

A RESIDUAL HAUNTING

Written by

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FADE IN.

INT. TIA MARITZA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's the Summer of 1982 in Easton, PA. LORENZO, 8, is on the couch and uses the remote to raise the volume on the television so that he could muffle the phone chatter taking place behind him.

NIVIA, 9, Lorenzo's sister, can't hear their father over the phone.

NIVIA

Lorenzo, can you turn down the TV?
I can't hear Dad.

Lorenzo ignores Nivia.

NIVIA (CONT'D)

(on the phone with Dad)
Nothing. I was just telling
Lorenzo to turn down the TV, but
he's ignoring me.
(listens)
Okay, hold on.
(to Lorenzo)
Hey, what's your face, do you wanna
talk Dad?

Lorenzo shakes his head. Nivia covers the mouth piece.

NIVIA (CONT'D)

What's the matter with you? Come
to the phone. I already told Dad
that you're here.

Lorenzo refuses to come to the phone and Nivia covers for him.

NIVIA (CONT'D)

(on the phone with dad)
Dad, Lorenzo can't talk right now.
He just dropped dead from something
funny that just happened on TV.

Lorenzo gives Nivia a thumbs up.

NIVIA (CONT'D)

I don't know what he's watching.
(listens)
Yeah, he just can't stop laughing.
He's holding himself. His sides
are hurting from laughing so hard.
(MORE)

NIVIA (CONT'D)

His face is all red. What a weirdo. Anyway, how are things at home?

TIA MARITZA, a Rosario Dawson type, joins Lorenzo on the couch.

TIA MARITZA

Hey, Lorenzo, who is Nivia talking to on the phone?

LORENZO

She's talking to Dad.

TIA MARITZA

You all packed? Remember, we've got an early day tomorrow. The bus to New York leaves at 10:45 in morning.

LORENZO

Yeah, I'm all packed.

TIA MARITZA

So, are you excited to be going back home?

LORENZO

No, not really. I like it out here in Pennsylvania.

TIA MARITZA

Well, I'm glad you enjoyed your stay. Maybe you can visit again next Summer.

LORENZO

Or maybe you could talk my stuck on stupid parents into moving to a nice, quiet neighborhood out here, and leaving the concrete jungles of New York City behind for good.

TIA MARITZA

Lorenzo, that's not nice. Don't disrespect your mom and dad.

LORENZO

Why because they brought me into this world? Big Whoop, Tia Maritza!

TIA MARITZA

That, and because they put a roof over your head, they put food on the table, and clothes on your back.

LORENZO

Of course, they do. It would be child abuse otherwise. My punk ass parents know they wouldn't last a day in jail.

TIA MARITZA

Are you saying that you think your mom and dad don't really care about you?

LORENZO

If they do, they sure have a funny way of showing it.

TIA MARITZA

Oh, okay, I think I know what you're getting at. Let me tell you something about your Dad, Lorenzo. Your Dad may not have a warm personality, but that's only because our Dad, your grandfather, was a man's man. He lived his life believing that any man who wore his heart on his sleeve wasn't a real man, and unfortunately, his beliefs rubbed off on your Dad.

LORENZO

Well, that's too bad. He should've had the wherewithal to wait until his issues were outgrown before deciding to start a family and bring kids into the world.

Lorenzo leaves Tia Maritza speechless.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

There's a greyhound bus in route to New York City. Lorenzo and Nivia are sitting directly behind the bus driver.

NIVIA

So, why didn't you want to talk to dad on the phone last night? That wasn't cool. What was that about?

LORENZO

I just didn't feel like talking to him, that's all.

NIVIA

Yeah, but things have been pretty awkward between you two for a while now, so are you going to tell me what's going on, or not?

LORENZO

Let's just say that he confirmed something for me that I've suspected about him for a long time.

INT. FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING PROJECTS - THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

BENICIO RIOS, a Benicio Del Toro type, is making sure Lorenzo doesn't walk in on him talking to his mistress on the phone.

BENICIO

(speaking softly)

Come on, baby. We talked about this already. Don't start with that again. I am not going to leave my wife and kids for you. I'm sorry for misleading you, but I needed a shoulder to cry on.

Benicio holds the phone away from his ear and hears Lorenzo coming.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

(to his mistress on the phone)

Hold on. Wait a minute.

Lorenzo walks in on his Dad.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

What do you want, Lorenzo?

LORENZO

Can I go next door? I wanna show Sonny my Pac-Man table top arcade game.

BENICIO

(to his mistress)

I gotta go. I'll talk to you later.

Benicio hangs up the phone.

BENICIO (CONT'D)
Yeah, you could go, but sit down
for a second. I wanna talk to you,
first.

Lorenzo places his arcade game on the table and sits down
looking very uncomfortable.

BENICIO (CONT'D)
I wanna ask you something, but it's
gotta stay between us, okay? You
can't tell your sister or your Ma
what I'm about to ask you.

LORENZO
Okay.

BENICIO
Good.

Benicio sits across from Lorenzo and stalls until he could
figure out a way to get what's on his mind off of his chest.

BENICIO (CONT'D)
So, are you looking forward to
spending the Summer in Pennsylvania
with your aunt Maritza?

LORENZO
Yeah.

BENICIO
That's good. What about Nivia? Is
she looking forward to it?

Lorenzo shrugs his shoulders.

LORENZO
I guess. I don't know.

BENICIO
Good.

Benicio knows he needs to get to the point.

BENICIO (CONT'D)
Okay, enough of the small talk.
That's not really what I want to
talk to you about. What I really
want to ask you is this, and I want
you to be completely honest with
me, okay? Tell me the truth.

LORENZO

Okay.

BENICIO

How would you feel if I were to leave and never come back? Would you be okay with that?

LORENZO

Leave where?

BENICIO

If I just went away, if you were to never see me again, would you be okay with that?

Lorenzo shakes his head no, sparing Benicio's feelings.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

Thank you, Lorenzo. Thank you.

Lorenzo is so confused and doesn't know what to do or say. Benicio lets Lorenzo off the hook and dismisses him from the table.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Go to your friend's house. Have a good time.

Lorenzo leaves the table with his arcade game.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

Remember, not a word about this to Nivia or your Ma.

LORENZO

Okay.

Lorenzo opens the door to the apartment and leaves Benicio alone in the living room.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - EVENING - MOMENTS LATER

SONNY, Lorenzo's best friend, is playing the arcade game, trying not to get killed.

SONNY

Uh-oh! The ghosts have me cornered. There's no way out! I'm dead. But you only scored 1,788. I scored 1,922. So, try to beat that.

Sonny passes the arcade game back to Lorenzo.

LORENZO

Nah, that's enough of that. I
don't feel like playing anymore.

Lorenzo sets the arcade aside.

SONNY

Why not?

LORENZO

Tell me if you think this is weird.

SONNY

What?

LORENZO

Before I came over here, my father
sat me down and asked me if I would
be okay with him leaving and never
coming back. What do you think he
meant by that?

SONNY

Leaving? Leaving where?

LORENZO

He didn't say. Leaving the family,
I guess.

SONNY

Your dad really asked you that?
What did you say?

LORENZO

Of course, I had to let him think
that I would hate for him to go. I
was afraid to see what would've
happened if I had said don't let
the door knob hit you on the way
out, motherfucker. He's such a hot
head.

SONNY

So, your Dad wants out the family,
huh?

LORENZO

It looks that way to me.

SONNY

Yeah, it looks that way to me, too.
That's fucked up.

(MORE)

SONNY (CONT'D)

And all this time I thought you had
the perfect family. Boy, did you
have me fooled.

There's a knock on the closed bedroom door. Sonny's mother
pops her head in.

SONNY'S MOTHER

Lorenzo, your mother's here to pick
you up.

LORENZO

Gotta go.

Lorenzo collects his arcade game.

SONNY

See you in school tomorrow.

Sonny sees Lorenzo to the door.

INT. FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING PROJECTS - HALLWAY - EVENING

Lorenzo and his mother, DENISE RIOS, a Roselyn Sanchez type,
run into Benicio as he steps out of their apartment looking
well groomed.

DENISE

Where the hell are you going?

BENICIO

I'm going to meet up with my boys.

DENISE

You're going to meet up with that
bitch, aren't you?!

Denise grabs Benicio by the sleeve of his jacket to keep him
from going anywhere.

DENISE (CONT'D)

No, you're not going anywhere,
Benicio!

BENICIO

Let go of me, Denise! I'm going.

DENISE

Fine, then I'm going with you.

BENICIO

No, you're not! You're staying
here!

DENISE
No, I'm going with you!

Benicio shoves Denise against the wall and ducks into the stair well. Lorenzo stops Denise from going after Benicio and leaving him alone in the hallway.

LORENZO
Hey, what about me?! Are you just gonna leave me in the hallway by myself?!

Denise turns her anger on Lorenzo and gets in his face.

DENISE
Well, hurry your slow ass up, then!

LORENZO
What are you yelling at me for?!
What did I do?!

Denise takes a deep breath and calms down.

DENISE
Nothing. You didn't do a damn thing, Lorenzo. It's that damn father of yours. If he thinks he could get away with playing me, he's got another thing coming.

Denise and Lorenzo make it to the door of their apartment. She unlocks the door, and they both go inside.

INT. HIGHWAY - PRESENT DAY

Nivia and Lorenzo are still on the bus.

NIVIA
So, what are you telling me?

LORENZO
I'm telling you that Dad is a punk, and if he had any balls at all, he would've left Ma to chase the life he always wanted for himself a long time ago.

NIVIA
You shouldn't say that about Dad.

Lorenzo looks Nivia in the eyes.

LORENZO

I suppose I should be more like
those stupid kids who blame
themselves when their parents get
divorced, right?

Nivia thinks that Lorenzo is asking a rhetorical question and
doesn't answer.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

I don't care if you think this
makes me a bad son! I'm sick of
the way everyone goes on and on
about Mom and Dad like they could
do no wrong just because they're
the parents.

NIVIA

Do you have to do that dumb thing
with your fingers?

LORENZO

Huh? What are you talking about?

NIVIA

I'm talking about you gesturing
with air-quotes. You gestured with
air-quotes when you said "Bad Son."
Why?

LORENZO

I don't know. I wasn't even aware
of it.

NIVIA

Well, talk without gesturing with
air-quotes. Lose the air-quotes,
okay? They irk me.

Lorenzo sees something that makes his eyes boggle and freaks
Nivia out.

NIVIA (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you, Lorenzo?
Why are you making that face?

Nivia freaks out as well when she realizes that the bus
driver is reaching back to get a feel of her knee and moves
her legs to avoid being touched by the perv. Lorenzo shifts
his body in his isle seat and stomps the bus driver's hand
with his foot. The bus driver yells out in agony.

LORENZO
That's right! That's what you get!
Keep both hands on the steering
wheel, you perv.

The adult passengers on the bus step in to protect Lorenzo
and Nivia and give the bus driver an earful.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

INT. FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING PROJECTS - THE RIOS FAMILY
APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

It's eleven years later. Benicio is sitting at the dinner
table playing a card game with Lorenzo's uncle, SAMMY.

SAMMY
So, how's the traffic cop business,
Benicio?

BENICIO
Aaaah!

SAMMY
That good, huh?

BENICIO
I don't know what else to tell you,
Sammy. The traffic cop business is
still the same ole business that
you asked me about the last time
you visited.

SAMMY
Okay, I get it. We don't have to
talk about work if you don't want
to.

BENICIO
Thank you.

SAMMY
But I gotta ask, Benicio. Given
your recent stint in rehab, do you
really think it's sensible to have
a bar in your living room?

BENICIO
You gotta ask my wife about that.
It was her idea.
(MORE)

BENICIO (CONT'D)

She walked into a salvation army one day, saw the bar, thought that it would be a good way to spruce up this place, so she had a couple guys wheel this thing in.

SAMMY

What was the point of that, though? It's not like you guys keep any liquor in the house.

BENICIO

These are all damn good questions. Again, you gotta talk to my wife about that. I don't know what else to tell you, Sammy.

SAMMY

Speaking of sprucing up the place, what's with the rusty old mountain bike, the old apple computer, and that betamax behind the bar? Whose bike is that? Is that your bike, or Lorenzo's?

BENICIO

It's my bike.

SAMMY

When was the last time you went biking?

BENICIO

It's been years.

SAMMY

Then why don't you chuck all that stuff?! Chuck the bar, the bike, the computer, the old ass betamax, the old ass shopping carts. Chuck it all, or put in storage somewhere. I mean, if I didn't know you, if we weren't family, I would say you guys were a couple of hoarders.

BENICIO

Hey, I'm with you, Sammy. You don't think I want to get rid of this stuff? I wanna get rid of that stuff, but Denise wants to hold on to everything. What do you want from me? Are we gonna play cards, or what? It's your hand.

Sammy just shakes his head and looks at his cards.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Denise and Tia Maritza have pots of food cooking over all four burners on the stove.

TIA MARITZA
So, how is Nivia finding her new place? Does she like it?

DENISE
Yeah, she likes it.

TIA MARITZA
So, you've seen it?

DENISE
Of course, I've already seen it. It's not that far from here, which is a good thing. It's pretty spacious.

TIA MARITZA
And she doesn't get scared about being in that place alone at night?

DENISE
Well, she's never that alone. Her boyfriend spends a lot time there.

Tia Maritza stands in front of the stove to stir the pasta.

TIA MARISSA
What boyfriend? That guy with the loose hands? What was his name again?

DENISE
Keith.

TIA MARITZA
Keith---that's right. She's still with him?!

DENISE
Yeah, she's still with him.

TIA MARITZA
I don't get it. When we talked on the phone, you told me that when you first met the guy you had a good feeling about him.

DENISE
Well, the way Nivia tells it...

