

# ***ADAPTATION PROJECT***

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NOTE: NO SPECIFIC TITLE YET FOR THE PROJECT.

FADE IN:

1 INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM - NIGHT

1

SAMSON THIERY, a young black man, wakes up in a disheveled dorm room. He looks around, confusion etched on his face as the camera closes in on his underwear and then a woman's panties on the floor. He seems disoriented, flashing back to the events of the night before.

Suddenly, PILLAR SINCLAIR, a young white woman, pops up beside him.

PILLAR  
(cheerfully)  
Well, good morning, lover boy.

Samson's eyes go wide with shock and horror as he realizes what has happened.

SAMSON  
(panicked)  
What... what is going on? How did  
I...

PILLAR  
(smirking)  
Don't you remember? Last night was  
the best night of your life.

Samson's face falls, the realization sinking in as he tries to make sense of the situation. The room falls silent, the tension palpable.

2 INT. BAR - DAY

2

IVANI PATIN-BELL, a formidable African-American attorney, sits across from DEXTER, an opposing counsel, at a bar.

IVANI  
(firmly)  
Dexter, you are not being fair.

DEXTER  
(condescendingly)  
Fair? That's a great deal and you  
know it.

IVANI

(frustrated)

Dexter! Your client overlooked four people of color and promoted Whites with less time and credentials. They repeatedly told part-time supervisors they needed degrees to become full-time, and then hired White supervisors with no degrees and less time. There's evidence upon evidence of this claim. NO DEAL... come better.

DEXTER

(scoffing)

Oh, my gosh, what do you people want? I mean, we gave you a black president, and you're still trying to bust our balls.

IVANI

(exasperated)

I'm so over you people keeping on about how we should celebrate and be so excited that y'all gave us a black president. No, we voted for a black president. America voted for a black president. And, as a matter of fact, having a black president didn't help the black people at all.

Ivani's frustration is palpable as she stares down Dexter, her resolve unwavering. The tension in the air is thick, and it's clear this is a battle of wits and principles.

DEXTER

(defensively)

Oh, here we go...

IVANI

(passionately)

No, it's a fact that no one wants to talk about. When President Obama took office, white America felt that we needed no more benefits. For instance, I know for a fact that certain cities had minority businesses fold because white companies no longer honored allowing them to have 10% of contracts. Prior to President Obama taking office, black businesses were able to partner

(MORE)

IVANI (CONT'D)

with larger white companies to get the minority contract agreement settled. But when President Obama came in, all of white America was like, "You got your black president, we don't have anything else for you.

DEXTER

(dismissively)

You're right, no one talks about that because it's not a fact. You're a lawyer, you need to present facts and stop with all of this.

IVANI

(firmly)

And you need to stop bringing up that we had a black president, Dex.

DEXTER

(sheepishly)

You know, I always like to mess with you and get you ruffled up like that. I get it, I understand. I'm just messing with you. I know what white America did, I know what we did with the black president. And you're right, we've talked about this many times - having a black president just really uncovered a lot of ugly in America. So, I won't mess with you anymore. I just like to tease you.

IVANI

(refocusing)

Well, anyway, getting back to the real matter at hand, please look into the offer. It's a fair deal, and I do not believe we should come in any less than what we're asking. So, look it over, give my office a call, and let's talk. Have a good one.

Ivani's determined expression and Dexter's sheepish demeanor create a dynamic exchange, underscoring the deep-rooted tensions and complexities surrounding race and politics in America.

3 EXT. IVANI DRIVING HOME - DAY

3

Ivani drives home, soft music playing in the background. She's engaged in a conversation with one of her ASSOCIATES.

IVANI

(into phone)

Okay, let's go over the key points again. Samson's family hired me to represent their son, and we need to make sure we have a solid strategy in place. This case is going to be a challenge, but I'm confident we can make a strong argument.

ASSOCIATE (V.O.)

(through phone)

I understand, Ivani. The demographics in Auburn are going to work against us, but I think if we focus on the facts and Samson's character, we can sway the jury.

IVANI

(nodding)

That's exactly what I'm thinking. We need to humanize Samson and make the jury see him as a young man of faith who had his rights violated. This isn't just about gender or race - it's about justice.

ASSOCIATE (V.O.)

(reassuringly)

I'll keep digging into the details and prepare our case. You just focus on getting home to your family. I know this has been a long day.

IVANI

(sighing)

You're right. It has been. But I'm ready to put this all aside for a bit and enjoy some home-cooked dinner.

Ivani smiles, her shoulders relaxing as she drives, the soft music underscoring the moment of respite before she re-enters the high-stakes legal battle ahead.

4 INTERNAL. IVANI'S HOME - DAY

4

Ivani pulls up to a cozy, well-kept home. She gets out of her car and heads inside, where her husband, THERON, is waiting.

THERON

(warmly)

Hello, my lovely wife. How was your day?

IVANI

(pleasantly surprised)

Oh my, you cooked dinner! (kisses him) My day was fabulous. I met with old Dexter about the case. As always, he wants to low-ball the offer and bring up the "We gave y'all a Black President" joke.

THERON

(chuckling)

Well, I'm glad to hear you're making progress. My day was great, too. Manufacturing has been a little tough, but I'm dealing with turnovers and training. Good help is hard to find, you know? Just trying to build a solid management team to get production back on track.

(SHOUTS)

Kids, get down here! Your mom is home, and it's time to eat!

The sound of children's footsteps can be heard as they rush down the stairs, eager to greet their mother. Ivani and Theron share a warm, loving moment, the family coming together for a meal.

5 EXT. CHURCH - DAY

5

After the church service, a MINISTER approaches the Patin-Bell family.

MINISTER

(warmly)

Greetings, brother Theron and sister Ivani. Hey, kids, how are you doing? Doing great and doing well in school, excellent, excellent.

(MORE)

MINISTER (CONT'D)  
 (Turns to Theron and  
 Ivani)

If you don't mind, could the two of you step into one of the pastoral offices? We have an urgent matter we'd like to discuss with you. I'm sorry, but the children will have to sit this one out. Thanks for understanding.

Theron and Ivani exchange a curious look, then follow the Minister into the church office, leaving their children behind.

The scene shifts, the camera lingering on the children's faces, hinting at the gravity of the conversation about to take place between the adults.

6 INT. PASTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

6

The Johnson family sits solemnly across from PASTOR JOSHUA VALENTINE. IVANI PATIN-BELL enters, concern etched on her face.

IVANI  
 (warmly)

Hi Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. How are you doing? (brightens) Oh my, I was just saying to Theron how excited we were for you and Samson after the NFL draft. You must be so proud.

The Johnsons exchange somber looks. MR. JOHNSON clears his throat.

MR. JOHNSON  
 Mrs. Blackwell, this is not a happy meeting. This is a very difficult time for our family. (turns to Samson) Samson, I think you should tell Mrs. Blackwell what happened.

Samson takes a deep breath, his brow furrowed with anguish.

SAMSON  
 (heavily)  
 Well, Mrs. Blackwell, after the draft celebration with my teammates, this... this girl, she... she drugged me and... (swallows hard) she took advantage  
 (MORE)

SAMSON (CONT'D)

of me. I woke up the next morning in her dorm room, and she told me we had sex. I was a virgin, Mrs. Blackwell. This girl, she's been taunting me and my girlfriend Hope for months, trying to get me to sleep with her. And now she's saying she's pregnant.

Ivani's eyes widen as the gravity of the situation sinks in. She reaches out and places a comforting hand on Samson's arm.

IVANI

(gently)

Samson, your rights were violated. I believe you. And I'm ready to help you fight this, if you're ready to face what's to come.

Samson looks to his parents, then back to Ivani, determination rising in his expression.

SAMSON

Yes, Mrs. Blackwell. I'm ready. I was wronged, and she has no right to get away with this.

Ivani nods solemnly, her mind already racing with strategy.

IVANI

Alright, Samson. Then we need to start by filing a police report. Can you tell me exactly what happened that night?

Samson takes a deep breath and begins to recount the events, his voice thick with emotion.

7

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS PARTY - DAY

7

The dance floor is packed with college students, music thumping. SAMSON stands out in the crowd, his towering physique and infectious energy drawing attention. PILAR, an attractive young woman, sidles up to him, her eyes sparkling with mischief.

PILAR

(coy)

Hey there, big guy. Aren't you gonna dance with me?



SAMSON  
 (politely)  
 Nah, I'm good. I don't really  
 dance, you know?

PILAR  
 (persistent)  
 Oh, come on. Just one song? (leans  
 in) I'll make it worth your while.

SAMSON  
 (firmly)  
 Thanks, but no thanks. I don't  
 drink, either.

Pilar pouts, but her expression quickly shifts to one of  
 scheming calculation. She turns and grabs a drink, discreetly  
 adding something to it before offering it to Samson.

PILAR  
 (sweetly)  
 Well, how about this? It's just a  
 coke. You gotta keep your strength  
 up, right?

Samson hesitates, but the combination of Pilar's persistence  
 and his own celebratory mood wear down his defenses. He takes  
 the drink, unaware of the drug that has been slipped in.

As Samson sips the spiked soda, his movements start to become  
 sluggish. Pilar and her friend exchange a triumphant glance,  
 then guide the disoriented Samson towards the exit.

PILAR  
 (sotto voce to her  
 friend)  
 Come on, let's get him back to my  
 dorm room.

The scene fades out, leaving the audience with a sense of  
 unease and foreboding.

8

INT. PASTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

8

Samson's voice is thick with anguish as he recounts the  
 horrific events.

SAMSON  
 (trembling)  
 Mrs. Johnson, I woke up the next  
 morning in her dorm room, and when  
 she told me we had sex, I was just  
 in shock. All I could think about  
 (MORE)

SAMSON (CONT'D)  
 was Hope, my girlfriend. Everybody knew I was a virgin, waiting for marriage. And this evil girl, she took that away from me. She took it away from me and Hope. (clenches fist) I'm so angry, and she's already saying she's pregnant. It's like she planned this whole thing.

Samson hangs his head, tears welling in his eyes. Mrs. Johnson reaches out and squeezes his hand sympathetically.

SAMSON (CONT'D)  
 (looking up)  
 I didn't know she put something in my drink. I was excited, celebrating with everyone, but I had no intentions of having sex with her. She's been harassing me and Hope for months, begging me to sleep with her. And now this has happened, and I don't know what to do.

Ivani places a comforting hand on Samson's shoulder, her gaze steady and reassuring.

IVANI  
 (firmly)  
 Samson, your rights were violated, and I believe you. The question is, are you ready to handle what's to come?

Samson takes a deep, steadying breath, then looks Ivani directly in the eye, his expression one of determined resolve.

SAMSON  
 (with conviction)  
 Yes, Mrs. Blackwell. I'm ready. She has no right to get away with this.

SAMSON  
 (resolute)  
 Yes, Mrs. Johnson. I'm ready to face whatever I have to face. Because I was done wrong, and she

(MORE)

SAMSON (CONT'D)  
has no right to get away with it.  
I'm ready to move forward.

Ivani nods, her brow furrowed in concentration.

IVANI  
(carefully)  
Okay, Samson. You said you went to  
the hospital and got tested. Do we  
have a hospital report? And a  
police report?

Samson's expression shifts to one of shock and confusion, his  
head shaking slightly.

