The Dominion

Written by

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The following quote appears over a black screen.

"Rap is something you do, Hip-Hop
is something you live." - KRS-One

FADE IN:

MAIN TITLE:

THE DOMINION

1993

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF HARLEM - LATE EVENING

Poor Harlem. It's raining. The screen is grainy with a greenish hue, like it's being shot through a vintage camera. We hear the main music from WU TANG CLAN - TEARS, the music builds intensity. We see different shots of urban landscapes, shifting from freeways to graffiti writers to rooftops of buildings, subway trains, local drug dealers and gangs.

We see vehicles rushing by splashing water on pedestrians. It's mid-September and it's a bit chilly. AERIAL VIEW of a subway train.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - LATE EVENING

Subway station is run down, ghetto. MEDIUM CLOSE UP of a YOUNG GIRL's sneakers and her leg shaking. The subway stops, she gets up and the doors open, we can't see her.

EXT. HARLEM SIDEWALK - LATE EVENING

MID SHOT of YOUNG GIRL walking up the subway stairs, up and down in sync under a sweatshirt hood. Cars rushing by and prostitutes walking. EXTREME CLOSE UP of YOUNG GIRL's eyes as she's running, big brown wide eyed. We still can't see her. Head going in and out of the screen to the beat of the music. CUT-IN of the YOUNG GIRL sneakers running on the sidewalk.

She's rapping to herself as she runs across the street getting hit by a car, car SCREECHES, sounds of car horns HONKING. The YOUNG GIRL enters a back alley. Junkie's shooting up, ghetto, run down, graffiti scrawls, a light is hanging above a door flickering. EXTREME CLOSE UP of the YOUNG GIRL's hands opening the door knob. She walks down the hallway and down the two set of stairs, still unable to see

her face. MAIN MUSIC FADES OUT. Can hear music bumping through the hallways.

INT. GOONEY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a YOUNG BOY's lips, taking a hit of a rolled joint, slowly blowing the smoke out. Music playing in the background (Jungle - drops). There's only but a few people in the room. CLOSE UP of SHARICE, 16 year old, BROWN SKINNED, YOUTHFUL LOOKING, hair worn in two really long FRENCH BRAIDS, NYC ACCENT. The YOUNG GIRL opens the door.

SHARICE (O.S.) 'Bout time you'd be here.

YOUNG GIRL

(rushing)

I know, I know. Heavy traffic.

Here for the first time, we see her, a TINY, YOUTHFUL, SHY, 15 year old RAMIRA MENENDEZ aka UNIQ. HALF BLACK and PUERTO RICAN, LONG, CURLY HAIR PULLED back in a PONYTAIL. RAMIRA throws her bookbag on the couch. Soaked from the rain, she takes her hoodie off.

GOONEY'S BASEMENT is dimly lit with weed smoke filling the screen. RAMIRA gives everyone dap. RAMIRA sits next to SHARICE, they give each other hugs. EXTREME CLOSE UP of RAMIRA's hands grabbing her bookbag and taking out her notebook full of rhymes.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Fight going down outside the door down the hallway. YOUNG MAN in his 20s hunched over smacking and punching an OLDER MAN in his 40s who is sitting against the hallway wall in a fetal position. They both look like broke bums, both CAUCASIAN.

YOUNG MAN

(yelling)

I told you to get the fuckin' money, bitch, can't fuckin' trust you!

OLDER MAN

(scream)

...n-no. I get it to ya...t-tommorow.

CONTINUED: 3.

OLDER MAN is in agony and pain, crying, nose bleeding as he's falling over on the ground slump. No one seen in the hallway.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GOONEY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

The gang hears the shouts and screams from outside. RAMIRA stands up.

(beat)

RAMIRA

(concerned)

Yo, what the hell was that?

SHARICE

Shit, I dunno.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

YOUNG MAN continues punching, he's breathing heavily. Throwing jabs left and right.

(beat)

Sounds of a door opening from far away. OLDER WOMAN opens door.

OLDER WOMAN (O.S)

(yelling)

The hell is goin' on down there?

YOUNG MAN flees fast down the hallway, leaving the OLDER MAN to lay on the ground.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GOONEY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

EXTREME CLOSE UP of RAMIRA'S lips. She puts the microphone to them. Background music cuts off.

RAMIRA

Cut that off and drop the beat Goon.

CONTINUED: 4.

GOONEY

Aight.

<u>CLOSE ON A FREESTYLE</u> 1. Very lyrical

2. Metaphors

GOONEY cuts the boombox off. GOONEY plays a beat on his MPC. GOONEY is a local emcee and an acquaintance of RAMIRA's. He has an NYC accent, TALL, SLIM, DARK SKINNED with SHORT DREADS, black bandana tied around his head.

GOONEY

That last lined killed it though.

SHARICE

Yea. Ya, rhymes got nice girl.

YOUNG KID

Yo, that line about the Cano Crew.

YOUNG KID shakes his head in disbelief, positive way.

RAMIRA

(passive)

Thanks.

(beat)

GOONEY

You need to start recordin' this shit though.

RAMIRA

Nah, I me--

SHARICE

You should, neva know what might happen happen.

