

INT. FORGOTTEN WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Abandoned, dirty and dilapidated. A tricked-out SUV is parked near a metal roll-up door.

A blood trail weaves from two DEAD BODIES. A man in a tactical vest and tiger-striped cap bleeds from the chest. A woman bleeds out the neck. A red plastic cup next to her.

Faint police SIRENS sing in the distance.

The back of AMARA AKUFFO (30s, Black, African accent, tight black catsuit, hard exterior but soft center) is pressed against an over turned table. Tense.

She clings to an unusually sparkly black handgun. Sweaty. Breathing fast.

A low MOAN. Slumped next to her in a blood-soaked blouse is FREYA LOPEZ (20s, Half-White, Half-Hispanic, edgy steampunk costume, free spirit).

AMARA

Freya, stay with me.

She tucks the sparkly gun, lays Freya flat, and rips her blouse. Freya stirs.

FREYA

(weak)

Stop fucking up my costume.

The police sirens grow LOUDER.

AMARA

Blame the bullet hole. Hold still.

Amara feels around Freya's shoulder wound with intention. Stops. Relieved.

AMARA (CONT'D)

Straight through. This may hurt.

She presses her hands on either side of Freya's wound. A BRIGHT GLOW grows strong from both palms.

Magically, Freya's bullet wound crusts over with a cement-colored scab. Freya SCREAMS. Amara yanks her hands away.

Sirens ROAR closer. Amara searches Freya's vest pockets. Freya weakly resists.

FREYA

No more magic. That shit hurts.

AMARA

Relax, I need your phone.

Freya relaxes. Bingo. Cellphone located. She makes a call. Outside the roll-up door, tires screech, and car doors slam.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Fists pound on the roll-up door. The phone rings. Her stay on the door.

AMARA (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Serwa, pick up.

POLICE VOICES mingle outside. Then silence.

AGENT BRENT (O.C.)

(bullhorn)

This is Special Agent Brent Johnson with the ATF. Open the door NOW.

She untucks the sparkly black gun. Trembling. The call goes to voicemail.

AMARA

Serwa - it's Momma.

Her eyes well.

AGENT BRENT (O.C.)

(bullhorn)

You have one minute to open that door or hell's coming.

She forcefully wipes her eyes. No time to cry.

AMARA

Your father isn't coming. Your Grandpapa...hello...hello.

A black screen. She mashes the power button a few times, but it's dead-dead.

AGENT BRENT (O.C.)

(bullhorn)

Ready or not.

She crouches down to Freya and repeatedly pats her cheeks.

AMARA

Freya, wake up. Freya!

Freya's eyes pop half open. Weak. Annoyed.

FREYA

Stop. I'm trying to die sexy.

Amara palms the sides of Freya's face.

AMARA

You're not dying. LISTEN. Tell
Serwa to stay away from her
Grandpapa. Do you hear me?

Freya blinks slowly. Consciousness fades fast.

FREYA

Bad...Gran...pa.

Light's out, but still breathing. A few shakes but it's
useless. She's in this alone.

BUUUUZZZZZZZZZZ! The business end of a rotary saw blade digs
into the roll-up door. Amara glares up. HARD.

AMARA

(to herself)

I'm not going back.

Sparks fizzle into the warehouse. Amara stands and aims the
sparkly black gun at the roll-up door. Off Amara, UNSTEADY
but READY.

EXT. VALUE VILLAGE STUDIO APARTMENTS - DAY

The façade screams last stop before homeless.

SUPERIMPOSE: EL CAJON, CA. TWO DAYS EARLIER

INT. SMALL STUDIO APARTMENT #233 - COMMON AREA - DAY

Light barely illuminates this tiny outdated studio apartment.
Budget furnished with two floor cots, tiny kitchen table, and
sheet-covered windows.

SERWA NYMARKO, (16, Black, slight African accent, creative,
daddy's-girl) sketches an unfamiliar superhero at the tiny
table. Two fingertips are covered with band-aids.

BATHROOM

Blocked off with cheap foldable partitions. AMARA squeezes
toothpaste on her toothbrush.

AMARA

Serwa, EAT. We must go soon.

COMMON AREA

A dry bowl of oatmeal sits across from Serwa as she draws.

SERWA

The water's not working.