IVANI (CONT'D)  
(firmly)  
Yes, Samson, a police report. If  
you're going to claim what you're  
claiming, we have to start there.  
I need you to tell me exactly what  
she did to you, what you're going  
to say in the police report.

Samson's distress is palpable, his body language tense and  
agitated. After a long pause, he takes a deep breath and  
raises his head, his voice clear and unwavering.

SAMSON  
(solemnly)  
She raped me.

The room falls silent, the weight of Samson's words hanging  
in the air. Ivani holds his gaze, her expression grave and  
resolute.

IVANI  
(quietly)  
Yes, Samson. That's what you're  
going to have to stand before  
everyone and say. Your rights were  
violated, and you deserve justice.  
But they're going to come at you  
from every angle, and you have to  
stand firm.

Samson nods, his jaw set with determination.

SAMSON  
(with conviction)  
I can do this. I have to. She did  
this to me, and she has to be held  
accountable.

Ivani places a hand on Samson's arm, a glimmer of hope in her eyes.

IVANI

(encouragingly)

Then let's get started. Give me the names of anyone you can think of who was at that party. This is going to be a long process, but we're going to fight for your justice.

10

INT. PASTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

10

IVANI

(firmly)

Yes, Samson, you were right. That's what you're going to have to put in the police report, that's the story you're going to have to stand before everyone and tell. They're going to come at you from every angle, but you have to stand firm on what you're saying, what you're claiming. And yes, you deserve justice, because your rights were violated.

Samson nods, his brow furrowed with concern.

SAMSON

(troubled)

But this semester is about to end. I have finals, and I was hoping to start training camp and play in the fall. And she did this to me. I can't believe it, I feel like my life is just unraveling. This one evil snake, she did this to me.

Ivani's expression softens with empathy.

IVANI

(understanding)

You make a good point, Samson. This semester is about to end, and we're going to have to interview a lot of people. Since this happened in Auburn, and my office is in Atlanta, we're going to have to hire an investigator there. This is going to be a long process, and it may interfere with your career.

(MORE)

IVANI (CONT'D)

(leaning forward)

But I need you to give me the names of anyone you can think of who was at that party. I know this is going to make a lot of people uncomfortable, but it's for your justice.

Samson takes a deep breath, his expression resolute.

SAMSON

(determined)

Okay, I'll do it. This is important, and I'm ready to fight for justice.

Ivani nods, already mentally strategizing their next steps.

IVANI

(reassuringly)

Good. We're going to get through this, Samson. I believe in you, and I'm going to do everything in my power to make sure you get the justice you deserve.

11 INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT

11

The house is buzzing with energy as SAMSON, a college football star, walks in. His teammates and PARTYGOERS surround him, CHEERING and CONGRATULATING him on being drafted to the NFL.

PARTYGOER

(excitedly)

Wasn't next, man? You're gonna kill it!

Samson smiles and nods, trying to navigate through the crowd. PILAR, an attractive female student, is eyeing him intently, making her way towards him.

PILAR

(flirtatiously)

Samson, hey! Can I get you a drink?

SAMSON  
(politely declining)

12 INTERNAL. UH, NO THANKS, PILAR. ' GOOD - NOON 12

Pilar persists, grabbing Samson's arm, trying to get him to dance with her. Samson gently pushes her away and continues celebrating with his other friends.

SMASH CUT TO:

13 INT. COURTROOM - DAY 13

The history of Samson and Pilar's relationship is now being presented. We see FLASHBACKS of Pilar showing up at Samson's practices, constantly trying to get his attention, even getting into arguments with Samson's girlfriend, HOPE. Throughout these scenes, Samson is seen dismissing Pilar's advances.

BACK TO:

14 INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - NIGHT 14

Pilar hands Samson a red solo cup, and he takes a sip. As Samson's focus shifts, Pilar exchanges a knowing look with her FRIEND, implying she has spiked his drink.

Pilar and her friend then LEAD Samson out of the house and towards Pilar's DORM ROOM.

SMASH CUT TO:

15 INT. PILAR'S DORM ROOM - LATER 15

The scene FADES IN, and we see Samson waking up, disoriented, as Pilar stands over him, a smirk on her face.

PILAR  
(smugly)  
Good morning, lover boy.

Samson's eyes widen as he takes in his surroundings, realizing what has happened.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

16 INT. CHURCH - DAY

16

The JOHNSON FAMILY sits solemnly as SAMSON, visibly distressed, speaks to IVANI BELL, a prominent attorney.

SAMSON  
(trembling)  
Mrs. Johnson, I... I went to the hospital, and they said I was drugged. I told my family and...  
(breaks down) and Hope.

Samson's face crumbles as he struggles to continue. Ivani reaches out and places a comforting hand on his shoulder.

IVANI  
(gently)  
It's okay, Samson. Take your time.

Samson takes a deep breath, trying to compose himself.

SAMSON  
(with difficulty)  
She... she took something from me that I can never get back. (beat)  
I'm just so angry, and I don't know what to do.

Ivani nods sympathetically, her expression a mix of understanding and determination.

MRS. JOHNSON  
(solemnly)  
Samson, we're here for you. We'll do whatever it takes to get justice.

Samson looks up, his eyes filled with a glimmer of hope.

SMASH CUT TO:

17 INT. SAMSON'S HOME - DAY

17

Samson sits on the couch, his head in his hands, as HOPE paces the room, her face a mask of fury.

HOPE  
(angrily)  
I can't believe this happened to you! That... that snake, Pilar, has been after you for years, and now she's done this!

Samson looks up, his expression pained.

SAMSON  
 (pleading)  
 Hope, please, I just... I need  
 your support right now.

Hope stops pacing and sits next to Samson, taking his hand in hers.

HOPE  
 (her anger giving way to  
 concern)  
 Oh, Samson, I'm so sorry. I'm here  
 for you, always.

They embrace, Samson's body shaking with suppressed sobs.

18

INT. IVANI'S LAW OFFICE - DAY

18

Ivani stands at the head of a conference table, her LEGAL TEAM gathered around her, expressions serious.

IVANI  
 (firmly)  
 Alright, team, we have a delicate  
 situation on our hands. Samson  
 Thiery is a young, black athlete  
 in the heart of Alabama, accusing  
 a white female of rape. We need to  
 approach this carefully.

GRACE  
 (concerned)  
 The demographics in Auburn are not  
 in our favor. It's going to be an  
 uphill battle.

BLAKE  
 (conservative)  
 Not to mention the potential  
 backlash from the public. This  
 could turn into a media circus.

LAYLA  
 (passionately)  
 We can't let that stop us from  
 seeking justice for Samson! This  
 is a clear-cut case of sexual  
 assault.



FLETCHER

(pragmatic)

We'll need to focus on the evidence, build a strong case. Jury selection will be crucial.

CESAR

(agitatively)

And we can't ignore the racial aspect. This is about more than just the crime itself.

Ivani nods, her brow furrowed in thought.

IVANI

(determined)

You're all right. We need to be strategic, but we can't back down. Samson's rights were violated, and we're going to fight for him.

SMASH CUT TO:

19 INT. POLICE STATION - DAY 19

Samson, accompanied by his parents, stands at the front desk, giving his statement to a POLICE OFFICER. The officer nods, his expression grave, as he takes notes.

SMASH CUT TO:

20 INT. PILAR'S HOME - DAY 20

Pilar sits on her bed, a smug smile on her face, as POLICE OFFICERS enter her room and HANDCUFF her, informing her of the charges.

SMASH CUT TO:

21 INT. NEWS STUDIO - DAY 21

A NEWSCASTER delivers a breaking news report, the headline "COLLEGE FOOTBALL STAR ACCUSES FEMALE STUDENT OF RAPE" scrolling across the screen.

NEWSCASTER

(solemnly)

We're here with a developing story out of Auburn, Alabama, where a prominent college football player, Samson Thiery, has filed charges

(MORE)

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)  
 against a female student, Pilar  
 Sinclair, alleging non-consensual  
 sexual activity.

The camera CUTS to various REACTIONS from the community,  
 showcasing the tension and polarization surrounding the case.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

22 INT. PILAR'S FAMILY HOME - DAY

22

The Sinclair home is a sprawling, luxurious estate. PILAR  
 sits in the living room, surrounded by her FAMILY, including  
 her FATHER, a distinguished-looking DOCTOR, and her MOTHER, a  
 well-dressed socialite.

PILAR'S FATHER  
 (concerned)  
 Darling, we're here for you. This  
 is a terrible situation, but we'll  
 do whatever it takes to clear your  
 name.

PILAR'S MOTHER  
 (sympathetically)  
 Yes, sweetheart. Our family has  
 the resources to fight this. You  
 know we'll stand by you.

Pilar nods, her expression a mix of worry and confidence.

PILAR  
 (earnestly)  
 I know, Mom, Dad. I'm just... I'm  
 so shocked that Samson would do  
 this to me. We've been friends for  
 years.

PILAR'S FATHER  
 (reassuringly)  
 Don't worry, Pilar. Our lawyers  
 will handle this. You just focus  
 on your studies and let us take  
 care of everything.

The family's BUTLER enters the room, discreetly informing  
 Pilar's father of a visitor.

BUTLER  
 (respectfully)  
 Excuse me, sir. There's a group of  
 Pilar's friends here to see her.

PILAR'S FATHER  
 (nodding)  
 Very well. Send them in.

A group of PILAR'S FRIENDS, including CHEERLEADERS and SORORITY SISTERS, enter the room, their expressions a mix of concern and outrage.

PILAR'S FRIEND #1  
 (angrily)  
 Pilar, we can't believe this is happening! Samson has no right to accuse you like this.

PILAR'S FRIEND #2  
 (passionately)  
 We're all here for you, girl. We know you would never do something like that.

The friends gather around Pilar, offering their support and comfort. Pilar's parents watch, their faces etched with determination to protect their daughter.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

23

INT. SAMSON'S FAMILY HOME - DAY

23

The THIERY FAMILY gathers around the dinner table, a somber mood filling the air. Samson sits quietly, as his PARENTS and SIBLINGS try to offer words of support.

SAMSON'S MOTHER  
 (tenderly)  
 Samson, we're all here for you, honey. We'll get through this together.

Samson nods, his expression pained.

SAMSON'S FATHER  
 (firmly)  
 That's right, son. We're a family, and we'll fight this, no matter what.

A KNOCK at the door draws their attention. JABARI, Samson's childhood friend, enters the room.

JABARI  
 (somberly)  
 Samson, man, I'm so sorry. I heard what happened.

Samson stands and the two embrace, a mixture of emotions passing between them.

SAMSON  
(quietly)  
Jabari, we haven't been as close lately, but you're still my brother, you know?

JABARI  
(nodding)  
I know, bro. I'm here for you, no matter what.

They retreat to a quiet corner of the room, their voices lowered as they engage in a private conversation.

SMASH CUT TO:

24 INT. SAMSON'S ROOM - LATER

24

Samson sits on his bed, his head in his hands, as HOPE enters the room. Her expression is a mix of anger and concern.

HOPE  
(angrily)  
Samson, I can't believe this is happening. That Pilar has been after you for years, and now she's done this?!

Samson looks up, his eyes pleading.

SAMSON  
(desperately)  
Hope, please, I need you with me on this. I don't know what to do.

HOPE  
(her anger giving way to sorrow)  
Oh, Samson, I'm so sorry. I'm here for you, but... (beat) Pilar has grieved me for so long, and now she's won.