INT. SUBWAY - DAY - FLASHBACK

Crowded subway car. YVONNE, Nivia's friend, is riding to school with Nivia seated next to her.

YVONNE
So, Jeffery finally asked me out yesterday.

NIVIA
Yvonne, I'm so happy for you. It's about fucking time.

YVONNE
I know. He was so nervous about it, too. You should've seen his face. Anyway, he's taking me out this Friday. We have no idea what we're going to do, though. Any suggestions?

NIVIA
Hey, why don't you and Jeffery come out with me and Keith? We're supposed to be going to the planetarium on Friday.

YVONNE
The Planetarium? That could be fun. Are you sure Keith won't mind?

NIVIA
Why would he mind? I'll ask him as soon as I see him. I'm sure he'll be okay with it.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Keith is looking to get something out of the vending machine with Nivia getting on his nerves.

KEITH
What makes you think I would be okay with letting another couple tag along on our date? When I'm on a date with you, I want it to be just us.

NIVIA

What's the problem, Keith? It's only Yvonne. You know Yvonne.

KEITH

Double dating is never a good idea, Nivia. I don't know this Jeffery dude. What if he turns out to be someone I'm gonna wanna crack for doing something that embarrasses us?

Keith finally puts his money in and makes his selection.

NIVIA

You always expect the worse in people.

Keith gets his snapple and leads Nivia away from the vending machine.

KEITH

Of course, I do. This is New York City. Hello?! We're not doubling with Yvonne and Jeff, and that's the end of it.

NIVIA

Well, I already told Yvonne that you'd be okay with it, so you be the villain and tell her that she can't come. I'm not gonna do it.

KEITH

That's just fine with me. I'll go find her right now. I know just where she is.

Keith changes his course of direction.

NIVIA

Don't you dare, Keith!

KEITH

You should've known better than to invite Yvonne and her boyfriend on our date without asking me first.

NIVIA

Keith, stop!

Keith reacts to Nivia grabbing him by the wrist with a back handed fist across her left eye.

NIVIA (CONT'D)

OW!

Keith wants to apologize but is still so frustrated with Nivia, that he leaves her standing there with her hand over her left eye.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

Tia Maritza puts on the oven mitts to remove the pot of pasta from the stove top.

TIA MARITZA

I don't know how you could allow
this to go on.

DENISE

Hey, we could protest against this
till we're blue in the face, a
girl's gonna do what a girl's gonna
do.

Maritza pours the pot of pasta into a drainer. She takes her eyes off the pasta for a second, and out of the steam comes a ghostly hand giving her and Denise the finger.

TIA MARITZA

How's Lorenzo doing?

DENISE

He's fine. He's locked up in his
room right now, doing God knows
what.

TIA MARITZA

He's been locked up in his room
this whole time, and he didn't come
out to say hi?! I'm going to see
him right now. Which is his room?

Denise stops Tia Maritza from going to Lorenzo's room.

DENISE

Don't bother. He's not going to
come out to see you. As a matter
of fact, he said that thanks to me
he could never show his face around
family again.

TIA MARITZA

What? That's crazy. Why would he
say something like that.

Tia Maritza gets back to the pasta.

DENISE

Well, according to him, I've been tearing him down in front of family for so long, he'd be too embarrassed to show his face around family ever again.

TIA MARITZA

I didn't wanna say anything, but you do tend to go off on tangent a lot when it comes to him.

DENISE

What are you talking about, Maritza?! No, I don't.

TIA MARITZA

All I know is that Lorenzo and I used to be tight, we used to be like this, and now he won't even come out of his room to say hi to me, or anyone else in the family because you're always making him out to be something out of children of the corn.

Denise tends to the other pots of food cooking on the stove.

DENISE

You're crazy.

TIA MARITZA

Well, does he have a girlfriend at least?

DENISE

No, no girlfriend.

TIA MARITZA

He is into girls, isn't he?

DENISE

Oh, of course, he is. No worries there. It's just that whenever Benicio and I broach the subject, he tells us that it's not his fault that girls can't get over how flat-footed and pigeon-toed he is. He swears that girls are turned off by his pigeon-toes. Add that to the list of traits he already resents me for passing on to him.

With the pasta drained, Denise pours it onto a plate.

TIA MARITZA
What else has he been up to?

DENISE
Are you ready? Get this...

TIA MARITZA
What? Get what?

Denise can't keep a straight face.

DENISE
He took up screenplay writing. He actually thinks he could make it as a screenwriter. He's been at it for years now.

TIA MARITZA
Screenplay writing? Really? Well, I guess I can't say I didn't see that one coming. Movies have always been his way of getting away from it all.

DENISE
Please. Get away from what?

Denise loads film into a camera.

TIA MARITZA
So, how many scripts has he written? Have you read any of them?

DENISE
I don't know how many. He's been at it for a while. I'm sure he's written a few.

TIA MARITZA
You haven't read any of his stuff? How do you know he isn't any good?

DENISE
Come on, Maritza. I'd only be encouraging him to pursue his whacky dream, if I were to read his stuff. Besides, even if he was any good at it, have you ever heard of a Puerto Rican screenwriter?
(MORE)

DENISE (CONT'D)

That's the kind of gig that only Jews excel at. That's a gig for the Jews.

TIA MARITZA

Well, at least he's trying to do something with himself. You should thank your lucky stars that your boy is writing screenplays, and not selling junk on street corners like a lot the kids I have to deal with everyday working as social worker.

Denise has Tia Maritza in the crosshairs of her camera and asks her to pose for a photo.

DENISE

Okay, stop what you're doing and smile for me.

Tia Maritza puts the pasta down and poses for the camera.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Lorenzo, now 19, stands in line with a manila envelope in his hand and waits to be helped by the next available postal service clerk. The sign for the next available clerk goes off, and Lorenzo steps up to the window.

MAIL CLERK

How are you today, Sir?

LORENZO

I'm good.

MAIL CLERK

I'm glad to hear it. How can I help you?

LORENZO

I've got something here that I'd like to mail to myself.

Lorenzo places the manila envelope on the counter.

MAIL CLERK

You wanna mail this to yourself?
Oh, so you want to copyright your manuscript poor man's style, huh?

LORENZO

That's right.

MAIL CLERK

No problem. How much is it to copyright your stuff through the Writers Guild of America?

LORENZO

Like thirty dollars.

MAIL CLERK

That ain't so bad, but you gotta save money where you can, right? I know how it is. It only costs fourteen dollars to copyright your material through the post office. You know not to break the seal on the envelope once you get it back, right? Keep it in a safe place.

LORENZO

Yeah, I know.

MAIL CLERK

So, what do you have in here, anyway, a book?

LORENZO

No, a screenplay.

MAIL CLERK

Screenplay, huh? Is it good?

LORENZO

Yeah, it's good. But, so were the last three scripts I thought were gonna open doors for me. Not to sound arrogant or anything, but people would have had a much better time going to see anyone of my movies than a lot of the crap that's playing in theatres today.

MAIL CLERK

Yeah, I heard that trying to break into that business could be a bitch. But stick with it, though. At least, you're trying make something happen. A lot of little motherfuckers around here ain't about shit.

Lorenzo gets his money out to pay for service.

INT. ACTIVE TEMP AGENCY - DAY

JOE and MIKE, two Active Temp Agency dispatchers, are busy behind their desks, trying to clear their office of everyone sitting in their seats waiting to be called out to work.

Lorenzo enters the office and walks right up to greet Joe and Mike.

LORENZO

Morning Joe. Morning Mike. Is it gonna be a slow day today. How's it looking?

JOE

You know how it works around here, Rios. Just sign your name in the sign in sheet and have a seat. If any job comes up, we'll let you know.

Lorenzo signs his name in the sign in sheet and makes his way to the waiting area.

KAREN GREEN, a Jane Levy type, perks up when she sees Lorenzo coming to sit down in the empty seat next to her.

LORENZO

What's up?

KAREN

Hey.

Lorenzo sits down and sighs.

LORENZO

Karen, right?

KAREN

Hey, you remembered.

LORENZO

Yeah, I remember. I'm pretty good with names.

KAREN

You're Lorenzo?

LORENZO

You got it. Have you been waiting here long?

KAREN

No, not really.

LORENZO

Man, it feels like it's been months since I've seen you last.

KAREN

I know. They hooked me up with a job in Queens, some cosmetic factory called POPS. Do you know the place I'm talking about?

LORENZO

Yeah, I know the place. That was where Mike sent me when I first set foot in this place. That's where they send all the newbies.

KAREN

Well, the job was only supposed to last a week, but they liked the way I worked, so they kept me on for another two weeks.

LORENZO

Atta girl. Get that money.

KAREN

How's your screenplay coming? Are you still writing?

LORENZO

Yeah, I'm still writing. I just mailed another copy of my script to some literary agent based in Cali on the way over here, so we'll see what happens there. Probably nothing. I don't know why I bother trying to break into this hellish business, but it's all I've ever been good at. You wouldn't know it by the way these racist Hollywood Hacks keep rejecting my Puerto Rican ass, but I really am good at it.

KAREN

So, what's your script about?

LORENZO

It's a horror flick called A Residual Haunting, and it's about a dysfunctional married couple who end up getting tormented and picked on by the spirit of their estranged son who happens to be alive.

KAREN

That sounds freaky as hell. I would pay to see something like that in theatres. I hope it works out for you. I'll keep my fingers crossed.

LORENZO

Thanks.

KAREN

Have you ever thought about signing up for an improv class?

LORENZO

An improv class? No, I never thought about taking an improv class.

KAREN

Well, you should. I think it would be good for you, not only do I think it would be good for you, but something tells me you would be good at it.

LORENZO

I don't know. My flat-footed, pigeon-toed ass is self-conscious enough as it is. The last thing I want to do is call attention to myself.

KAREN

Come on. Forget about that. A lot of writers do it. They say it helps with their writing. Improv can help with story development. It can also help you come up with all kinds of personalities for your characters.

LORENZO

How is it that you know so much about improv?

KAREN

There's a improv class in Soho that I go to on weekends.

LORENZO

Oh yeah? You interested in Theatre?

KAREN
Theatre, film, television,
whichever one comes first.

Karen goes in her backpack for a flyer.

KAREN (CONT'D)
In case you're interested in
checking it out, here's a flyer for
you.

Lorenzo takes the flyer from Karen and looks it over.

LORENZO
Yeah, okay. I'll think about it.

KAREN
You won't have to get on stage or
anything. You could just sit down
and watch me and my group perform,
but I promise you'll have a good
time.

LORENZO
I'll give it some thought.

Lorenzo hears his name and another guy's name being called to
Joe's desk.

JOE (O.S.)
Rios! Brandon!

Lorenzo folds the flyer Karen gave him in half.

LORENZO
Wow, that was fast.

Lorenzo stands up and stuffs the flyer in his pocket.

KAREN
Don't throw that flyer away in the
garbage, Lorenzo.

Lorenzo smiles.

LORENZO
I'm not. I won't. I'll see you
later.

KAREN
Later.

Karen notices the pants size sticker on Lorenzo's jeans and
lets him know.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Lorenzo, do you know you still have the pants size sticker on your jeans?

Lorenzo looks around for the sticker.

LORENZO

I do? I hate it when that happens.

Karen peels off the sticker for Lorenzo.

KAREN

Here, let me get that for you.

LORENZO

Thanks.

KAREN

At least I know you don't have a girlfriend. No woman would let her man leave the house looking like that.

LORENZO

Thanks.

Karen checks Lorenzo out as he turns to walk away from her.

JOE

Come on, Rios. We ain't got all day.

BRANDON, a Nate Diaz type, and Joe are waiting on Lorenzo.

JOE (CONT'D)

You ever been to Jack's's, Lorenzo?

Lorenzo finally makes it to Joe's desk.

LORENZO

Jack's? No, I don't think so.

JOE

What about you, Brandon? You ever been to Jack's?

BRANDON

No, Never.

JOE

Well, good, because that's where you're going.

Joe hands Lorenzo and Brandon their time sheets.

JOE (CONT'D)

You won't need train fare because the place where you're going is within walking distance. You'll find the exact address on your time sheets.

Lorenzo looks over his time sheet.

JOE (CONT'D)

You're gonna report to a guy named Lenny. He's gonna have you do some shit mannequins.

LORENZO

Mannequins? He's gonna have us do what with mannequins?

JOE

Lenny will give you all the details when you get down there, and don't forget to bring your signed time sheets back to me, or you won't get paid. Now, get going. He's waiting on you guys.

BRANDON

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Lorenzo and Brandon pocket their time sheets and exit the office together.

EXT. STREET - DAY

LENNY, the store manager, stands in front of a store window with the name Jack's spelled out in bold black letters. He looks down the block and sees Lorenzo and Brandon looking very lost and steps in to assist them.

LORENZO

There's Jack's right here.

BRANDON

Who's this guy coming at us?

LORENZO

That must be Lenny.

Lenny steps up to greet Lorenzo and Brandon.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
We're supposed to report to someone
by the name of Lenny. Is that you?

LENNY
Yeah, that's me. Where are you
guys coming from? Who sent you?

LORENZO
Active Temp Agency.

Lenny looks very confused.

LENNY
Where?

BRANDON
They sent us over from the Active
Temp Agency.

LENNY
Active Temp Agency? What the hell
kind of bullshit agency are they
running down there? I only asked
for one guy. What were they
thinking sending me two?

Lorenzo and Brandon look at each other.

BRANDON
You only need one guy?

LENNY
Only one guy.

LORENZO
I could kill somebody!

LENNY
It's fucked up, I know, but the
fact remains I still only need one
guy, so you're gonna have to work
this out amongst yourselves, but
make it fast because I've got to
get back inside.

BRANDON
There's nothing to work out. I'm
your guy. He's gonna go back to
the agency.

Lorenzo protests.

