES, "Moseley" inscribed on the soles.

HYPE MAN

Now, ladies and gentlemen, to welcome our first new board member in more than forty years, here is tonight's offering!

To thunderous applause, the stagehands guide SYDNEY out onto the stage, dressed in a giant red OWL SUIT.

SYDNEY

You-...you tricked me.

HYPE MAN

Just following orders, Sydney.

Another stage hand emerges from the wings with a lit TIKI TORCH, which he hands to the Hype Man.

HYPE MAN (CONT'D)

Let the celebration commence!

The Hype Man gradually lowers the flaming torch down onto Sydney's costume, her tail immediately catching fire.

LEILA

What are you doing?? Stop it!

Sydney tries swatting it out, but the fire continues to spread.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Stop!! Someone help her!! Stop!

Leila launches out of the chair, KICKING the cobbler in the face.

COBBLER

AGGH!!

Leila notices a drop of blood from the cobbler's nose SLEEP into the leather of her red shoe, as if by osmosis.

She CHARGES at the Hype Man, pushing him off his feet.

She tries unzipping Sydney's costume as the flame burns her hands, only for the stagehands to GRAB her and pin her to the ground.

The HYPE MAN gets between them, flicking a drop of sedative off the tip of a SYRINGE.

HYPE MAN

Hold her still.

Leila continues to writhe and fight as the Hype Man pushes the needle closer and closer to her neck, until--

BANG BANG! The sound of gunshots, which turn out to be the engine backfire of a modded-out GOLF CART CRASHING through the amphitheater pillars and into the crowd.

MOLLY sits in the driver's seat while CARTER rides shotgun, taking out rabid dancers with a baseball bat.

LEILA  
Carter!

From the other side of the amphitheater, a PICK UP TRUCK plows through the crowd, coming to a stop at the lip of the stage.

Robbie and Damien in the front seat, ARI pops up from the truck bed:

ARIANA  
Leila!

Leila quickly KNEES the Hype Man in the stomach and springs to her feet, leaping into the truck, only for the rabid dancers to GRAB her legs. As she hangs on to the truck bed:

LEILA  
Ari! The shoes!

Ari leans out and beats the dancers away just enough to slip the shoes off Leila's feet.

ARIANA  
Go--fetch!!

She ties them together, and CHUCKS them off into the crowd, where CARTER catches them and lifts them into the air.

CARTER  
Come get it, sickos!

He and Leila make a moment of eye contact before--

SYDNEY  
Ari!

The girls turn to see Sydney at the lip of the stage, her suit still burning.

LEILA  
(to Ari)  
I'll hold you.

Ari leans out of the truck bed and grabs her mother's hands as Leila holds Ari's waist, until--

An ELBOW wraps around Leila's neck. The HYPE MAN tries to push the syringe into her.

HYPE MAN  
Be smart, Leila. Let us help you.

In the cab of the pickup, Damien unbuckles to help her, only for a group of dancers to RIP him out of the front door. He hangs on for dear life.

DAMIEN  
ROBBIE!!

He REACHES into the car for something to hold onto - and finds ROBBIE'S HAND.

ROBBIE  
Hold on!

In a wide - our three battles play out. Damien hanging onto Robbie. Ari hanging onto Sydney. The Hype Man holding Leila in his clutches.

Finally, Robbie manages to WRENCH Damien back inside just as Leila BITES into the Hype Man's arm, grabs the needle from his other hand, stick him with it, and KICKS him out of the truck bed.

Sydney gives her full weight to Ariana, nearly pulling her out of the truck, but Leila manages to grab her just in time.

LEILA  
Ari.

Ari around to see more DANCERS flocking towards the truck.

SYDNEY  
Don't you fucking let go you,  
stupid, ungrateful, spoiled--

In SLOW-MO, Ari turns to her mother, then LETS GO. Sydney falls into the crowd of dancers.

Damien puts the pedal to the metal as the truck peels out, dodging dancers, debris, and destruction, squeezing through a gate and out into...

EXT. ARLINGTON CEMETERY - NIGHT

And just as easily as it came, it goes, and soon they are driving down a peaceful gravel road.

SYDNEY (V.O.)  
No one will remember the events of  
that day like we do. And in the  
end, it made us the best of  
friends.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

HENRY finally comes to, finding himself on a BENCH outside the emergency room.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Close on Damien, his eyes on the road.

SYDNEY (V.O.)

Damien became a carpenter in upstate New York. He's happier up there.

A HAND lands on Damien's shoulder. Pan to Robbie, smiling.

SYDNEY (V.O.)

Robbie found a job in the private sector. He gets to be his own boss.

In the TRUCK BED: Ariana leans on Leila's shoulder, wiping away a tear.

SYDNEY (V.O.)

My daughter and I speak on the phone every single day.

Leila puts her head on Ari's as she watches the amphitheater, the Washington Monument, and the Capitol grow smaller and smaller in the distance.

SYDNEY (V.O.)

And Leila. I taught her a lot that day. But most of all, I taught her to trust herself. Because I trust her.

She RIPS her necklace off and tosses it out of the truck. It lands in the grass, in a forest of gravestones.

EXT. ARLINGTON CEMETERY - SAME

The pickup drives into the horizon, dawn just beginning to break.