They embrace, Samson holding Hope tightly as she fights back tears.

25 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

25

IVANI and her LEGAL TEAM are interviewing the FOOTBALL COACH, STAFF, and TEAM MEMBERS.

IVANI

(serious)

Finals are coming up, and this case could be a long, drawn-out affair. It's going to be high-profile, with the media swarming. We need character witnesses, but keep your statements limited. We'll interview each of you.

The TEAM members exchange uneasy glances.

26 INT. COLLEGE LOCKER ROOM - LATER

26

The TEAM is gathered, SAMSON in the center. Some look sympathetic, others agitated.

TEAM MEMBER #1

(scoffing)

This is just part of the game, man. Girls are always coming onto us.

TEAM MEMBER #2

(stepping forward, firm)

But you know he was a virgin, waiting for marriage. This isn't just some hookup. She took that from him.

The two TEAM MEMBERS start ARGUING, voices rising. SAMSON watches, overwhelmed.

TEAM MEMBER #1

(aggressive)

That's how it is, you gotta just roll with it.

TEAM MEMBER #2

(defiant)

No way, we all respected him for that choice. It was taken from him.

The ARGUMENT escalates into a HEATED FIGHT. IVANI and the LEGAL TEAM rush in, quickly diffusing the situation.

IVANI  
 (calm but authoritative)  
 That's enough. Samson, give me the names of the teammates you want us to interview.

SAMSON  
 (nodding)  
 I'll get you the list.

IVANI  
 (placing a hand on his shoulder)  
 The truth always comes out. We'll keep an eye on the ones who aren't supporting you.

SAMSON  
 (grateful)  
 Thank you.

The TEAM disperses, some still grumbling. IVANI and Samson discuss the case in more detail.

IVANI  
 (thoughtful)  
 We have a lot of work to do, but I know you have the right people in your corner.

SAMSON  
 (resolute)  
 I'm ready to do whatever it takes.

27 INT. BAR - DAY

27

IVANI sits across from DEXTER at a dimly lit bar.

DEXTER  
 (serious)  
 My firm is taking the Pillar Sinclair case.

IVANI  
 (unfazed)  
 I figured as much. It's right up your alley.

DEXTER  
 (cautious)  
 I can't share much, you know, confidentiality. But they're going for the jugular.

IVANI  
 (bristling)  
 My father has nothing to do with  
 this.

DEXTER  
 (raising a hand)  
 Hey, I'm just saying - you gotta  
 be careful. Protect yourself.

IVANI  
 (defiant)  
 My father was no saint, but he was  
 my hero.

The air grows tense as DEXTER shifts uncomfortably. IVANI  
 stares him down, unwavering.

DEXTER  
 (clearing his throat)  
 Look, I'm just giving you a heads  
 up. They're not gonna play nice.

IVANI  
 (resolute)  
 I didn't expect them to. But I'm  
 ready.

She takes a sip of her drink, eyes narrowed. Dexter watches  
 her warily, sensing her determination.

TEAM MEMBER  
 (probing)  
 What's the deal with your father?

IVANI  
 (defensive)  
 My father was no saint, but he was  
 my hero.

The TEAM MEMBER scoffs, a hint of a smirk on his face.

TEAM MEMBER  
 (patronizing)  
 Oh, your 'hero', huh?

The room grows tense, all eyes on Ivani. She meets the TEAM  
 MEMBER's gaze, unwavering.

IVANI

(firm)

Yes, my hero. He may not have been perfect, but he fought for what he believed in.

FLASHBACK TO:

28

INT. SMALL-TOWN STORE - DAY

28

PINK IVAN JOHNSON, a gruff-looking man in his 50s, stands behind the counter of a modest country store. His FRIENDS surround him, laughing and joking, liberally using the N-word.

A well-dressed BLACK MAN with an Afro enters, speaking in a refined, "white" manner. Ivan and his friends eye him suspiciously.

IVAN

(to his FRIENDS)

What the hell is this?

The FRIENDS all stop, puzzled by the MAN's speech.

FRIEND

(confused)

How's this dude talkin' like that?

The MAN turns to Ivan, undeterred.

MAN

(professional)

Mr. Johnson, I have a business proposition for you. I'd like to introduce you to a gentleman from New York.

IVAN

(narrowing his eyes)

You one of us or one of them?  
'Cause you sure as hell don't sound like it.

The MAN bristles, offended.

MAN

(indignant)

What's wrong with how I talk? Just 'cause I speak proper English, you got a problem?



IVAN  
 (slamming his hand down)  
 We don't take kindly to your kind  
 'round here, boy.

The MAN storms out, fuming. Ivan turns to his FRIENDS, a self-satisfied grin on his face.

IVAN  
 (resolute)  
 From now on, we ain't usin' that  
 word no more. We're better than  
 that.

His FRIENDS nod in agreement, the tension diffused.

The TEAM MEMBER listens, a newfound understanding dawning on his face.

TEAM MEMBER  
 (quietly)  
 Sounds like he was a complex man.

IVANI  
 (nodding)  
 He had his flaws, but he fought  
 for what he believed in. That's  
 the kind of father I had.

The TEAM MEMBER nods, the weight of Ivani's words sinking in. The two continue their conversation, the air thick with unspoken history.

29 INT. RURAL LOUISIANA STORE - DAY

29

IVAN JOHNSON, a strong-willed Black man in his 40s, sits with his FRIENDS, discussing business. A well-dressed Black MAN enters.

MAN  
 (polite)  
 Gentlemen, I believe I may have an  
 opportunity to help expand your  
 business. I have some contacts in  
 New York who are interested in  
 working with you.

Ivan's friends exchange curious glances, then one FRIEND reaches out and TUGS on the Man's Afro.

FRIEND  
 (skeptical)  
 Well, boss, this fella sure don't  
 sound like one of us.

The Man recoils, offended.

The Man stands his ground, growing increasingly agitated.

MAN  
 (irate)  
 What is wrong with you country  
 bumpkins? Just because I speak  
 proper English doesn't make me any  
 less Black. I'm tired of you  
 Southern folk thinking I'm trying  
 to be white. I'm American! I'm  
 just speaking right.

One of Ivan's FRIENDS stands up and REACHES for the Man's  
 Afro, sneering.

FRIEND  
 (derogatory)  
 N\*\*\*\*r, get outta here!

The Man recoils, then points an accusatory finger.

MAN  
 (frustrated)  
 That's another thing, y'all need  
 to stop using that word! There are  
 too many words in the dictionary  
 for you to use such a derogatory  
 term for each other. Educate  
 yourselves a little better than  
 that.

Ivan slams his hand down on the counter, glaring at the Man.

IVAN  
 (angry)  
 What kind of n\*\*\*\*r are you,  
 comin' in here talkin' like that?  
 This is our way!

The Man stands his ground, unwavering.

MAN  
 (firm)  
 Sir, I ask that you do not refer  
 to me in that manner. You really  
 need to stop using that word.

Ivan unleashes a barrage of derogatory language, but the Man refuses to back down, challenging their use of the offensive term. The store erupts in a heated exchange, leaving the air thick with tension.

30 INT. RURAL LOUISIANA STORE - LATER

30

The tension escalates as Ivan slams his hand down, glaring at the Man.

IVAN  
(exploding)  
I'll use any damn derivative I  
want, you hear me? (unleashing a  
barrage of slurs)

The Man's jaw tightens, his patience wearing thin.

MAN  
(disgusted)  
You know what? You're all just a  
bunch of ignorant, Southern  
n\*\*\*\*rs.

The store erupts in outrage, the friends closing in on the Man. But Ivan raises a hand, silencing them.

IVAN  
(somberly)  
Enough. We're better than that  
word. We ain't gonna use it no  
more.

The friends exchange confused looks, taken aback by Ivan's shift in tone.

FRIEND  
(puzzled)  
Boss, you listenin' to that man?  
Nah, this ain't got nothin' to do  
with him. This is how we talk.

IVAN  
(resolute)  
I'm my own man. I make my own  
decisions. We ain't using that  
word no more. We're gonna do  
something different.

The friends fall silent, the weight of Ivan's words settling over the room.

31 INT. RURAL LOUISIANA STORE - LATER

31

The Man shakes his head in disgust and turns to leave, his FRIEND following close behind.

MAN  
(to Ivan)  
I can't work with the likes of  
you. (to his FRIEND) Come on,  
let's get out of this backwoods  
place.

Ivan and his FRIENDS watch them go, shaking their heads.

FRIEND  
(scoffing)  
Can you believe that make-believe  
n\*\*\*\*r, tryin' to sell us some of  
that white man's stuff? He must be  
outta his mind.

The FRIENDS erupt in laughter, but Ivan suddenly grows serious. When one of the FRIENDS uses the N-word again, Ivan holds up his hand, silencing them.

IVAN  
(firmly)  
Enough of it. We're better than  
that word. We ain't gonna use it  
no more.

The FRIENDS exchange puzzled looks.

FRIEND  
(confused)  
Boss, you listenin' to that man?  
Nah, this ain't got nothin' to do  
with him. This is how we talk.

IVAN  
(resolute)  
I'm my own man. I make my own  
decisions. We ain't gonna use that  
word no more. We're gonna do  
something different.

The FRIENDS fall silent, their leader's words carrying weight in the room.

32 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

32

The air is thick with tension as IVANI PATIN-BELL, a formidable African-American attorney, and her LEGAL TEAM

survey the predominantly white jury pool. Ivani exchanges a knowing glance with her colleagues, fully aware of the uphill battle they face.

IVANI

(to her team)

This is going to be tough. Auburn is a bastion of white privilege, and cracking this jury is no easy task.

One of Samson's TEAMMATES, eager to assist, leans in with a determined expression.

TEAMMATE

(eagerly)

Ms. Bell, I took it upon myself to gather some intel that could help our case. I had the whole team download Pilar's Instagram before she deleted her profile. It's filled with all kinds of, you know, promiscuous behavior.

Ivani nods, considering the information, as her team exchanges uneasy glances.

IVANI

(tactfully)

Thank you, we'll take that into consideration. For now, let's focus on finding the most impartial jurors we can. Character witnesses from Samson's team may be our best shot at swaying this panel.

The TEAMMATES nod, their expressions a mix of determination and apprehension, as Ivani steels herself for the arduous jury selection process.

Ivani turns to the eager TEAMMATE.

IVANI

(carefully)

And how many of you say you've, uh, "dated" Pilar in the past?

The TEAMMATES exchange uneasy glances, before three of them tentatively raise their hands.

TEAMMATE 1

(sheepishly)

Well, you know, she kind of...had a thing for us athletes. I mean, we've, uh, been intimate before.

TEAMMATE 2

(nodding)

Yeah, she's not exactly, you know, selective.

Ivani and her team share a pointed look, taking in the information.

IVANI

(diplomatically)

I see. Well, thank you for sharing that. We'll keep it in mind as we build our case.

The team then discusses the events of the night in question, each TEAMMATE offering a slightly different recollection. Ivani listens intently, her brow furrowing as she tries to piece together a cohesive narrative.

Suddenly, a FLASHBACK unfolds, revealing an encounter between HOPE, Samson's girlfriend, and the manipulative PILAR.

In the FLASHBACK, PILAR corners HOPE, her eyes glinting with a predatory gleam.

PILAR

(snidely)

Well, well, if it isn't Samson's little church girl. Seems like you've been hogging all the fun.