LORENZO

Hold up! Don't I get a say in this?! I'm gonna have my say. Why do you automatically get to go inside with Lenny?

BRANDON

Come on, man. You don't really need this job. Wasn't you the one talking my ear off the whole way over here about how you were going to go to Hollywood and become this big time filmmaker? So, you go off and become this big time filmmaker, and leave mannequins to us little people.

LENNY

Mannequins?! What the hell else did those bastards tell you guys about my business?

LORENZO

Yo, I'm not gonna let you fuck up my money, so you go back and tell Joe and Mike that I said they could suck my butt!

Brandon ignores Lorenzo and speaks to Lenny directly.

BRANDON

Never mind him, Lenny. I'm your guy. Let's go inside.

Lorenzo grabs Brandon's arm to stop him from going anywhere.

LORENZO

You're not going anywhere. I'm going inside.

Things between Lorenzo and Brandon get very chippie, and they end up tying each other up in a clinch.

LENNY

Hey, come on, guys, guys! Not in front of my business! Knock it off!

Brandon starts backing Lorenzo into the middle of street, holding up traffic. Driver's in their cars start to lose patience and honk their horns. Lorenzo takes a couple of knee strikes in his ribs and sweeps Brandon's feet from under him, bringing him down. Brandon spins around on his back to avoid the barrage of punches coming down on him.

Tourists gather around and take photos of the brawl with their smart phones. Lenny sees a bunch of cops coming to disperse the crowd and arrest Lorenzo and Brandon, so he tries to warn them even though he can no longer see them through the crowd.

LENNY (CONT'D)

Hey, guys, here come the cops. The
cops are coming!

The cops push through the crowd of tourists to get to Lorenzo and Brandon. When Lenny sees that both Lorenzo and Brandon managed to walk away with the rest of the crowd and escape arrest, he smiles and goes back inside his store.

INT. NIVIA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Lorenzo shows up at his sister's doorstep and rings the bell. Nivia comes to the door and is happy when she sees Lorenzo.

NIVIA

Hey, my brother. What are you
doing here?

LORENZO

Nivia.

Lorenzo and Nivia embrace.

NIVIA

Come in.

Lorenzo enters and Nivia locks the door behind him.

NIVIA (CONT'D)

What are you doing here out of the
blue? Why didn't you call to let
me know you were coming?

Lorenzo looks around Nivia's home expecting to find her punk ass boyfriend there.

LORENZO

Your punk ass boyfriend isn't here?

NIVIA

His name is Keith, Lorenzo, and no,
he's not here.

LORENZO

Well, I'm going to hang around here for awhile, so if you're expecting him, you better get in touch with him and tell him not to come. Because if I'm still here when he shows up, there's going to be a problem.

NIVIA

Hey, who do you think you are coming in here after all this time and throwing your weight around like you own the place? Is that why you came here? Why don't you go home?

LORENZO

I can't go back to the projects right now. The cops could be showing up there to arrest me any minute.

NIVIA

The cops? Why? What do cops want with you? Don't tell me that you finally did it, Lorenzo.

Nivia gets a hold of Lorenzo's jacket and pulls him close to her.

NIVIA (CONT'D)

Tell me that I still have a mother and father?

LORENZO

Yo, would you get that thought out of your head already?! I could never get away with something like that. If I was on the run, my flat-footed, pigeon-toed ass would stick out like a sore thumb. Eye witnesses would have no problem picking me out of a line up. So, get that thought out your head already.

NIVIA

Then, what do the cops want with you?

LORENZO

For disrupting downtown traffic earlier today.

NIVIA

You went streaking?! It's not even that warm out.

LORENZO

No, God damn it! Some dude got in my face, and we ended up scrapping in the middle of the street. Traffic was backed up for a good ten minutes. I was lucky to get away before the cops could bag me.

NIVIA

Well, Keith sometimes stops by unannounced, so I don't know he's planning on stopping by or not, but if he does, and you're still here, you better keep your hands to yourself! You got that, Lorenzo?!

LORENZO

You know somehow I always knew you'd up falling for someone who beats you.

NIVIA

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

LORENZO

I mean everyone knows that a girl who grows up without a dominate father figure in her life is more likely to end up in an abusive relationship in her adult life.

NIVIA

What are you even talking about? I had a dominate father figure in my life. What do you call dad?

LORENZO

I call dad a punk, that's what I call him. If dad had done what most fathers would've done if the guy their daughter was dating had given her a black eye, you wouldn't be with Keith today.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY -
FLASHBACK

KEITH, a Bruno Mars type, is alone on the couch playing a video game. Nivia brings Keith a drink and stands in his way when she gives him his glass.

KEITH
Get out my way, Nivia! Don't you
see I'm playing here?

Nivia steps aside.

NIVIA
Oh, I'm sorry! I was only bringing
you the drink you asked for.

KEITH
Alright, you were bringing
something for me to drink, but you
don't have to be stupid about it.

Nivia sits down next to Keith.

NIVIA
God, you are one moody fuck. I'm
coming into this game right now.

Nivia picks up a game console and joins the game.

KEITH
Oh, I see you've been practicing,
huh?

NIVIA
Yup. You see the difference
already, huh?

KEITH
Yeah, but don't be getting cocky.
I'm not gonna go easy on you.

The door to the apartment opens and Lorenzo enters looking like he's just getting home from school. He locks the door behind him and is not happy to see Keith sitting on his couch.

LORENZO
Whoa! What the hell is this?!

NIVIA
What the hell is what, Lorenzo?!

Lorenzo looks past Nivia and talks to Keith.

LORENZO

You got a lot nerves coming back here, son!

NIVIA

Ma!

LORENZO

What's he doing here, Nivia?!

Denise comes running just in time.

DENISE

What?! What's all the yelling about?!

NIVIA

Tell Lorenzo to stop bothering us!

DENISE

Lorenzo?!

LORENZO

Lorenzo what?! What's he doing here, Ma?!

DENISE

What do you mean, what's he doing here? Nivia invited him to stay for dinner. He's a guest. Now, don't go starting anything.

LORENZO

Are you serious? This asshole blackens your daughter's eye, and you're gonna feed him now?!

DENISE

Lorenzo, what do you want from me? Your sister's so in love with this guy, that if I tell him to leave, she's just gonna leave with him, and then we'll never see her again. So, please, just go to your room and stay there until it's time to eat.

LORENZO

Go to my room?! You're telling me to go to room?! I can't wait for dad to get home from work. We'll see what he has to say about this shit.

Lorenzo goes to his room and slams the door behind him.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

All four members of the Rios family are at the dinner table eating. Lorenzo is staring at Benicio, waiting to see if or when he's going to tear Keith a new one.

NIVIA

Hey, Dad, guess what.

BENICIO

What?

NIVIA

Keith just got the results of his civil servant exam and got a ninety four.

BENICIO

A ninety four?! Hey, that's pretty good. Those with scores that high are almost guaranteed a job. What kind of job is it?

KEITH

Train conductor.

BENICIO

Train conductor, huh? That's the exam I should've taken, but I took the one for traffic agent instead.

KEITH

Oh, you're one of those cops who go around writing up tickets and leaving them on people's windshields?

BENICIO

Yeah, I'm one of those cops. You don't have any unpaid parking tickets, do you?

KEITH

I don't have a car, but I'll be getting one real soon.

BENICIO

Well, don't let me catch you being reckless behind the wheel, especially when my daughter's in the car with you, or I'll bust you!

Lorenzo can't believe how chummy Benicio is being with Keith.

DENISE
Keith, would you like some more
Mofongo?

KEITH
Wepa.

Keith holds out his plate for Denise to serve him and Lorenzo loses his appetite.

LORENZO
I had enough.

Lorenzo slides away from the table in his seat and stands up.

DENISE
You barely touched your plate.
Where are you going?

LORENZO
That's alright. I see how it is.

Lorenzo shoots Benicio an angry look and walks away from the table.

BENICIO
What's with him?

DENISE
He'll be alright.

Dinner goes on without Lorenzo.

INT. NIVIA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - PRESENT DAY

Nivia rips into Lorenzo for drumming up painful memories.

NIVIA
I'll have you know that Keith
hasn't laid hands on me in that way
since then.

LORENZO
So, he's been on his best behavior
since then. So the fuck what?
What's that supposed to mean, that
he's cured?!

NIVIA
You know what your problem is,
Lorenzo?

(MORE)

NIVIA (CONT'D)

You hold on to things too long.
Everything you just talked about
happened so long ago. Why don't
you let it go?! Get over it!

LORENZO

It's not that I can't get over
stuff, it's that my memory is just
that photographic. I got that
Marilyn Henner thing. I may not be
able to tell you what the weather
was like, or what day of the week
it was on May 3rd, 1980, but my
memory is just that photographic.
So, I can't just get over stuff!

NIVIA

Whatever, Lorenzo. All I know is
that if you don't do something
about your unforgiving nature and
keep recounting the ways you've
been wronged by the people in your
life, you're going to turn out to
be one miserable human being.

The doorbell rings. Nivia leaves Lorenzo alone in the living
room to go answer the door and returns to Lorenzo with Keith
in tow.

KEITH

(being friendly)
What's up, Lorenzo?

Lorenzo looks Keith up and down.

KEITH (CONT'D)

You know what, man? This shit's
been going on long enough! You
wanna hit me so bad, then get on
with it already!

Nivia gets in Lorenzo's way to stop him from getting to
Keith.

NIVIA

Lorenzo, stop!

KEITH

Get out the way, Nivia! Let him
come.

NIVIA

It's time for you to go, Lorenzo.
If you can't be cool, then you
can't stay here. We'll try this
again some other time.

Nivia ushers Lorenzo out the door.

INT. ACTIVE TEMP AGENCY - DAY

The office is packed with people looking for temporary work.
Karen offers Lorenzo half of her bagel.

KAREN

Are you sure you don't want split
this bagel with me? It looks like
we're going to be here for a while.

LORENZO

No thanks.

KAREN

What's the matter with you? You
feeling okay?

LORENZO

Yeah, it's just that I thought I'd
be done with this place by now.
I'm so sick of this place.

KAREN

So, am I ever gonna get a chance to
read one of your scripts?

LORENZO

I didn't know you were interested
in reading my work.

KAREN

Well, I am.

LORENZO

Then, we'll have to work something
out.

Brandon comes by and puts his hand out as a peace offering.
Lorenzo looks Brandon up and down and snubs him.

BRANDON

Come on, man. You still pissed
about what happened the other day?
Don't be. I'm not. It was kind of
fun for me. Wasn't it fun for you?
(MORE)

BRANDON (CONT'D)

No one got arrested. We should be able to laugh about it by now.

Lorenzo ignores Brandon, and Brandon gives up.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Whatever, man, have it your way.

Brandon walks off.

KAREN

What was that about? Did you two have a fight?

LORENZO

You don't know how lucky you are to be female. I fucking hate males.

KAREN

Hey, girls could be hot messes, too. Don't get it twisted.

LORENZO

Do you believe the nerve on that guy? First, he tries to play me like a sucker, and then he expects me to give him dap, as if nothing ever happened.

KAREN

What did happen? Tell me everything. Don't leave anything out.

LORENZO

Some other time, Karen. I really don't wanna get into it now.

KAREN

Okay, that's cool.

LORENZO

Let me go see how much longer they're gonna have us sit here.

Lorenzo leaves his seat and walks over to Joe's desk to have a word with him.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Joe, what's going on?

JOE

To be honest with you, Lorenzo,
after what happened last time, I
don't know how comfortable I feel
about sending you out on any more
jobs.

LORENZO

Whoa! You blaming me for what
happened last time? You gotta be
kidding me?! You two dropped the
ball, and you wanna take it out on
me by not sending me out on anymore
jobs?

JOE

Who dropped the ball? I dropped the
ball? Get outta here! How did I
drop the ball? I didn't drop the
ball.

LORENZO

It had to be either you or Mike,
and Mike wasn't the one who sent me
and Brandon to go work for Lenny,
who only needed one worker. If I'm
not mistaken, that was you. So,
you dropped the ball, but you don't
wanna send me out on anymore jobs?
That's just fine with me! I don't
even know why I came back here
after the way you fucked up my
money. To hell with this place.
Active Temp Agency my ass!

Lorenzo storms out of the Active Temp Agency for the last
time.

INT. THE HUB - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Karen is on stage with her improv group going over some
improvisational exercises.

KAREN

Oh, I have an exercise we can try.
Do you guys know the game "One word
at a time?"

KAREN'S CLASSMATE

No, how does it go?

KAREN

I think you guys will like this one. Okay, it goes like this: We all get in a circle, and then one of us says a word, and then the person next to him or her will say a word, and then we keep going until we come up with a phrase, a sentence, a saying, or anything that makes sense. So, if I were to say "I," the next person to go would say something like "Rufus," then the next person would say "Take," and then the next person would say "This," and the next person would say "Woman," and then we keep going until we finish something that makes sense. Does everybody understand?

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #2

Yeah, that sounds like a good one.

Lorenzo enters and takes a seat in the front row of the auditorium.

KAREN

Come on. Let's try it. I'll start it off. The first word that pops in your head.

Karen, and her group all form a circle.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Okay, here we go. If...

KAREN'S CLASSMATE

I.

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #2

Were.

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #3

A.

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #4

Betting.

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #5

Man.

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #6

Comma.

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #7
If I were a betting man. Comma?
Whoa, wait a minute. What? She's
throwing me off.

Karen steps in to officiate and gets everyone back on track.

KAREN
No, she's not throwing you off.
It's going well. If I were a
betting man. Comma. Just play off
of that. Take it from there.

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #7
If I were a betting man. Comma.
Finish.

KAREN
If I were a betting man. Comma.
Finish. That's good. Now, the
next person goes on...

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #8
The.

Now, they're back to Karen.

KAREN
Rest.

KAREN'S CLASSMATE
Of.