BATHROOM

Disbelief, Amara turns the sink knobs. Nothing. She buries her frustration, rubs toothpaste on her gums. Marches out.

COMMON AREA

She procures a glucose meter from Serwa's backpack. Serwa, unbothered, offers an unbandaged finger. Amara tests.

SERWA

What do you think, Momma?

Amara glances at the drawing, realizing, then scans the beeping glucose meter. Sighs.

AMARA

You're low. You need to eat.

SERWA

It's SUPERDAD to the rescue.

Amara returns the meter to Serwa's backpack. She opens a dorm-sized fridge. An empty insulin vial and molded bread ends.

AMARA

Do you want him to see you sick?

Worried stare. Serwa picks up a repaired toy.

SERWA

We could be rich. Why hide IT?

Triggered. She grabs the molded bread and SLAMS the fridge door. Serwa sinks in her chair.

AMARA

IT doesn't exist. We're FINE. I'm getting a raise soon.

Amara removes the moldier sections of bread and places the ripped remains in front of Serwa.

AMARA (CONT'D)

Eat.

Serwa turns away from the unsavory breakfast.

SERWA

Nah. I'll eat at school.

AMARA

Immigration only had an early appointment so you'll be late today. You're too low - EAT.

Amara glares at Serwa. Determined. Serwa stares at breakfast. Disgusted.

INT. IMMIGRATION OFFICE - WAITING AREA - DAY

DMV vibe. Walls covered in Pro-America boilerplate.

Lodged in the corner, Amara repositions her bags. Serwa shakes her head at the morning news on a very outdated TV.

SERWA

Redd's got robbed again.

INT. IMMIGRATION OFFICE - RITCHIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Photos with assault rifles, American flags, and a red cap with a clear message. Make America Great Again.

A schlubby man, RITCHIE LOPEZ, (60s, Cuban, entitled energy) pulls out an unlabeled pill bottle, shakes a couple of PILLS in his hand and knocks them back. Chews hard.

Rubs his face at the sight of his negative bank balance.

An incoming call on his cellphone. Debating. Stuffs the pill bottle in his jacket, composes himself, and answers.

RITCHIE

Lou, I was...yeah,...fucking
Lakers, they choked...I know it's
five g's...What?...THREE DAYS?

His office door opens. Amara and Serwa tip-toe inside. Ritchie looks up and gestures for them to sit. Amara listens.

RITCHIE (CONT'D)
 Yeah, I'll get da money...Alright,
 I gotta go.

Ritchie ends the call and turns to his computer. Amara refuses to make eye contact.

RITCHIE (CONT'D)
 Name?

AMARA
 Amara Akuffo, Sir. One k, two f's.

He types. Uninterested.

RITCHIE
 You got some missing information.

AMARA
 What do you need, sir?

RITCHIE
 (nods to Serwa)
 What's her father's name?

Amara looks to Serwa. Hesitates. Serwa looks up from drawing.

SERWA
 My father's name is Obe. Obe Ny-mar-
 ko. You need me to spell it?

Ritchie frowns and types on his computer. An awkward silence. Amara tenses up. His eyebrows raise and he turns to Amara.

RITCHIE
 Oh, somebody's got a pair on them.

Serwa's confused. Amara fidgets under Ritchie's accusing glare. She knows he knows.

RITCHIE (CONT'D)
 (to Serwa)
 You should go wait outside.

SERWA
 Why? What does it say?

Amara places her hand on Serwa's leg. Message received. Serwa reluctantly slogs out the door.

Ritchie follows, locks the door, and plods back behind his desk. Amara stays fixed on the floor.

RITCHIE
Do I look fucking stupid?

AMARA
No, sir. I didn't do it.

Ritchie picks up his landline and dials.

RITCHIE
I don't give a shit. You're a
wanted murderer, Mrs. Nymarko. I'm
deporting you and...

AMARA
...Your debt. I can pay your debt.

Amara's eyes glaze. Ritchie slams the phone down. He stands
and looks down on her. Angered.

RITCHIE
I don't need nothing from you. You
need me. Get on your knees.

Amara looks up, afraid. Ritchie points to the floor.

RITCHIE (CONT'D)
Beg. BEG ME to stay in my country.

She slides to her knees in supplication.

AMARA
I beg you to stay, sir. They will
kill us. This is our home.

