



OVERRULED

AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

CREATED BY: © ANDRÉ + DAVID JOHN CRAIG

OVERRULED

EP #101: "OVER TAKEN"

Written by

©André

Based On

THE FABULOUS LIFE OF JUSTICE FATIMA NICOLE BAILEY
WHO IS ACTUALLY A DYNAMICALLY FICTIONAL CHARACTER WE ALL WANT TO
BE

DISRUPT MEDIA
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EXT. DARK ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Eerie silence. Wet, moldy and abandoned. A strip of light shines on THREE TERRIFIED BLACK TEEN BOYS, BEATEN AND TIED UP sitting on the wet ground. Pan to reveal a 4th YOUNG BLACK BOY lying FACE DOWN in a pool of his blood. He's gone...

SHAHID (16), drenched, his bloody fingers scrape the concrete working to free his hands. His determination gives us hope.

SHAHID

Come on... fuck... come on.

JONATHAN (17) spirit shattered. Nothing makes him blink.

MARQUI

You have to tell 'em.

MARQUI (17) angst targeted at Jonathan.

MARQUI (CONT'D)

I'm not fuckin' dying for you!

SHAHID

They'll kill us like they did Jay.

Shahid glances at Jay's lifeless body. He goes dark. Jonathan finally speaks, without even moving a muscle...

JONATHAN

Tell 'em it was Jay. He already dead, they won't do nothin' to us.

THE SOUND OF BOOTS ON CONCRETE gets closer. The boys strain to listen, eyes darting manically. Then A HELICOPTER FLIES OVERHEAD and they here the faint sound of a siren. A glimmer of hope. Their voices echo in terror.

MARQUI / JONATHAN / SHAHID

HELP! HELP US! YOOO! WE'RE IN HERE!

The DOOR BURST OPEN. 4 MASKED FIGURES IN MILITIA BLACK enter, GUNS DRAWN. The boys who scream over each other.

MARQUI / JONATHAN / SHAHID (CONT'D)

We don't know anything! Let us go!
You can't do this to us!

THREE SIMULTANEOUS GUN SHOTS BLAST. FLASHES from the GUNS lighten the room. All 3 bodies COLLAPSE.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - EARLY MORNING

A FEMALE NEWSCASTER stands in front as POLICE LIGHTS FLASH. YELLOW TAPE blocks off the area. CORONER VANS lined in a row.

NEWSCASTER

We're live at the scene where the bodies of four teen boys have been discovered.

(MORE)

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

Details are still emerging. No names have been released. But the growing crowd suggests that this tragedy will deeply effect this close-nit neighborhood.

PRE-LAP: UNITED VOICES CHANT "F'N B CAN'T SPEAK FOR ME!"

EXT. COURT HOUSE STEPS - AFTERNOON

CHYRON STAMPS: **9 MONTHS LATER** - BOLD LETTERS ON A RED STRIP

AUDIO CONTINUES, CLOSE ON: PICKET SIGNS WITH PHOTOS OF THE SLAIN BOYS, "HAWTHORNE FOUR", "F'N B!", "DON'T LET OUR BOYS DIE IN VAIN" AND OTHER QUOTES.

REVEAL: A MASSIVE PROTEST on the steps.

Packed with RILED UP PROTESTORS, MINISTERS, PARENTS and CONCERNED CITIZENS. Mostly PEOPLE OF COLOR, *Black, Latin, and a few white allies*. Including **LINDSEY STEPHENS** (40's), purpose and power, effortlessly sexy, white civil rights attorney, standing with the families for a press conference.

COURTHOUSE DOORS DRAMATICALLY FLY OPEN like a concert diva's grand entrance when we GO INTO SLO-MOTION...

JUMP CUTS: **FACE UNSEEN**, **JUDGE FATIMA NICOLE BAILEY** (Black Ageless, Seasoned), SAUNTERS OUT. *Strong, confident*, laced in a CRISP SHIRT, WIDE BOTTOM SLACKS with a TEXTURED BLAZER, RED BOTTOMS, holding an LV BRIEFCASE and a BLACK BIRKIN. The MEDIA and CROWD SWARMS like bees to Beyoncé. A WHITE FEMALE PROTESTOR jumps in front of Fatima.

WHITE FEMALE PROTESTOR

Fuck-N' Bitch! Recuse yourself.

SECURITY GUARD holds the Protestor back. Fatima **FACE STILL UNSEEN**, *unscathed*, moves about her business, and her business now is making her presence felt, *a sign of power*. Getting to her CAR where **VINCENT** (40s), FATIMA'S DRIVER, holds the door for her. Her message is crystal clear: "*Shit don't phase me*".

FATIMA (V.O.)

Lemon. Sugar. Water.

CHYRON STAMPS: "**OVERRULED**" ON A RED STRIP. We **TITLE OUT**

EXT. CITY - DAWN

A beautiful aerial view of the city. The sky lightens from the rising sun.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAWN

WE HEAR: BEYONCÉ & JACK WHITE'S "DON'T HURT YOURSELF"

CHYRON STAMPS: **TODAY** - BOLD LETTERS ON A RED STRIP

A helicopter flies over freeways and streets. Street lights, headlights and the red glow of brakes shine below. We catch up to a SPEEDING CAR ON A BARREN STREET BELOW and we...

EXT. ANGELINO HEIGHTS - STREET - DAWN

DRONE over the roar of a 1969 CHEVROLET CAMARO YENKO moving high speed, takes every turn like a pro. It flies passed A MOTORCYCLE COP who TURNS ON HIS LIGHTS and GIVES CHASE.

INT. FATIMA'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAWN

High-end premiere suite. California King. TWO FACELESS BODIES lie under a large fluffy duvet. It's quiet. Wall-clock reads 5:30am. "Alexa" speaks over speakers in the ceiling.

ALEXA

Fatima. Time for swift justice.

INT. MELANIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN

A HELICOPTER flies over. Light from a digital clock glows in the modest room. Queen bed with mismatched bedding tossed about. On a small night-stand loaded with PAPERS, A WORN NOVEL AND A PRESCRIPTION PILL BOTTLE, the ALARM SOUNDS.

INT. ERIN'S DRESSING ROOM - DAWN

We only see the BACK OF A WOMAN'S PERFECT HEAD OF HAIR. JUMP CUTS OF: MAKE-UP ARTIST, HAIR STYLIST and STYLISTS prep her.

INT. DARK APARTMENT - DAWN

JUMP CUTS: FACES NEVER SEEN. NAKED MALE AND FEMALE, in a HARD SEXUAL ROMP. i.e. *fuckin' her brains out*. PANTING. PULLING. BITING. GRINDING. So wild HE KICKS A LAMP OVER and BREAKS IT. ALARM RINGS. He finishes *sloppy and hard*. RUSHES UP. GRABS HIS CLOTHES. HE'S OUT.

INT. PARTY HOUSE - DAWN

LOUD MUSIC. Room's in shambles, remnants of a wild party. Light shines from a TV. NUDE BODIES lay around. DRUG RESIDUE everywhere. A NUDE MALE pushes TWO NAKED GIRLS off of him.

REVEAL: **BASIL** (mixed, 32), that sexy ass handsomely rugged dude with bloodshot light-colored eyes, skin beaded with sweat, POPS TWO PILLS WITH A SWIG OF VODKA.

INT. SUNNY'S HOME - PRIVATE GYM - MORNING

PICTURE WINDOW, STUNNING MONEY VIEW. The repetitive sound of foot-after-foot pounding on a TREADMILL contrasts the serenity. JUMP CUTS: HIGH-END SNEAKERS, SCULPTED LEGS;

SHORT-SHORT JOGGING SHORTS UP TO THE SHIRTLESS MUSCULAR TORSO OF A WELL-AGED MAN - **FACE UNSEEN** - SWEATING OUT MORNING TOXINS.

He grabs a remote. Turns on the MORNING NEWS we **MATCH CUT TO--**

INT. MELANIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

CLOSE ON: TV PLAYING THE SAME MORNING NEWS, SOUND BLASTING.

ON THE TV: **ERIN MASTERS** (40s), high-maintenance boss bitch, "*shit don't stink*" kinda well-spoken, even better dressed, BEGINS HER BROADCAST.

ERIN (ON TV)
Happy Morning family. Erin Masters
reporting on "Our Morning" CBS.

MELANIE (33), school teacher with that buttah skin, in a far too conservative blouse, cooking in the connected kitchen.

TREVOR (13), shades lighter than mom with LIGHT EYES directly in front of the TV, EATING FRUIT, *absorbed by the news*.

MELANIE
Trev, turn that down boy.

He's lost in the news story.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
Sitting that close to the tv is
going to damage those eyes.

DAVID (16), enters, dangerously confident, dressed too-well for a high-school kid. SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING.

DAVID
You think the problem with this is
he's too close to the tv?

MELANIE
What are you looking for?

DAVID
You should be talkin' about how
your psycho 13-year-old kid watches
news 24/7. We ain't related.

David finds his BAG near the couch. **We CUT TO--**

INT. NEWS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PRODUCTION CREW hustles. Erin in her element. Taping live.

INTERCUT: Scenes over the last nine months of NATIONAL PROTESTS, the COPS GETTING ARRESTED, the FAMILIES in PAIN.

ERIN

Nine months have passed since the brutal kidnapping and murders of Jonathan Phipps, Jason Ferguson, Marqui Sweeney, and Shahid Lee, four Black teen boys whose bodies were found in a warehouse last summer. Now, the highly anticipated Hawthorne Four Trial is set to begin in just 10 days. The nation was rocked by the case chilling revelation that a group of white police officers, allegedly linked to crime boss Tommy Spagnoli are at the center of this case. The officers involved are facing charges of 1st-degree murder. While accusations of cover-ups have reached the highest levels of government implicating the police commissioner, the department and even top officials.

VIDEO PACKAGE: PROTESTOR SCENE. PICKET SIGNS. ROWDY CROWD.

ERIN (CONT'D)

Protestors have gathered daily since Judge Fatima Bailey was assigned to preside over the trial.

VIDEO: Fatima leaves courthouse. **FACE UNSEEN** We MATCH CUT TO--**INT. MELANIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM**

Trevor, still locked into the TV.

ERIN (ON TV)

A representative for Justice Bailey released a statement saying, "This case doesn't center solely around race, as there are two defendants named in the cover-up that are African American and one Latino."

Melanie enters as more VIDEO of Fatima - STILL **FACE UNSEEN**.

TREVOR

Bailey's a bully. I hate her.

Melanie stares intently at the screen, *disturbed*.

MELANIE

Trev, we don't hate, and please, turn it off and go brush.

We **MATCH CUT TO --**

INT. FATIMA'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

SUNLIGHT beams through windows in the large, spotless modern kitchen. MOUNTED TV plays, Erin continues.