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #2
The.

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #3
Sentence.

KAREN
If I were a betting man. Comma.
Finish the rest of the sentence.
Okay, let's stop there. That was
good. Well done. Did you feel it?
Do you see what was happening?

KAREN'S CLASSMATE #2
Yeah, that was fun. I can use an
exercise like this to help me with
my ad-libbing.

Karen does a double take when she sees Lorenzo sitting in the
front row and waves at him. Lorenzo waves back.

KAREN

Alright, give me a minute, guys,
and then we'll try it again.

Karen walks off the stage to say hi to Lorenzo.

INT. KAREN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Karen is sitting in front of her desk top computer going over Lorenzo's script while he sleeps in her bed. Lorenzo feels the sun's rays on his face and finally wakes up.

KAREN

Hey, you. How did you sleep?

Lorenzo sits up in the bed and wipes the boogers from eyes.

LORENZO

I slept good. Your bed is so
comfortable.

KAREN

Good.

Karen gets back to Lorenzo's script. Lorenzo kicks the sheets off and picks his pants up off the floor to put them on.

LORENZO

Is that my script your reading?

Lorenzo sits back on the bed to put on his socks and shoes.

KAREN

Yes, it is. It's not bad, Lorenzo.
I really mean that. I gotta admit
that when you first told me about
your aspirations, I thought you
were only trying to impress me, but
you really are that talented. I
don't know why Hollywood isn't
beating down your door trying to
land you, but keep shopping your
scripts around. You can't give up.

LORENZO

If only you were someone in the
business who could give me a leg
up.

KAREN

I do have one critique.

LORENZO
Oh boy. Here we go.

Lorenzo gets off the bed and walks over to Karen shirtless.

KAREN
It's more of a suggestion than a critique. Do you wanna hear it, or no?

LORENZO
Okay. Tell me.

Lorenzo lets Karen talk while he leans over to kiss her on the neck.

KAREN
If you want to see the lead role go to someone Puerto Rican, you should give the lead character more to say in Spanish. Lorenzo? Are you paying attention?

Lorenzo continues to neck Karen.

LORENZO
Yeah, I'm listening. Don't mind me. Go ahead.

Karen struggles to get her point across with Lorenzo necking her.

KAREN
Because as the script reads right now, I could see the lead going to anyone who is White, Black, Asian, Indian.

LORENZO
Uh-huh.

KAREN
So, just give the lead character more to say in Spanish. Have the lead character say something like kiss my ass in Spanish, have him say something about piraguas, for all I care. Is the piragua man even on the corner with his cart yet? All this talk of piraguas makes me wanna go out and get one now.

Karen is too hot and bothered by Lorenzo's necking to go on with her critique, and they start making out passionately.

LORENZO

That's good stuff. You've given me a lot to think about. It looks I still have work to do. I'm gonna get on that right away.

KAREN

I'm glad I could help.

LORENZO

Well, I better be getting home. My parents are probably running around like chickens with their heads cut off for staying out all night without calling.

Karen gets out of her seat and follows Lorenzo to the couch where he left his shirt.

KAREN

Hopefully, we'll get to do this again soon.

Lorenzo grabs his shirt and puts on. His phone starts to ring. He sees the number on the phone and recognizes it.

LORENZO

Oh, this is the call I've been waiting for. I gotta take this. Give me one second.

KAREN

Go ahead.

Lorenzo answers his phone.

LORENZO

Hello?

INT. STACEY LU'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

STACEY LU, a literary agent calling from California, is sitting behind her desk with Lorenzo's script in front of her.

STACEY

Hello, am I speaking with Lorenzo Rios?

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

LORENZO

Yeah, this is Lorenzo.

STACEY

Hi, Lorenzo. This is Stacey Lu.
You sent me your script.

LORENZO

Oh, Hi, Stacey. How are you?

Karen is curious to know who Lorenzo is talking to.

KAREN

Stacey?

Lorenzo gestures for Karen to be quiet so he could hear Stacey.

STACEY

I'm not calling you at a bad time,
am I?

LORENZO

No, it's fine. We can talk now.

STACEY

Well, I calling to let you know how
much I enjoyed reading your script.
You have a very unique voice.
That's something we could use a lot
more of around here. I'm also
calling to talk to you about
representation.

Karen can't help but to listen in Lorenzo's phone call.

LORENZO

Really?

(listens to Stacey)

No, I have no representation.

That's something I could use a lot
of.

(listens)

Uh-huh. And they wanna meet with
me next week in New York, right?

(listens to Stacey)

The meeting is going to take place
here in New York?

(listens to Stacey)

Uh-huh.

(sigh of relief)

Okay, Stacey.

(MORE)

LORENZO (CONT'D)

I'm looking forward to this. I'll talk to you soon. Bye.

Lorenzo gets off the phone with Stacey.

KAREN

Okay, are you gonna tell me what that was all about?

LORENZO

I don't know. I think my life is about to change.

Lorenzo closes in on Karen to steal that kiss.

KAREN

Wait a minute! I thought you had to get home?

LORENZO

I do, but fuck that. I could wait a few more days to rub the good news in my parents' faces.

KAREN

Okay, that's more like it. Let's get your clothes and get you back into bed.

Lorenzo takes his shirt back off, and he and Karen make their way over to the bed.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Denise can be heard talking to Nivia on the phone in the kitchen. Benicio stomps on a cockroach that managed to enter the apartment through a window that Denise left opened.

DENISE (O.C.)

God damn it, Nivia, I'm sick of you always covering for your brother. If you know where he is, you better tell me! You can't keep things like this from me!

Benicio closes the window and starts in on Denise on his way to the kitchen.

BENICIO

Denise, how many times do I have to tell you not to leave the window open without putting up the screen?
(MORE)

BENICIO (CONT'D)

That's how these big ass roaches
keep getting in.

Benicio joins Denise in the kitchen.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Benicio tries to listen in on Denise's conversation with
Nivia.

BENICIO

Well, what's she saying, Denise?

Denise covers the mouthpiece on the phone to answer Benicio.

DENISE

She says she hasn't seen or heard
from Lorenzo since he showed up at
her house that day.

Denise gets back to Nivia.

DENISE (CONT'D)

What the hell do you think I'm
gonna tell him?! I'm gonna tell
him that if he's wants to keep
living here, he's got to call and
let us know where he's going to be.

(listens)

If he ever walks through that damn
door again. He could be lying dead
somewhere, for all we know!

Benicio grabs a broom and a dust pan to sweep up the dead
roach in the living room and leaves the kitchen.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Benicio returns to the spot where he left the dead roach,
only to find it gone.

BENICIO

Where the hell did it go? I know
it was right here.

Benicio looks around for the roach and sees it hobbling its
way under the dinner table.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

See, this is why the big ones freak
me out so much.

Benicio catches up with the roach and stomps on it three times.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

Why are the big ones so much harder
to kill than the smaller ones?

Benicio makes sure the roach is dead this time before
sweeping it up in the dust pan.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS
LATER

The time on the clock radio reads 11:33 p.m. Benicio and
Denise are getting ready for bed.

DENISE

It's almost midnight, Benicio.
Still no word from Lorenzo. Where
do you think he is right now?

BENICIO

I'm sure he'll be fine for the next
couple of days, maybe five. He'll
outstay his welcome at his friend's
house, whichever friend that might
be, and he'll come right back here.
Let's just go to bed.

Benicio sits down at the foot of his bed to take off his
shoes.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

Man, oh man. What a night. Where
did I go wrong with this kid? I
keep wracking my brain around this
thing, and I can't for the life of
me figure out where I went wrong.

DENISE

You can't?

Benicio shoots an angry look at Denise.

BENICIO

What's that supposed to mean,
Denise? You got something you
wanna say to me? Let's hear it.

DENISE

Okay, you wanna know where you went
wrong with this kid? I'll help you
out.

(MORE)

DENISE (CONT'D)

How bout the time when you sat our seven year old boy down and asked him if he would be okay with you checking out on the family? How's that for starters?

BENICIO

He told you about that?

DENISE

No, he told Nivia, then Nivia told me. What were you thinking, Benicio? What kind of talk is that to have with a seven-year-old? No wonder things were always so awkward between you two.

BENICIO

Yeah, okay, maybe I shouldn't have had that talk with him, but what's that got to do with the way he's been behaving lately? I don't know why he would choose to put himself through all those rejections just to get into the movie business. If he'd only go out and get a real job like a normal person we wouldn't be having this problem.

DENISE

Well, how was he supposed to learn about work ethics when the first thing his father does when he comes home from work every day is get pissed drunk and rant about how much he hates his line of work?

Benicio takes offense and fires back.

BENICIO

And you've been the perfect mother, right?! Is that what you're saying? Let me ask your hoarding ass a question. You wanna talk to me about awkward? Here's an awkward question for you. Why do you think Lorenzo dreads our family get-togethers?

DENISE

I don't know why. How should I know?

BENICIO

Maybe it's because you've been trashing Lorenzo in front of family for so long that we're now at the point where he can't even bring himself to show his face at family get-togethers because he's too embarrassed and ashamed.

DENISE

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

BENICIO

Oh, you don't, huh?!

DENISE

I really don't.

Frustrated, Benicio waves Denise off

BENICIO

Whatever, Denise! Shut up!

DENISE

Don't tell me to shut up! You shut up!

BENICIO

Are you looking to get smacked?! Is that it?

DENISE

Don't threaten me, Benicio!

The back and forth between Benicio and Denise comes to a stop when the light bulb in their room suddenly starts flickering like crazy.

DENISE (CONT'D)

That's weird.

The light bulb flickers for a good minute then stops.

BENICIO

Yeah, that was weird.

Benicio and Denise keep looking at the light bulb but it seems that the flickering is over for the time being.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

Look, it's late. Let's just go to bed.

Denise gets out of bed.

DENISE

No, after everything you just said to me, I don't think I could sleep in the same bed with you tonight. I'm going to sleep in Nivia's old room.

BENICIO

Fine with me. Why don't you go do that?

Denise leaves Benicio alone in the room.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

It's dark. The only light getting in is coming from the moon, and the time on the clock radio that reads 2:43 a.m. Benicio is having a dream he thinks is happening in real time. He is fast asleep and opens his eyes when he feels someone he assumes is Denise climbing into bed behind him.

BENICIO

You coming back to bed?

Benicio gets no response.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

So, does this mean you're not mad anymore?

Still no response.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

Well, you're in the bed with me, so I'm gonna take your silence as a yes.

A creepy hiss.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

Come on, Denise. If you're gonna be like this, why don't you go back to Nivia's room?

Benicio finally turns over to face Denise and jumps out of bed screaming when he sees a shadow figure made up of thousands of big cockroaches looking back at him with glowing red eyes. The shadowy figure breaks apart, and before he knows it, Benicio finds himself covered with cockroaches.

Benicio wakes up from his nightmare in a cold sweat and finds nothing in the bed next to him.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - NIVIA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The only light in the room is coming from the moon. An eight foot tall shadowy figure that is so much darker than the dark itself looks down on Denise and reaches down from the ceiling to smother her in her sleep. Denise feels the need to sit up and gasp for air, but there's something holding her down. Her breathing labored, Denise grabs both sides of the mattress and rocks from side to side until she falls from the frame of the bed and hits the floor with the mattress landing on top of her.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Benicio is just about to go back to bed when he hears a loud thud from Nivia's room and gets out of bed to go check on Denise.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Benicio runs out of the master bedroom and goes next door to Nivia's bedroom but can't get in.

BENICIO

Denise, what's going on in there?!

Benicio turns the knob and bangs on the door.

BENICIO (CONT'D)

Denise, are you alright?!

Benicio tries the door knob again and this time it opens.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - NIVIA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Benicio turns on the light in the bedroom and goes over to Denise when he finds her cowering in a corner.

BENICIO

Denise, what are you doing on the floor?!

DENISE

It's the damndest thing. It felt like I was having a heart attack. I couldn't catch my breath.

(MORE)

DENISE (CONT'D)

And when I tried to sit up it felt like something was holding me down.

BENICIO

Are you okay now?

DENISE

I could use some water.

BENICIO

Okay, I'll get you some water.
Don't move.

Benicio leaves Denise on the floor and stands up to leave the room. Benicio is making his way towards the door when the light in the room goes out. Sitting in total darkness, Denise hears a loud thud on the floor and screams, fearing the worst.

DENISE

Ouch! Benicio, what was that?!
Are you hurt?! Talk to me!

The light in the room comes back on, and Denise sees Benicio on the floor holding his head.

BENICIO

I'm good. I hit the damn wall on my way out the door. What the hell is going on with these lights?!

Denise slides across the floor to get to Benicio and checks on him.

DENISE

Move your hand. Let me see your head.

BENICIO

How does it look? Am I bleeding.

DENISE

Your forehead is red, but no blood.

BENICIO

Now, I gotta show up to work with a big ass bump on my forehead.

DENISE

Can you stand up?

BENICIO

Yeah, I could stand up.

Denise helps Benicio to his feet.

DENISE
Okay, here we go.

Benicio takes Denise by the arm to pull himself up. Denise reacts and complains of a burning sensation on her upper back.

DENISE (CONT'D)
OW! OW! OW!

BENICIO
What?! What's the matter with you?

DENISE
I don't know, but my back hurts
like a motherfucker!

BENICIO
Let me see.

Benicio lifts her shirt and sees scratches going down her back.

BENICIO (CONT'D)
Whoa! How did you get these?

DENISE
What? What do you see?

BENICIO
Scratches. Five long scratches.

DENISE
That's what it feels like. It
burns like hell.

BENICIO
Let's go into the bathroom. I'll
treat it with some hydrogen
peroxide.

DENISE
What the hell is going on around
here tonight?!

BENICIO
I don't know, and I gotta go to
work in three hours.

Benicio and Denise link arms and make it out of the room together.