Ritchie dawns a devious smile. He enjoys this power trip.

RITCHIE
You wanna home here, you're gonna
pay. Get up, you're mudding up my
floor.

She rises from the floor and wipes her face. Head down.

AMARA
I will pay whatever you say, sir.

He sits and types.

RITCHIE
Donate. You're donating - six-grand
in three days, to my non-profit.

Her jaw clenches but she remains composed.

AMARA
Sir, I can't...

He bangs on his desk and turns to her. Stern.

RITCHIE
...I CAN'S live in America. Six-
grand - by Monday - comprende?

AMARA
Yes, sir.

Ritchie strides to the door and opens it. She gets the hint and hurries out of his office. He closes the door. Pleased.

INT. STINNEY HIGH SCHOOL - HALL - DAY

Amara and Serwa are directed through metal detectors and searched by wand-wielding security guards.

Serwa sees a familiar face, DEMETRICE SMITH, (16, Black, wheelchair, nerdy cool) with an unfamiliar face wearing a tiger-striped cap.

The unfamiliar face hands him something, sees them, before disappearing out a handicap exit. Amara spies the exchange.

SERWA
Demetrice, you going to art class?

Demetrice tucks something and whips his chair around. Grins.

DEMETRICE
Yo! Where've you been? You know I
can't start my day without that
smile.

Serwa blushes, then catches Amara's side-eye. Straightens.

DEMETRICE (CONT'D)
You didn't tell me you had a
sister.

Amara rolls her eyes and nudges Serwa toward the main office.

AMARA
Excuse us. We have priorities.

Demetrice turns his wheelchair and purposely lags.

DEMETRICE
You're right, Serwa is a priority.

Suddenly, a size fourteen shoe from CHARLES "CHEWIE" LONG, (16, Black, all-city defensive end, anger issues) rockets Demetrice's wheelchair down the hall.

CHEWIE

Get yo' cripple ass out the hall.

DEMETRICE

Hey! Stop playing.

Hallway kids laugh. He gains control of his wheelchair and tries to laugh it off. Serwa looks to see if he's okay.

AMARA

Your father expects to find a lady upon his arrival. Books, not boys.

MAIN OFFICE

School events and rules of conduct clutter the walls. The RECEPTIONIST, (70s, should retire) index fingers types.

Amara signs Serwa in and notices a custodial job posting.

RECEPTIONIST

What class is this pass for?

Before Serwa can respond Principal EBONY MILLS, (40s, Black, pants suit, happily overworked) stops at the counter.

EBONY

Serwa should be in art.

Ebony tries make eye contact with Amara. Nope. The Receptionist hands Serwa a slip of paper.

AMARA

Go straight home after school.

Serwa nods and speed walks out. Ebony blocks Amara's exit.

EBONY

Ms. Akuffo, I just need a minute to talk about Serwa's medical needs.

Amara looks up. Bothered. The sudden eye contact surprises Ebony.

AMARA

Her medical needs are met, Ma'am.

Ebony pushes a smile.

EBONY

Ma'am? Please call me Ebony.
Ms. Akuffo, part of my job is to be prepared for my students medical emergencies. It would help me to help you if we had Serwa's insulin on hand.

Amara folds her arms. Carefully considering.

AMARA

Do you employ undocumented people?

Surprised. Ebony looks at her for a moment.

EBONY

No. I can't. Ms. Akuffo, do you need financial assistance? I could -

Amara quickly regains herself.

AMARA

-- No. I'll meet her needs.

Amara storms down the hall.

EBONY

Ms. Akuffo, just so you know, I'm required to call C.P.S. if something ever happens.

INT. LIL ANGELS DAYCARE - FOYER - DAY

Daycare or a toy store. NANCY KNAVS, (50s, White, pudgy, tone-deaf, self-serious) picks up toys among children.

She wipes her forehead. A toddler dumps a bucket of blocks.

NANCY

Happy place. Freya! Amara!

The front door opens. Amara creeps in with her head down and shuffles to the breakroom. Nancy peeps the time. Annoyed.

Discipline will need to wait. Two yoga moms waltz in. Their two fighting children trail behind.

HEATHER, (20s, White, Chanel sunglasses, alpha mom) thumbs through her phone. Nancy's eyes trace Heather. Starstruck.

HEATHER

Let's do - Nobu today.