ERIN (ON TV)

The protestors, including family members of the slain, fear Judge Bailey's wealth and success has detached her from the community. Their concerns are fueled by her high incarceration rate for Black men and her perceived leniency for crimes against Black innocent people. A petition to have her removed from the case is gaining momentum, with whispers of taking this to the Supreme Court.

J.P. (30s), Black, heavily tatted, ex-CIA operative or prison, maybe both, CHOPS FRUIT AND VEGGIES, tossing them in a BLENDER, while keeping an eye on the TV.

ON SCREEN PHOTOS: the six cops being charged.

ATTORNEY FOR THE FAMILIES (ON TV)

The only thing black about her is that robe. It's given her the power to continually lynch not just innocent Black men she incarcerates, but the families who never see justice for crimes committed against them.

FEMALE PROTESTOR (ON TV)

Crazy her initials are F.N.B. since she's such a ~~Fuck'N Bitch!~~ (BEEP)

BLACK FEMALE PROTESTOR

She's supposed to protect us. Judge Bailey remember where you came from.

MS. FERGUSON

Jason was an A+ student, an honor roll kid, not some thug. We just want Justice Bailey to understand that this kind of loss...

REVEAL: FATIMA, our FIRST LOOK at her finds her in an equally expensive HOUSE ROBE and SLIPPERS. She enters thumbing through a LARGE STACK OF PAPERS. She notices Lindsey on the screen and pauses to watch.

EXT. COURT HOUSE STEPS - DAY

Lindsey stands confidently addressing reporters.

LINDSEY

We're not just fighting for these boys, but for every family who has lost someone to this broken system.

INT. FATIMA'S KITCHEN - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Fatima rolls her eyes subtly and gets back to her paper work.

LINDSEY (ON TV)

Justice is demanded, not only in the courtroom but in the way this country handles the truth.

J.P. QUICKLY TURNS THE CHANNEL. Fatima's eyes stay on the pages, as she...

SERIES OF JUMP CUTS: GRABS A PLATE OUT OF A CABINET; BUTTER DISH FROM THE FRIDGE; KNIFE FROM THE DRAWER; A CROISSANT FROM A LARGE BREAD BOX IN THE PANTRY. SITS AT THE ISLAND.

J.P. watches Fatima spread a huge amount of BUTTER. J.P. turns on the blender, eyes locked on Fatima. Fatima slathers JAM on her croissant. J.P pours the GREEN smoothie into a glass. Fatima is about to take a big happy bite, when J.P. snatches the croissant, replaces it with the smoothie.

FATIMA

Do not mess with me this morning.

J.P. dramatically tosses the croissant in the trash.

J.P.

Drink.

FATIMA

This is bullshit.

J.P.

High blood pressure, pre-diabetic is bullshit. Drink.

Fatima looks at the BRIGHT GREEN DRINK and FAKE GAGS.

A COMMERCIAL for the upcoming news plays.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

Coming up at 8, we join the protest outside the courthouse where people are rallying against the assignment of Justice Bailey for the Hawthorne Four Trial.

J.P. hurriedly turns off the TV.

J.P.

The shit they say about you...

FATIMA

Comes with the robe.

J.P.

Nervous?

FATIMA

I don't get nervous. I have another day or two with this trial. Then I can shift focus to the circus.

J.P.

This trial is easy. The other is a monster. What are you thinking?

FATIMA

See the evidence presented. Trust the jury. Do what's fair.

J.P.

Drink.

Fatima takes a big GULP, GAGS for real this time.

FATIMA

(re: drink)

Utter bullshit.

J.P.

What you do affects everything, especially your future. This Erin bitch's not making it easy.

FATIMA

I knew what I was getting into 30 years ago when I put on the robe. I've never let any of the pretty little hacks on TV affect me. Most of them are out of work now.

Fatima's CELL ALARM sounds. J.P. grabs a TRAY OF PILLS and JUICE and gives it to Fatima. Fatima *hates this*. J.P. *amused*.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

I pay you too well for you to be such a bitch to me.

J.P.

You don't pay me enough to deal with such a big ass baby. Swallow.

We leave them to their bickering, which never ends. **CUT TO--**

INT. MELANIE'S CAR - DAY

Melanie impatiently taps the steering wheel. Trevor's in the back seat READING NEWS on his CELLPHONE.

MELANIE

If he's in there changing clothes again. Go get your brother.

TREVOR

Ma, I'm trying to read up on stuff.

David comes out on his CELL. Melanie glares at him as he gets in the car. Melanie takes the phone from his ear, hangs up.

DAVID

Ma! What the hell?

MELANIE

I must have misheard you.

She puts her window down and HOLDS HIS PHONE OUT.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Did you say, *"take my phone and toss it because I don't know how to speak to my mother?"*

DAVID

The phone snatch was craaaazy.

MELANIE

Keep making us late and you'll get front row seat to crazy.

DAVID

My kicks had a smudge on 'em.

TREVOR

Ma, how do you become a reporter? I want to expose people like Erin Masters does.

MELANIE

I'm not sure baby. That's an interesting choice. Research it.

DAVID

You encourage this? When I was his age I was obsessed with Rihanna. He chooses a news reporter who ain't even that hot.

That amuses Melanie, a quick smile as we leave them.

INT. D.A. SUNNY JAMES' OFFICE - MORNING

TV plays the end of "Our Morning with Erin Masters"

ERIN (ON TV)

It's been beautiful having you all here with me for Our Morning.

D.A. SUNNY JAMES (35) that too good-looking smooth dude you can't trust, the one that was punishing the treadmill, is at his impeccably organized desk working, but really he's watching TV.

ERIN (ON TV) (CONT'D)
This is Erin Masters, Our Morning,
every morning.

KARLA (20s), secretary, enters, DROPS A FILE on his desk without breaking her stride. The file lands crooked, disrupting his meticulous organization, he straightens it without taking his eyes off the screen.

ERIN (ON TV) (CONT'D)
See you tonight at 7pm for Night
Cap With Erin where I sit down with
our friend Civil Rights attorney
Lindsey Stephens with her take on
the upcoming Hawthorne Four Trial.

Sunny OPENS THE FOLDER.

INSERT: "REJECTED" stamped in bold red letters on a WARRANT.

ON TV SCREEN: Erin's sign off package takes us into...

INT. FATIMA'S HOME - FOYER - MORNING

HAYES (20s), Fatima's, male executive assistant, enters looking like last night's festivities, which was him pounding that unknown female. *Hungover*. J.P. meets him in...

THE HALLWAY.

She hands Hayes a portable **STEAMER**.

J.P.
(re: disheveled look)
If you want to pass that off as
anything other than yesterday.

THE KITCHEN.

Hayes drops the steamer, goes to the FRIDGE, head in hand. J.P. shoves him, grabs an UNMARKED CONTAINER of a LIQUID and pours some.

J.P. (CONT'D)
If you slow the app surfing for ass
you wouldn't have this problem.

Fatima comes in, *doesn't even need to look at him*.

FATIMA
15 minutes late for another hook-
up. That's the kind of shit makes a
man lose his job.

HAYES
You know my extra curricular
activities don't affect my
performance.

FATIMA

Except by 15 minutes.

J.P. hands Fatima a CONTAINER for daily pills.

J.P.

1:30 and 5:30.

HAYES

I'm just fulfilling my youthful urges.

She changes her mind and hands them to Hayes.

J.P.

1:30, 5:30.

FATIMA

Find the urge to be youthfully fulfilled and on time.

Fatima slices J.P. with her eyes.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

(muttering)

Bitch.

J.P. sticks out her tongue. Hayes gathers Fatima's things.

INT. MELANIE'S CAR / EXT. DAVID'S HIGH SCHOOL

TEEN KIDS everywhere. It's LOUD. MELANIE'S CAR pulls up with David ducking from embarrassment.

DAVID

Can't you drop me up the street?

MELANIE

You act like I'm driving a hoopty.

DAVID

No one says that anymore.

David jumps out. *No goodbye?* Melanie LAYS ON THE HORN. He tries to ignore it. She blows til he comes back.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Ma! What are you doing?

MELANIE

I didn't hear a goodbye, or thank you mom for bringing me to school.

DAVID

Cuz I should be droppin' you off.

She LAYS ON THE HORN AGAIN, drawing more attention.

DAVID (CONT'D)

How old are you?

David walks away. Melanie screams out...

MELANIE

I put your hemorrhoid cream in your
bag baby. That's mamas baby boy.

Students LAUGH at David. He joins a GROUP, *MORTIFIED*.

INT. BASIL'S LOFT - MORNING

A large industrial space transformed into a MODERN LIVING LAIR. Basil, fresh out of the shower, body like a Greek god.

BEDROOM.

SERIES OF JUMP CUTS: CLOTHES on the bed; TOSSES THE TOWEL showcasing his sculpted nude body; A FRESH PAIR OF UNDERWEAR over his sculpted legs and perfect ass; Checks himself in the MIRROR; A PAIR OF JEANS; SHIRT, BELT; Grabs a GUN from the bed, PUTS IT IN HIS BELT. A HARD KNOCK at the...

FRONT DOOR.

Basil goes to the door *cautious*; holding the gun behind his back. Checks the VIDEO MONITOR, hesitates, then opens.

PRINCE (Italian, 20s), thin tatted guy with forced style, BOOZE BOTTLES in one hand. His arms around TWO SEXY GIRLS, pushes in. Sexy Girl 1 sticks her tongue down Basil's throat and grabs his ass. He's *not happy to see them*.

EXT. COURT HOUSE - MORNING

Vincent drives Fatima and Hayes. SUV, BLACK WINDOWS. Fatima peers at the crowd curiously. PROTESTORS out in full force.

FATIMA

I don't know what they get from it.
(to Hayes)
Call Summer. Get in front of this.

She takes in the growing crowd. *Empathy*. We **TIME CUT TO--**

INT. FATIMA'S CHAMBERS - MORNING

Hayes is on his cell while Fatima studies herself in the MIRROR. She mixes her CELINE with DIOR effortlessly.

As she puts on her ROBE, **OFFICER LEE** (30s), the almost-too-young-looking BAILIFF, ex-military background, enters.

LEE

Sorry I'm late. Had a situation.

FATIMA

It's a running theme.

LEE
Plans for the press today?

FATIMA
If you see 'em, shoot 'em.

LEE
Easily done.

Fatima takes a seat at her *meticulously organized* DESK.

FATIMA
Let's do a lock out. Just in case.

LEE
Shooting 'em sounded more fun.

Hayes, wraps his call and exchanges formalities with Lee.

HAYES
(to Fatima)
Summer's talking to Penguin.
They're increasing ad runs for the
book, setting up appearances, some
good press to shift the balance.

FATIMA
Lemon. Sugar. Water.

The door FLIES OPEN, Sunny storms in with a *vengeance*.

FATIMA (CONT'D)
Or just bitter water.