EXT. STREET - DAY

There's a car parked at a curb. The driver gets out of the car and goes into a bodega without setting the brake properly. Benicio, dressed in uniform, runs into the driver on the way out of the bodega. The car starts to roll into the street, and Benicio drops his bottle of beer to get in front of this thing to stop it from rolling into traffic. Benicio loses his footing and ends up getting pinned down under the wheels of the car. Good samaritans come running to get the car off of Benicio.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Denise is standing with her back turned to the bathroom mirror checking out the reflection of the scratches on her back in a hand held mirror when the phone rings.

DENISE

I fucking hate bad timing.

Denise leaves the bathroom to answer the phone.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Denise answers the phone.

DENISE

Hello?

Denise listens to the caller on the other end.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Yes, this is Mrs. Rios.

Denise listens.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Is he alright? How bad is it?

Denise is too preoccupied to notice the floating spirit orbs.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Thank goodness.

Denise listens in.

DENISE (CONT'D)

St. Lukes Hospital, okay. I'm on my way. Thank you so much for calling.

Denise listens.

DENISE (CONT'D)
I'll do that. Thanks again.

Denise gets off the phone with the caller to call Nivia and gets the machine.

DENISE (CONT'D)
Nivia, it's your Ma. Listen, don't worry. Everything is fine, but I need you to meet me at St. Luke's Hospital. Your Daddy was in an accident, but he wasn't seriously hurt. I'm on my way over there now. Don't bother calling me back when you get this, just come to the hospital. Love you.

Denise ends her call and gets off the phone. Denise feels a hard tug on her pony tail and nearly falls over backwards. Freaking out, Denise looks around and sees nothing out of the ordinary. Her arms covered with goosebumps, Denise caresses them and runs the hell out of the kitchen.

INT. ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Benicio is in a hospital bed waiting for his doctor to come in with the results of his X-rays. Benicio's Doctor enters the room with some good news and bad news about his X-rays.

BENICIO'S DOCTOR
Mr. Rios, for a man your age to be pinned under the wheel of a car without any broken bones or fractures to show for it is nothing short of remarkable.

BENICIO
So, I'm okay? Does that mean I don't have to stay here? I could go?

Benicio's doctor plasters his x-ray film onto a illuminator to highlight the water in his right knee.

BENICIO'S DOCTOR
Well, not so fast, you did say that you've been complaining about pain in your right knee long before today's incident, right?

BENICIO

Yeah, my right knee's been hurting
for a couple of weeks.

Benicio's doctor points out the problem area for him on the
film.

BENICIO'S DOCTOR

That's because you got a lot of
synovial fluid building up around
the knee joint. It's what we call
knee or joint effusion. Do you see
that?

BENICIO

Yeah.

BENICIO'S DOCTOR

So, it's your call. I know you're
anxious to get out of here, but,
the way I see it, even if you
hadn't been brought in today, you
would've come in eventually seeking
treatment for your knee. So, as
long as you're here already, you
might as well let us treat it for
you now.

BENICIO

So, how much longer would I have to
stay here, if I decide to go
through with this?

BENICIO'S DOCTOR

No more than two days, but, as I
said, it's your call.

BENICIO

(sighs)

Two days. Two days.

Benicio mulls over the idea of staying at the hospital
overnight.

INT. ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL - CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

There's only a handful of people around. Denise is sitting
at a table across from Nivia with her rain coat buttoned up.

NIVIA

So, still no word from Lorenzo?

DENISE

No.

NIVIA

What did the cops say when you reported him missing?

DENISE

I haven't gone to them yet. I already know what they're going to say. They're going to say that he's an adult, and that he's free to come and go as he pleases.

NIVIA

I'm sure he'll turn up, Ma. He probably met a girl he never told you about, some chick with her own crib.

DENISE

I don't see how that could be when he spends most of time on that damn computer of his writing stupid movie scripts.

NIVIA

Maybe writing screenplays is not all he's doing when he's on his computer.

DENISE

What do you mean?

NIVIA

What I'm saying is maybe he met a girl to hook up with online.

DENISE

You mean people are actually meeting and falling for each other over the internet? I don't buy that. Who does that?

Nivia notices that Denise hasn't touched the tray of food in front of her.

NIVIA

Are you gonna finish your food?

DENISE

No, I don't really feel like eating.

NIVIA

You should be happy Dad wasn't seriously hurt. It could've been so much worse. So what if doctors want to keep him here a bit longer as a precaution?

DENISE

That's just it. He has to be here a bit longer, which means I have to go back to that apartment by myself, and I don't know if I could do it.

NIVIA

What's the big deal about going back to the apartment by yourself?

DENISE

Some crazy things have been going on in the apartment lately.

NIVIA

What crazy things?

DENISE

Like there's someone else in the house with me when your Dad is away at work. It feels like I'm being watched all the time. It's gotten so creepy over there, I can't even change out of my clothes.

NIVIA

You're afraid to change out of your clothes in your own home? I'm almost afraid to ask what you got going on underneath that trench coat.

DENISE

But that's not all. I was also scratched on my back.

Denise opens up her rain coat to show Nivia her back.

NIVIA

Whoa, how did that happen?

Nivia feels the scratches.

DENISE

That's just it. I have no idea how.

NIVIA
Does it hurt?

DENISE
Not so much anymore, but it hurt
like a motherfucker at first.

NIVIA
It feels like I'm reading in
braille.

DENISE
I'm covering up now.

Denise closes her rain coat and buttons up.

NIVIA
So, what's the big deal about
getting scratched?

Denise is annoyed with Nivia's skepticism and loses her
patience.

DENISE
Scratches just don't happen, Nivia.
Scratches just don't appear out of
nowhere. A rash I could
understand, but that's not what's
happening here. I haven't even
told you about the weird nightmares
your father's been having.

NIVIA
Okay, okay, take it easy.

Denise takes a deep breath.

NIVIA (CONT'D)
So, you don't wanna go back to the
apartment by yourself? Would you
like me to stay with you, until dad
comes home?

DENISE
Would you?

NIVIA
Yeah, okay. But we'll have to go
to my place, first, so I could pick
up a few things.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nivia is in bed with Denise sleeping next to her. Nivia looks at the photos Denise took of Tia Maritza during her last visit and notices some strange anomalies. She hears a knock on the door to the apartment and tries to get out of bed without waking Denise.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nivia looks through the peep hole and opens the door for Keith.

NIVIA

What are you doing here, Keith?

KEITH

I thought you could use the company. Are you gonna let me in?

Nivia steps aside to let Keith in.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Where's your mother?

NIVIA

Asleep in her bed.

Nivia locks the door to the apartment.

KEITH

Is she still being weird?

NIVIA

I don't know what you mean.

Nivia and Keith make their way over to the couch and get comfortable.

KEITH

Of course, you don't. Not that I believe in any of this stuff, but they say that too much clutter in a house that's supposedly haunted can make matters worse.

NIVIA

Don't start with that again, Keith.

KEITH

I'm just saying. Why don't you tell your mother to get rid of that junk?

NIVIA

Okay, okay, would you stop talking already? I got some pictures I want you to look at.

KEITH

What pictures?

Nivia shows Keith the pictures with the strange anomalies in them.

NIVIA

My mother took some pictures of my Tia Maritza in the kitchen the last time she was here.

Keith takes the pictures from Nivia.

KEITH

What's that white stuff next to your aunt?

NIVIA

I was kind of hoping you could tell me. I have no idea.

KEITH

Did they all come out like that?

NIVIA

Just about. There's even one picture where you could see what looks like a hand giving my Tia the finger.

Nivia shows Keith the picture she's referring to.

NIVIA (CONT'D)

Doesn't that look like a middle finger? There's the hand, and that's the middle finger sticking straight up at her.

KEITH

Get outta here. I don't see that. It's probably steam. You said these pictures were taken in the kitchen, right? Maybe your Tia was in the middle of cooking something when your mother took the picture.

NIVIA

Yeah, you're probably right.

Keith loses interests and gives the pictures back to Nivia.

KEITH

Hold on. I gotta go to the
bathroom, but I want for us to be
making out when I get back.

Keith gets up and leaves Nivia on the couch.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Keith gets his phone out and prompts himself up on the
bathroom sink while he makes a call to another woman.

KEITH

Hey, what's up, baby girl? It's
me.

(listens)

I'm good. What are you up to?

(listens)

That's why I'm calling. About
tonight. I'm not gonna be able to
make it. How 'bout this Friday?

Keith listens to the girl on the other end.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nivia tires of waiting for Keith and starts flipping through
the channels on television.

NIVIA

What the hell is he doing in there?

Nivia resumes channel surfing.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A shadowy doppelganger lies in wait for Keith to come out of
the bathroom. Keith comes out of the bathroom and gets
pounced on from behind. Right away, the Doppelganger goes
for rear naked choke hold. Keith falls over backwards and
hears something creepy in his ear.

THE DOPPELGANGER

(in a demonic voice)

Lorenzo says hello.

Keith kicks his legs in the air trying to get out of the
choke hold.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Denise hears the commotion going on outside of her bedroom and cracks the door open just enough to pop her head out to see what is going on and sees Keith on the floor being choked to death by this shadowy thing with Lorenzo's face. Denise screams and hides inside.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nivia hears the screams and gets off the couch to check on Denise.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nivia finds Keith on the floor on her way to the master bedroom.

NIVIA

Keith! What the hell?! Are you alright?

The worse seems to be over for Keith.

NIVIA (CONT'D)

Why's my mother screaming?

Nivia leaves Keith on the floor and tries to get Denise to let her in the room.

NIVIA (CONT'D)

Ma, open the door! What's going on in there? Open the door.

Nivia bangs on the door.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Denise prays as she stacks every stick of furnisher in the room against the door to keep the thing from getting in.

DENISE

Holy Marry, mother of God, pray for us sinners now until the hour of our death, Amen.

Denise ignores Nivia's pleas and keeps pushing furnisher against the door.

NIVIA (O.C.)

Ma, let me in!

DENISE

Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for
us sinners now, until the hour of
our death, Amen.

The light in the room starts flickering like crazy and a black mist appears in the room with Denise and freaks her out. Denise screams and removes the furnisher away from the door so she can get the hell out of dodge.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nivia is pushed aside when Denise comes running out of the room in hysterics. Denise doesn't see Keith on the floor when she comes running out the room and steps on his head trying to get to the door to the apartment. Nivia manages to catch up to Denise and stops her from leaving the apartment.

NIVIA

Ma, stop! It's okay!

DENISE

No, it's not! I saw it! It's
here! There's something here! We
gotta leave! We can't stay.

NIVIA

Just calm down, Ma! Whatever it
was, it's gone now. I don't see
it.

DENISE

I wanna leave. I don't care. We
can't stay here.

NIVIA

Okay, we'll leave. We'll stay at
my place. Just relax. Just stay
here. I gotta go check on Keith.
You stepped on his head pretty
good.

Both Nivia and Denise get startled and scream when they hear three loud knocks on the door.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)

Police! Open up.

Denise stops Nivia from opening the door.

DENISE

What are you doing? Don't open the
door.

NIVIA

What do you mean?! Of course, I gotta open the door. It's the police.

DENISE

Well, what are you gonna tell them?

Nivia opens the door to two police officers standing outside.

NIVIA

Yes, officers?

POLICE OFFICER

Is everything okay in here?

NIVIA

Yes, everything is fine.

POLICE OFFICER

We got a call from some of your neighbors. They reported hearing screams coming from this apartment.

NIVIA

Yes, there was screaming, but you won't get anymore trouble from us, officers. I promise.

Keith is still on the floor in the hallway and finally starts to come around, not knowing where the fuck he is.

KEITH (O.S.)

My head! Where the fuck is everybody?! I pissed myself.

POLICE OFFICER

Who was that?

NIVIA

That's nobody, officer.

POLICE OFFICER

We'll be the judge of that. Step aside, please.

Nivia steps aside to let the officers in.

INT. HBO STUDIOS - OFFICE - DAY

Lorenzo is in a pitch meeting with three studio executives.

STUDIO EXEC

So, we like the title, Lorenzo. A Residual Haunting is a good working title. We get it, but what message are you hoping audiences who come to see your movie will walk away with?

LORENZO

Well, to tell you the truth, I haven't given it much thought. To me, it's all about the story line. What matters to me is the story line, that it's plausible and well received. Take the protagonist from that movie Sunset Boulevard, that old movie from the fifties, he wasn't big on movies with messages in them either. Besides, moviegoers often walk away with messages other than the one the filmmaker was trying to convey. For instance, I saw Do The Right Thing six times, and all I got from watching that movie is that Black people like looking for trouble, that Black people are nothing but troublemakers. I'm sure that's not what the filmmaker was going for, but that's what I got. I mean, come on, man. How come you ain't got no pictures of brothas on the wall?! What kind of bullshit is that?!

Lorenzo's got everyone in the room cracking up.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Like Sal said, get your own damn pizzeria, and then you could put up as many pictures of brothas as you want on the wall! What are you starting trouble for?! Buggin' Out, my ass!

The studio executives can't stop laughing.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

And what about Radio Raheem's stupid ass?! I wasn't mad when Sal took a bat and smashed Radio Raheem's boom box. If I was Sal, I would've done the same damn thing!

(MORE)

LORENZO (CONT'D)

You think you're gonna come into my place of business and blast your music? I don't think so, Radio Raheem. Go be an asshole somewhere else.

Lorenzo takes a drink of water while everyone keeps laughing.

INT. COURT HOUSE - DAY

Lorenzo meets with an Entertainment Attorney and has him look over a contract before signing anything.

LORENZO

I hate to have to do this to you again, but can you explain the details of this contract to me one more time? I just want to make sure that I understand everything before I sign.