FADE TO BLACK.

**ONE YEAR LATER...**

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

Sydney sits at a desk with the hosts of THE VIEW. She finishes reading a passage of her NEW BOOK.

SYDNEY

(reading)

I've tried to tell this story a thousand times to a thousand people, but I always come to the same conclusion. You just had to be there.

JOY BEHAR

That is lovely.

WHOOPPI GOLDBERG

So lovely. Such a personal story and told so beautifully.

SYDNEY

And all true.

WHOOPPI GOLDBERG

Tell me, did the experience of writing this book help you heal from the events of the day?

SYDNEY AHERN

The truth is, Whoopi, I was really hurt after that. When you spend your whole life in public service, and one day it all turns on you, you can't help but think - am I the problem?

WHOOPPI GOLDBERG

Mmm.

SYDNEY AHERN

But then I realized - it's not me. It's this system. It's the secrets we keep. That's when I decided to partner with the Red Shoe Foundation to fix the emotional hole at the center of our country.

JOY BEHAR

And let me say, it's been a pleasure getting to know the Red Shoe Foundation and all the great work you guys do.

SYDNEY  
Hasn't it?

Angle on Sydney, clad in a pair of red high heels.

WHOOPPI GOLDBERG  
And, in fact, we have a gift for  
everyone in the audience, if you  
just look under your seats you'll  
find...

Everyone in the studio audience reaches under their seats and  
pulls out a pair of RED SHOES.

WHOOPPI GOLDBERG (CONT'D)  
A brand new pair of scarlet loafers  
courtesy of the Red Shoe  
Foundation!

Cheering over some pop-y outro music.

JOY BEHAR  
(into camera)  
Our guest is Florida Representative  
Sydney Ahern, the book is "Our  
House: How November 15th Taught Me  
the Importance of Self-Love".

Joy Behar props the book up for the camera as we PULL OUT,  
finding ourselves...

INT. DINER - DAY

Where the interview plays on a shitty tv in the corner.

In a BOOTH, a PORTLY MAN in a yellow suit speaks to a local  
NEWS REPORTER over an omelette breakfast.

PORLY MAN  
To me, small business isn't small.

NEWS REPORTER  
But the tax breaks you're  
suggesting could severely inflate  
the city's deficit.

PORLY MAN  
Which will be offset by the growth  
of new businesses. This is what  
people want.

In the corner, LEILA, a year older and a year wiser, mouths  
along with the portly man's talking points.

LEILA  
(mouthing along)  
The people know best, and I know  
the people.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Leila steps outside and unwraps a stick of CHEWING GUM.  
The NEWS REPORTER steps out on the way to his car.

NEWS REPORTER  
Hey, I don't know what you did, but  
that guy's starting to look like a  
real candidate.

LEILA  
Just got him to be himself.

NEWS REPORTER  
No, I saw him be himself. It was  
terrible. *That* was something else.

Leila smiles, feeling appreciated. Then her face SINKS.  
Across the street: ROBBIE waves innocently.

INT. LEILA'S CAR - DAY

Leila and Robbie get into her parked car.

LEILA  
What do you want?

ROBBIE  
Don't worry. I'm not going to tell  
anyone where you are. I'm not here  
for me.

Leila eyes him. She knows what he means.

LEILA  
What are you her lap dog?

ROBBIE  
I'm doing a favor. She just wants  
to find her daughter.

LEILA  
What does that have to do with me?

ROBBIE

Look, whatever you think of her,  
Sydney is a human being.

LEILA

She's telling the world we're all  
still friends. That everything is  
fine.

ROBBIE

I know.

LEILA

Doesn't that bother you?

ROBBIE

Not as much as it bothers her that  
Ariana is missing.

LEILA

Has it occurred to her that maybe  
she doesn't wanna see her?

Robbie breathes a sigh of frustration.

ROBBIE

I know you're angry, Leila.

Robbie digs into his briefcase.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

Who isn't?

He leaves an envelope on the dashboard, then steps out. After  
a beat, Leila opens it.

Inside: Robbie's BUSINESS CARD and a check from Sydney Ahern.  
In cool, cursive writing: "One Hundred Thousand Dollars".

She puts the check back in the envelope and chews her gum  
harder.

EXT. LONG DRIVEWAY - DAY

Leila turns into a long driveway. Linger on a sign that reads  
"Rock Valley Community College."

EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - DAY

Leila's beat up sedan comes to a stop in the parking lot.

INT. LEILA'S CAR - DAY

ARIANA gets in.

ARIANA

*Ugh.*

LEILA

What's up?

ARIANA

My advisor asked me when I'm going to transfer. Again.

LEILA

And?

ARIANA

We'll see. Too much on the brain right now.

Ariana smiles at Leila.

ARIANA (CONT'D)

Everything ok?

Leila nods, smiling back.

INT. SEDAN - LATER

Leila keeps her eyes on the road. She glances at the CHECK, sitting in the driver's door pocket.

Then at ARIANA, fast asleep in the passenger seat, bathed in amber light.

Leila thinks. Then grabs the check, spits her gum into it, and rolls down the window.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The check flies past the camera, bouncing down the highway. The sedan drives off into the sunset.

FADE TO BLACK.

**THE END**