Lee quickly blocks SUNNY. Sunny tries to push past. Fatima motions for Lee to back off. Lee releases, stays on guard.

FATIMA (CONT'D)
(to Hayes)
Does Mr. James have an appointment?

Fatima doesn't like this dude throwing his maleness around. Hayes checks his cell calendar.

HAYES
Nothing here on your books, no.

SUNNY
Why would you reject this?

Fatima motions to Hayes and Lee to leave. They do because *this won't be pretty*. Sunny hands her the paper. Her eyes cursing him out. Then she reads.

FATIMA
Because you actually thought you
could slip this half-baked bullshit
by me. Try that shit with Kingston.

SUNNY
Fatima--

FATIMA

I'm sorry. Are we friends?

His eyes scream, "*Are you kidding me?*" But he needs this.

SUNNY

Justice Bailey.

FATIMA

Coming in much clearer now.

Sunny places the paper in front of her again.

SUNNY

You're tying our hands over technicalities.

FATIMA

(tosses the paper)

Technicalities keep your cases from blowing up in court. Right?

SUNNY

We have a detective under deep, life's on the line. You know what we're up against.

FATIMA

Even more reason to make sure if you bring this in front of a judge--

SUNNY

--When.

FATIMA

--your sloppy, corner cutting tricks don't send them right back on the street.

SUNNY

I'm asking for a little fucking flexibility.

She takes a moment of contemplation.

FATIMA

Ok. I'll give you this...

Sunny hopes rise... prematurely.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Do your job right. You know when you come correct I meet you halfway.

SUNNY

Fucking impossible!

Sunny's *alpha-male* can't stand losing, to her.

FATIMA
Goodbye Mr. James.

Sunny STORMS OUT, nearly knocks Hayes over. Hayes enters, curiosity piqued.

HAYES
Is that the emergency warrant you were debating approving?

FATIMA
Possibly.

HAYES
You denied it? Seemed important.

FATIMA
Sometimes you gotta make 'em work for it.

Hayes nods. Mentally *jotting down notes*. CELL ALARM SOUNDS.

HAYES
10 minutes to showtime.

Fatima raises from her seat and leaves. Hayes waits until she's out of sight. He pushes the door closed. Goes to her desk, opens her laptop, finds the file "HAWTHORNE FOUR TRIAL", sticks a MEMORY STICK in and COPIES FILES.

Off the GUILT IN HIS EYES we **TIME CUT TO--**

INT. MELANIE'S CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Silent. Melanie is at her desk in front of the class. 5th GRADERS are hunched over their desks focused on their test.

Melanie hears WHISPERING in the back of the room. We see two boys in the back talking, they don't notice she's watching. She clears her throat, that's enough for them to jump back in line. Her CELL VIBRATES. She grabs it quickly to not disrupt the class. She checks the text discretely.

INSERT TEXT: FOR THE SINS OF OUR FATHERS.

This jars Melanie. No clue what it means, she blows it off just as THE BELL RINGS.

MELANIE
Bring your tests to the front.

The kids rush their papers to her desk and file out. She takes another look at her cell and reads the text again. Something about it causes her unease.

Off Melanie masking concern we **TIME CUT TO --**

INT. DAVID'S HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT

Hip-Hop plays from a BLUETOOTH SPEAKER. David's hanging with his boys, TWICE HIS SIZE. They pass WEED AROUND:

C.J. (17), big like a linebacker. **CHIEF** (Native American, 17) tatted, skater. **ARYAN** (16), all-American white-ish boy, jacked with urban style.

ANGEL (16), Latina, *the girl every guy wants*, CUDDLES UP with David. Chief tells a story in his *animated, look at me way*.

CHIEF

I'm like you can't kiss me after,
that's like suckin' myself off.
Would it be gay to suck my own
dick?

Mixed reactions but general consensus, *this boy's crazy!*

CHIEF (CONT'D)

Fuck it. I'd just have to be gay.

HE BENDS OVER, TRIES TO FLEX to see if it's possible.

DAVID

You're one twisted nigga.

CHIEF

Apparently not twisted enough.

He's literally disappointed he can't do it.

ANGEL

Just keep a girl around to do it.

She turns and faces David and GOES DOWN ON HER KNEES. She goes to UNZIP his pants, he STOPS HER abruptly.

DAVID

Whoa... whoa girl. I don't want to
make all these niggas jealous when
they see what I'm workin' with.

ANGEL

His body may be small, but he's the
black you never go back from.

Off David's ego-boosted cocky look we **TIME CUT TO --**

EXT. CITY STREET - ESTABLISHING

SOUPED UP TESLA, BLACKED OUT WINDOWS, weaves through traffic.

INT. D.A. SUNNY JAMES' OFFICE / INT. ERIN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

On SELF DRIVE, Erin talks handsfree, CHANGING HER BLOUSE.

ERIN

Go to Freeman. He hates her.

SUNNY

He's tied up in a trial.

ERIN

Just have the bitch removed.

SUNNY

Motion's been filed. Judicial bias.

ERIN

She'll see that coming a mile away.

Her car SLOWS itself after a CAR WITH AN ELDERLY WOMAN DRIVER CUTS HER OFF. Erin TAKES THE WHEEL.

ERIN (CONT'D)

What the fuck you ignorant bitch?!
Learn how to drive before you hit
our streets.

SUNNY

ERIN!

Erin blows off Sunny's judgment. She's used to getting away with these offhand, tasteless remarks. DRIVING ERRATICALLY IN HER BRA, REACHING IN THE BACK SEAT.

ERIN

Just ask her to recuse herself.

SUNNY

How would that go? *"Justice Bailey,
I'm requesting that you recuse
yourself."*

(mocking Fatima's voice)

*"I'm requesting that you go fuck
your face."*

(then)

We need a narrative that questions
her impartiality without looking
like a personal vendetta.

ERIN

Like some soundbites and headlines
that can get people's attention.

SUNNY

Don't poke the bear.

ERIN

If by bear you mean shady cunt. I'm
going to bait Lindsey Stephens
tonight. Get her to say something
damning. She holds enough cred. If
I get her to throw shade at Bailey,
more people will make noise.

This is the moment when you realize just how much Erin has it out for Fatima.

SUNNY

That sounds more like a ratings play. Don't make this a circus.

ERIN

It's always a circus, you just gotta put the right clown in the spotlight.

Off Erin's devilish grin we **TIME CUT TO --**

INT. COURT ROOM - AFTERNOON

Court is IN SESSION. The tension is palpable. Fatima sweeps her eyes across the courtroom like a hawk.

CAMERON SCORZA (30's), on the stand, guilt oozing from his pores, is being cross examined by...

TANYA MCMANIS (30s), insecure but masking, underdressed prosecuting attorney.

At the Prosecution's table: **MALE ATTORNEY (Latin, late 20s)**, jittery, flipping through files, her 2nd **CHAIR**.

On the defense side is:

MR. HOLDEN (black, 50s), the cocky wannabe-Cochran Defense attorney, over-dressed with a **BOW-TIE** and **PINK SHIRT**. His thin lips smirk, a trick he uses to cover panic.

At the Defense Counsel's table: **4 MALE ATTORNEY'S** in Tom Ford suits; Holden's puppets.

Lee patrols the **GALLERY** with sharp eyes.

TANYA MCMANIS

Mr. Scorza, on the afternoon of Wednesday, did you receive a phone call from Tracy Benson?

CAMERON SCORZA

Could've been Wednesday.

TANYA MCMANIS

Could have been Wednesday, but you do recall a phone call?

CAMERON SCORZA

Sure.

TANYA MCMANIS

What did she say on the call, specifically?

MR. HOLDEN

Objection. Hearsay.

FATIMA

Sustained.

Tanya begins to *fall apart*, flipping through notes.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Ms. McManis, take a deep breath. I sustained an objection, you didn't lose the case. Just rephrase.

Was that a gift from the goddess? Tanya regains her footing.

TANYA MCMANIS

Did Mrs. Benson ask you do something for her during that call?

CAMERON SCORZA

Want the naughty details.

TANYA MCMANIS

Yes or no please.

CAMERON SCORZA

Yeah.

TANYA MCMANIS

What did she asked you to do specifically?

CAMERON SCORZA

She wanted me to end this dude. Said he was a problem for the family and needed to be... erased.

TANYA MCMANIS

Erased. What did you gather she meant by erase?

CAMERON SCORZA

I didn't have to gather shit. They call me for one thing. No details needed. She wanted this dude dead.

He slices his hand across his neck.

TANYA MCMANIS

Your testimony is that Tracy Benson was asking you to murder someone who was bad for business.

CAMERON SCORZA

(to the crowd)

I feel like this bitch ain't listening. Yeah that's what I said.

FATIMA

Order in the court! Mr. Scorza, not sure if you think your mother's in the courtroom, but that's going to be the last "bitch" or I hold you in contempt. Understood?

She doesn't wait for an answer.

FATIMA (CONT'D)
Continue Ms. McManis.

TANYA MCMANIS
Mr. Scorza, do you know why Mrs.
Benson wanted this done?

CAMERON SCORZA
I don't ask questions. I do what
I'm paid to do.

TANYA MCMANIS
And did you do it?

CAMERON SCORZA
I sure the fuck did. It was either
him or me. You don't say no to
these people.

TANYA MCMANIS
So on Mrs. Benson's orders, you
killed a man who was bad for
business?

We leave testimony as Lee notices A **FEMALE REPORTER** in the gallery. He spots a RECORDER in her purse. *Stealthy*, he motions her to rise. She *protests*, distracts Fatima. Fatima recognizes her. *Can't leave it.*

FATIMA
Ms. Boyd, tell your editor at the
Sun Times that all invitations into
my court have now been revoked,
effective immediately. Can't follow
my rules, can't play in the game.

Lee tries to grab her arm, she snatches away. Back at it.

FATIMA (CONT'D)
Mr. Scorza, please answer the
question?

CAMERON SCORZA
I made his wife a widow. Sent Bens
a pic after.

TANYA MCMANIS
By "Bens" you're referring to Mrs.
Benson, correct.

CAMERON SCORZA
Nah. I sent it to Bens.

Tanya's eyes demand clarity, *Who?*

CAMERON SCORZA (CONT'D)
Mr. Benson.

AUDIBLE GASPS. We push into **MR. BENSON (50's)**, seated in the Gallery. Tanya doesn't miss a beat. The DEFENSE TABLE huddles *nervously*.

TANYA MCMANIS

You're saying that you sent a photo to Mr. Benson, not Mrs. Benson who you testified hired you.

CAMERON SCORZA

Yep.

TANYA MCMANIS

Why did you send it to Mr. Benson?

CAMERON SCORZA

That's usually who I confirm with.

TANYA MCMANIS

Are you now testifying that you've performed similar acts for Mr. Benson, not just Mrs. Benson?