ENTERTAINMENT LAWYER

Hey, don't feel bad. I get how misleading these Standard Writing Services Contracts can be. That's what I'm here for. I'd be more than happy to go over it again with you. I don't think you realize what a far cry you are from the usual knuckle heads that come into this office seeking my counsel. So, yeah, I'd be more than happy to go over this contract with you again.

The entertainment lawyer flips to the first page of the contract.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Lorenzo comes to a Bus Stop just blocks away from his childhood home in the projects and rips off a missing person poster with his face on it.

INT. FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING PROJECTS - LOBBY - DAY

Lorenzo enters the building with a purpose and does a double take when he sees his face on a missing person poster that is taped to a wall and takes it down.

INT. FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING PROJECTS - HALLWAY -
CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo knocks on his parents door and gets no answer.

LORENZO
Is anybody home?! It's me.

Lorenzo stops knocking and puts his ear to the door for any sign of life inside the apartment.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
If you're in there, open up!

Lorenzo gives up and walks away from the door to the apartment.

INT. NIVIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lorenzo shows up at Nivia's doorstep and knocks. Denise comes to the door, takes one look at Lorenzo, screams, and slams the door in his face.

LORENZO
What the hell?

Lorenzo knocks again. Nivia comes to the door this time.

NIVIA
Well, well, well, look who finally
decided to turn up.

Nivia lets Lorenzo in.

INT. NIVIA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lorenzo gets the missing person flyer out of his back pocket and unfolds it for his family to see.

LORENZO
Did you put up these posters of me
missing all over the neighborhood?

NIVIA
Well, yeah!

LORENZO
Why? I wasn't missing. I was
staying with a lady friend.

NIVIA
(to Denise)
What did I tell you?

DENISE
Well, you could just stay with
whoever she is at her place.
There's no way we're going to let
you continue to stay with us, not
until you apologize for not telling
us where you've been.

LORENZO
Um, excuse me, but when have we
ever been a family that
communicated? We've never been a
family that communicated. So, I
don't know why you're getting so
worked up over a phone call that
you knew I was never gonna make.

NIVIA
I guess it's a good thing the cops
couldn't have cared less when you
went to them, Ma.

LORENZO
The cops?! You went to the cops
about me being missing?

DENISE
Um, excuse you, but no one's seen
or heard from you in days, and then
the next thing I know we're all
being terrorized by your ghost, so
what the hell else are we supposed
to think? Of course, we're going
to think the worst.

LORENZO
My ghost? What do you mean by
that?!

DENISE
Just what I said. What I saw
choking the life out of Keith
looked just like you, only it had a
body that was all dark and smoky.

LORENZO
Keith was nearly choked death?

Nivia sees the smirk on Lorenzo's face and becomes enraged.

NIVIA

Lorenzo, if you don't wipe that stupid smirk off your face...

LORENZO

What smirk?! My face is fine. I don't know what you're talking about.

NIVIA

Don't give me that! I saw you smirking. Cut it out! I know that all of this must seem like a bunch of crap to you, but this is serious.

LORENZO

I know this is serious. I'll even go to the apartment and check it out for myself to show you how seriously I'm taking this.

NIVIA

Are you sure you wanna do that?

LORENZO

Yeah, it's worth a try, right? Who knows? Maybe my presence alone will be enough to scare this thing away.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT - MOMENTS
LATER

Lorenzo opens the door to the apartment halfway and pops his head in to have a look around before setting foot all the way inside with his backpack.

LORENZO

Hello?

Lorenzo stands by the door to the apartment in case he has to make a fast getaway.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Are you here?

Lorenzo builds up the courage to venture into the living room.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo stands in the middle of the floor and calls the thing out.

LORENZO

Well, here I am. Don't you wanna
say hey to your long lost twin?

Lorenzo sets his backpack down on the couch.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

I heard you tried to take out my
sister's boyfriend. In case you
haven't heard, it's her ex-
boyfriend now. So, what's your
deal? Are you just misunderstood,
or what?

Sensing no danger, Lorenzo starts to move around more.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

I don't think you're gonna be
scaring a whole lot of people using
my face, though.

Lorenzo leaves the living room and makes his way into the kitchen.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo calls out the entity.

LORENZO

Nothing in here either, huh?

Lorenzo leaves the kitchen and makes his way to the bedrooms.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo enters and sits at the foot of the bed.

LORENZO

I can't believe I'm doing this.

Lorenzo sits on the bed a bit longer and waits for something to happen.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - NIVIA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo enters and gets his phone out to make a call.

INT. NIVIA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nivia sees that it's Lorenzo calling and takes the call.

NIVIA

Well, tell me. What's it look like over there?

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

LORENZO

I don't know what to tell you, Nivia. There's nothing going on so far. I've been in the master bedroom. I just finished checking my room, and now I'm in your room.

NIVIA

You mean to tell me that you haven't seen anything?

LORENZO

What did I just say? Where did Ma say she felt something pull on her hair?

NIVIA

That happened in the kitchen.

LORENZO

What about Keith? Where did he get attacked?

NIVIA

That was in the hallway, just outside the master bedroom.

LORENZO

Look at that. I've been here thirty minutes already, and I haven't seen a damn thing yet. I wonder what this entity is waiting for.

NIVIA

Just don't let your guard down, Lorenzo. There is something there, and if you let your guard down you're gonna see for yourself real quick.

LORENZO

I hear you. I'm gonna be staying here a while longer, so I'll call back later to let you know if anything happens.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lorenzo is at the dinner table eating take out while watching television. There's a knock on the door.

LORENZO

Oh shit. She came. I don't believe it.

Lorenzo gets up from the table with a smile on his face and answers the door.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

I didn't think you were going to show up.

Lorenzo steps aside to let Karen in.

KAREN

Would I have asked for directions on how to get here if I wasn't going to come?

Lorenzo locks the door behind Karen and gives her a kiss.

LORENZO

Sometimes people change their minds. It happens all the time.

KAREN

Na, I wasn't going to stand you up. Besides, you sounded so lonely on the phone. I had to come. Who knows? This could be fun.

LORENZO

Well, I can't promise you anything. I've been here nearly seven hours, and not a damn thing has happened to me yet, not even a BOO.

KAREN

So, do you think your family is making this whole thing up? Why would they do that?

LORENZO

I don't know.

KAREN

Na, your sister is not going to take your parents in, unless there was something going in this apartment.

LORENZO

Hey, are you hungry. I got food here.

KAREN

No thanks. I got myself something to eat before I came over here. How about giving me a tour of the place?

LORENZO

I could give you a tour, although, I don't know why you would need one. It's a three bedroom apartment in public housing. What is there to see?

KAREN

Hey, what better way is there to learn more about the guy I'm seeing? I'm interested in knowing more about where you grew up, okay? So, give me the damn tour.

LORENZO

Okay. Here we have the living room.

Karen goes over to the window to have look outside.

KAREN

At least you have a nice view of the neighborhood. What kind of view do you get on the other side of the building?

LORENZO

Just a big empty lot, not much of a view at all.

KAREN

Where to next?

Karen follows Lorenzo to the kitchen.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo shows Karen around.

LORENZO

Next, we have the kitchen.

KAREN

Is this where your mother said her hair was pulled?

LORENZO

Yup, she said this thing tugged on her pony-tail so hard, that she nearly fell over backwards.

KAREN

That really must have freaked your mother out. If something like that happened to me, I wouldn't wanna come back here.

LORENZO

Well, that's my mother for you. She likes the neighborhood. She finds a neighborhood that works for her, and she sticks with it.

KAREN

Where to next?

LORENZO

The bedrooms.

Karen follows Lorenzo out the kitchen and to the master bedroom.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo makes his way to bedroom.

LORENZO

This is where my sister's Ex got choked out.

KAREN

I know your ass laughed when they told you about that, didn't you?

LORENZO

I sure as hell didn't cry over it.

Karen laughs.

KAREN
You're so bad, Lorenzo.

Lorenzo comes to his bedroom and shows Karen around.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LORENZO'S BEDROOM -
CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo shows Karen to his bedroom.

KAREN
Who's room is this?

LORENZO
This is my room.

Karen looks around.

KAREN
You didn't play any sports at all?
I don't see any trophies.

LORENZO
Me? Sports? I couldn't play any
sports, not with my feet. My
parents saw to that shit. Fucking
genetics.

KAREN
So, you weren't outgoing at all,
not even as a kid?

LORENZO
I couldn't even make it down the
block without the other
neighborhood kids gawking at my
feet like I was some kind of a
freak, so I mostly stayed indoors.

KAREN
Awe, is that why you resent your
parents so much?

LORENZO
That's one of the reasons, yeah.

KAREN
Has anything ever happened to
anyone in here?

LORENZO
No, not that I know of.

KAREN

Thanks for the tour. That was fun.

Karen and Lorenzo make out.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lorenzo and Karen are making out heavy on the couch. Karen is nervous about letting Lorenzo get to second base.

KAREN

Lorenzo, wait.

LORENZO

What? What's wrong?

KAREN

It's not you. I'm just feeling kind of weird, knowing that there could be something here watching us. I feel funny about that.

LORENZO

Come on, Karen. How long have we been here? It's damn near three in the morning, and nothing. If there's something here, what's it waiting for?

KAREN

I don't know, Lorenzo. But I can't help how I feel. I'm sorry.

Lorenzo climbs off of Karen and sits back.

LORENZO

It's okay, Karen. I get it.

KAREN

You're not mad?

LORENZO

No, I'm not mad.

Karen spots a floating spirit orb with her peripheral vision and follows it with her eyes.

KAREN

Oh, Lorenzo, look.

Lorenzo looks over his shoulder.

LORENZO

What?

KAREN

You see that?

Karen keeps her eyes on the spirit orb and watches it shoot the side of Lorenzo's head.

KAREN (CONT'D)

It went into your head. Did you feel it?

Lorenzo appears to be dizzy and starts to sway back and forth.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Lorenzo?

The light bulb starts flickering like crazy and the Television turns on by itself.

KAREN (CONT'D)

What the hell? Have you guys been having electrical problems or something?

Lorenzo just stares at Karen with a weird look on his face.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Lorenzo, why aren't you saying anything? You're starting to scare me.

Without saying a word, Lorenzo gets aggressive and tries to get Karen's pants down.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Lorenzo, stop!

LORENZO

Just give me some!

Karen screams and kicks Lorenzo off of her.

KAREN

Get away from me, Lorenzo!

Karen gets off the couch and tries to get the door to the apartment open but finds it too complicated to unlock.

KAREN (CONT'D)

How do you get this damn door open?!

LORENZO

Karen.

Karen sees Lorenzo getting back to his feet and gives up on trying to get out of the apartment.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Karen runs to the bathroom and locks herself in. Karen takes the heavy lid off the toilet tank to use as a weapon and talks to Lorenzo through the door.

KAREN

Lorenzo, honey, you gotta snap out of it. You let this thing get a hold of you.

The light in the bathroom starts to flickers for a minute, and then goes out. Too scared to hide in total darkness, Karen screams and runs out of the bathroom.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Karen is still holding the toilet tank lid when she sees Lorenzo coming at her and chucks it at him. Lorenzo blocks the toilet lid and gets a hold of Karen as she tries to run past him and takes her down to the floor.

KAREN

No, let me go!

Karen puts up a fight.

LORENZO

Karen, it's me! I'm okay now.
Don't be scared. I'm myself again.

Karen keeps her guard up but settles down some and looks Lorenzo in the eyes.

KAREN

Are you sure? Is it really you?

Lorenzo sees that Karen is no longer afraid of him and takes his hands off her.

LORENZO

Yeah, I'm my old self again.

Lorenzo can see into the living room from where he is in the hall and freezes.

KAREN

Now what? Why are you looking that way?

Karen looks to see what's got Lorenzo so spooked and gasps when she sees the shadowy doppelganger staring back at them from the living room.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Oh my God, Lorenzo! What is that?

Karen hides behind Lorenzo.

LORENZO

What are you?!

There's a loud knock on the door, and Lorenzo and Karen see the doppelganger disappear before their very eyes.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)

Police! Police department! Open up, please.

Lorenzo gets up to answer the answer.

INT. HOLY NAME CHURCH - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Lorenzo and Karen are sitting in an empty pew just foots away from the alter.

KAREN

Are you feeling better now?

LORENZO

Yeah, much better now. I'm surprised the cops didn't take me away in handcuffs.

KAREN

Come on. I know you didn't mean to hurt me on purpose. I get what was going on with you.

LORENZO

Yeah, but still. I don't know what was scarier --- the shadowy thing that looks like me, or the look the cops gave me when they saw my handprints all over the arms of a Caucasian woman. You know what I'm saying?

Karen rubs Lorenzo's back to console him.

KAREN

Yeah, I know what you're saying, but, at least you know now that your family's not full of it.

LORENZO

That was so crazy, Karen. How did I go from proposing to you to O.J. Simpson in the span of three minutes? The shit just doesn't make sense.

Lorenzo realizes where he is and feels the need to apologize to the big statue of Jesus on the cross.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Sorry, Lord, I forgot where I was for a second. That ever happened to you?

KAREN

Up until tonight, I never had a reason to mention this, but there's a guy I know in my Improv group who has friends in the ghost hunting business.

LORENZO

The ghost hunting business? That's a real thing? I thought that was just what you saw in the movies.

KAREN

No, it's a real thing.

LORENZO

And these guys you're telling me about are the real deal?

KAREN

They are. They call themselves Poof Be Gone Paranormal Dicks.

Lorenzo looks at Karen and tries not to laugh.

LORENZO

The Poof Be Gone Paranormal Dicks?

KAREN

No, it's just Poof Be Gone Paranormal Dicks. Dicks, as in investigators, Private eyes.

LORENZO

Yeah, okay, I get it. That's clever.

KAREN

They've been at it for years. They've got all the gadgets for communicating with spirits, and they even have a proven, battle tested psychic on the team, so, yeah, they're the real deal.