GOONEY

I'm jus' sayin', word get around
and boom--

SHARICE puts her arm around RAMIRA, fantasizing.

SHARICE

(interrupts)

We gon' be on tv, on stage, record deals and shit.

RAMIRA smiles and shakes her head. GOONEY and YOUNG KID laugh.

CONTINUED: 5.

RAMIRA

Man ya'll crazy.

RAMIRA is setting up the equipment. She looks down being shy. She sits down with her notebook in her lap. GOONEY plays a beat that she made. The beat is street like, grungy, very 1990s.

RAMIRA

I dunno ya'll, I'ma leave that up to you Goons.

CLOSE UP of GOONEY'S face. He shoulder shrugs.

GOONEY

Yo, whateva man. Jus' sayin'.

RAMIRA

I ain't tryna get no record deal and all that, I ain't sellin' my soul to the devil.

RAMIRA does another freestyle.

RAMIRA is rapping about--

- 1. LADY EL High School bully
- 2. Struggles growing up in poverty
- 3. Drug addicted mother

GOONEY shakes his head in disbelief.

GOONEY

(talking to Young Kid)
See what I'm sayin', she don't
listen to me bruh. I keep tellin'
her, you need to do it and show 'em
whatchu got--

RAMIRA

(interrupts)

I just do it for fun ya'll, I ain't tryna do all that.

CLOSE UP of YOUNG KID.

RAMIRA (CONT)

Aye, what time is it?

SHARICE

11:15. Why?

CONTINUED: 6.

RAMIRA Shit, I gotta go!

Real worried look on Ramira's face, trembling, eyes big. GOONEY stops the beat on his MPC. She grabs her notebook and equipment, exits the door quickly. Everybody looks around confused.

EXT. HARLEM SIDEWALK - NIGHT

CLOSE ON of RAMIRA'S dirty Chuck Taylor's kicking up the water as she's running towards us on the sidewalk diagonally. Dodging pedestrians and wannabe rappers on the corner.

RAMIRA bumps into one of the pedestrians who is a LOCAL EMCEE. The LOCAL EMCEE flex's on RAMIRA surrounded by thugs and punks. The rain gets heavy and starts to pour.

LOCAL EMCEE (O.S.)

Aye, watch where the hell ya goin'!

RAMIRA doesn't notice and continues running and doesn't notice that she bumped into him, spinning almost getting hit by a car. Car honks.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

RAMIRA walks in the dim lit hallway with smoke filling it. Sounds of music bumping throughout the hallways. POV of RAMIRA looking in the neighbors door. Old man sitting on the couch watching a program, drinking beer and in his wife beater.

CUTAWAY of an OLDER MAN standing outside his doorway smoking a cigarette. Graffiti scrawls on the walls, wallpaper peeling, very run down, ghetto and dirty. Sounds of police cars outside building. This is RAMIRA's apartment building. RAMIRA opens the door to her place.

INT. RAMIRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CARMEN, late 30's woman, long brown hair, sitting in an arm chair rocking back and forth, cigarette smolders between her fingers. She's run down, wearing a sleep blouse. Her makeup is running, she's watching tv.

This is RAMIRA'S mom. Has the face of a drug addict. Ignoring the fact that RAMIRA exists coming in. CARMEN is watching tv as well, looks tired. Spanish/NYC accent. Unemployed, food stamps, welfare.

CONTINUED: 7.

LIVING ROOM looks run down, clouds of cigarette smoke filling the air. Dishes filled in the sink, wallpaper peeling, untidy, ghetto. It's dark inside and RAMIRA turns on the light as she enters, throwing her bookbag on the floor.

RAMIRA goes into the fridge and grabs the juice carton out the fridge, realizing that the carton is empty.

RAMIRA

No juice.

CARMEN

Where you been?

RAMIRA is caught off guard by CARMEN, and wasn't expecting her to speak.

RAMIRA

Out.

CARMEN

Out where?

RAMIRA

(agitated)

Uh, with my friends.

CARMEN

(disgusted)

You and your friends.

RAMIRA

(agitated)

Mom, please, don't start!

CARMEN

(yelling)

I told you to be back home by 11, now I-I don't like you out late at night Ram --

RAMIRA

(interrupts)

Like you even give a shit! You don't care about me or what I do! You just sit around--

CARMEN

(interrupts)

I don't do shit? Who puts food in ya mouth, clothes on ya back huh?

CONTINUED: 8.

CARMEN (O.S.)

(talking under breath)

Talkin' bout I just sit around, please!

RAMIRA

Well least I gotta job, you ain't even lookin', just depend on me to--

CARMEN gets up out of her arm chair fast and gets close to RAMIRA. CARMEN still has the cigarette between her fingers. The two are pressed and in each other's faces.

CARMEN

(yelling)

Don't, you raise your voice at me.
I pay for the bills and do
everything to support you!

RAMIRA

(yelling)

All you do is smoke them cancer sticks all day!

CARMEN raises her right hand wanting to slap RAMIRA down, her cigarette hits RAMIRA's sweater putting a burn in it.

RAMIRA

Shit!