CAMERON SCORZA

If I'm doing it for one, I'm doing it for both. It was weird that she ordered this one, she don't ever do that. But 20 g's is 20 g's.

TANYA MCMANIS

Mr. Scorza, you do know that Mr. Benson isn't on trial here right?

CAMERON SCORZA

All the same. The whole family is--

Scorza eyes Mr. Benson and his goon. Tanya firmly positions herself in front of Mr. Benson.

TANYA MCMANIS

The whole family is what?

MR. HOLDEN

Objection! Your Honor, this entire line of questioning is irrelevant and prejudicial.

FATIMA

Overruled. Proceed, Ms. McManis.

TANYA MCMANIS

Mr. Scorza, please continue. The whole family...?

Scorza regrets saying it. He leans forward, muttering.

CAMERON SCORZA

They're killers. Dirty. Every fuckin' one of 'em. Bens runs the show, but he's smart enough to hide behind his wife and kids.

MR. HOLDEN

Your Honor, OBJECTION! Wildly unfounded accusations without a shred of evidence.

FATIMA

Mr. Holden, keep yelling like that you'll be working stapling papers for a paralegal. Overruled.

TANYA MCMANIS

You said you were paid. Can you tell us who paid you?

CAMERON SCORZA

Benson. Mr.

TANYA MCMANIS

How do you know the payment came from Mr. Benson, and not Mrs?

CAMERON SCORZA

Cuz he handed it to me?

TANYA MCMANIS

Mr. Benson, paid you in person?

CAMERON SCORZA

Yup. Always cash. Keeps wads of it in his home office safes.

MR. HOLDEN

Objection. Speculation. Prejudicial. Again!

FATIMA

Overruled. Again. Continue McManis.

TANYA MCMANIS

How do we know you're not making this up to mislead these proceedings? Any proof of this transaction?

CAMERON SCORZA

Yeah. I recorded the whole thing.

MR. HOLDEN

Objection. Any such recording is inadmissible and illegal.

FATIMA

The jury will disregard any reference to a recording. It's inadmissible.

MR. HOLDEN

Your Honor, I move to strike this entire line of questioning. It's clearly prejudicial.

Tanya consults her 2nd Chair.

TANYA MCMANIS
Your Honor, I have no further questions, but I reserve the right to recall this witness.

FATIMA
Noted. Re-cross Mr. Holden?

MR. HOLDEN
Defense requests a brief recess Your Honor.

FATIMA
Wise decision.
(addressing the court)
The court will recess for one hour. Be on time, or don't be at all.

We ZOOM into the GAVEL as it strikes, the sound resonates like a hammer driving a nail in a coffin **we CUT TO --**

INT. GROCERY STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

Melanie's *meticulously choosing items* for her nearly full basket. **SKETCHY MAN** (40s) at the end of the aisle WATCHING.

SERIES OF JUMP CUTS: SHE MOVES THROUGH THE AISLES. THE SKETCHY MAN IS ALWAYS A FEW STEPS BEHIND.

Her CELL RINGS. It's DAVID.

MELANIE
Hey baby... With whom?... Ok but be home by the time me and Trev get there... I'm heading to drop the groceries at home then get Trev... no you may not... Home by 6 David, don't play.

Off the Sketchy Man watching Melanie **we TIME CUT TO --**

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Melanie's loading groceries into her TRUNK. One of the bags bottom BREAKS, groceries go everywhere. As she's picking things up, Sketchy Man rushes to her with a new bag. He helps her put things into the new bag.

MELANIE
Oh God. Thank you. I don't know why they fill these things up so much.

SKETCHY MAN
A pleasure. Good day and be safe.

They finish the bag, she smiles, he leaves. We CUT TO--

INT. FATIMA'S CHAMBERS - LATER

Fatima is seated at her desk, eating a BOWL OF SOUP.

FATIMA'S POV: Mr. Holden and Ms. McManis argue. WE HEAR MUFFLED VOICES as Fatima *tunes them out*, enjoying lunch. Other Counsel Members, Hayes and Lee are in the room. She takes her last spoon full of soup. *Wish it was a burger.*

FATIMA

Ego.

This snaps them out of their rants.

MR. HOLDEN

I beg your pardon?

FATIMA

This is about ego.

MR. HOLDEN

Whose "ego"?

FATIMA

I'll bet, Mr. Holden, when you were a little rug-rat playing games with your friends the moment you realized you were about to lose the intense game of Monopoly or H.O.R.S.E. - if you shot hoops, you look tall enough to ball... I bet you'd "accidentally" flip the table over or overthrow the ball just enough where it disappeared on the other side of the fence. And God forbid it was a young, smart female in school who was getting higher marks than you. I'm sure the efforts to sabotage were extreme.

MR. HOLDEN

I resent your honor's accusations--

FATIMA

Let's do a quiet exercise Mr. Holden. Let me speak to the room without interruption, yes?

He holds his tongue *and it burns.*

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Ms. McManis has been trying to offer you a deal since before the proceedings. You and your mighty team of suits has so much as given her the finger. Maybe it's because she's a woman. Maybe because she's white. Or because, respectfully, her voice is as annoying as...

INT. MAN IN HOUSE - CRICKET FANTASY

MR. HOLDEN IS IN HIS HOUSE, LISTENING, SEARCHING FOR A CRICKET, driven mad by the noise.

FATIMA (V.O.)
...that damn cricket in your house at night and reeks audible havoc, causing you to lose sleep searching for it everywhere, but they have that magic ability to throw sound. It's over there...

He goes one direction quickly. *Dammit!*

FATIMA (V.O.)
No, over there!

He runs back the other way.

INT. FATIMA'S CHAMBERS - REALITY - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Holden, *annoyed*. Hayes, quietly *amused*.

FATIMA
That fact is, Mr. Holden, you've ventured into a wilderness of cold.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - DAY - FANTASY

Mr. Holden, *shocked*, out in the center of a FROZEN LAKE.

FATIMA (V.O.)
All that surrounds you for miles is ice. Frozen ground.

He walks gently, testing each step.

FATIMA (V.O.)
You're trying to walk carefully. Knowing that this very shallow surface underneath your feet is as equally thin, as your defense. Any moment it'll crack sending you plummeting into freezing water where you'll survive for what...?

INT. FATIMA'S CHAMBERS - REALITY - CONTINUOUS

FATIMA
(to her audience)
15 minutes? Maybe 30 if you've got meat on your bones like me.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - FANTASY

A HELICOPTER comes flying over Mr. Holden. Swoosh! Ms. McManis, in the PASSENGER SEAT, tosses out a LADDER ROPE.

FATIMA (V.O.)
Ms. McManis is hovering above you,
copter blades moving the wind
around it. She's literally tossing
down a rope ladder and yelling...

TANYA MCMANIS
(mouths Fatima's voice)
"I'm here to save you! Come on!"

INT. FATIMA'S CHAMBERS - REALITY - CONTINUOUS

Ms. McManis smiles to herself, *amused*.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - FANTASY

FATIMA (V.O.)
Maybe you think by some Marvel
miracle, you'll...

WINGS grow on Mr. Holden's back and he LEAPS and FLIES.

FATIMA (V.O.)
...grow wings and fly your bow-tied
ass to safety. But I gotta tell ya,
there will be no wings, and no
flight.

The WINGS RETRACT and he comes CRASHING DOWN, lands hard, the ICE CRACKS and spreads for a long distance. Holden looks down, *frightened*, debating whether to grab the rope ladder.

FATIMA (V.O.)
I would suggest, Mr. Holden, that
you get over your massively
inflated ego, reach up and pray she
can lower that ladder and pull you
up before it's too late. Or before
the deadly prosecutor venom comes
to the surface when all she has a
taste for is the sweet nectar of
victory and decides to let you slip
into your self-inflicted fate.

Ms. McManis gestures to the PILOT to take off, leaving Mr. Holden stranded. The ice cracks more. *FUCK ME!!!!*

INT. FATIMA'S CHAMBERS - REALITY - CONTINUOUS

FATIMA
Everyone's watching. Your
reputation and the reputation of
your cult-like firm are at stake.
(MORE)

FATIMA (CONT'D)

It would be absolute choice, not circumstance to skate on thin ice and become an embarrassment to the legal community for trying to force win the un-win-able.

She rises and moves to her coat rack.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

I'm about to put this hot ass robe back on. By the time I'm back on that bench, I hope you would have made the right choice.

They're frozen, waiting for the next word.

MR. HOLDEN

Judge--

FATIMA

Look down Mr. Holden. Ice. Cracking.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - FANTASY

The ICE beneath his feet breaks open and he PLUMMETS UNDERNEATH the ice cold water. Goes dark.

EXT. MELANIE'S HOME - LATER

Melanie's CAR is parked in her driveway. Trunk open, front door wide open. Melanie moves in and out, unloading bags.

INT. SKETCHY MAN'S CAR

Sketchy Man up the street. Pulls out CAMERA, takes photos on a LONG LENS.

EXT. MELANIE'S HOME

Melanie returns to close the trunk. An UNMARKED DETECTIVE'S CAR pulls up. She slows, *instant concern*. TWO DETECTIVES, DETECTIVE ONE and DETECTIVE TWO get out, moving toward her.

MELANIE

Can I help you?

DETECTIVE ONE

Ms. Russell?

MELANIE

Yes.

DETECTIVE ONE

This is regarding your son. We need you to come with us.

Melanie is instantly alarmed.

MELANIE

What happened? Is he ok?

Detective Two walks toward her.

DETECTIVE ONE

We'll explain. Not here. It's sensitive. Come with us.

MELANIE

I need to grab my things.

DETECTIVE TWO

You won't need anything. Gotta move quick.

Melanie knows something's off. She's torn between her instincts and her concern for her son.

MELANIE

I can't leave without ID.

Detective Two grabs Melanie by the arm. Melanie goes into defense mode, she's no punk either.

Melanie KICKS Detective One in the knee, he stumbles. She slams an ELBOW into Detective Two's RIBS. He holds on.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Let me go!

Before she can SCREAM, Detective One covers her mouth. She goes wild and PUNCHES Detective Two in the jaw. This only pisses him off. With all gloves off, the two Detectives wrestle her into the backseat.

The unmarked car door SLAMS shut. The Detectives look around making sure they've not been seen.

SNAPPED PHOTOS from the Sketchy Man's camera capture every moment, zooming in as the car peels away.

INT. BASIL'S LOFT - LATE AFTERNOON

Basil and COMPANY are in FULL DAYTIME PARTY MODE. Two Sexy Girls dance; kissing and playing with each other.

Prince sits uncomfortably close to Basil. Prince pours shot after shot, they're slamming them down.

There are PILLS poured out on the table. Prince puts a pill in his mouth and transfers into both Girl's mouths.