HOPE

(cautiously)

I don't know what you're talking about, Pilar.

PILAR

(circling Hope)

Oh, I think you do. Samson and I have a...special connection. Maybe it's time you step aside and let the big girls play.

HOPE

(firmly)

Samson is my boyfriend, Pilar. He's not interested in you.

PILAR  
 (scoffing)  
 We'll see about that.

The FLASHBACK ends, leaving Ivani's team with a growing sense of unease about the complex web they're about to untangle.

33

INT. NEWS STUDIO - DAY

33

NEWS ANCHOR  
 (concerned)  
 We're seeing a firestorm of reaction to the Samson Thiery case. Women are claiming this is an attack on the Me Too movement, while men are coming forward with their own stories of being targeted by female athletes.

CUT TO:

NEWS FLASH - WOMAN ON STREET

(frustrated)  
 This case is setting us back! Men can't just cry victim whenever a woman pursues them. That's not how this works.

CUT TO:

NEWS FLASH - MAN ON STREET

(defensive)  
 You think it's easy for us? These women can be just as ruthless. They use their looks and status to get what they want.

CUT TO:

NEWS ANCHOR  
 (shaking head)  
 And now racial tensions are flaring up as well. Some are seeing this as a "Taylor Swift poster child" being accused by a "practically OJ Simpson" figure.

The screen splits, showing passionate debates and arguments breaking out.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

(grimly)

It seems this case has sparked a battle on multiple fronts - of gender and of race. The nation is deeply divided on how to interpret these events.

34 INT. NEWS STUDIO - LATER

34

NEWS ANCHOR

(disbelief)

Some are even claiming that this "accomplished young lady" couldn't possibly have harmed the "massive black young man." They say he should have felt "privileged" to be with her.

CUT TO:

NEWS FLASH - OLDER WHITE MAN

(scoffing)

A white girl like that, accusing a big black athlete? No way. He should've counted his blessings.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

The racial divisions in this case have left society deeply torn.

CUT TO:

NEWS FLASH - YOUNG BLACK WOMAN

(outraged)

Privileged? Are you kidding me? Since when is it a privilege to have your body violated?

CUT TO:

NEWS FLASH - OLDER WHITE WOMAN

(defensive)

It's not about race! This girl comes from a good family. Why would she lie?



The various news flashes overlap, creating a cacophony of heated arguments.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Emotions are running high, as people take impassioned stances on both sides of this highly charged debate. The nation seems to be splitting apart at the seams.

35 INT. IVANI'S LAW OFFICE - DAY

35

Ivani sits with a group of VETERAN ATHLETES, the "OG's", as they address a group of YOUNG ATHLETES.

OG ATHLETE

(stern)

Back in our day, we didn't look at those white women the same way you young bucks do. We knew they could get us in trouble.

(shaking his head)

You gotta look out for each other, understand? These days, you got these athletes with million-dollar sperm, thinking they can do anything.

Another OG ATHLETE leans forward, gesturing emphatically.

OG ATHLETE 2

(gravely)

You gotta protect yourselves, no matter what. You text that girl, tell her exactly what you want her for. That's your waiver right there.

(pointing a finger)

I'm telling you, use those cell phones. If she screams rape, you got proof.

The young athletes exchange uneasy glances, absorbing the OG's blunt advice.

IVANI

(solemnly)

The world hasn't gotten any easier for you all. But you have to look out for one another. These are the harsh realities you face.

She looks around the room, her gaze meeting each young athlete's eyes.

IVANI (CONT'D)

(firmly)

We can't change the past, but we can control the future. Protect yourselves, and have each other's backs.

The OG's nod in agreement, the tension palpable in the room.

OG ATHLETE 2

(emphatically)

They'll come after you, no matter what. Everywhere we turned, it was women, women, women. We couldn't even use the bathroom without them popping up!

Another OG ATHLETE nods grimly.

OG ATHLETE 3

(shaking his head)

You gotta protect yourselves, put up those boundaries. 'Cause it can get out of hand real quick, and they will try you.

A YOUNG ATHLETE speaks up, his expression troubled.

YOUNG ATHLETE

(hesitantly)

One time, a girl tried to get with me when I was drunk. Didn't even know what was happening. But the next day, she was talkin' about it, sayin' I couldn't "get it up" or something.

The other young athletes murmur in agreement, their faces darkening with frustration.

IVANI

(solemnly)

The stories are coming out now, and people are getting real upset about it.

She looks around the room, her gaze steady.

IVANI (CONT'D)

(firmly)

You have to protect yourselves, no matter what. Use those cell phones, use anything you can. Because they will come after you, and you have to be ready.

The OG's nod in agreement, the tension palpable as the young athletes digest this harsh reality.

36

INT. IVANI'S LAW OFFICE - LATER

36

IVANI

(solemnly)

I've been getting threats. It's getting very tense out there.

The athletes exchange uneasy glances.

YOUNG ATHLETE

(angrily)

These women can be so vicious, man. It's not fair.

Ivani raises a hand, her gaze unwavering.

IVANI

(firmly)

Don't forget the Me Too movement. Men aren't innocent either. We're all just as vicious.

The athletes start to protest, but Ivani cuts them off.

IVANI (CONT'D)

(sharply)

It's unfair to group any demographic based on the actions of a few. But this Pilar...

She shakes her head, a humorless laugh escaping her lips.

IVANI (CONT'D)

(with a sardonic smile)

Oh, there is a world of difference between a bitch and a snake.

The athletes fall silent, the weight of her words sinking in. Ivani's gaze sweeps over the room, her expression hardening.

IVANI (CONT'D)

(decisively)

We have to be better than that. We have to rise above it. Because if we don't, we're no better than they are.

The athletes exchange a look, the tension in the room palpable as they grapple with Ivani's challenge.

37 INT. IVAN'S SHOP/STORE - FLASHBACK

37

A WOMAN storms into the shop, her face twisted in anger. She slams a package down on the counter in front of IVAN, who sits surrounded by his FRIENDS.

WOMAN

(hissing)

You sold me this piece of junk! Most of it's used. I want my money back!

Ivan's eyes narrow as he regards the woman coolly.

IVAN

(scoffing)

Did the bitch just hiss at me? Crazy-ass.

NICKEL, one of Ivan's friends, interjects with a pointed look.

NICKEL

(calmly)

Eh, boss, bitches don't hiss - they bark. Snakes, they hiss.

IVAN

(dismissively)

Bitch, snake - whatever. It's all the same to me.

NICKEL falls silent for a moment, then turns to face Ivan, his expression serious.

NICKEL

(firmly)

What, boss? I thought you were smarter than that.

Ivan looks at Nickel, confusion and defensiveness warring on his face. Nickel shakes his head slowly, then leans in, his voice low and intense.

The camera pans away from the two men, focusing on the other friends in the shop, their expressions ranging from amusement to discomfort as Nickel's speech continues off-screen.

38 INT. IVANI'S LAW OFFICE - DAY

38

Ivani sits with her legal team, including GRACE, discussing the potential impact of Ivani's father's past on the case.

GRACE

(thoughtfully)

You know, Ivani, when I was in high school, I did some research on my adopted mom's husband. That's how I found out about your father, Ivan.

Ivani looks at Grace, her brow furrowed.

GRACE (CONT'D)

(with a small smile)

When I realized he had a daughter, I became kind of obsessed with you. I always thought it was so cool that you were from the same hometown as my mom.

She pauses, her expression sincere.

GRACE (CONT'D)

(earnestly)

You were such an inspiration to me, Ivani. That's why I chose you to be my mentor. Your father's story, and your own journey, made me want to become an attorney and fight for racial reconciliation, just like your mom.

Ivani is silent for a moment, processing Grace's words. The rest of the team looks on, the gravity of the situation weighing heavily in the room.

IVANI

(quietly)

I see. So my father's past will undoubtedly have an impact on this case.

She sighs heavily, her gaze drifting to the paperwork in front of her.

IVANI (CONT'D)  
 (resolute)  
 Then we'll have to be prepared to  
 address it, no matter what it  
 takes.

The team exchanges a solemn look, understanding the challenge  
 that lies ahead.

39

INT. PROMINENT WHITE CHURCH - AUBURN - DAY

39

Ivani and her LEGAL TEAM enter the church. As soon as they  
 step inside, a CHURCH MEMBER blocks their path.

CHURCH MEMBER  
 (firmly)  
 We don't want any trouble here.

IVANI  
 (calmly)  
 We are not here for trouble. We  
 are here to worship.

CHURCH MEMBER  
 (unmoved)  
 Look, we don't want any trouble.

IVANI  
 (with resolve)  
 We heard you the first time, and  
 I'm telling you, we are here to  
 worship the same God you serve. We  
 need prayer.

Several MEN from the congregation now surround Ivani and her  
 team, their faces unwelcoming.

IVANI  
 (surveying the room,  
 distraught)  
 Wow... so no prayers here. I guess  
 we don't serve the same God after  
 all.

Ivani exchanges a somber look with her team, realizing this  
 hostile congregation is the "jury" they must win over.

GRACE  
 (under her breath)  
 This is not going to be easy.

LAYLA  
 (determination in her  
 eyes)  
 We'll see about that.

40 INT. IVANI'S HOME - DAY

40

Ivani is in the kitchen, preparing a special meal for her family. She appears distracted and distant, the weight of the upcoming trial clearly weighing on her.

Her eldest son, TJ, storms in, throwing his backpack down.

IVANI  
 (firmly)  
 TJ, take your shoes off. Take your backpack and belongings up to your room and shower before you come to the table.

TJ  
 (impatiently)

41 INTERNAL. MAMA, ' HUNGRY! - NOON

41

IVANI  
 (gesturing to the kitchen  
 counter)  
 Here, eat a protein bar and banana. Get your things out of my kitchen. Take a shower - you stink. You're not going to sit your stinky butt at my table.

TJ  
 (angrily muttering as he  
 walks away)  
 Damn... always tripping. I'm tired of this shit.

Ivani stops in her tracks, the profanity jolting her. She turns to TJ, her eyes narrowing.

IVANI  
 (sharply)  
 What did you just say?

TJ  
 (frustrated)  
 Mama, I'm tired... I'm not doing this with you.

IVANI

(sharply)

No! What did you just say? You think you're grown? Say it to my face!

Theron enters the kitchen, sensing the tension.

TJ

(defiant)

Mama, you're always tripping. I'm hungry and tired from playing ball. I just want to eat.

IVANI

(grabbing TJ's face, forcing him to look at her)

No! Say what you said! You think you're grown enough to talk to me like I'm your peer? I am not your peer! You think you're grown enough to use profanity with me? I don't care how many pubic hairs you have down there - you will never, ever, ever cuss at me again!

THERON

(shocked)

What? TJ, you didn't... What did you say?

TJ

(stubbornly)

All I said was I'm tired of this shit. She's always tripping.

THERON

(sternly)

Son, you will not use that language in this house.

TJ

(sitting down at the table)

This is how teenagers talk.

Ivani's frustration boils over as she unleashes a torrent of scolding on TJ, who in turn angrily retorts that she's just being a "crazy black mama."

The heated exchange continues, the tension palpable as Theron tries to intervene and calm the situation.