RAMIRA tries wiping the ashes off. She stops herself tightening her lips. RAMIRA is close to CARMEN like their about to kiss.

(beat)

RAMIRA grabs her bookbag and heads to her room slamming the door. CARMEN stands there with tears coming down her face, shook, angry, dismantled.

INT. RAMIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON RAMIRA leaning against her bedroom door, head against it. Her eyes watery.

RAMIRA

(quietly)

So fuckin' sick a this.

CONTINUED: 9.

Bedroom is dimly lit, messy, clothes on the floor, cassette tapes littering her dresser of her favorite rappers stacked up alongside a boombox. She kicks off her shoes and throws her bookbag on her bed. Weed shown on her dresser along with papers and other various items.

CLOSE ON a picture frame on her dresser of her and her boyfriend ENRIQUE. RAMIRA picks up the picture and looks at it. RAMIRA has a little smile on her face. She puts the frame down.

CUT-IN of RAMIRA's hands grabbing the cassette tape and the dial on her boombox. Music is being played outloud and it's (Nas - represent).

RAMIRA grabs her hairbrush and pretends she's on a stage in front of a large crowd. She's looking in the mirror, eyes intense. The lights are dim and you hear the music in the background. The music is a bit loud. CLOSE UP of her feet moving and hand waving back and forth. Sounds of banging on the floor. RAMIRA comes out of her world back to reality. (beat)

NEIGHBOR DOWNSTAIRS (O.S.)

Hey, turn that shit down!

RAMIRA

(sigh)

Okay!

RAMIRA turns on her light, trips and falls on her cassette tapes near her floor she almost hits her head. She gets up and turns her boombox off and goes to lay on her bed hugging her pillow tight. She turns off her light.

FADE TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Beep. Beep. RAMIRA's hand touches alarm clock. It reads 7:00am. She pushes the covers back and yawns. MAIN MUSIC being played and it's Black Moon - who got da props?

RAMIRA's eyes are dazed. She hears a rock being thrown at her window. Window shot of SHARICE. RAMIRA has a smile on her face. They're both yelling.

SHARICE (O.S.)

Hey!

CONTINUED: 10.

SHARICE

Aye, you comin' down or what?

RAMIRA

Yea, I'll be down in a minute. Gotta get dressed.

SHARICE

Aight, hurry up.

RAMIRA puts on her clothes quickly. Real gloomy outside.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

RAMIRA at the sink washing up, brushing her teeth. She stares at herself looking in the mirror leaning over the sink, eyes are intense.

Bathroom is tiny, mirrors are dirty, toothpaste and brushes scattered around the sink.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S BEDROOM - MORNING (CONT.)

RAMIRA grabs her jean jacket, sneakers and puts them both on. She grabs her notebook and puts it in her worn, tattered bookbag.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

She grabs a banana off the counter and puts it in her bookbag. MAIN MUSIC fades out.

(beat)

She turns towards CARMEN's room and stares at the door. She walks toward the front door instead.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - MORNING

RAMIRA walks into the half lit hallway of her run down apartment building. Hallway of some kids smoking weed. Bullet holes in the walls. There's a radio and sounds of a DJ being heard. Passing some kids playing dice on the floor with money. The kids are in their teens, mostly black, some white.

CONTINUED: 11.

She runs right through them, accidentally kicking the dice and her foot gets caught on the radio cord, unplugging it and she's in a hurry not really paying attention. The kids moan and grumble.

YOUNG BOY #1

The hell are ya doin'?

YOUNG BOY #2

You almost ran us ova! (kids grumbling)

RAMIRA (O.S.)

(rushing)

Sorry 'bout that!

RAMIRA continues running down the hallway, down the stairs really fast, without looking back, trying to catch up with SHARICE.

EXT. RAMIRA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

It's gloomy. SHARICE and RAMIRA are facing each other, hugging and giving each other dap. RAMIRA is out of breath. Sounds of vehicles rushing by quickly.

SHARICE

Took you long enough. Was about to just bounce and leave.

POV of RAMIRA looking down at her dirty sneakers, doesn't make eye contact with SHARICE. SHARICE just stands there chewing her gum, waiting for a response.

(beat)

RAMIRA

(disappointed)

Yea, sorry 'bout that, it's just, got into it with my moms last night after I got home, just been trippin' lately.

SHARICE

Damn, sorry to hear that. Just keep ya head up aight. Always hear no matter what ok?

The sounds of a rap cipher fill the streets of Harlem, catching RAMIRA and SHARICE's attention, interrupting their conversation.

They look around wondering where the noise is coming from.

CONTINUED: 12.

SHARICE

Yo, you hear that?

RAMIRA

Yea, let's see what it is.

SHARICE and RAMIRA continue walking down the sidewalk in a slow manner, towards the bus stop. WIDESHOT of a small crowd filling the bus stop area, with local underground emcee's in their teens and early 20s. Some of different ethnic backgrounds.

Two neighborhood emcee's are battling, going head to head. From the waist up, the first emcee is ROK-ONE, 19 YEARS OLD, MEDIUM BUILT, BLACK, TALL, wearing a BEANIE HAT, BOOTS unlaced and BAGGY CLOTHES.