LORENZO

Maybe I'll keep the part about the psychic from my parents. They're stuck on stupid skeptics when it comes to the supernatural. But that sure as hell never stopped them from getting me and my sister out of bed on Sunday mornings to take us to church and pray to a God they've never seen or heard from before, the posers.

KAREN

Well, it's up to you, but if you want, I could talk to my friend and see what he could do about getting you and his ghost hunting friends together.

LORENZO

That would be awesome.

KAREN

Okay, I'll keep you posted.

LORENZO

In the mean time, we've got to do something to protect ourselves from this thing. Any ideas?

INT. METAPHYSICAL BOUTIQUE - DAY

Business is slow. Lorenzo and Karen have the place to themselves and go from isle to isle looking at holistic items.

LORENZO

What's this thing?

Lorenzo takes a dream catcher off the shelf and shows it to Karen.

KAREN

You don't need that. It's a dream catcher. It's mostly for babies. You hang it over a crib, and it's supposed to keep the bad dreams from babies while they sleep. The Native Americans swear by it.

Lorenzo puts the dream catcher back on the shelf and picks up the black candle next to it.

LORENZO

How 'bout this? What's this for?

KAREN

What's the matter with you, Lorenzo? Don't you know anything? We're trying to rid all the dark, negative energy out of your place, so you gotta think positivity, you gotta think wholeness. White candles are what we're going for.

Karen picks out a white candle for Lorenzo and takes the black candle from him to put back on the shelf.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Black candles are for devil worshippers.

LORENZO

Yikes.

Lorenzo sees a green candle and takes it off the shelf.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

What does a green candle mean?

KAREN

Green candles are okay. They're mostly for luck and prosperity. You could have it if you want.

Lorenzo puts the green candle back on the shelf and follows Karen into the isle of sage and incense sticks.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Now we're talking.

Karen takes a handful of incense sticks off the shelf and throws it the basket Lorenzo is holding.

LORENZO

What do you want with incense sticks?

KAREN

Incense sticks work. You light a stick and smoke out the dark, negative energy that may be hiding in any corner of your house.

LORENZO

That's gonna be a problem.

KAREN

Why?

LORENZO

You've been to the apartment. You know what a hoarder my mother is. How are we supposed to smoke the dark energy out of every nook and cranny in the apartment with the junk she's hoarding?

KAREN

I didn't want to say anything against your mother, but, yeah, I see your point. That is gonna be a problem, but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

LORENZO

Are we done here?

KAREN

We might as well get some sage. It performs the same job as the incense.

Karen throws in a handful of sage along with the white candles and incense sticks.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I think we're good. I guess you could bring that stuff up to the counter and have the lady ring it all up for you now.

Lorenzo is just about to bring his items to the counter when Karen remembers something else on her list.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Oh, you know what else you should get? Black salt.

LORENZO
Black salt?

KAREN
They should have some here. Let's
look around and see.

Lorenzo follows Karen around the store for black salt.

INT. NIVIA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nivia is expecting company and tidies up a bit before they arrive. The bell rings and Nivia stops what she is doing to answer it.

INT. NIVIA'S HOUSE - DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nivia comes to the door and finds Lorenzo standing there with two men and a woman wearing black shirts that read "Poof Be Gone Paranormal Dicks."

NIVIA
Hey, Lorenzo.

LORENZO
Nivia.

NIVIA
And who do you have with you?

LORENZO
This is team I was telling you
about.

LUCAS, 27, the lead investigator, introduces himself to Nivia.

LUCAS
Hi Nivia. I'm Lucas, the lead
investigator of the team.

SARAH, 27, the theologian on the team, introduces herself to Nivia.

SARAH
Hi, my name's Sarah. I'm the team
theologian.

CONNOR, 26, the tech guy, introduces himself to Nivia.

CONNOR
Connor.

LUCAS

Yeah, Connor's our tech guy. He doesn't talk much.

NIVIA

Thanks for coming, guys. Come on in.

Nivia steps aside, and the paranormal team follows Lorenzo inside.

INT. NIVIA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

There's a tape recorder on the coffee table keeping a record of every word being said.

BENICIO

Look, Lucas, I don't know how much Lorenzo has already told you about our case, but we really need you to take care of whatever it is that's in our apartment, so our daughter could have her house back.

LUCAS

So, things are so active in your apartment, that you had to move in here with your daughter?

BENICIO

That's right. That's why we asked for this interview to be conducted here, and not at the apartment. My wife's so freaked out by this thing, she vows never to set foot in that apartment again until it's gone for good.

LUCAS

And what about you, Benicio? Are you freaked out by this thing?

BENICIO

Other than a few nightmares, I really haven't experienced much of anything. It's my wife I'm worried about.

LUCAS

What about these nightmares? Tell me about them.

BENICIO

Well, in the one I had on the night before my accident there was a school bus coming straight at me, and I woke up before the impact.

LUCAS

Hmmmm. And who else has had experiences?

DENISE

Well, Keith, my daughter's ex-boyfriend, he was nearly choked to death by this thing.

LUCAS

Really? Where is he? Will I be getting a chance to talk to him? We'd really like to talk with everyone who may have had run ins with this thing.

NIVIA

Sorry, but he feels emasculated now that I know an entity made him piss himself, so he wants nothing more to do with me.

LUCAS

That's too bad. Man, this thing must be a real beast. I can't wait to get over there. Have all of you seen it? What does it look like?

Denise chimes in.

DENISE

It's a shadowy thing. It's about eight or nine feet tall, and it looks a lot like Lorenzo.

Lorenzo chimes in.

LORENZO

She ain't lying. I saw the same damn thing.

LUCAS

I see.

BENICIO

In all the years that you've been doing this, does this entity sound like anything that you might have come across before?

LUCAS

No, I can't say that it does.

BENICIO

But it is unusual, no? I mean, I've never been a real believer in this stuff, but the spirit of a living person going around haunting people is something I never heard of before.

LUCAS

That just goes to show you how much there is to learn about how the spirit world works. That's why we love what we do.

BENICIO

That's fair.

LUCAS

Now, about the apartment, how long have you lived in this apartment?

BENICIO

That's what's strange about this whole thing. We've lived in this apartment for years, and nothing like this has ever happened before.

LUCAS

Hmmmm, that's interesting. Has there been any new developments?

BENICIO

What do you mean?

LUCAS

Any recent deaths in the family? Has any thing new been brought into the home, any remodeling?

BENICIO

Well, now that you mention it, my wife does have a habit of finding things on the street that she might think of as art and bringing into the home. You could say she's a hoarder.

Denise tears up from the guilt.

DENISE

Oh my god, I caused all of this, didn't I? I brought this thing in. I had no idea that something like this could happen. I'm sorry. I'll stop. I'll stop right now. I'm done.

Nivia and Benicio try their best to console Denise.

LUCAS

Denise, you mustn't blame yourself. So many other factors could've brought this on. We just don't know. That's what we're here to find out.

Nivia wipes the tears from Denise's cheeks and kisses the top of her head.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Having said that, we are gonna have to remove whatever clutter there is, if we're to have room for our equipment.

BENICIO

Do whatever you have to do, Lucas.

LUCAS

We'll do our best, Benicio, but it's not going to be easy. Keep in mind that we're always going to be out gunned by the supernatural when going into these investigations. But, not to worry, we've got a proven, battle tested psychic on the team to even things out and give us a fighting chance.

EXT. AIRLINE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

JACKIE, 33, psychic extraordinaire and friend of the Poof Be Gone Paranormal Dicks team, could see the landing strip from her window and recites a prayer of protection.

JACKIE

Father, I come to you today, bowing
in my heart, asking for protection
from the evil one. Lord, surround
me with your divine hedge of
protection. Encompass me round
about with your strength and your
might. For it is you who blesses
the righteous, O Lord. You
surround us favor as with a shield.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A green suburban with a logo that reads Poof Be Gone Paranormal Dicks on the outside is doing about forty five. Connor is driving to the Rios's family apartment with Jackie reciting another prayer of protection from the passenger seat.

JACKIE

Let all who take refuge in you be
glad, let them ever sing for joy.
And may you shelter us, that those
who love your name may exult in
you. Lord, I ask that you protect
our minds. Father, the mind set on
the flesh is death, but the mind
set on the Spirit is life and
peace.

EXT. FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING PROJECTS - MOMENTS LATER

On the way into the building, Connor finds that the junk Denise's been hoarding has been left by a dumpster for sanitation workers to haul away.

INT. FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING PROJECTS - HALLWAY -
CONTINUOUS

Connor and Jackie come to the Rios family apartment. Connor knocks on the door and waits for someone inside to answer. Lucas comes to the door to greet Connor and Jackie.

LUCAS

Hey Jackie.

JACKIE

Hi Lucas. Are you ready for me?

LUCAS

Yes, we're all set up in here.
Come in. We're glad you could make
it.

Lucas stands aside and invites Connor and Jackie in.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

How was Seattle?

JACKIE

Seattle was cool.

LUCAS

I didn't call you away from
anything important, did I?

JACKIE

No, not at all. Besides, I could
hear the urgency in your voice when
you called to tell me about this
case, so I knew I had to hurry up
and get here to see how I could
help.

LUCAS

Well, I'm glad you could make it.
So, do you still not want me to
tell you about the family who lives
here?

JACKIE

That's right. I don't want to know
anything. I want to find out about
whatever it is that's here on my
own.

LUCAS

Do you need time to warm up or
anything?

JACKIE

Nope. I recited my prayers of
protection on the way over here.
I'm good to go.

LUCAS

We're gonna get out of your way,
then.

(MORE)

LUCAS (CONT'D)

We got a little nerve center going on in the master bedroom, so we'll be able to monitor everything that goes on throughout the entire apartment from in there. Whatever you do, try to stay in the frame of the camera. We wanna be able to see you at all times.

JACKIE

That's fine, Lucas. Now, go on.
Let me get on with it.

LUCAS

I'm gone. I'm not even here. Oh,
here's your walkie-talkie.

Lucas hands Jackie a walkie-talkie and leaves her alone in the living room so she can start her walk.

JACKIE

Okay, the first thing I'm getting is the roller coaster of emotions. Everything from anger to resentment. You name it, I'm feeling it. Oh man, the dysfunction and tension in this apartment is so thick you can cut it with a knife.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lucas, Sarah, Connor, Lorenzo, and Karen can watch Jackie's every move on the monitor.

LUCAS

Connor, check my microphone. I'm having trouble hearing Jackie. She keeps coming in and out.

Conner fixes Lucas's microphone.

CONNOR

How's that?

LUCAS

That's better.

LORENZO

So, where did you guys find Jackie?

CONNOR

Jackie's been with us since the beginning.

KAREN

Shhhh. Listen up. There's more.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jackie is careful to stay in the frame of the camera.

JACKIE

I'm getting a male figure. I keep getting an L name, Larry, Lawrence. I'm going with Lawrence. Yeah, Lawrence feels better. He's a young guy about nineteen, twenty years of age. This guy, this male grew up here, and I'm getting a lot of resentment over that. This guy hated living here. Hated it. Way too much dysfunction for any kid to handle. Mostly because of his parents. I'm getting that he always thought that his parents were more like teenagers than adults, and being their son made him feel like he was handed a raw deal, like he was never given a fair shake. Now, I'm being pulled over to this corner.

Jackie is being drawn to a particular corner.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo is blown away by Jackie's accuracy.

SARAH

Well, Lorenzo, are you impressed with what you've heard so far?

LORENZO

She's good. Although, I go by the name Lorenzo, not Lawrence, but Lorenzo is Spanish for Lawrence, so I'm not gonna eat her lunch for being Gringo.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jackie is picking up on the doppelganger.

JACKIE

Okay, now we're getting somewhere.
I'm seeing the elephant in the
room. It's right here in the
corner. It's so angry. Did you
guys do some cleaning? I'm getting
that it's angry because you guys
took away it's hiding place when
you cleared the clutter from the
apartment. Now, it feels totally
exposed, and it doesn't like that.
Oh, this thing is very angry. You
know this thing was never human,
was never alive. It's not a demon.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo can hear everything Jackie is saying through the
speaker.

LORENZO

Well, that's a relief.

Karen shushes Lorenzo.

JACKIE (V.O.)

Although, I can see how the people
living here could mistake it for a
demon. This thing came from
nowhere. Apparently, this thing
was talked into existence.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jackie keeps her eyes on the doppelganger and describes its
every move to the paranormal team watching from the master
bedroom.

JACKIE

So, all the hurt and resentful
emotions that this Lawrence guy's
been harboring over the years took
shape and became this unholy thing.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lucas gets on his walkie to communicate with Jackie as he looks on in the monitor.

LUCAS

Any idea what this unholy thing
wants with the Rios family?

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jackie gets on the walkie-talkie and relays the doppelganger's motives to Lucas.

JACKIE

So, now that it's here, what it
wants to do is drive Lawrence's
father and mother so far up the
wall, that they end up killing
themselves or each other. And it's
only doing it because it's what
Lawrence has been wishing for since
his childhood. So, this thing is
going to see to it that his parents
answer for their dysfunction.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Karen, and the paranormal team turn and look at Lorenzo at once.

LORENZO

So, no matter how much I talked
about breaking into the industry, I
couldn't conjure up a screenwriting
career for myself, but it was no
problem for me to conjure up a dark
entity to punish my dysfunctional
guardians. Pisses me off!

Feeling guilty, Lorenzo buries his face in his hands and shakes his head.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The doppelganger makes its way towards Jackie and causes her to lose her train of thought.

JACKIE

And now it's looking at me like it
really wants to fuck me up.

The camera Jackie is looking into shuts off.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The picture from the living room goes out on the monitor.

LUCAS

What happened to the picture?

CONNOR

We lost the signal.

SARAH

You think it was the entity?