42 INT. IVANI'S LAW OFFICE - LATE IN THE WEEK - DAY

42

Ivani and her legal team - GRACE, LAYLA, BLAKE, FLETCHER, and CESAR - are gathered, discussing the progress of the case. Ivani looks distracted, fidgeting in her seat.

IVANI  
(frustrated)  
How can we get through to them?  
This jury is impossible.

As the team continues discussing strategy, Ivani starts wiggling in her seat, trying to adjust her bra.

IVANI  
(exasperated)

43 INTERNAL. AH, CAN' TAKE THIS ANYMORE! - DAY

43

Ivani suddenly reaches under her blouse and removes her bra, letting out a great sigh of relief. The team stops, stunned by her actions.

LAYLA  
(eyeing Ivani's breasts)  
Really? Those little biddy things  
were uncomfortable?

IVANI  
(matter-of-factly)  
Boobs are boobs, and a bad bra is  
a bad bra.

LAYLA  
(scoffing)  
All boobs are not equal. I'm not  
seeing how your little biddy bra  
caused you problems.

Layla leans forward, a mischievous grin on her face.

LAYLA (CONT'D)  
Let me take this bra off and let  
these puppies loose. When they hit  
the table, you'd think an  
earthquake just happened.

IVANI  
(flustered)  
Layla! The wire was uncomfortable,  
and maybe the bra was twisted. Why  
can't you understand that just  
because I don't have jugs like  
(MORE)

IVANI (CONT'D)  
yours, I can still be in  
discomfort?

The rest of the team watches the exchange, some amused, others slightly uncomfortable.

GRACE  
(diplomatically)  
Okay, let's get back to the case.  
We need to focus on how to connect  
with this jury.

The team turns their attention back to the task at hand, the tension slowly dissipating as they continue their strategy session.

44 INT. IVANI'S LAW OFFICE - DAY

44

LAYLA  
(scoffing)  
Wire? Girl, I can't even with a  
wire. You don't have my problems.  
Don't even try it.

Ivani looks at Layla intently, the rest of the team chuckling at the exchange.

IVANI  
(thoughtfully)  
But I do have your problems. How  
can I make you feel my pain is  
like your pain, even though we're  
physically different? The pain is  
the same.

CESAR  
(curious)  
Where are you going with this?

IVANI  
(determined)  
How can we get someone to  
understand that the pain they feel  
is no different than the pain we  
feel? That's it! We have to take  
this away from black versus white,  
man versus woman, and get to the  
soul.

The team falls silent, considering Ivani's words. Grace speaks up, a glimmer of hope in her eyes.

GRACE

(earnestly)

We couldn't reach the local church. Perhaps we can meet with the leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention and other prominent Christian leaders. Maybe they can provide some consultation, support, and direction.

Ivani nods, a spark of inspiration lighting up her face.

IVANI

(resolute)

Yes, that's exactly what we need to do. We have to appeal to their hearts, not just their minds. This is about more than a court case - it's about understanding each other's humanity.

The team begins brainstorming, ideas flowing as they strategize their next move. The tension in the room gives way to a sense of purpose and determination.

45

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY

45

Ivani enters, followed by the eight CHURCH LEADERS, including DR. REV. HENRY FLINTROY. The atmosphere is tense.

IVANI

(passionate)

The importance of the church stepping into the fray and bridging the gap through the gospel cannot be overstated. If only Rev. Billy Graham had marched with Dr. Martin Luther King...

The LEADERS exchange uneasy glances, unwilling to engage.

FLINTROY

(sternly)

THAT'S ENOUGH, young lady. You will not address men of God in this mannerism.

The eight CHURCH LEADERS, including DR. REV. HENRY FLINTROY, sit across from a passionate Ivani.

IVANI

(scoffing)

Men of God"? Is that what you think you are? My God was downright gangster when He sent Jesus to start the ministry of spreading the gospel to Jew and Gentile. God never sits back and watches the righteous forsaken.

(leaning forward)

We need to fight with boldness like David... we need to fight at all cost for justice by any means.

One LEADER shakes his head, judgmental.

LEADER

Hah! By any means necessary, like your father? I see you're a lot like Malcom, not Martin.

Ivani's eyes narrow, her father's legacy clearly a sore spot.

IVANI

(firmly)

You leave my father out of your mouth.

(a beat, then)

And yes, I guess I am my father's child because I have a little Martin and a little Malcom in me. The Bible has Solomon and the Bible has David. The Bible has Matthew and the Bible has Peter.

IVANI

(scoffing)

And you worthless "men of God" are neither... you are your own DAMN gods with your own DAMN agendas.

The Leaders exchange uneasy glances, unsure how to respond. Flintroy steps forward, his tone stern.

FLINTROY

(firmly)

Then leave, young lady.

Ivani's face hardens, her anger palpable. She turns to leave, but Flintroy follows her out.

46 INT. CHURCH HALLWAY - LATER

46

Flintroy catches up to Ivani, his expression grave.

FLINTROY

Your anger will be your demise.  
Just like Moses in his anger  
struck the rock three times... you  
will be just like him, and you  
will not see the promised land.

Ivani glares at Flintroy, her eyes narrowing. Without a word, she raises her middle finger to him, a defiant gesture that speaks volumes.

Flintroy watches, his disappointment evident, as Ivani turns and strides away, leaving him in the hallway, his words hanging in the air.

47 INT. CAR - DAY

47

Ivani sits in the passenger seat, her usually sharp demeanor now weary. Beside her, her husband THERON drives, his expression concerned.

THERON

(gently scolding)  
Honey, you're too smart for that.  
Don't let those people get to you  
like that.

(a beat)

And I heard you got on TJ about  
using profanity. You two need to  
have a talk about that.

Ivani sighs, running a hand through her hair.

IVANI

(tiredly)  
I know, I know. I just... lost my  
temper. Those "men of God" were  
more interested in politics than  
actually doing God's work.

THERON

(raising an eyebrow)  
Did you really cuss them out?

Ivani grimaces, not meeting his gaze.

IVANI

(mumbling)  
Maybe a little...

Theron shakes his head, a small smile tugging at his lips.

THERON  
You're unbelievable, you know  
that?

Before Ivani can respond, a NEWSFLASH interrupts the radio.

NEWSREPORTER (V.O.)  
We interrupt your regularly  
scheduled program to bring you  
breaking news. Ivani Patin-Bell's  
father, Ivan Patin, has been  
identified as the murderer of a  
local father and son in their  
hometown.

Ivani's face falls, the color draining from her complexion. Theron reaches over, giving her hand a gentle squeeze.

THERON  
(softly)  
Oh, honey...

Ivani stares straight ahead, her expression haunted, as they continue their drive to the Thiery's home.

48 INT. THIERY FAMILY HOME - DAY

48

Ivani and Theron sit with the THIERY FAMILY, including JABARI, who appears visibly uneasy. The Thierys cast wary glances at Ivani, the news of her father's past weighing heavily.

After a tense moment, Jabari turns to Ivani.

JABARI  
(hesitantly)  
Uh, Mrs. Bell, can I talk to you  
for a second? In private?

Ivani nods, sensing Jabari's discomfort. They step away from the group, moving to a quieter corner of the room.

JABARI  
(lowering his voice)  
Look, I, uh... I know something  
about Pilar. About that night.

Ivani leans in, her full attention on Jabari.

IVANI  
 (quietly)  
 What is it, Jabari?

JABARI  
 (nervously)  
 I, uh... I took Pilar to a guy who  
 sells drugs, and I think he might  
 have given her something. Some  
 kind of... "ruthie," or whatever.

Ivani's brow furrows as she takes in this information.

IVANI  
 (carefully)  
 And how can you prove that?

Jabari's gaze shifts, his expression troubled.

JABARI  
 (hesitantly)  
 I can't. I mean, I've got a  
 record, and I was there... they're  
 gonna think I'm just trying to  
 cover my own ass.

Ivani nods, understanding the dilemma Jabari faces.

IVANI  
 (reassuringly)  
 Don't worry, Jabari. We'll figure  
 this out. Just tell me everything  
 you know.

Jabari takes a deep breath, then begins to recount his story,  
 as Ivani listens intently, her mind already whirring with  
 strategies to corroborate this new information.

49 INT. PASTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

49

Ivani and Theron sit across from their PASTOR, a kind-faced  
 man in his 50s. Ivani's demeanor is one of pure exhaustion,  
 the weight of the case visibly weighing on her.

IVANI  
 (admitting defeat)  
 I just... I have no idea how this  
 is all going to turn out. I'm so  
 stressed, and I'm worried about  
 Samson. This case is unlike  
 anything I've ever handled before.

The Pastor nods sympathetically, reaching across his desk to give Ivani's hand a gentle squeeze.

PASTOR  
(reassuringly)  
I can see how much this is taking a toll on you, Ivani. But you're not alone in this. Theron and I are here for you, and we're going to get through this together.

Closing his eyes, the Pastor bows his head, his voice soft and soothing.

PASTOR  
(praying)  
Lord, we come to you in this time of need, asking for your guidance and strength. Lift the burdens from Ivani's shoulders, Lord, and fill her with your peace and clarity. Give her the wisdom and discernment she needs to navigate this difficult case, and the courage to stand firm in the face of adversity.

Theron reaches over, taking Ivani's hand and giving it a comforting squeeze. Ivani's eyes drift closed as the Pastor continues to pray, the weight of the world momentarily lifted from her.

PASTOR  
(concluding the prayer)  
In your name we pray, Amen.

Ivani opens her eyes, a glimmer of hope returning to her expression.

IVANI  
(softly)  
Thank you, Pastor. I needed that.

The Pastor smiles, clasping Ivani's hand once more.

PASTOR  
(reassuringly)  
I'm here for you, Ivani. Whenever you need me, you just let me know.

Ivani nods, already feeling a sense of renewed determination as she and Theron rise to leave the office.



50 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

50

The trial is underway. A WITNESS, a woman in her 40s, takes the stand.

WITNESS

(nervously)

I... I have something to say.

IVANI

(standing up)

Objection, Your Honor. This witness was not on the registered list.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

(standing)

Your Honor, this witness is key to our case.

JUDGE

(firmly)

Overruled. The witness may proceed.

The WITNESS shifts in her seat, glancing at IVANI.

WITNESS

(hesitantly)

I... I know Ivani. We went to school together, back in Mamou.

IVANI

(pleading)

Your Honor, this has no bearing on the case. The jury doesn't need to know about my personal history.

JUDGE

(firmly)

I understand your concerns, Ms. Bell, but the defense has argued it's relevant.

The WITNESS suddenly erupts, pointing an accusatory finger at IVANI.

WITNESS

(screaming)

She don't want y'all to know her father killed my daddy! And two other white men! That murdering son of a bitch!

The courtroom erupts in shocked murmurs. IVANI stands, appalled.

IVANI  
(outraged)  
Your Honor!

JUDGE  
(banging gavel)  
That's enough! Strike that last  
statement from the record!

The WITNESS continues to shout, face flushed with anger.

WITNESS  
(hysterical)  
He killed my daddy! And his 16-  
year-old son! Murdering piece of-

JUDGE  
(sternly)  
Bailiff, remove the witness from  
the courtroom!

Two BAILIFFS quickly escort the WITNESS out, still shouting. The courtroom is left in stunned silence. IVANI stands, her composure shaken, as the JUDGE turns to her.

51 INT. COURTROOM - LATER

51

JUDGE  
(sternly)  
Order in the court! We will take a  
recess. Ms. Bell, I'd like to see  
you and the defense in my  
chambers.