From the waist up, the second emcee with a short haircut, WHITE, BAGGY CLOTHES 17 YEARS OLD, D. DAVE.

CLOSE ON A FREESTYLE BATTLE

ROK-ONE goes up to battle, does a 16 bar freestyle, he freestyles about D. Dave.

- 1. White
- 2. Short.
- 3. Lame.

The crowd is obnoxious as he kills his opponent with each bar and metaphor. D. DAVE goes up to battle, drops a 16 bar freestyle, he raps about ROK-ONE.

- 1. Ashy lips.
- 2. The way he's dressed.

He chokes half way through, the crowd then starts booing.

SHARICE whispers to RAMIRA.

SHARICE

(whispers)

The line about them ashy lips killed it.

(beat)

RAMIRA

(laughs)

I know.

CLOSE UP of RAMIRA's face, she looks stunned and nervous, she wants to freestyle so badly but her shyness is holding her back. The crowd is hyped up. The HOST snatches the mic from D. DAVE.

CONTINUED: 13.

HOST

And it looks like the crowd is feelin' ROK-ONE from Brooklyn. Which means D. DAVE, you can sit on down and go back home because you got served today brotha!

The CROWD SHOUTS and HOLLERS. D. DAVE just shakes his head and goes into the crowd, embarrassed.

ROK-ONE

It's what I do is crush these niggas all day B.

HOST

Up next is-

SHARICE

(whispering)

Get in there.

SHARICE pushes RAMIRA into the cipher. (beat)

RAMIRA

(whispering)

No! I can't! What're you doin'?

CROWD is staring and grumbling loud.

SHARICE

RAMIRA is pushed into ROK-ONE. She falls to the ground, landing on her butt. The crowd stops grumbling. ROK-ONE turns around, and kneels down to RAMIRA.

(beat)

ROK-ONE

What's up shorty? You wanna battle?

RAMIRA just sits there looking up at him, with her mouth wide open. She swallows hard. There isn't a sound from the crowd.

Camera panning the different people in the crowd, they have a stunned look on their faces.

ROK-ONE

Nobody wants to hear yo wack ass rap. You scrawny ass little girl, whatchu know 'bout them 16's huh?

(MORE)

CONTINUED: 14.

ROK-ONE (cont'd)

You wannabe Latifah. Ya'll lookin' like the run down version of Salt-n-Pepa.

The crowd laughs.

CLOSE ON RAMIRA's face, she's pissed, just staring at ROK-ONE, he's kneeling down on one knee. She looks like she wants to punch him.

SHARICE's face looks stunned. Eyebrows raised. Worried look, she tries to hold RAMIRA back. RAMIRA's body is stiff and hardened.

The mic is laying on the ground with a crack on the side. RAMIRA slowly gets up, wiping the debris off. She grabs her tattered, worn out bookbag. ROK-ONE gets up too, just staring at her, she's very embarrassed.

ROK-ONE

(laughing)

What ya'll wanna see me and Roxanne battle, Latifah, Lyte?

The crowd starts BOOING and pointing their thumbs down.

SHARICE puts her arm around RAMIRA's shoulder and proceeds to school.

The crowd grumbles and talks.

SHARICE

Aye, you aight? (beat)

RAMIRA walks fast trying to get away from SHARICE. Face says she wants to fight.

SHARICE

It's cool, you'll get 'em next time. He wasn't all that anyway. Don't let them get to ya.

RAMIRA looks back at the crowd, standing there firm, wanting to go back and rip ROK-ONE to shreds.

SHARICE

(passive)

You okay? (beat)

CONTINUED: 15.

RAMTRA

(disappointed)

Why the fuck did you have to push me into the crowd?

SHARICE looks disappointed, shocked. A little surprised that RAMIRA called her out. RAMIRA walks away shaking her head.

(beat)

SHARICE

Was just tryna help you out!

FADE TO:

INT. PUBLIC SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATE MORNING

RAMIRA standing at her locker, waist up, scurring to get her books together. Her locker door fully open. Hallway has only but a few people in it.

ENRIQUE CALDERONE, 17, RAMIRA's boyfriend, DARK BLACK HAIR, SPANISH, HANDSOME and TALL. Holding a basketball on his right hip, wearing the high school's basketball shirt that reads 'A. PHILLIP RANDOLPH BASKETBALL', hiding behind the locker.

He taps RAMIRA on the left shoulder fooling her, she turns to the left then right and sees him. She smiles and her eyes widen. RAMIRA and ENRIQUE hugging and kissing firmly as she stands on her tippy toes.

ENRIQUE

What's up buttercup?

RAMTRA

(softly)

Not much babe. How are you?

ENRIQUE

(softly)

Nuttin' much, been shootin' some hoops, wished you could be there to watch.

RAMIRA

Yea, me too. I kicked it with Sharice and them, came home, mom was bitchin' 'bout everything and--

ENRIQUE

(interrupting)

You should come to my game tonight, get the stress off ya mind. We're (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 16.