Lucas takes his headset off to go check on Jackie in the living room.

LUCAS

I'll go check it out. Everyone stay here.

SARAH

No, I'm going with you.

Connor, Lorenzo, and Karen are left in the room together.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lucas and Sarah find Jackie on the floor and run over to help her up.

LUCAS

Jackie, are you alright? What happened?

JACKIE

Man, is this thing powerful. I protected myself the whole way over here, and this thing was still able to come at me.

Sarah notices the whelp developing over Jackie's left eye.

SARAH

Lucas, look at her eye. Do you see that shiner?

LUCAS

Oh yeah. Look at that.

JACKIE

What?

SARAH

Can you see out of your left eye,
Jackie?

Sarah stops Jackie from pawing at her left eye.

JACKIE

Yeah. I can see. Why? How bad is
it?

SARAH

No, don't touch it.

LUCAS

Yeah, don't touch it, Jackie.

SARAH

Maybe there's something in the
refrigerator we put over her eye to
keep the swelling down. I'll go
check.

Sarah leaves Jackie alone with Lucas and disappears into the
kitchen.

LUCAS

So, this thing just came at you,
huh? What did it feel like?

Lucas tries to get the camera working again.

JACKIE

It happened so fast, I didn't have
time to feel anything. One minute
the thing was cowering in that
corner, and then the next minute I
was blacking out.

Sarah comes back from the kitchen with a frozen water bottle.

LUCAS

What do you have there?

SARAH

Frozen water bottle.

LUCAS

Perfect.

Sarah holds the frozen water bottle on Jackie's left eye.

SARAH
Let's go, Jackie.

LUCAS
Yeah, take her out into the hallway.

Sarah walks Jackie out of the apartment and leaves Lucas alone with the doppelganger.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Connor, Lorenzo, and Karen are still waiting to get a picture on the monitor.

KAREN
What's wrong, Lorenzo?

LORENZO
I'm just thinking about what my sister told me. She tried to warn me about my unforgiving nature, but I never meant for anything like this to happen.

The picture is back on the monitor.

CONNOR
Hey, look. Lucas got the camera working again.

Connor, Karen, Lorenzo can see Lucas using provocation techniques to get the doppelganger to communicate with him through the spirit box.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lucas is trying to get the doppelganger to communicate with him through the spirit box.

LUCAS
So, you're angry, huh? You attacked my friend, so, guess what? Now, you got me angry! I'm angry now! So, why don't you come after me?! I'm standing here! Answer me, you fuck!

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Connor, Karen, and Lorenzo are so preoccupied with watching Lucas on the monitor, they don't even notice the black mist coming out of one of the four corners of the room.

CONNOR

Does anyone else feel that? It just got so cold in here.

Connor caresses his arms to warm himself.

KAREN

Yeah, it does feel colder.

Lucas's provocation technique agitates Lorenzo..

LORENZO

What the hell does he think he's doing?

CONNOR

What are you talking about?

LORENZO

Why is he being so disrespectful?

CONNOR

What? The provocation? It's a provocation technique.

LORENZO

Well, what's that about?

KAREN

What are you getting so worked up about, Lorenzo?

LORENZO

I just don't think I like this technique.

CONNOR

It's a common practice. All the paranormal groups use it.

Lorenzo can feel the black mist affecting him.

LORENZO

That's it! I'm gonna put a stop to this shit.

Connor and Karen try to stop Lorenzo from leaving the room.

KAREN

Lorenzo, you're acting weird.
What's wrong with you?

Lorenzo leaves the room, and Karen and Connor go chasing after him.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo confronts Lucas and smacks the spirit box out of his hand.

LUCAS

What the hell are you doing,
Lorenzo? Are you crazy?

LORENZO

What the hell do you think you're
doing?! What are you disrespecting
the spirits for?

Lucas turns to Connor.

LUCAS

What the hell is he talking about?

CONNOR

I don't know. He has a problem
with your provocation technique.

LUCAS

Come on, Lorenzo. I don't mean
anything by that. It's just a way
to get the spirits to come through.
It's what paranormal investigators
do. We do what we gotta do to get
the evidence.

LORENZO

Man, that's bullshit. A good
paranormal investigator doesn't
have to disrespect the spirits to
get a rise out of them. They're
not circus animals. They're not
here to perform for you!

Karen tries to apologize for Lorenzo.

KAREN

I'm sorry, Lucas. I think
something's got a hold of Lorenzo.
I've seen this happen to him
before.

Lucas gets in Lorenzo's face and talks to the entity inside of him.

LUCAS

Are you affecting my friend here?
Whatever you think you've got
planned for us, it's not going to
work! You're not gonna get us to
turn on each other, do you hear
me?!

Lucas goes down hard with a spinning back kick to the solar plexus.

LORENZO

Don't disrespect the spirits. You
keep disrespecting the spirits, and
I will crack you face open!

Conner and Karen subdue Lorenzo and bring him down to the floor.

KAREN

Lorenzo, snap out of it.
(to Conner)
There's something wrong with him.
This isn't him.

Lorenzo looks up and sees the doppelganger looking down at him smiling.

LORENZO

Karen, Conner. I'm okay. You can
let me up now. I'm alright.

Karen and Conner slowly release Lorenzo.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Don't worry.

Lucas is still down and Lorenzo goes over to help him up.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

Lucas, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to
do that. Something came over me.

Lucas lets Lorenzo help him up.

LUCAS

Thanks.

LORENZO

Are you sure you're alright?

LUCAS
Yeah, I'll be alright.

LORENZO
Karen, Conner why don't you help
Lucas to the room?

KAREN
What are you gonna do?

LORENZO
I'm gonna get this thing to leave
here for good.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lorenzo lights up the sage and tries to smoke the entity out
of every corner of the apartment.

LORENZO
I know I brought this on myself. I
spent way too much time and energy
being mad at the world, wishing my
parents dead, but your existence
has really opened my eyes. From
now on, I'm never going to judge or
criticize another child of God's.
When I die, I wanna go knowing that
my soul, my spirit is going to move
on to be with the Lord in Heaven,
not linger around on earth to end
up another recruit for Satan's
army.

The Doppelganger comes out of hiding and grabs Lorenzo by the
throat.

THE DOPPELGANGER
You're no fun anymore.

The doppelganger lifts Lorenzo off the floor by the throat.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lucas, Connor, and Karen are watching everything on the
monitor.

KAREN
Oh my god! Lorenzo is levitating.
Do you see that?

The professional that he is, Lucas is more concerned with documenting everything.

LUCAS

Connor, are you getting this?!

CONNOR

I'm getting it! I'm getting everything!

KAREN

What are you guy's talking about?
We gotta go in there and help him.

LUCAS

He'll be alright, Karen.

Karen gets a flask of holy water out of a backpack and leaves the room.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Karen sneaks up on the Doppelganger and does the sign of the cross before sprinkling it with holy water.

KAREN

You're not wanted here! I want you
to leave. Leave now and don't you
come back ever!

Karen continues to sprinkle the doppelganger with holy water. Lorenzo feels the doppelganger losing strength. The doppelganger lets Lorenzo drop to the floor and vanishes before his eyes.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lucas and Conner finally pull themselves away from the monitors and leave the room to check on Lorenzo.

INT. THE RIOS FAMILY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo is still on the floor trying to recover when Karen comes to his aide.

KAREN

Lorenzo, I was so scared for you.
How do you feel? Are you okay?
Man, that thing was really
squeezing the shit out of your
Adam's apple.

LORENZO

Yeah, I know.

Sarah and Jackie come in from the hallway.

KAREN

Do you think it's gone?

LORENZO

I don't know. What do you think, Jackie? Are you feeling anything?

Jackie is doing her walk around the apartment and can't sense any negative energy.

JACKIE

I'm not getting anything. I think it's gone. I'd get a priest in here to give the apartment a proper blessing just to be safe, but, well done, Lorenzo. You did a great job.

SARAH

Man, you can really notice the difference. The energy feels so much lighter in here. Do you feel that?

CONNOR

Yeah, it really does.

LUCAS

Well, Lorenzo, if this screenwriting thing of yours doesn't work out for you. You could always try your hand at paranormal investigating.

Lorenzo can't tell if Lucas is joking or not.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Just an idea.

Lucas leaves Lorenzo with something to think about.

DISSOLVE TO:

EX. FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING PROJECTS - DAY

Neighborhood kids each with paper money in their hands stop the piragua man wheeling a big block of ice and beer bottles filled with fruity flavored concoctions in a cart.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #1
Yo, Piragua man, piraguas all
around. Make mine a coconut.

PIRAGUA MAN
Coconut, okay.

Piragua man starts shaving the block of ice.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #2
Yeah, make mine a coconut, too.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #3
I don't know about you, but I'm
going for the green. What flavor
is green?

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #2
Lime.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #3
Yeah, gimme the lime.

PIRAGUA MAN
Two coconuts, one lime.

A series of film production trucks roll into the neighborhood
and peek the kids' interest.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #2
Hey, check it out. Are those movie
trucks? They look like movie
trucks.

PIRAGUA MAN
Here you go, kid.

Piragua man serves neighborhood kid #1 his piragua and
pockets the money.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #3
Maybe they're just passing through.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #2
Then, why are they stopping? No, I
think they're going to be shooting
a movie here in the hood.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #3
Oh, cool. Let's go check it out.
I hope it's Denzel Washington.
Hurry up, Piragua man.

PIRAGUA MAN
Hey, don't rush me, kid.

Piragua man serves neighborhood kid #2 his piragua and takes his money.

INT. FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING PROJECTS - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Lorenzo knocks on the door to his old apartment. The door opens, and Lorenzo is greeted by the new tenants, RUBEN and LISSETTE.

LORENZO
Hey, how's it going?

RUBEN
Okay. Can I help you?

LORENZO
Um, yeah, this is gonna sound strange, but I was the previous tenant, and I was wondering if I could...

Ruben finishes Lorenzo's thoughts.

RUBEN
If you could have one last look around?

LORENZO
Yeah, I know it's a strange request.

RUBEN
No, it's not a strange request, it's no problem at all. Come in.

LORENZO
Thanks.

Ruben is gracious enough to let Lorenzo in.

INT. RUBEN AND LISSETTE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo introduces himself to Ruben and Lissette.

LORENZO
I'm Lorenzo, by the way.

Lorenzo and Ruben shake hands.

RUBEN

Nice to meet you, Lorenzo. I'm
Ruben, and this is my wife,
Lisette.

LISSETTE

Hi.

LORENZO

Lisette, nice to meet you.

Lorenzo and Lisette shake hands.

LORENZO (CONT'D)

So, how long have you been living
here?

RUBEN

About a month.

LORENZO

And how are you finding the place?

LISSETTE

It's just your typical three
bedroom housing unit.

Lorenzo makes his way around the apartment and tries to get a
sense of anything paranormal.

LORENZO

Have you had any electrical issues
since you've been here?

Lisette and Ruben look at each other and follow Lorenzo into
his old bedroom.

LISSETTE

No, everything's been fine.

LORENZO

So, you haven't experienced
anything out of the ordinary?

Lorenzo reaches his old bedroom.

INT. LORENZO'S OLD BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo takes a look inside from the doorway.

RUBEN
Anything out of the ordinary?

LORENZO
Yeah, like sudden mood swings,
sudden drops in temperature?

Again, Lissette and Ruben look at each other.

RUBEN
No, nothing like that. Why? Was
that your experience when you lived
here?

Lorenzo opts out of sharing his paranormal experience in the
apartment with Ruben and Lissette.

LORENZO
I guess everything's okay. I think
I've taken up enough of your time.
I'll be heading out now. Good luck
with everything.

RUBEN
Thanks. Good luck to you.

Ruben and Lissette see Lorenzo to the door and lock up behind
him.

LISSETTE
That was weird.

RUBEN
I'll say it was. I've never heard
of anyone being nostalgic over a
public housing unit.

Ruben puts the chain on the door.

EXT. FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING PROJECTS - CONTINUOUS

Lorenzo exits the building to loud music. MAX, a childhood
friend of Lorenzo's, approaches him.

MAX
Lorenzo, hold up.

LORENZO
Max, what's up? Walk with me.

Max walks with Lorenzo.

MAX

Where did you go?

LORENZO

I just wanted to see how the new tenants were finding my old apartment.

MAX

Ah, wanted to see if it's still clean, huh?

LORENZO

Yeah.

MAX

So, is it?

LORENZO

They said that everything was fine. I didn't get the sense that anything was off, so I guess it is.

MAX

Still, I can't blame your folks for wanting to move into a new place after everything that happened.

LORENZO

I guess not.

MAX

Tell me about the guy playing the lead in your movie. What have I seen him in?

LORENZO

Oh, he's a first time actor from Puerto Rico, but don't worry. He'll do us proud. I gotta go.

Max stops in his tracks, but Lorenzo keeps moving.

MAX

Hey, where you going? You gonna miss out on your own wrap party?

LORENZO

Yeah, there will be others, but you have a good time.

Lorenzo walks off.

EXT. TAWNY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Poof Be Gone Paranormal Dicks show up at a women's place of residence. TAWNY, the home owner, comes to the door and find five people standing there with shirts that say Poof Be Gone Paranormal Dicks.

TAWNY

Hey, are you guys the paranormal investigators? I can see by the look of your shirts that you are.

LUCAS

Hi Tawny. I'm Lucas, the Lead investigator.

Lucas shakes hands with Tawny and introduces the rest of team.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Allow me to introduce the rest of my team. This is Sarah, this is Connor, and my two investigators in training, Karen, and Lorenzo.

TAWNY

Well, nice to meet you all. Thanks for showing up so quickly. I'm at my wits end here. Please, come in.

Lucas leads his team into the house with Lorenzo being the last one to enter, and the door slams shut behind him.

FADE OUT.

THE END