IVANI nods, her eyes narrowed, as she follows the JUDGE and the DEFENSE ATTORNEY out of the courtroom. The LEGAL TEAM exchanges worried glances, aware of the setback this has caused.

IVANI, the JUDGE, and the DEFENSE ATTORNEY are seated.

JUDGE  
(concerned)  
Ms. Bell, I understand the  
sensitivity of this matter.  
However, the defense has argued  
that your father's past is  
relevant to the case.

IVANI

(firmly)

Your Honor, that's completely irrelevant. My father's actions have no bearing on what happened to my client. This is a clear attempt to distract the jury and discredit me.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

(calmly)

Your Honor, the witness's testimony speaks to the character of the Bell family. It's crucial for the jury to understand the context.

IVANI

(leaning forward)

Context? You mean the context of a young black girl being brutalized in the Jim Crow South? The context of a father fighting to protect his family and community from the very racism and injustice your client represents?

JUDGE

(raising a hand)

Ms. Bell, I understand your passion, but the fact remains that your father's actions are now part of the record. We need to address this in a way that maintains the integrity of the proceedings.

IVANI

(exhaling deeply)

Then we request a mistrial, Your Honor. This is a clear attempt to prejudice the jury against me and my client.

The JUDGE considers this, then nods slowly.

JUDGE

(nodding)

Very well. We'll take a recess to allow the defense to respond to your motion. I'll reconvene shortly.

IVANI and the DEFENSE ATTORNEY rise, the tension palpable between them as they exit the chambers.

52 INT. PILAR'S FAMILY HOME - DAY

52

PILAR and her FAMILY are celebrating, clinking glasses and hugging amidst the joyous atmosphere.

ON THE TV

A NEWS FLASH interrupts the festivities. An elderly WHITE GENTLEMAN appears on screen, looking frail but determined.

WHITE GENTLEMAN

(ON TV)

(emphatically)

They need to leave that poor colored woman alone. She's been through a lot.

The FAMILY turns their attention to the TV, expressions shifting to confusion.

WHITE GENTLEMAN (ON TV) (CONT'D)

Her father is not the monster people paint him to be. He was a man doing what any father would have done.

53 EXT. RURAL TOWN - (FLASHBACK) - DAY

53

The WHITE GENTLEMAN, much younger, faces off with another man, JEB. It's clear a scuffle has just occurred.

WHITE GENTLEMAN (V.O.)

Him and Jeb had a fight. A gentleman's fight. And Jeb was mad 'cause her father whipped him pretty good.

The younger WHITE GENTLEMAN smirks triumphantly as JEB storms off.

54 INT. PILAR'S FAMILY HOME - LATER

54

The WHITE GENTLEMAN on TV starts to break down.

WHITE GENTLEMAN

(ON TV)

(crying)

And he did a horrible thing... God help me! I have carried this pain all my life, but I have to make it right...

His face crumples as the tears flow freely.

WHITE GENTLEMAN (ON TV) (CONT'D)

Jeb took that sweet child and... took advantage of her. She was a child! And Dorothy did right by raising her little girl.

PILAR and her FAMILY exchange bewildered looks as the agonized WHITE GENTLEMAN continues.

WHITE GENTLEMAN (ON TV) (CONT'D)

Dorothy did right... she lost her son, but through her husband's horrible deed... she raised that little girl because that poor colored child... she was just a child herself!

The WHITE GENTLEMAN dissolves into heartbroken sobs as the TV camera pushes in on his weathered, remorseful face.

PILAR and her FAMILY are left in stunned silence, the celebrations forgotten amidst this shocking revelation.

55

INT. IVANI'S OFFICE - DAY

55

The atmosphere is tense as IVANI stands motionless, a haunted look on her face. Her LEGAL TEAM exchanges worried glances, unsure of how to proceed.

Slowly, their eyes drift toward GRACE, whose expression morphs from shock to disbelief. She locks eyes with IVANI, realization dawning.

GRACE  
(horrified whisper)  
You're... you're... my mother?

The words hang in the air, heavy with implication. IVANI'S eyes widen, her composure crumbling. She sways unsteadily, as if the ground has shifted beneath her feet.

All eyes are on IVANI as she struggles to remain upright, her face drained of color. Her knees buckle, and she collapses in a dead faint, crumpling to the floor.

The TEAM reacts instantly, rushing to her side with shouts of alarm.

LEGAL TEAM MEMBER  
(cradling Ivani's head)  
Ivani! Can you hear me?

ANOTHER MEMBER  
 (checking pulse)  
 Someone call an ambulance!

Amid the chaos, GRACE stands frozen, her eyes locked on IVANI's unconscious form, the revelation sinking in with devastating weight.

The TEAM members work frantically to revive IVANI, their voices a cacophony of panic and disbelief, as the truth that has been buried for so long finally comes to light.

56

INT. IVANI'S BEDROOM - DAY

56

IVANI frantically stuffs clothes into a suitcase, her movements frenzied and erratic. THERON hovers nearby, confusion and hurt etched on his face.

THERON  
 (pleading)  
 Ivani, please... after eighteen years of marriage, twenty-four years of being together, how could you have never shared this with me?

IVANI whirls around, eyes blazing with a mixture of anguish and defiance.

IVANI  
 (sharply)  
 You didn't marry that thirteen-year-old girl!

THERON  
 (exasperated)  
 Duh, of course not! But why keep this from me? Why the secrets?

IVANI's face contorts, her pain laid bare as she gestures wildly.

IVANI  
 (voice rising)  
 I am not that thirteen-year-old girl! I am NOT her!

THERON  
 (raising his hands)  
 I know that, baby. I know...

IVANI's eyes flash with a sudden, manic intensity. She moves closer to THERON, cornering him with her gaze.

IVANI

(trembling with emotion)  
Then what do you want me to do,  
huh? Was I supposed to dig her up  
from the grave, put a dress on  
her, and drag her down the aisle?  
Put a bikini on her for our  
honeymoon?!

THERON stares at his wife, stunned into silence by the rawness of her anguish. IVANI's chest heaves as she struggles to maintain her composure.

THERON

(bewildered)  
What? Why are you talking like  
this?

IVANI whirls on him, her eyes wild with anguish and anger.

IVANI

(voice rising)  
Because she is dead! Dead! Dead!  
Dead! She is gone... I am not her!  
I am not some weak little girl!  
(vehemently)  
She is dead, and she must stay  
dead!

IVANI's face crumples as she collapses to the floor, wracked with sobs. THERON moves towards her, his expression one of deep sadness and concern.

THERON

(gently)  
Baby...

IVANI

(recoiling)  
No! Don't touch me! I am not  
pitiful! I don't want your pity!

THERON

(placating)  
Baby, I'm not pitying you. I just  
want--

IVANI

(cutting him off)  
Just get me out of here! Please,  
please take me to a place outside  
of Auburn. Just... don't touch me.  
Just get me out of here. I need...  
to clear my head.

(MORE)

IVANI (CONT'D)  
 (anguished)  
 Oh God... Oh God... Oh God...

IVANI dissolves into heartrending sobs, curling in on herself as the weight of her trauma threatens to consume her. THERON watches helplessly, torn between respecting her wishes and his instinct to comfort her.

57 EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - DUSK

57

A rustic cabin sits nestled in the woods, a haven from the turmoil of the world outside. THERON's car pulls up, and he exits, moving to the passenger side to help IVANI.

THERON  
 (gently)  
 I'll stay in town tonight, give  
 you some space. But I'll be back  
 first thing in the morning, and  
 I'm with you for the whole week...  
 for the trial.

IVANI nods wordlessly, her eyes haunted. THERON squeezes her hand reassuringly before heading back to the car. IVANI watches him drive away, then turns and makes her way inside the cabin.

58 INT. CABIN - NIGHT

58

IVANI sits on the couch, knees drawn to her chest, as the weight of her trauma washes over her.

59 INT. FLASHBACK - . IVANI'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

59

YOUNG IVANI, no older than thirteen, watches as her FATHER kneels before her. His eyes are full of sadness, but his expression is resolute.

FATHER  
 (placing a necklace  
 around her neck)  
 You have to be strong, little one.  
 I have to go away for a while.

YOUNG IVANI'S MOTHER cries softly in the background, begging him not to go. The FATHER takes YOUNG IVANI's face in his hands, giving her a tender kiss on the forehead.



FATHER (CONT'D)  
 (whispering)  
 Remember what I told you. Be  
 strong.

He stands, grabbing his guns, and with one last look at his trembling wife and daughter, he exits, leaving them behind.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Tears stream down IVANI's face as the memory fades. Her fingers clutch the necklace, a tangible connection to her past.

MOTHER (V.O.)  
 Be strong, baby girl. Be strong.

IVANI lets out a heart-wrenching sob, the weight of her trauma threatening to overwhelm her as she clings to the memories of her childhood, forever shaped by the events that ripped her family apart.

60 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

60

IVANI stands, a portrait of strength and determination. She addresses the jury, her gaze unwavering.

IVANI  
 My father, Pink Ivan Johnson,  
 killed three people. Yes. You see,  
 my father hated White people, and  
 White people in my hometown hated  
 him. He was his own man. (beat) He  
 refused to give up his land and  
 his community. He fought for his  
 rights. He fought for my rights.  
 (defiant)  
 Yes, you may view him as a  
 murderer, but he was my hero. He  
 took the life of a man that raped  
 me, and the life of a man that  
 assisted in the act. And  
 inadvertently, he took the life of  
 my rapist son.

She pauses, steadying her breath.

IVANI (CONT'D)  
 Mr. Earl rescued me and brought me  
 to my parents. Mr. Earl explained  
 the police report... that my  
 father shot and killed my rapist  
 and his buddy. And apparently, my  
 (MORE)

IVANI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
 rapist son -- who was not supposed  
 to be home that day, football  
 practice was canceled due to the  
 weather -- shot my father in the  
 back. And he spun around and  
 killed my rapist, 16-year-old son.  
 (profound)  
 My father was my hero.

Ivani's eyes burn with conviction, daring the jury to challenge her truth.

Ivani's impassioned speech continues, her voice ringing with emotion.

IVANI  
 I was a child. (beat) I was  
 thirteen years old. A young Black  
 lady in the deep South, where  
 Blacks did not have much rights.  
 This was 1988, where many schools  
 in the South still had separate  
 events like a Black Prom and a  
 White Prom.  
 (incredulous)  
 Yes, twenty years after civil  
 rights -- Blacks still did not  
 have, and still do not have, full  
 rights. Today, you have the power  
 to change that.

She shifts her focus, connecting with the jury on a visceral level.

IVANI (CONT'D)  
 (pleading)  
 I have been fighting so hard for  
 Samson's rights. I have been  
 fighting so hard because I can  
 empathize with him. My virginity  
 was taken. My rights were  
 violated, and it cost me to lose  
 my hero.  
 (solemn)  
 I understand Mr. Samson Thiery's  
 loss -- his precious loss. Him  
 being a dedicated Christian,  
 wanting to do the right thing in  
 such a challenging time.

Ivani's gaze sweeps across the courtroom, her words carrying profound weight.

The courtroom falls silent, hanging on Ivani's every word.

61 INT. COURTROOM - (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

61

Ivani's voice takes on a spiritual cadence, her words carrying profound meaning.