ENRIQUE (cont'd)

leading 4-1 and, uh, really appreciate it if you came, wouldn't mind seein' you be a cheerleader.

RAMIRA smiles.

ENRIQUE makes cheerleading movements. Disgusted written all over RAMIRA's face as she shakes her head. She looks around the school hallways. They're empty.

RAMIRA

(laughs)

I'ma poet, not a screamin' fan girl babe. Besides gotta help out afta school anyway. I'ma see if I can make it, gotta get--

ENRIQUE interrupts her again.

ENRIQUE

(offended)

Oh, I see, too busy, huh? Can't even kick it witH me anymore?
(beat)

RAMIRA

(agitated)(sigh)

What're you talkin' 'bout? Why you gotta say stupid shit like that? Of course I wanna kick it witchu'--

Bell rings.

RAMIRA (CONT)

I'm late for class, I'll talk to ya later!

ENRIQUE

Jus' sayin'.

RAMIRA slams the locker in ENRIQUE's face hard, almost biting his nose off.

ENRIQUE

Well, damn.

ENRIQUE, stands there with the basketball in his hands gripping it hard, standing there staring at RAMIRA as she walks away. ENRIQUE then turns his back shaking his head in disbelief.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - AFTERNOON

Kids grumbling and giggling boisterously loud, kids are being antics. Mix of white, black and Spanish kids. Throwing things at one another and joking. Classroom is run down, ghetto, papers on floor.

CLOSEON RAMIRA, holding her head low, writing in her notebook, sitting in the back right corner, minding her own business. She's in her own world, rapping to herself not realizing she's in school. A paper ball is thrown at her face, she looks up immediately.

There he stands, we see him for the first time. Visible from the waist up. ANGELO RIZZO, 17 YEARS OLD. RAMIRA's best friend since childhood. ITALIAN, VERY HANDSOME, DIMPLES, ATHLETIC/SLIM BUILT, with a YOUTHFUL look. SHORT, DARK, WAVY BLACK HAIR. He's holding his books to his side.

RAMIRA's, eyes widen with a smile on her face. ANGELO sits in the seat next to her and taps her on her left arm. He has an NYC accent.

ANGELO

(joking)

Hey if you look at the notebook too long ya eyes'll turn to mush.

RAMIRA

(joking)

If you quit spinnin' them turntables, ya hands will turn to mush.

They both laugh, blushing.

ANGELO

I see you got jokes!

RAMIRA just stares at ANGELO and smiles, looks down in embarrassment.

RAMIRA

So how you been bigtime?

ANGELO

(sigh)

Not too much, gotta a little show comin' up this weekend.

RAMIRA

That's what's up.

CONTINUED: 18.

ANGELO

But, how's uh- you oh boy?

RAMIRA

(sigh)

He cool, Enrique bein' Enrique. You know how he is.

ANGELO

Yea.

A round white man, walking into classroom with a quick stride, arms swinging by his side. WHITE HAIR on the sides of his head and BALD at the top.

The English teacher, MR. CARTER, comes in yelling. RAMIRA and ANGELO, quickly quiet down.

MR. CARTER

Alright! Class, would you please turn to page 11 in your textbooks?

Some punk kids laughing, giggling fill the air. MALE STUDENT #1 is caught throwing a paper ball.

MR. CARTER

HEY! Boys in the back! Enough is enough! Do I make myself clear?

MALE STUDENT #1

Aight! Aight! Sorry Mista Carta.

STUDENTS in the classroom are snickering.

MALE STUDENT #1

(to himself)

Bitch ass!

CLOSE UP of a FEMALE STUDENT #1. MALE STUDENT #2 spilling her nail polish on her.

FEMALE STUDENT #1

SHIT! Mista Carta! He just spilled nail polish on me!

FEMALE STUDENT #1 is wiping all the red nail polish off. MALE STUDENT #1 and #2 are laughing hard.

MR. CARTER

Guys! What the hell did I just say? I want to see you boys after class, giving you detention for disruption.

CONTINUED: 19.

(beat)

FEMALE STUDENT #1

Stupid niggas!

MR. CARTER

And what're you doin' with nail polish in my class?

FEMALE STUDENT #1

Sorry Mista Carta, won't happen again.

FEMALE STUDENT #1 has a disgusted look on her face as she pops her gum. The whole class laughs and giggles. WIDE SHOT of the class taking their books out as the teacher writes on the chalk board shaking his head.

MR. CARTER

Now shut up and open your textbooks to page 11.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

RAMIRA and ANGELO stand in the hallway. The hallways are almost empty, with everyone rushing to get home.

RAMIRA and ANGELO talk as they hold their books. Both smiling and blushing. They're both nervous.

ANGELO

(softly)

So I guess I'll talk to you later then, I'll call ya tonight or somethin'.

RAMIRA

(softly)

Yea. I can't wait to-

Group of punk kids running through the hallway. One of them accidentally bumps into RAMIRA and knocks all her books down.

BOY #1 (O.S)

(yelling)

SORRY!

RAMIRA kneels down to pick up her books. ANGELO kneels down to help her out, they both bump heads, blushing, and stand back up, rubbing their heads.