He puts another pill in his mouth and goes to Basil. He puts his face close to Basil, ready to feed him the pill. Basil puts his hand up to grab it, but Prince grabs his hand hard and FORCES HIS MOUTH ONTO HIS, transfers the pill.

Prince backs off slowly with an evil grin.

Prince pulls Girl 1 down with him to the couch, sticks his tongue in her mouth and grabs her naked breast hard; He grabs her by her hair and pushes her face together with Basil and makes them kiss, holding the backs of their heads so they can't stop. They go hard.

Off Prince *loving it too much*. **WE CUT TO --**

INT. FATIMA'S CHAMBERS - LATE AFTERNOON

Fatima removes her robe as Hayes briefs her.

HAYES

Mayor's dinner pushed to Thursday.
We'll pull wardrobe.

Fatima's CELL RINGS. "UNKNOWN CALLER". She sends it to VM. Her CELL ALARM goes off. *The reminder is more annoying than the situation*. Hayes hands her a glass of water and pills.

HAYES (CONT'D)

5:30.

He nudges the pills toward with enough force to make it clear. A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Hayes goes to open it to...

MILLER (50s), Real Estate Tycoon, Fatima's "perfect" man, tall and turning heads, politician polished.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Miller.

MILLER

How's it hangin'?

HAYES

Low and to the right.

FATIMA

I thought I was meeting you.

MILLER

The press is out in full force.
Good optics to show support.

Fatima raises an eyebrow, *hates being out of the loop*.

HAYES

Front steps. Q&A. To the car.

FATIMA

You're asking me to stand and be pretty?

Hayes grabs her coat and bag and hands it to Miller.

HAYES

Miller's briefed on Summer's plan.

Miller helps her with her coat. *Gentleman or routine? She's used to this performative part of her job.* We watch her mentally transform from judge to A-List celebrity. Off her confident, ready for battle look WE TIME CUT TO--

INT. COURT HOUSE HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Hayes hurries through the hallway, scrolling on a DATING APP swiping left and right with quick precision. The DING of a match distracts him just long enough for an OPENING DOOR to startle him. He stops abruptly. Regains his composure, glances around for a clear coast and then slips inside.

INT. COURT HOUSE ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Hayes walks in the dark room cautiously, his *nervous energy is evident by his slow movement.*

DETECTIVE RACHEL BARNA (50s), a cold female FBI agent, leans on a table, relaxed. A MAN stands by the door, threatening presence. Barna doesn't even bother looking at Hayes.

DETECTIVE BARNA
Expected to see you earlier.

He swallows his tongue ever so briefly. Then...

HAYES
It's been a lot of unexpected--

DETECTIVE BARNA
Trial starts in 10 days, no time for unexpected. Got something?

Hayes hesitates, his hand moves toward his pocket, betraying his better judgement.

DETECTIVE BARNA (CONT'D)
Your loyalty to your boss isn't in question. This is a simple investigation.

HAYES
If it's so simple why not go to her directly. Ask whatever you want.

Detective Barna smirks, enjoying this more than she should.

DETECTIVE BARNA
Better to keep her guards down so we can do our jobs uninterrupted.

HAYES
Can't you guys just hack into computers and phones or whatever?

Barna's done playing games. She holds her hand out, palm up. After deep contemplation, Hayes reaches in his pocket and pulls out THE MEMORY STICK. He hands it to her. **This is where we realize that Hayes' loyalty is actually in question.**

HAYES (CONT'D)

What now?

DETECTIVE BARNA

When it happens you'll know.

He searches for reassurance. She's got nothing for him. She's headed out the door when...

HAYES

She's an important and good woman.

Barna's expression hardens, just hearing this boils her blood. The distain reads on her face.

DETECTIVE BARNA

Good to know.

Masking her intent, this is more than an investigation, it's a takedown. As Barna leaves the room, Hayes' face turns pale, realizing the gravity of his choice. Off his look **WE CUT TO--**

EXT. COURT HOUSE STEPS - MOMENTS LATER

Miller's arm is firmly around Fatima's waist as they exit a united front. The Crowd of Protestors has grown in numbers and *anger*. The PRESS SWARM THEM, microphones push forward as **REPORTERS QUESTIONS** come out rapidly.

PRESS 1

Comment on the controversy surrounding your involvement with the upcoming Hawthorne Four trial?

Miller tightens his grip on Fatima, an air of calm and control, this ain't his first dance. He steps forward, addressing the group.

MILLER

The narrative that this amazing woman, who is from the same neighborhood as those boys, is racially biased against her own people is not only laughable, but offensive.

Miller, like a pro, pauses for impact, his intensions land.

MILLER (CONT'D)

I wouldn't stand with her if there was even a shred of truth to these accusations.

Fatima is chewing on her tongue to keep silent, that's simply not her way, but she knows too well how to play the game.

MILLER (CONT'D)

We join the nation in wanting justice for those boys and their families. Our hearts break for the parents who have to live with this tragedy every day.

He turns to the MEDIA, tone shifts with pointed intent.

MILLER (CONT'D)

(to reporters)

Keep the story about the victims, Jonathan, Jason, Marqui, Shahid. Keep their names in the headlines. It's in your hands to spread the truth, or fan the flames of vicious conspiracies and lies.

The Reporters go silent. The impact of his words cause a ripple of momentary compassion. ON FATIMA: A moment of emotion, controlled but even a blind man can see she feels it. Off Fatima's diverted eyes **WE MATCH CUT TO --**

INT. ERIN'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Erin's PACING in a SEXY ROBE watching the NEWS LIVE.

MILLER (ON TV)

She'll handle this case with the highest degree and fairness. Justice will be served.

More questions fly. Miller grabs Fatima and pushes passed them. Cameras follow as they rush to the car. Fatima gives one last look into the camera. *Vultures.*

Erin PAUSES the screen on Fatima and Miller, perfectly poised and perfectly united.

ERIN

(calling out)

Too fucking perfect!

SUNNY fresh out of the shower, comes in wearing only a towel, water droplets still clinging to his bronze skin.

SUNNY

I don't think I'm that good looking.

ERIN

(re: TV)

Look at him. How the hell did she get him?

SUNNY

He got HER. Failed record exec, mediocre realtor. Now a Real Estate tycoon.

(MORE)

SUNNY (CONT'D)

His clientele relies heavily on her political and celebrity network. Power is seductive.

He moves in close to her, *electricity*, opens her robe and slides his tongue from her breast down to her Brazilian waxed landing, each moment deliberate.

ERIN

Don't I know it.
(distracted)
It's too perfect. I trust him less than her.

Sunny pops up. *Yep, I'm not getting anymore today.*

SUNNY

It would bring me great joy to discredit him just to hurt her, but he's squeaky.

And in this very second you realize part of their attraction is how much they equality hate Fatima.

ERIN

You don't make \$400 million in real estate and stay squeaky? Nope.
(re: time)
Shit. I have to get out of here. Meet after I wrap?

SUNNY

Yours?

She's already holding her overnight bag.

ERIN

I'll need a long, hot soak in a huge tub, and that's a yours thing.

He bites her lip. *Lightening*. Off her pleasure **WE CUT TO --**

EXT. TREVOR'S SCHOOL ENTRANCE - LATE AFTERNOON

The front is clearing out as students head home. TWO KIDS approach Trevor. **VICTOR** (Latin, 13) kind eyes. **STACIE** (14), smart, cute, dressed like the 80's.

STACIE

Trevor, you did great. I'm happy we're part of this project.

TREVOR

Thanks. You too. Wish they had more after school stuff to do.

They start to walk away, their budding friendship is clear. Victor turns back with a hint of concern for Trevor.

VICTOR
Where's your mom?

TREVOR
Late I guess.

Stacie hears a bit of strain in Trevor's voice.

STACIE
Come with us, my mom can drop you.

TREVOR
I'm ok. She probably just stuck
with some kid at her school.

Stacie hesitates for a moment, she was really happy to help.

STACIE
Ok. See you tomorrow.

VICTOR
Alright bro. Get on Fortnite later.

TREVOR
No games on weekdays.
(then)
See you tomorrow.

As Victor and Stacie walk away, the reality of his situation weighs on Trevor. He calls his mom, no answer. His confident demeanor shifts, now worry grows. He calls again. Rings, then voicemail. The school grounds almost empty. The quiet is more uneasy, now that the student-mania has died down. Trevor exhales hard, *frustrated*, then CALLS DAVID.

INT. CHIEF'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Parked behind the school, Chief's in the front with a GIRL draped across him. David's in the back with Angel. They are all making out. David's CELL RINGS killing the moment. He glances at it, sees it's Trevor and dismisses it.

EXT. TREVOR'S SCHOOL - LATE AFTERNOON

Trevor hears David's voicemail. Hangs up and calls again.

INT. CHIEF'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Angel's head is going down into David's lap when his CELL RINGS AGAIN. Annoyed, Angel looks and sees Trevor's name.

ANGEL
Cock block.

DAVID
Mom has him calling to make sure
I'm coming.

Angel rolls her eyes, annoyed, but ready. She taunts.

ANGEL

If he stops calling you will be.

David smirks, *teenage hormones racing*. He TURNS OFF his phone to make sure there are no further interruptions. Angel grins, takes her GUM out of her mouth and her head goes down again.

DAVID

Whoa...

EXT. TREVOR'S SCHOOL

Trevor stares at his phone. Pissed. The school grounds are pretty much empty now. He knows he's on his own. He opens the UBER APP and requests a pick-up.

EXT. FATIMA'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

The CAR pulls up to Fatima's GATED PROPERTY. The gates open.

INT. FATIMA'S HOUSE - FOYER - LATE AFTERNOON

Fatima and Miller enter. Public persona masks off. The ultra-polished front vanishes to hint at something more complex.

FATIMA

Thanks for that out there today.

MILLER

We're in the final stretch, have to control the narrative. No missteps.

His words are sharp, always *about business*.

MILLER (CONT'D)

When are we going to talk about post-Hawthorne trial plans?

Fatima grabs a BAGEL AND CREAM CHEESE from the fridge.

FATIMA

Summer's campaigning for a TV series. She feels I'd want more freedom than SCOTUS.

Miller comes behind her and gently but firmly PUTS BOTH FOOD ITEMS BACK.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

Not you too.

He hands her an APPLE instead. Subtle, but pointed.

MILLER

Supreme Court judges make roughly \$200k per year. Judge Judy makes an easy \$70 mil. Choices.

Fatima considers the magnitude of this.

FATIMA

The "Black Judge Judy".

MILLER

Thee Fatima Nicole Bailey.

FATIMA

F'N B.

They share a laugh of strategy and possibility. This isn't just about her career, this is about power and legacy.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

That little name has grown on me.

MILLER

You've earned it.

FATIMA

I have, haven't I?

He kisses her forehead, walks out the back.

INT. FATIMA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Fatima checks her cell, takes a bite from her apple. She passes several doors until she reaches...