IVANI

I appeal not to your minds, but to your spirit. I have been in your town for the past several months, and I see this is a close community, knitted together with a strong Christian bond.

(imploring)

Therefore, I appeal to you, Christian to Christian. I appeal to your spirit to see two of God's children before you. To see them as fellow Christians, and not as male or female, nor as Black versus White, but simply as two spirits.

She pauses, letting her words sink in.

IVANI (CONT'D)

(reverent)

One spirit wanted their light to shine bright for Christ. This spirit, in a dark world, made a choice to shine his light bright and save sex for marriage.

Ivani's eyes scan the faces of the jurors, her gaze piercing, imploring them to look beyond the surface and see the deeper truth.

The courtroom hangs in a reverent hush, the weight of her words settling upon all present.

62 INT. COURTROOM - (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

62

Ivani's voice builds in intensity, her words painting vivid pictures.

IVANI (CONT'D)

(lamenting)

Almost unheard of, hush-hush, embarrassment among our young people today, to be a virgin past the age of twenty.

(accusatory)

Another one of God's children didn't respect the beauty of this

(MORE)

IVANI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
 light and decided to attempt to  
 dim that light.

She pauses, letting the weight of her statement linger.

IVANI (CONT'D)  
 (sagely)  
 This is a tale as old as time.  
 Cain versus Abel. Jesus and Judas,  
 with Samson and Delilah in  
 between.

Ivani's eyes grow distant, reminiscing.

IVANI (CONT'D)  
 (nostalgic)  
 As a child, I found some stories  
 in the Bible harsh and some  
 unrealistic. But the old, wise  
 people used to always say, "Just  
 keep getting up in the morning,"  
 and I see clarity.  
 (dramatic beat)  
 There is one story about God  
 deciding to destroy an entire  
 city.

The courtroom hangs on her every word, captivated by the  
 vivid imagery she weaves.

63 INT. COURTROOM - (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

63

Ivani's voice rings out, quoting scripture with reverence.

IVANI (CONT'D)  
 God sent angels to Abraham and  
 informed him of God's plan.  
 Abraham went boldly to God and  
 asked Him, "Would He destroy the  
 righteous with the wicked? Would  
 God have mercy if fifty righteous  
 people existed?  
 (building intensity)  
 Then he pleaded, for forty-five,  
 forty, down to ten. Each time, God  
 assured Abraham He would not  
 destroy the city if such a number  
 could be found.

She pauses, her gaze sweeping the courtroom.

IVANI (CONT'D)

(fervent)

I believe there are not ten, but twelve righteous children of God that will not allow the righteous to fall with the wicked. I believe there are twelve children of God that can see clearly a child of God's precious gift, his virginity, taken from him.

(impassioned)

On a night that should have been his greatest celebration, it became his greatest nightmare. His light for Christ was snuffed. But we know justice can restore.

Ivani's voice echoes through the hushed courtroom as she recites the scriptures.

IVANI (CONT'D)

(quoting)

The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.

(quoting)

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

(quoting)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

(quoting)

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

(forceful)

Whoever says to the guilty, 'You are innocent,' will be cursed by peoples and denounced by nations. But it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and rich blessing will come on them.

(MORE)

IVANI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
 (powerful)  
 For I, the LORD, love justice; I  
 hate robbery and wrongdoing. In my  
 faithfulness, I will reward my  
 people and make an everlasting  
 covenant with them.

The courtroom is transfixed, hanging on Ivani's impassioned words and her powerful invocation of scripture.

64 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

64

The tension is palpable as the case draws to a close. IVANI stands stoic, her closing statements hanging in the air.

SAMSON  
 (distraught)  
 No! This is not fair... She's  
 evil... You will burn in hell...  
 How could she do this to me... and  
 walk away...

His voice cracks with anguish.

SAMSON (CONT'D)  
 She took my virginity... She stole  
 that from my wife... You are evil!

PILAR  
 (dismissive)  
 Oh, shut up.

Chaos erupts in the courtroom as the two exchange heated words. SUPPORTERS try to calm them down, but their emotions run high.

The JUDGE, still present, POUNDS his gavel, trying to restore order.

PILAR (CONT'D)  
 (scornful)  
 I can't believe I chose a soft,  
 babbling fool like you to be my  
 baby's father... But you will pay  
 me the rest of your life.

A hush falls over the courtroom as Pilar's words sink in. Her LAWYERS and FAMILY hang their heads in disbelief.

SAMSON perks up, realization dawning.

65 INT. COURTROOM - (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

65

The emotional fallout hangs heavy in the air. Pilar's venomous words cut deep.

SAMSON  
(to the Judge, dismayed)  
Did you hear what she said?

IVANI  
(gently)  
Samson, son... Samson...

SAMSON  
(pleading)  
But Mrs. Bell... Everyone heard her... Right?

Ivani's face falls, her heart sinking.

IVANI  
(solemn)  
Samson, no... son. The verdict came down... It is over.

Samson COLLAPSES back into his chair, utterly devastated. Pilar SMIRKS triumphantly and saunters out.

IVANI (CONT'D)  
(consoling)  
You can beat her in civil court for custody.

SAMSON  
(hollow)  
Do you really think I could love that child?

Ivani turns to GRACE, and Samson follows her glance, searching for understanding.

IVANI  
(resolved)  
Yes.

Ivani stands, gathering her paperwork. As she turns, she sees FLINTROY striking the wall THREE TIMES, mimicking Moses striking the rock.

Ivani politely wipes the tip of her nose THREE TIMES with her middle finger, a defiant gesture towards Flintroy.

Flintroy, annoyed, walks away as Ivani LAUGHS softly. But her laughter fades as she turns, saddened by the sight before her.

THERON stands with their THREE CHILDREN. All wear expressions of shock, except for TJ, who stands smiling and nodding.

The weight of the unjust verdict hangs heavy, a solemn pall cast over the courtroom.

66

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - DAY

66

GRACE, IVANI, DOROTHY and THE THIERY FAMILY, including SAMSON, HOPE and their PARENTS, are gathered. A somber air hangs over the room.

DOROTHY

(to Grace)

Grace, darling, I hope you don't mind the Thierys being here. Ivani and I have a lot to tell you.

(Grace shrugs)

And I thought it best that Samson and Hope hear this story.

Dorothy takes a deep breath, steadying herself.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

(narrating)

I was in the kitchen when I heard the gunshots. I ran to the barn to find everyone dead.

FLASH TO:

67

EXT. BARN - (FLASHBACK) - DAY

67

Dorothy WEEPS over her DEAD SON'S body. EARL arrives, tries to console her.

Furious WHITE MEN start gathering, intent on torching Ivan's properties.

EARL

(shaking Dorothy)

Mrs. Thibodeaux, you have to stop them! They're about to do a bad thing!

DOROTHY

Let them! My boy is dead... my husband is gone.



EARL  
 (blurting out)  
 Jeb raped Ivani's daughter!

Dorothy FREEZES, tears drying up instantly.

DOROTHY  
 (a whisper)  
 What did you say?

BACK TO PRESENT DAY:

Dorothy recounts the story to the stunned group.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)  
 Earl told me the whole story from  
 the beginning. I fixed my clothes  
 and said, "Take me to the other  
 side of the tracks.

FLASH TO:

68 EXT. STREET - (FLASHBACK) - DAY

68

The angry WHITE MOB has torched one home, heading for the next. Dorothy stands in the road, FIRES a shotgun in the air.

DOROTHY  
 (firm)  
 Leave these people alone, ya  
 hear?! I know what Jeb did to that  
 little girl... She's a child, for  
 God's sake!  
 (FIRES again)  
 You evil, wicked people! They  
 didn't kill my boy, you did! All  
 this hate and evil... Jeb killed  
 our boy!  
 (FIRES)  
 Get out of here! Go home! I said  
 go home!

One by one, the mob disperses, leaving Dorothy and Earl alone.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY:

DOROTHY (CONT'D)  
 I prayed, and God gave me a  
 calling to heal this land from  
 hatred and evil. I wouldn't let my  
 boy's death be in vain.

(MORE)

DOROTHY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

(to Ivani)

I made arrangements with Tabby to raise the baby. Being from a wealthy family, I had overseers watch over the Patin's property. I suggested they move away - no one had to know about the child.

GRACE

(stunned)

All these years...you are my mother?

IVANI

(firm)

No. I gave birth to you, but Dorothy is your mother. Don't be like those adopted children who forget who wiped their noses and cared for them. I was thirteen, just a child myself. I had nothing to give you - I was playing with paper dolls.

Dorothy takes Grace's hands.

DOROTHY

When you were born, I saw God's grace. He knew thirty years later, your birth would be significant. He prepared Ivani to take this case, and for Samson and his future wife to see that God's grace is sufficient. Love comes in many forms, and justice doesn't always come the way you think it will.

The profound revelation hangs heavy in the air.

69 INT. CHURCH - DAY

69

A joyous CELEBRATION is underway. Laughter and chatter fill the air as PASTOR and THE THIERY FAMILY mingle with the DIVERSE CONGREGATION.

FLASH TO:

70 INT. ANOTHER CHURCH - DAY

70

A DIFFERENT PASTOR sits in the pulpit, looking out at his MILKY WHITE CONGREGATION with a distraught expression.

FLASHBACKS hit him rapidly:

-- A young IVANI as a little girl, the pain etched on her face.

-- SAMSON, handsome and hopeful.

The Pastor SHAKES HIS HEAD, overwhelmed.

CONGREGANT (O.S.)  
Pastor? Are you okay?

The church is SILENT, all eyes on the Pastor as he stands behind the podium. He takes a LONG PAUSE before speaking.

PASTOR  
(heavy)  
My soul is heavy... I have been  
thinking heavily about the Samson  
Thiery trial.

The congregation ERUPTS into CHEERS and PRAISE.

CONGREGANTS  
Hallelujah! Praise God!

The Pastor is ASTONISHED, but presses on.

PASTOR  
Was justice... rendered?

CONGREGANTS  
(resounding)  
Yes!

PASTOR  
One of God's children...  
(beat)  
I was reading about Samson. An  
outstanding young man.

GRUMBLES ripple through the congregation.

PASTOR (CONT'D)  
A Christian, waiting for  
marriage...  
(steeling himself)  
I was thinking it's time for us to  
join our fellow African-American  
Christians. Perhaps a joint  
dinner?

GASPS. Some MEMBERS get up and STORM OUT.

ANGRY MEMBER  
 (shouting)  
 Pastor, what are you doing?!

The Pastor is left shaken, facing a rapidly thinning congregation.

FLASH BACK TO:

71 INT. CHURCH - DAY 71

The CELEBRATION continues, joy and unity radiating, unaware of the turmoil brewing elsewhere.

72 INT. PASTOR'S OFFICE - DAY 72

Ivani sits across from her PASTOR, weariness etched on her face.

IVANI  
 Well, it looks like I have a lot of cases with men saying they're violated, manipulated. How unfair the world is, and why does God allow so much evil to reign?  
 (beat, building intensity)  
 They killed the peacemakers in the sixties and scared everyone.

She starts naming names, anger rising, as her Pastor watches calmly.

IVANI (CONT'D)  
 They killed...

The Pastor gently reaches out, touching Ivani's shoulder.

PASTOR  
 (soft)  
 They killed Jesus, too.

Ivani STOPS, the weight of his words sinking in. She looks at him, a flicker of understanding in her eyes.