CONTINUED: 20.

RAMIRA

<u>Well</u>, as I was sayin', I'll see ya later and maybe we can hang out tonight or somethin'.

ANGELO

Yea, I forgot to mention the battle is in Big Kane's basement.

RAMIRA

Big Kane?

ANGELO

He's this big dude who stands outside all the time with his gut hanging out, can't miss him.

RAMIRA

Ah, I see, can't wait though.

ANGELO

Don't forget the game tonight.

RAMIRA

Right, right!

RAMIRA and ANGELO both hug firmly. ANGELO walks down the hallway to the exit door. RAMIRA just standS there staring at ANGELO, she's smiling and blushing.

INT. GIRLS BATHROOM - CONTINUED

Scene is greenish and hazy. RAMIRA walks into the bathroom. She's the only one in there dead quiet. She's rapping to herself, as she's setting her books down on the ledge. Graffiti scrawls on the walls and profane language written on the mirrors. Toilet paper on the floor and is run down.

CUT-IN of her washing her hands, walks over to dry them off. Her back is turned towards the door, we hear loud footsteps of people walking in.

FEMALE STUDENT #2

Yo whassup youngblood?

OVER THE SHOULDER shot of RAMIRA as she has her back still turned. She is shook and frightened caught off guard and stops rapping. She slowly turns around, and there she stands with one person on each side.

CONTINUED: 21.

THREE SHOT MEDIUM of TAMARA JENKINS bka LADY EL and her two sidekicks. All three are known as the CANO CREW. LADY EL towers over RAMIRA. LADY EL is 18 YEARS OLD, STOCKY, JAMAICAN descent, not very pleasent looking. LADY EL has a subtle accent.

LADY EL's CANO CREW, which mainly consists of two other girls, one standing on each side of her. Both names of the girls are JAZZY O and CHANELLE FOXX. Both girls are shorter than LADY EL, but they too are taller than RAMIRA. Both girls have mean looks, displeasing and intimidating. Both girls are chewing their gum nonchalantly, looking at RAMIRA up and down. They all look like they want to start something.

All three of them are nothing but hoodrats. CHANELLE FOXX has a gold tooth.

RAMIRA's face is stern, eyes widened, heartbeating fast and sweating, scared look on her face, her eyes are really intense and big.

CUT-IN of RAMIRA's hands, they are shaking and sweaty.

LADY EL and her crew back RAMIRA into the wall.

LADY EL

(taunting)

Lookin' like a damn fool witcha hand me down clothes and beat up sneaks, lookin' all bummy 'n shit!

LADY EL and her CANO CREW laugh and giggle. RAMIRA still standing there shook and scared, she doesn't say anything.

LADY EL

What? You scared. Say somethin' bitch!

LADY EL hits the wall that RAMIRA is leaning against, scaring her even more.

CHANELLE FOXX

Fuck her! Let's just get outta here! Waistin' our damn time!

The CANO CREW leaves, walking out slowly while mumbling. CLOSE UP of RAMIRA looking stunned and shocked. She's breathing heavily, in fear of her life.

FADE TO:

EXT. RAMIRA'S JOB - EVENING

WEATHER SHOT of the city, time lapse of the sun setting. RAMIRA at her part time job, working at a family owned business, outside grocer stand that sells fruits and vegetables. Background music being played and it's (De La Soul - breakadawn).

She stands behind the counter, stocking the baskets and rapping to herself.

A display of different produce. It's crisp outside. Different views of locals gathering to buy various types of produce. Sounds of kids playing in the streets and trains rushing by. Typical Harlem day. RAMIRA's running down the corrupted sidewalk.

JIMMY

Ya late again Miss Menendez!

RAMIRA

I know, I know, wasn't my fault.

JIMMY is the manager there, tall older white guy. He walks away shaking his head.

JIMMY

This is the second time this week!

RAMIRA

Won't happen again.

A coworker named JASON overhears RAMIRA talking to herself. JASON taps her on the arm.

RAMIRA

Damn, he's always giving me shit!

JASON

If you was on time, then maybe he--

RAMIRA

(interrupts)

I mean, it's just the second time I ever did it.

JASON

(whispers)

In the same week though. You know how Jimmy is.

RAMIRA rummages to get her work clothes on and gloves. (beat)

CONTINUED: 23.

RAMIRA

Yea, always complainin' 'bout somethin', gotta stick up his ass.

RAMIRA (CONT)

I really need some extra hours man.

OLD LADY

Um, excuse me!

RAMIRA takes a quick glance and realizes the line is long.

RAMIRA

Oh shit.

JASON stands there laughing.

JASON

Aye, you stay here, I'll take care of it.

RAMIRA

Aight, thanks J. (beat)

INT. RAMIRA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

RAMIRA gets juice out of the fridge. She walks over to the beaten, filthy counter and pours herself a glass. She walks over and throws away the empty carton. CARMEN walks in from the bedroom, with a beer bottle in her hand.

CARMEN

How was your day baby? (beat)

RAMIRA leans against the kitchen counter with her glass in her hands. She has her head down and seems depressed.