INT. FATIMA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

LINDSEY is standing in the mirror adjusting her lingerie. Fatima opens the door, startled by her presence.

FATIMA

My God. What you are doing here?

Lindsey freezes in place for a brief moment. Fatima hangs onto her shock. Then, she moves toward Lindsey, her hand brushing up against her neck before leaning in to kiss it.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

I thought you had a big date with a pretty little mouth piece?

LINDSEY

I wanted to see you before.

Fatima softens, the most open we've seen her. This is the moment we get a rare glimpse into the duality of Fatima's existence. A whole secret life.

FATIMA
Tease me and leave me.

LINDSEY
Saw the segment today.

FATIMA
Hayes' doing.

LINDSEY
Even though I hate to see you
standing there letting a man speak
for you, I understand the optics.
You both looked perfect as always.
He's just simply good.

There's a trace of bitterness in Fatima's tone.

FATIMA
Why are you here though, really?

LINDSEY
I needed to make sure you're ok.
She loves that she cares, but she'll never admit otherwise.

FATIMA
I'm good.

LINDSEY
Some hear that and believe it.

She pulls her close. Lindsey's hand lingers on Fatima's
cheek, real care in contrast with Miller's calculated touch.

Fatima holds up her apple, proof *I'm taking care of myself*.
Her CELL RINGS. "UNKNOWN CALLER" again. She sends it to VM.

FATIMA
Damn unknown keeps calling.
(then)
I'm good.

Lindsey studies her eyes, *unconvinced but knows not to push*.
She gives her a *sweet kiss and a loving embrace*.

LINDSEY
Now forgive me. I have to go cheat
on you with a much younger woman.

FATIMA
And far more annoying.

LINDSEY
See you later?

FATIMA
You know where to find me.

One last kiss, tender, real. Lindsey leaves. Off Fatima
looking at her phone with unspoken concern, **WE TIME CUT TO--**

INT. MELANIE'S HOME - LIVINGROOM - EVENING

Dark out now. Trevor's sitting SCROLLING HIS CELL. Face lit by the screen. FRONT DOOR OPENS. David enters obviously *high*.

DAVID

Ma! I know I'm late. I know! But--

TREVOR

--She's not here.

David stops in his tracks. *Thank GOD!* Turns off the *good-boy*.

DAVID

That was fuckin' close. Where'd she go? Her car's here.

Trevor's eyes finally lift from his screen. *Concern reeks.*

TREVOR

She didn't pick me up. I called you but you ignored me. I'm sure you were doing gross things with Angel.

David can't contain his devilish smirk. *You ain't wrong.* He plops down on the couch next to Trevor.

DAVID

You didn't call me. And it's only gross cuz you're 5.

TREVOR

I'm worried.

David rolls his eyes, blowing it off.

DAVID

What for?

TREVOR

She bought groceries but didn't put 'em up. Stuff just melted all over.

David's *cocky fades*. He hops up, goes into the...

KITCHEN.

He sees the food spilling out of bags. He returns to the...

LIVINGROOM.

DAVID

Did you call her dummy?

TREVOR

It was ringing and going to voicemail. Now just voicemail.

David CALLS HER. VOICEMAIL. CALLS AGAIN. *Oh shit...*

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Told you.

David starts pacing to jumpstart his brain power.

DAVID

Maybe Rose picked her up.

TREVOR

She hasn't seen her since school
let out. Something happened to her.

DAVID

Don't say shit like that.

David paces more, calls another number. He goes into--

INT. MELANIE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

David storms in, frantically searches, for some kind of clue.
On the NIGHTSTAND, a HANDWRITTEN POST-IT: "BASIL, THURSDAY
2:30pm"

His expression goes cold. *Pissed*. Trevor comes in and sees
David ANGER SCROLLING.

TREVOR

Who are you calling this time?

DAVID

Your sperm donor.

INT. BASIL'S LOFT - MAIN ROOM - EVENING

MUSIC plays loudly. Prince and Sexy Girl 1 PASSED OUT ON THE
COUCH, PANTS DOWN AROUND HIS LEGS AND SHE'S NUDE WITH HER
FACE LAYING IN HIS NAKED LAP, a true display of debauchery.

INT. BASIL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Basil's SPRAWLED OUT ON HIS BED with Sexy Girl 2 SLEEPING.
His CELL VIBRATES. *Dazed*, Basil fumbles for the phone, he
goes to answer, misses it.

INT. MELANIE'S HOME - BEDROOM - EVENING

David hangs up. *Pissed*.

DAVID

Just like his bitch ass. Nowhere to
be found.

INT. BASIL'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Basil, now dressed, sneaks out the front door.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT, PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mood lighting. A FOUR-SEAT TABLE set for two. Fatima sits, her style compliments the ambiance, though impatience radiates from her as she repeatedly checks the door.

POLICE COMMISSIONER REYES (50s), handsome but imposing, enters dressed casually impeccable. **A WAITER** takes his COAT and leads him to the table. This seems routine.

FATIMA

Commissioner. I was expecting the mayor.

She ain't thrilled to see him.

COMMISSIONER REYES

We thought it best I come.

FATIMA

You, in a closed setting, an interesting dynamic.

COMMISSIONER REYES

Privacy allows for an uninhibited level of communication.

Fatima sits silently, giving him the space.

COMMISSIONER REYES (CONT'D)

Great work wrapping up the Benson trial. No noise.

FATIMA

The marriage of testimony met with evidence. Who'd have thought.

Reyes sit, something on his tongue.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

I'm listening.

COMMISSIONER REYES

The Hawthorne case. Lot's of noise. The kind that levels kingdoms.

FATIMA

Not those of great kings.

COMMISSIONER REYES

And to be great, one has to rule, often with a stern hand.

Fatima holds her words. Her eyes asking everything.

COMMISSIONER REYES (CONT'D)

With a target on a SCOTUS seat, a trial like this -- the outcome, could land you on either side.

(MORE)

COMMISSIONER REYES (CONT'D)

We just want to ensure that you maintain the support from those whose interest aligns with your future. Great expectations.

FATIMA

I rarely meet expectations. I believe it's better to exceed, by doing the unexpected.

COMMISSIONER REYES

Except, unexpected results can sometimes work against your own greater good.

FATIMA

I tend to stay on the path of great and good. I've never compromised my job for personal gain.

COMMISSIONER REYES

You're too smart a player for that. Your personal gain has come from skillfully balancing justice and duty -- a masterful act. We just have to make sure you don't lose your balance.

Reyes raises his hand signaling the WAITER, who brings his jacket. Reyes stands, buttons his jacket, nods politely, EXITS. Fatima's alone with her thoughts, her expression cryptic leaving the audience wondering IS SHE GOOD OR...?

INT. FATIMA'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Fatima is taking a much needed moment alone. She opens her LAPTOP resting on the sofa next to her. Clicks through a few emails, mundane routine. Her eyes refocus, she lands on a VIDEO FILE. She hesitates for a second before opening it.

INSERT VIDEO: A SURVEILLANCE VIDEO of the BOY'S KILLING. The video shows grainy footage of the heinous act. The scene unfolds showing the violent, raw killings.

Fatima watches with unflinching focus. Is this the first time she's seen this? Or has she watched it over and over searching for something?

In a slow deliberate motion, she closes her laptop, eyes remain void of emotion, but behind them her mind races. As she sits in silence, we can only imagine what she's thinking. Her fingers lingers over the screen of her CELL for a beat, then calls LEE. RINGING...

INTERCUT: FATIMA'S LIVING ROOM / LEE'S LOFT GARAGE

Lee is UNDER THE HOOD of a METALLIC BLUE 1970 PLYMOUTH ROAD RUNNER with methodical precision.

PULL BACK to reveal the garage is well lit to showcase a FLEET of EXOTIC RACE CARS, including a BLACK 1970 DODGE CHARGER R/T and a 1969 CHEVROLET CAMARO YENKO--

EXT. ANGELINO HEIGHTS - STREET - DAWN - FLASHBACK

The 1969 CHEVROLET CAMARO YENKO - DRIVER'S FACE UNSEEN - has pulled over sitting on the side of the road. The MOTORCYCLE COP is getting off his bike and walking up to the window, hand on hip holding his gun. He approaches.

MOTORCYCLE COP

Hands where I can see them.

Hands come out. The Motorcycle Cop peers inside at the DRIVER. His expression from suspicious to shock.

REVEAL: OFFICER LEE

MOTORCYCLE COP (CONT'D)

Lee? What the fuck man?

Lee's eyes are unreadable. The motorcycle cop glances around nervously, knowing the ramifications if this blows up.

MOTORCYCLE COP (CONT'D)

I called for back up bro.

Off this we cut BACK TO THE PHONE CALL--

INTERCUT: FATIMA'S LIVING ROOM / LEE'S LOFT GARAGE

Lee wipes his hands. His voice calm and controlled.

LEE

Judge.

Her voice is equally steely, but determined.

FATIMA

That thing we discussed. It's here.

Lee's mind calculates next steps. He stays ready.

FATIMA (CONT'D)

I'll leave it for you.

LEE

I'll get it when the lights go out.

A silent agreement. Understanding in the air. Lee turns back to his work, hardening and preparing. Off this moment of anticipation, we CUT TO--

INT. NIGHT CAP WITH ERIN SET - EVENING

The set for **NIGHT CAP WITH ERIN**, designed like a high-end penthouse living room. The metallic "E" Logo catches light in the background.

PRODUCTION STAFF buzzes about doing final looks. Erin makes her way to set, her sultry nighttime persona more sexy than her daytime image.

She's followed by **LAURA** (40s), the PRODUCER.

Her GLAM SQUAD: MAKE-UP ARTIST, **MISS. X** (Latin, 20s, Trans), no-make up, stunning. HAIR STYLIST, **TIMOTHY** (Black, 30s), tatted gym-rat, hood-street energy - are doing final looks.

ERIN

Why would her team block so many straight forwards about Bailey?

MISS X

Ooop... Shady!

LAURA

They said because of the sensitivity of the trial they want to tread lightly.

TEK (Israeli, 20s), SOUNDMAN, fits her LAV MICROPHONE.

TIMOTHY

But if it was white boys they'd want it all said.

TEK

(re: necklace)

You guys have to take this off, it's too noisy.

ERIN

People don't come here to tread. Swim or drown.

(reading more)

Where is she?

WARDROBE STYLIST, **RUBEN** (Black, 30s), couture draped diva, REMOVES THE NECKLACE. LAURA talks into ear piece.

RUBEN

I just finished her. They're walking her in now.

A **FEMALE P.A.** (19) brings Lindsey in, calm confidence, radiant in all white. The contrast between she and Erin is stark, not just in looks, but vibe as well.

LINDSEY

Hey lovely.

She reaches out to hug her, but Erin's *not* having it. Her "nice" fades quick. She's controlled.