HOLD ON IVANI, a profound realization washing over her.

73 EXT. CHURCH - DAY

73

SAMSON and HOPE, radiant with joy, exit the church as NEWLYWEDS. They pause to take a PHOTO with their BABY GIRL, a perfect family portrait.

SMASH CUT TO:

74 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

74

A NEWSREPORTER sits across from IVANI PATIN-BELL.

NEWSREPORTER

I'm here with Ivani Patin-Bell, lead attorney for the high-profile case of Christian male athlete Samson Thiery accusing Pilar Sinclair of rape. Sinclair is now confirmed to be pregnant with Thiery's child. Counselor, you've been under great scrutiny by your own sex.

IVANI

(measured)

From my understanding, an unidentified amount of criticism has surfaced.

NEWSREPORTER

Well, yes. Many women are saying this case throws a huge curveball at the "Me Too" movement.

IVANI

(firm)

I disagree. If anything, it supports it.

NEWSREPORTER

(taken aback)

Excuse me?

IVANI

If Samson were a female, and a male slipped her a "rufie" to gain financially or for manipulation, would I be here?

The Newsreporter opens her mouth, but Ivani presses on.

IVANI (CONT'D)

Many athletes, like other men in power, take advantage of their status and plow through women like there's no tomorrow.

NEWSREPORTER

(conceding)

Yes, and the majority of women voluntarily stand in front of that plow.

IVANI

(pointed)

Majority," so you agree not all? There are some who are victims?

NEWSREPORTER

(dismissive)

These days, everyone plays the victim.

IVANI

(leveling her gaze)

Even men.

They lock eyes, the weight of Ivani's statement hanging in the air.

75

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

75

IVANI

(earnest)

Yes, even men can be victims. When one's rights are violated, that needs to be the focus, not their sex, race, economic status. We are all human beings. Simple.

(beat)

This case is about a young man who made the decision to save sex for marriage. A very, very precious gift that was snatched away from him in an instant.

She looks directly into the camera, passionate.

IVANI (CONT'D)

No one is speaking to his faith. No one is supporting what a tragic loss he has experienced. A gift no money can replace or substitute -

(MORE)

IVANI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
 he lost a gift he can never get  
 back.

(pointed)  
 Would you like to speak on that?

The NEWSREPORTER shifts, uncomfortable.

NEWSREPORTER  
 Pilar Sinclair is from a very  
 prominent family outside of  
 Auburn, Alabama. She was raised in  
 a high-society environment.

Ivani leans forward, eyes blazing.

IVANI  
 And that makes her innocent of  
 violating a young man of not-so  
 "high society" background? Her  
 being from a prominent family  
 exonerates her?

The Newsreporter falters.

NEWSREPORTER  
 Why would she need to "trap"  
 someone?

Ivani fixes her with a steely gaze.

IVANI  
 We shall soon find out.

HOLD ON IVANI, resolute, as the truth hangs in the air.

76 INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - DAY

76

The THIERY FAMILY, HOPE, IVANI, THERON, and MS. DOROTHY  
 THIBODEAUX are gathered. Grace wears a stony expression as  
 Dorothy addresses her.

DOROTHY  
 Grace, darling, I hope you don't  
 mind the Thierys being here. Ivani  
 and I have a lot to tell you.  
 (Grace shrugs)  
 And I thought it best that Samson  
 and Hope hear this story.

Dorothy steadies herself, then begins:

DOROTHY (CONT'D)  
 (narrating)  
 I was in the kitchen when I heard  
 the gunshots. I ran to the barn to  
 find everyone dead.

INTERCUT WITH:

77 FLASHBACK - BARN - DAY

77

Dorothy WEEPS over her DEAD SON's body. EARL arrives, tries  
 consoling her as COPS show up. Word spreads fast - angry  
 WHITE MEN gather to torch Ivan's properties.

EARL  
 (FLASHBACK)  
 (shaking Dorothy)  
 Mrs. Thibodeaux, you have to stop  
 them! They're about to do a bad  
 thing!

DOROTHY  
 (FLASHBACK)  
 (wailing)  
 Let them! My boy is dead... my  
 husband is gone!

Dorothy SOBS as Earl begs her to listen. Finally:

EARL  
 (FLASHBACK)  
 Jeb raped Ivani's daughter!

Dorothy FREEZES, tears drying instantly.

DOROTHY  
 (FLASHBACK)  
 (a whisper)  
 What did you say?

BACK TO SCENE  
 Dorothy recounts the painful story  
 to the captivated group.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)  
 Earl told me the whole story from  
 the beginning. I slowly got up,  
 fixed my clothes, and said, "Take  
 me to the other side of the  
 tracks.

The weight of her revelation hangs heavy.



HOLD ON THEIR RAPT EXPRESSIONS as we...

78

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

78

A RIOTOUS CROWD, brandishing torches and weapons, TORCHES a house nearby. They head towards the next home, fury in their steps.

Earl's car SCREECHES to a halt in the middle of the street. Dorothy BURSTS out, shotgun in hand. She FIRES into the air.

DOROTHY

You leave these people alone, ya hear?!

The crowd HALTS, taken aback.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

I know what Jeb did to that little girl!

She is a child, for God's sake! You evil, wicked people!

(GRIPPING the shotgun tightly)

You leave these folks alone! They didn't kill my boy, you did! All of you! All this hate and evil!

Dorothy COCKS the shotgun.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Jeb killed our boy, and all of you

evil, wicked snakes!

She FIRES another SHOT into the air.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Get out of here! Go home, ya hear?!

(FIRES again)

I said go home!

The crowd stands in stunned silence, staring at the defiant woman in the road.

After a tense moment, they begin to DISPERSE, one by one... leaving Dorothy and Earl alone in the middle of the street.

79 INT. SMALL HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

79

DOROTHY knocks on the front door. TABBY, early 40s, opens it. Dorothy enters to find YOUNG IVANI, 13, visibly PREGNANT, lounging on the couch, reading.

Ivani looks up, smiles warmly at Dorothy. They embrace.

80 EXT. SMALL HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER

80

Dorothy and Tabby settle into chairs in the quaint backyard.

TABBY

Are you sure you want to raise the  
baby?

Dorothy nods, conviction in her eyes.

DOROTHY

I am sure. I prayed about this,  
and

this is God's plan.

(leans forward)

God placed such a burden on my heart  
to heal this land from all the hate  
and evil. I will not let my boy's  
death be in vain.

TABBY

I see. So you're not going back to

Mamou?

DOROTHY

Oh, good gracious, no!  
(reassuring)  
Like I told you, the overseer for  
my

property will manage yours and send  
you the money. You're staying here  
until the baby's born, and then I  
have a house for you in Baton Rouge.

(pausing)  
 I haven't told my people about my  
 plans yet. My daddy may cut me out  
 of the will, but my Father in Heaven  
 has given me this calling.

TABBY  
 Pinky's doing good. Studying hard,  
 keeping up. I know you said Baton  
 Rouge Magnet is free and college  
 prep, but...

(hesitates)  
 She's looking at Southern  
 University  
 Laboratory instead.

DOROTHY  
 Why? BRHS is a reputable school.  
 Tabby pauses, carefully considering her words.

TABBY  
 Well... she was at a private,  
 predominantly white Christian school  
 back home. Felt like an outsider, so...

(shrugs)  
 She wants to go to school with her  
 own folks right now.

81 INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

81

Dorothy sits amongst the Thiery family, Ivani, Theron, Hope,  
 and GRACE. A warm glow filters through the windows.

DOROTHY  
 When Grace was born... oooohhhh,  
 what a beautiful baby!

(overcome with emotion)

My eyes and heart were not large  
 enough. How gracious is our God?  
 God took all the ugly and evil from  
 whence she came and made the most  
 innocent, beautiful bundle of joy.  
 Dorothy holds Grace's hands, misty-eyed.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

I wanted to name her Joy, but all  
 I

could witness was how His grace was  
 truly sufficient... Grace.

(chuckles softly)

My daddy wanted to cut me out of the  
 will, but when he saw Grace... my Lord,  
 heaven and hell could not prevail.  
 Oh, did he love him some Grace!  
 Yes, God's grace is sufficient.  
 Ivani gazes at Grace, her own eyes shimmering.

IVANI

I could not look at you when you  
 were born. I just cried in my  
 mother's arms.

(regretful)

I did not see you until twenty  
 years

later, at my mother's funeral. You  
 walked right up to me, introduced  
 yourself, and said, "I am your

biggest fan," starting to name my accomplishments. I had nothing to give you at thirteen... nothing. A weighted pause hangs in the air.

GRACE

I cannot believe all this time... the two of you said nothing. All this time, you are my mother? Ivani shakes her head gently.

IVANI

I am not your mother. I gave birth to you... this wonderful woman is your mother.

Dorothy rises and moves to Samson and Hope. She takes their hands.

DOROTHY

I hear you have a chance to win full custody in civil court. Are you two going to fight for your baby? Samson and Hope share an uncertain look, shaking their heads.

SAMSON & HOPE

Our baby?

THE THIERYs

We will raise the baby.

DOROTHY

How come, not you two?

SAMSON

Ms. Thibodeaux... I... I don't know.

I can't... Hope and I need to get to know each other before we start a family.

Dorothy turns to Grace.

DOROTHY

Look at Grace. Do you like her?  
Was

she a good attorney to you?

SAMSON

Yes, ma'am. She is the best. She  
really gave me some good talks. I  
felt blessed to get to know her.

DOROTHY

Did you feel evil or shame from  
her?

SAMSON

No, ma'am.

DOROTHY

What did you feel from her?

Samson looks intently at Dorothy, a small smile spreading.

SAMSON

Love.

82

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

82

Dorothy holds the rapt attention of the room. Her words carry  
a powerful weight.

DOROTHY

My daddy came from an era that did  
not care much for people of color.  
My husband hated people of color.  
Ivani's father hated white people.  
(looking around)  
All of that hate brought Grace into  
my life.  
She squeezes Grace's hand.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Children do not ask to come here,

but look at how God turns it around.

Because of an ugly deed, I dedicated  
my life to find people that loved.

(smiling warmly)

God is no fool. He is smart. "The  
greatest of these is love... what  
you have done to the least of them...  
you have done unto me."

Samson and Hope listen, captivated.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

If we would just love one another.

God knew it would be hard for man  
to love someone different than him.

It is easy to love what you are  
familiar with. It takes intentionality  
to love someone different than you.

She leans toward Samson, her tone solemn.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Son, you will not get justice from

our government. Our government has  
never freely given justice to the  
common man... especially people of  
color.

(shaking her head)

Our government did not free the  
enslaved Negro for humane reasons,  
but for the only reason that moves

this country to pass laws... money.

White people understand why black  
people take a knee to the flag.

(a rueful chuckle)

Hell, I would if I were black.

Reaching out, she grips Samson's hands.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Do not be upset about man's  
verdict.

God has the final say. Because of  
a horrific incident to a thirteen-  
year-old child, I have raised many  
children of color. I have fought  
for racial reconciliation.

(locking eyes with him)

God knew thirty years ago that you  
and Hope needed to meet Grace, to  
look in her face and see what God's  
grace looks like. I know it is hard.

(squeezing his hands)

Pray, pray, pray... be still. Look  
beyond your needs and plans and listen  
to God's plan. Remember, God's justice  
comes in many forms.

FADE OUT.