RAMIRA

Fine. Long day. You seem happy. (beat)

Here comes a greasy man with his boxers on, wife beater. RICO, 30s, LATINO. Gold chain around his neck, hair dark black, neatly combed and greased. He puffs on a cigar. He has a stern look on his face, like he owns this place.

(beat)

CARMEN

Oh, baby, this is Rico! (long beat)

CONTINUED: 24.

RAMIRA doesn't really pay any attention. She continues to drink her juice. She puts her glass in the sink. RICO looks at RAMIRA up and down in a seductive way.

RAMIRA

I'm 'bout to go to the game tonight.

RAMIRA walks to her bedroom. CARMEN and RICO just stand there watching her go into the bedroom. CARMEN frowns. RICO just takes a big puff of cigar.

INT. RAMIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

RAMIRA walks into her room quickly. She runs towards her bedroom lamp and turns it on and sits on her bed. She listens to her voicemail. She takes a deep breath as she picks up the phone and dials ENRIQUE's number.

RAMIRA's face, eyes dart around as she holds the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. ENRIQUE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The phone rings.

ENRIQUE is getting ready to leave and he turns around to pick up the phone.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

ENRIQUE

Uh, hello?

RAMIRA (V.O)

(nervous)

Uh, hey babe, it's me.

ENRIQUE (V.O)

Oh, hey, what's goin' on?

RAMIRA

I saw that you called.

ENRIQUE (V.O)

Yea, thought you bailed out on me, 'bout to leave.

CONTINUED: 25.

RAMIRA (V.O)

Yea, my fault been along day and just totally forgot.

ENRIQUE

Yea, kinda doesn't surprise me when you say that.

RAMIRA

Huh? What do you mean?

ENRIQUE

(sighs)

Nothin', just be ready when I get there.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

RICO

She don't like me do she?

CARMEN

She'll be fine, just give it time.

CUT BACK TO:

ENRIQUE hangs up the phone. Telephone conversation ends.

INT. RAMIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

RAMIRA sits there confused and hangs up the phone slowly. She gets up and walks over and puts on her jacket and sneakers. She walks out of her room.

INT. RAMIRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

RAMIRA walks into the living room. CARMEN takes a hit of cigarette.

RAMIRA

I'm 'bout to leave. Be back later.

CARMEN

Ok baby, dinner will be on the stove when you get back.

RAMIRA doesn't say anything. As she exits, RICO sits on the couch staring at RAMIRA's butt as she exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMIRA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

RAMIRA is running down the sidewalk and ENRIQUE is standing right there, they both hug.

RAMIRA has a sad look on her face. Sounds of vehicles rushing by on the crisp Autumn day.

ENRIQUE

Whatchu' lookin' all sad for? (beat)

RAMIRA

(shrugs)(sighs)

I'm aight, my mom got a new boyfriend and I already don't like him, got th--

ENRIQUE interrupts RAMIRA.

ENRIQUE

Oh yea, don't worry, prolly not as bad as you think?

RAMIRA

And the Cano Crew is gangin' up on me.

ENRIQUE

Yea, don't pay them any mind.

RAMIRA

Their the ones that be startin' shit, things were so much better back in the L.E.S.

(beat)

ENRIQUE

Cheer up girl.

RAMIRA

I am. And--

ENRIQUE interrupts her again.

ENRIQUE

(interrupts)

You should come kick it with me this weekend, get ya mind off things.

CONTINUED: 27.

RAMIRA

(sigh)

Yea, we'll see about it.

ENRIQUE shakes his head.

RAMIRA

What?

ENRIQUE

Nothin', just always seem like an excuse.

RAMIRA

Excuse? Where we goin' to now?

ENRIQUE

He puts his arm around her shoulder.

ENRIQUE

I'm sorry babe, I don't wanna argue, I'll read every rap you write, listen to ya freestyles everything, 'kay?

RAMIRA

(rolls eyes)

Yea, yea, we'll see.

They kiss and continue walking towards the bus stop.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

Camera is panning the crowd. Boisterous sounds of the crowd cheering and hollering in the gym. In this scene, music plays in the background (The Beatnuts - psycho dwarf). Some students are scurrying in late as well as RAMIRA. She looks around and hears someone shouting her name. OVER THE SHOULDER shot as she looks up and spots SHARICE and ANGELO at the top, they spot her.

SHARICE is shouting, and waving her hands.

SHARICE

Ramira! Up here!

CONTINUED: 28.

CLOSE ON RAMIRA doing a half smile. She walks up the bleachers and accidentally steps on an OLD MAN's hotdog, and mustard squirts in the guys face.

RAMIRA

Oops, my bad!

OLD MAN

What the hell? God damnit!

RAMIRA

(blushes)

Uh, sorry, didn't mean too!

The OLD MAN IN BLEACHERS just grumbles loudly and shakes his head while wiping his face. Some girl above him just laughs. RAMIRA sits down in between ANGELO and SHARICE, she hugs him and her.

SHARICE

Aye, what's good?

RAMTRA

Not much, just came to see Enrique. Forgot all about it.

ENRIQUE spots RAMIRA as he's dribbling the ball and waves to her. She waves back, with a smile. His smile fades away as she notices her sitting next to ANGELO.