ERIN

I'm giving you air time for your cause under the condition that you'd be open to any subject.

Lindsey meets Erin's challenge with unexpected ease.

LINDSEY
What's this about, Erin?

ERIN
Your team is trying to shoot down questions about the judge.

Lindsey's mastery of *towing the line*.

LINDSEY
I won't participate in character assassination. I don't mind answering questions about anything but be clear, the second I get as much as a whiff of slander or vitriol, I'll walk. Do you understand?

Oh no this bitch did not! Erin's team collectively gasp and peel away slowly. Erin keeps her composure.

ERIN
(re: Wall Logo)
That "E" is for Erin. My show. If you don't like it, walk now. Do YOU understand?

The DIRECTOR, **ROBERT** (40s), and Laura come over sensing the need to squash tension. Erin and Lindsey dick measure. Then take their seats. Off the simmering tension, **WE CUT TO--**

EXT. MELANIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Trevor's face, buried in his CELL. David's DRIVING too fast.

DAVID
You could help me look you know.

TREVOR
Why were you calling dad?

DAVID
Don't call that nigga dad.

TREVOR
Maybe if he felt like you didn't hate him so much he'd be around.

He wrestles the pain and anger.

DAVID
So it's my fault? He don't even answer the one fuckin' time I...

Trevor sees how much this effects David.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Whatever. What are you doing?

TREVOR

Trying to hack into mom's Find My iPhone account. Might be easier if I wasn't afraid that we might run into a truck or air at the speed we're going.

David drives faster. Trevor braces himself, unamused.

EXT. FREEMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

David and Trevor pull up to MELANIE'S SCHOOL. Not a soul in sight. The headlights blast into the dark, making the scene more eerie. Trevor doesn't even bother scanning.

TREVOR

Told you she wouldn't be here.

David's *uncharacteristically quiet*. No smart ass remark. Trevor picks up on it immediately.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Uh oh. This is bad.

DAVID

What?

Thinking he found something on his phone.

TREVOR

You're worried. You never worry.

David shifts around in his seat, trying to mask.

DAVID

I'm not worried. I'm just thinking.

TREVOR

Oh man.

DAVID

What?!

TREVOR

You're really worried cuz you never think.

And just like that, Trevor's words confirm what they've both been avoiding admitting... Something is very wrong.

They hold in silence, Trevor gets back to work on the cell.

INT. FATIMA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Fatima is sitting comfy on her couch, eating CHIPS AND DIP. She turns on the TV just in time for...

NIGHT CAP WITH ERIN opening package shows ERIN and LINDSEY sitting, both looking stunning, but Fatima can see the ice between them. She puts her feet up just when her CELL RINGS.

CELL SCREEN READS: HAYES

SPLIT SCREEN: HAYES' APARTMENT / FATIMA'S LIVINGROOM

FATIMA
I'm watching.

HAYES
She looks incredible.

FATIMA
Always.

Fatima CRUNCHES A CHIP. Hayes can't help but smirk.

HAYES
Fatima... What are you eating?

FATIMA
That's Judge Bailey.

HAYES
Justice Bailey what are you eating?

FATIMA
Carrots.

She crunches again.

HAYES
That's a thin carrot.

FATIMA
Show's starting. Gotta go.

She hangs up and zeros into the TV.

INT. NIGHT CAP WITH ERIN SET - CONTROL BOOTH

The BOOTH is packed with TECHNICIANS and PRODUCERS. Robert is at the helm, WATCHING MULTIPLE MONITORS, CALLING CAMERAS.

ROBERT
And go on camera 1. Tight on Erin.

INT. NIGHT CAP WITH ERIN SET - STAGE

Monitors, cameras everywhere. The crew in perfect synchronization. SHOW STARTS.

ERIN
Good Evening. Welcome to *Night Cap with Erin*. Our guest tonight is a friend of the show.
(MORE)

ERIN (CONT'D)

Renowned civil rights attorney who has been visible in many of the high profile cases involving everything from racially charged murders to human trafficking. She's a powerful voice on the issues and tonight we're going to be discussing her most recent works and many of today's headlines. I'm excited to welcome back to the show, Lindsey Stephens.

The vibe in the studio is charged, everyone on edge.

INT. MILLER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The FRONT OFFICE is pitch black. WE HEAR LAUGHTER coming from the back room. We make our way through the DOOR to...

OFFICE.

We enter through the CRACK IN THE DOOR to find Miller at his BAR-CART pouring himself a DRINK. He knows how to unwind.

PAN TO REVEAL: TAJA, TOPLESS laying on the DAYBED flipping channels on the TV.

Don't have to spell out the fact that they're hittin' it.

MILLER

You want one?

TAJA

You always forget...

MILLER

--You don't drink.

TAJA (CONT'D)

I don't drink.

She lands on **NIGHTCAP WITH ERIN**. She turns to the next channel when...

MILLER (CONT'D)

Flip that back.

She does, but not without an eyebrow raised. He sits, glued.

TAJA

I thought you weren't an Erin fan.
(mocking)

"A messy hag".

MILLER

It's who she's interviewing.

TAJA

Oh. That fake white bitch that fronts like she's down. What's your deal with her?

MILLER

I could tell you, but then you'd
have to come up missing.

She STRADDLES HIM, kisses him soft.

TAJA

(seductive)

I bet I can get it out of you.

They go at it hard. We CUT TOO--

INT. MELANIE'S CAR / INT. BASIL'S CAR - NIGHT

David is driving slowly now. Trevor's phone RINGS.

TREVOR

He's calling!

DAVID

Don't answer. Disappears for a
year, doesn't answer when I call.
Fuck that clown.

Trevor doesn't play by David's rules. ANSWERS.

TREVOR

(to phone)

My mom's missing.

Basil is driving fast. Blurs of streetlights flash.

BASIL

What you mean missing?

TREVOR

(rapid)

She didn't pick me up, I had to
UBER, her car's at home, the
groceries were ruined I tried to
call--

BASIL

Trevor. T, Slow down. What?

David takes the phone from Trevor, boiling over.

DAVID

We're good homie.

BASIL

What's Trev talking about?

DAVID

Nothing. She proolly at the house.

Basil presses harder on the gas, mind racing.

BASIL
You're not at your house?
Where are you?

DAVID
Looking for her.

BASIL
How are you getting around?

DAVID
Flying on a magic fuckin' carpet.

TREVOR
(screams out)
Literally flying!

Basil's switches to SPEAKER.

BASIL
You can't be driving without a
license. A black boy? Do not go to
your house. I'll go check it out.

DAVID
Oh... now he knows where we live.

BASIL
D. We can go head to head any other
time. Right now, I need you to man
up and listen to me.

DAVID
Fuck that.

David's about to hang up when Trevor takes the cell.

BASIL
I'm texting you an address. Go
there and wait for me to call. You
called me for a reason. I need you
to trust me.

DAVID
Now you want me to trust--

BASIL
I'm not fucking around. Do what I
said!

Basil's tone snaps David into a reality.

BASIL (CONT'D)
David?!

DAVID
Text then shit!

Basil hangs up. He texts the address while driving fast
through a RED LIGHT. Basil's eyes sharpen with intent.

EXT. MELANIE'S HOME - NIGHT

Basil pulls up, his car screeches to a halt. He gets out, GUN hidden by his side. Up to the porch, illuminated only by the lights inside. Gun raised. The house is dark. Checks the door, LOCKED. He moves quickly to the side of the house, nothing. Back to the front, looks up and down the street then hurries back to the car.

INT. BASIL'S CAR - NIGHT

Back in the driver's seat. Heart pounding. CELL RINGS. CELL SCREEN READS: PRINCE

He sends the call to voicemail. MAKES A CALL.

SANCHEZ (O.C.)
Sanchez.

BASIL
Los.

SANCHEZ (O.C.)
Yo! Fuck you doing callin'?

BASIL
I'm texting an address. Go there and meet my boys.

SANCHEZ
Yo, ain't you--

BASIL
I think Mel's in trouble. She went ghost on the boys. Ain't like her.

SANCHEZ (O.C.)
You call Oz?

BASIL
No. And keep this quiet. Just us.

SANCHEZ (O.C.)
I got'chu bro.

HANGS UP. Off Basil TEXTING THE ADDRESS we TIME CUT TO--

INT. FATIMA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Fatima's locked on the tv. Her excitement for Lindsey, only overshadowed by her annoyance of Erin. J.P. brings a plate of VEGETABLES. Fatima looks at the CHIPS then back at Erin, and exchanges the plate of chips and dip with J.P.'s veggies.

J.P.
How much did I miss?

FATIMA

Polite banter chit-chat. Issues,
blah, blah. Erin's greasing.

J.P. sits next to Fatima and grabs a carrot from the plate.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

David pulls up. Heavy foot traffic. A CAR PULLS UP behind them lightening fast. David tries to act cool, but you can tell he's shaken by how fast he checks his rear view mirror.

TREVOR

Who's that?

SANCHEZ (Latin, early 30s), tattoos, looks like a boxer, jumps out wearing a BLAZER and JEANS. Underneath the jacket we see a holster with a gun.

DAVID

Looks like one of his shady niggas.

He heads to their car.

SANCHEZ

Dave? Trev?

DAVID

It's David. Who the fuck are you?

Trevor SOCKS David in the arm.

SANCHEZ

Sanchez. Your pops had me meet you.

DAVID

Ain't my pops.

INT. EVENING WITH ERIN SET - NIGHT

The interview is in full swing. *Seamless*. Erin leans into Lindsey, a physical manifestation she's about to pounce.

ERIN

Let's pivot.

Time to show her who's fucking show this is.

ERIN (CONT'D)

The upcoming Hawthorne Four trial
is stirring controversy.

Lindsey puts on her armor for battle.

INT. FATIMA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They watch intently, the tension here matches the screen.

J.P.
Here this bitch go.

INT. EVENING WITH ERIN SET - CONTINUOUS

Erin's motivation is piercing, her voice predatory.

ERIN
Several of your cases have gone through Judge Bailey's court. How do you feel about the consensus that she is the worst fit for this trial?

Lindsey doesn't flinch. *Totally prepared.*

LINDSEY
Anyone who's heard me speak knows that I disagree with a lot of the Judge's decisions.

ERIN
Naturally, she's opposed to everything you stand for. Lenient toward white cops who commit crimes against innocent people of color.

LINDSEY
Because she often leans heavily on the law. Unfortunately, these laws are antiquated, oblivious to race and hate issues. That's why I fight for reform of laws created by white men in a time of ignorance...

Erin's not falling for this dodging.

ERIN
Ignorance?

LINDSEY
They didn't know racism was a thing because that's all there was.

ERIN
Sounds dangerously like an excuse. Are we forgiving racists now?

LINDSEY
The laws need to change, without question. They were entered into immorally, inhumanely. That said, knowing the law as it's written, I've never seen Judge Bailey rule outside of it. Perhaps too rigidly within it.

INT. FATIMA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

J.P. can barely contain her reaction. Fists clenched..

J.P.
Get that bitch!

ERIN (ON TV)
The sentencing is always light on white, and heavy on dark and that only works with good fried chicken.

Fatima is *motionless*, when her CELL RINGS - "UNKNOWN CALLER" again. Straight to VM.

INT. EVENING WITH ERIN SET - CONTINUOUS

With a predatory grin Erin senses blood in the water.

LINDSEY
No matter the race, the burden is on the prosecution. The law can only support heavy sentencing when the charge and evidence warrant it. First Degree Murder, is often overcharged. The burden of indisputable proof to get a conviction there is heavy.

ERIN
So in this case where a group of white thug cops abducted and murdered Black boys, how far can the law "as it's written" protect them?

LINDSEY
Allegedly.

ERIN
You think there's a chance they're innocent?

LINDSEY
Our duty is to presume innocence. They have the right to be tried in court. Not by public opinion.

ERIN
Unless the new judge, jury and executioners posing as law enforcement already made that decision when they murdered those Black boys. Not an isolated incident.

LINDSEY
We need to look past race to unmask the entire structure.
(MORE)

LINDSEY (CONT'D)

Two African-American and Latino officers are among the defendants.

ERIN

Those officers were named in the corruption case, not the abductions and murders.

LINDSEY

Is covering up murders somehow better than committing them?

ERIN

Those cops have been on the force less than a year. Feels like a scapegoat. Colorizing the case to keep the focus off the fact that these are lynchings.

LINDSEY

There's a lot of unfounded accusation floating around. Conspiracies at best. I speak only to what holds evidentiary value. So here's what I hope.

The camera pushes into her face, intensity rises.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)

I hope that there's justice for these boys, for their mothers, and families. I hope every single individual who committed these acts, or supported any cover up of these acts, rot in prison. And I hope that this very competent, morally sound, but sometimes disconnected judge...

ERIN

F'N B.

Lindsey points at her. *Girl, I will walk off this set!* They lock in a silent battle for a beat.

LINDSEY

I hope *Justice Bailey* sees the evidence and punishes those responsible to the highest extent of the law. Life in prison. And I'm not opposed to the Death Penalty.

Erin's ego is satisfied, she softens as she wraps things up.

ERIN

How I love the words when they fall from your mouth. Death to the murdering racists cops.

(to camera)

We'll be right back.

INT. MILLER'S OFFICE - LATER

Miller is finishing watching Erin. Locked to the screen.

Taja is getting dressed with lots of attitude.

TAJA

As amazing as you are in bed, even
the best can't multitask.

She picks up her last piece of clothing.

TAJA (CONT'D)

(more pointed)

Next time say you want TV and not
me.

Miller finally tears away from the screen.

MILLER

That was an interesting interview.

She catches an underlining meaning in his tone. As she's
about to exit.

TAJA

I'm not the type to lay around and
watch you salivate over someone who
is obviously your ex. It's bad
enough I have to compete with your
current situation-ship.

She moves to leave, but he grabs her.

MILLER

No competition. Just business.

She pulls away.

TAJA

Don't give assurances you can't
commit to. I know what this is. I
get what I want and keep it
pushin'.

Without a blink, she's OUT. Off her exit we CUT TO--

INT. DINER - LATE NIGHT

David and Sanchez are scarfing down a spread of BREAKFAST
FOOD. Trevor has a bowl of FRUIT.

TREVOR

I don't know how you can eat all
those chemicals.

DAVID

Shut up and eat your soggy melon.

Sanchez keeps his focus on his food, but is about business.

SANCHEZ

Tell me again what the house was like when you got there.

TREVOR

The door was a little open, so I pushed it. Everything looked normal. But mom left the bags on the kitchen counter with frozen stuff in 'em melting. Her keys and wallet too.

DAVID

Moms' OCD. She don't do that shit.

TREVOR

She's clean and meticulous. O.C.D. is a disorder. Thus the D.

DAVID

Shut... UP you weird fuck!

Sanchez keeps the focus.

SANCHEZ

No note? Her cell, or bag there?

DAVID

She had a note that had Basil's name on it with a time for today. Wonder if that means anything.

SANCHEZ

If you're trying to insinuate that your dad has something to do with this you can kill that noise.

DAVID

Sure you know 'em better than us.

Sanchez's voice lowers, tone serious.

SANCHEZ

Is she in any kind of trouble?

DAVID

She ain't into drugs if that's what you're gettin' at.

(boiling over)

Are you gonna help find her or are you just a babysitter who asks too many stupid questions? And why you got a gun?

Trevor tries to deescalate the rising tension but before he can, Sanchez's PHONE RINGS. *Saved by the bell.* Answers.

SANCHEZ

Sanchez. Go.

He leaves the table. Stepping outside to take it.

INT. BASIL'S CAR - SAME TIME

Basil is parked outside his loft, tension permeating.

BASIL
I looked everywhere.

EXT. DINER / INT. BASIL'S CAR

Sanchez walks out of the diner.

SANCHEZ
So what's the plan here?

BASIL
I'm so deep, I can't do shit.

Sanchez leans against the building, pulls out a cigarette and keeps his eyes on the boys.

SANCHEZ
I can't take two teenage boys home to 5 kids, and a pregnant wife.

BASIL
I'm not asking you to do that.

Seeing Trevor and David arguing at the table.

SANCHEZ
Your boys don't know what you're into?

BASIL
Nah bro.

SANCHEZ
Well I'm bout to either punch that David kid or tell him what's up.

BASIL
Yeah... gotta mouth like his pops.
(then)
I think this whole thing might have something to do with the peeps I'm workin' with. I think I know where you can take 'em. It might blow some shit up, but it's the only place they might just be protected.

Prince BANGS ON THE WINDOW. In reflex, Basil PULLS HIS GUN ON PRINCE.

SANCHEZ
What the fuck was that?

BASIL (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I'll text you an addy. Take 'em. I gotta--

Basil hangs up and TEXTS. Prince grows *impatient*.

PRINCE
You 'gon hold a fuckin' gun on me?

Basil puts the window down. Prince PULLS HIS GUN on him.

PRINCE (CONT'D)
You got deals goin' without me?

BASIL
Talkin' to my ex.

Prince studies Basil for a long beat. *Not buying it.*

PRINCE
Oh yeah? Show me.

BASIL
Show you what?

Tension. Basil gets out, goes to Prince, who is still holding his gun on him. Basil doesn't flinch.

PRINCE
Show me who you just hung up with.

BASIL
You starting to act like I'm yo' bitch.

PRINCE
If you act right maybe you will be.

Prince PUSHES BASIL UP AGAINST THE CAR, then rubs the tip of his gun down Basil's face. After an intense stare down, Basil lifts his phone to Prince's face. He opens it and on the screen, the last call...

CELL SCREEN READS: THAT BITCH. PIC of a sexy Latin woman.

Prince lowers the gun.

PRINCE (CONT'D)
Your pretty ass sure knows how to pull 'em huh. Maybe us 3 should have some fun together.

Off Prince's exit and leaving Basil *fuming* **we TIME CUT TO--**

INT. FATIMA'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

The house is dark. Everyone is sound asleep.

INT. FATIMA'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

TWO FIGURES are sleeping in the bed. The rise and fall of their breathing suggest complete safety and comfort.

CLOSE ON: Fatima snoring softly but steady.

EXT. FATIMA'S FRONT GATE - LATE NIGHT

Suddenly BRIGHT CAR LIGHTS slice through the darkness as a car pulls up to the GATE. The car idles for a moment, lights prevent seeing who's inside.

INT. FATIMA'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

INTERCOM RINGS, a jarring occurrence that shocks Fatima awake.

FATIMA
Alexa, bed lights.

The RECESSED LIGHTS come on.

Fatima sits up. Lindsey wakes. Fatima looks at the SECURITY MONITOR. The image is washed out by the blinding headlights. Fatima's gut tightens. *Senses strong.*

LINDSEY
What is it?

Fatima doesn't answer. Her focus locked on the video.

INT. FATIMA'S KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

The KITCHEN LIGHTS snap on. J.P. enters moving swift, strategic. Fatima meets her a little frazzled.

FATIMA
Who is that?

J.P.
Says he's a detective. An urgent matter.

Immediate suspicion. Officers don't show up unannounced.

FATIMA
How did he get passed the main gate? You sure he's really a cop?

J.P.
He showed his badge. If he's not...

J.P. shows her gun.

Fatima's CELL BUZZES. *Distracted* she opens it, it's a VIDEO. She ducks off and plays it. The VIDEO IS SURVEILLANCE OF MELANIE sitting in a stark room alone, we **MATCH CUT TO--**

INT. LUXURY YACHT - PREMIERE BEDROOM - SAME TIME

The video morphs to the LIVE SETTING. A luxury bedroom. Melanie, unrestrained, sits on a CALIFORNIA KING BED. *The fight in her quiets* for a moment, as outside seems still.

We hear HIGH HEEL FOOTSTEPS on tile which *ignites her fight*. Her heart rate rises. She stands, braced.

The DOOR OPENS to a **FACE UNSEEN** WOMAN. A GLOVED HAND tosses an ENVELOPE on the bed. Exits. Melanie rushes to open it.

INSERT: OMINOUS PHOTOGRAPHS of TREVOR and DAVID being escorted out of the DINER BY SANCHEZ, **You can't see his face.**

The DOOR CLOSSES with a thud. Melanie BANGS FOR HER LIFE.

MELANIE

What do you want! Don't hurt my boys!

Her efforts are met with silence. She collapses on the bed.

An EPIC DRONE SHOT pulls back OUT OF THE WINDOW and UP into the sky revealing the YACHT isolated in the CENTER OF THE OCEAN with no other vessel or land in sight.

Off this we **GO BACK TO--**

INT. FATIMA'S FOYER - LATE NIGHT

The Foyer lights blast on. A MALE FIGURE stands just outside the frosted DOOR. J.P. pauses in preparation.

Fatima still *stunned by the video*, lingers behind. J.P. opens the door slightly, ready for anything.

SANCHEZ

Fatima Bailey please.

TREVOR (O.C.)

Wait... what?!

J.P.

What's this regarding?

He steps to the side to REVEAL THE BOYS.

SANCHEZ

Her grandkids.

All the air sucks out of the room. Fatima *lowers her defenses*, steps forward, her heart beating out of her chest. She stares at the boys, frozen in this moment. Trevor eyes are wide with confusion and a bit of distain for the polarizing figure he's come to hate. David is boiling over with anger, realizing that lies in his family go deep.

And this revelation hits with the force of a train, Melanie is Fatima's DAUGHTER and there's a LOT of shit going on we need to figure out...

OFF THIS WE... END EPISODE