SHARICE

Damn, what was all that about?

RAMIRA

I dunno.

ANGELO

He always seems to have a problem with me.

RAMIRA

Yea, it's Enrique, sure he's, he gets like that when things don't go he's stressed.

SHARICE

Mm, I see.

Sounds of the gym fill with hollers and shouting. Different views of the gym with the ball being passed around, and of the scoreboard and buzzer. ENRIQUE's team loses by one point. After the game, the crowd leaves the stands and talk amongst themselves.

CONTINUED: 29.

Main music fades out.

SHARICE

Aye, I'ma see ya'll tommorow.

RAMIRA

Ok.

ANGELO

I'll be waitin' by the wall over here for you.

ENRIQUE is sweaty amd pissed walking towards the locker room upset because his team lost the game. RAMIRA runs down quickly before he leaves, almost tripping over her own feet.

RAMIRA grabs him by the arm.

RAMIRA

(out of breath)

Hey. Babe, good game.

ENRIQUE shrugs RAMIRA off, snatching his arm away from her. He doesn't turn around, just continues walking and ignores her.

RAMIRA

(angry)

Oh, I see how it is. Can't even get a hug or nothin'.

RAMIRA looks at ENRIQUE as he walks, just standing there and ANGELO witness' the whole thing, as he stands there against the wall. He shakes his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

TWO-SHOT of ANGELO and RAMIRA walking outside. She looks a little down and pissed. Cars rushing by. Damp outside. ANGELO looks at RAMIRA. Not many people in the streets. (beat)

ANGELO

You okay?

RAMIRA

Yea. I'm fine. (beat)

CONTINUED: 30.

ANGELO

You don't look like it. I've known you since we were little. Now I know when nothin's right.

RAMIRA

I dunno just--

ANGELO

Can't believe he just shrugged you off like it's nothin'.

RAMIRA

I know, that's Enrique for ya.
He'll be fine tommorow. I dunno why
he's so agitated anymore, he used
to be so cool when we first met.

(beat)

ANGELO shakes his head. RAMIRA looks at ANGELO.

RAMIRA

What?

ANGELO

Nothin', just--

RAMIRA

Just what?

ANGELO

(sigh)

You stick up for him, even though he treats you like shit. I see how he talks to you sometimes and this ain't the first time either.

(beat)

RAMIRA

(sigh)

And besides, you don't see how he is when you're not there.

ANGELO

Jus' sayin'.

RAMIRA

Can't stand them Cano bitches.

ANGELO

Oh you mean Tamara?

CONTINUED: 31.

RAMIRA

Yea.

ANGELO

What'd they say?

RAMIRA

Jus' talkin' mad shit about stuff in the bathroom, and my mom got a new boyfriend too. I got crazy vibes from him.

ANGELO looks at RAMIRA being concerned, he stops her walking and looks at her dead in the eyes, and holds her arms.

ANGELO

You know, I'm here for ya, no matter what aight? Want you to know that.

RAMIRA looks at ANGELO and smiles.

RAMIRA

Thanks Ang.

ANGELO hugs RAMIRA and she smiles, then she giggles. They continue walking.

RAMIRA

(smiling)

Remember when we were little and we would always play dress up in my room with rope chains and Kangol hats. I was Lyte and you was Slick Rick with the patch ova ya eye?

ANGELO

Yea, the Italian Slick Rick!

RAMIRA

Those days was so much fun man. Remember we would just sit in ya room and just freestyle and you would beatbox like Doug E. Fresh tryna breakdance?

ANGELO

(reminiscing)

Yea, yea! And I spun on my head breakin' my mom's vase.

CONTINUED: 32.

RAMIRA

Yea.

ANGELO

She still mad about it too. That was her favorite vase.

RAMTRA

We should do that again.

ANGELO

Yea. We should.

RAMIRA puts her hand to her mouth pretending it's a microphone, goes in for a freestyle while JORGE beatboxes. They laugh and giggle.

RAMIRA

(siqh)

Good times.

ANGELO

You should go to the Dominion this Saturday. They host battles, would be a good look.

RAMIRA

Nah, I'm good, Gooney said the same thing the otha night. Ain't tryna get a deal, just do it for fun.

ANGELO

Yea, I feel ya.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMIRA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

ANGELO and RAMIRA stand there.

RAMIRA

Guess I'll see you tommorow then.

ANGELO and RAMIRA are hugging.

ANGELO

Wait, let me walk you up.

INT. RAMIRA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT (CONT)

RAMIRA and ANGELO are walking up her stairs. Walking in the half lit hallway. Sounds of (Janet Jackson - that's the way love goes) coming from someone's room thumping.

RAMIRA

Well, thanks for walkin' me up to my door.

ANGELO

Oh, no problem, anytime. (beat)

They both stand there and stare at each other like they want to kiss. They draw closer and closer to each other.

MAN SMOKING

Well, kiss her if you're gonna kiss her.

They both blush and look down. RAMIRA takes her key out and opens the door.

RAMIRA

I'll seeya.

ANGELO

Seeya.

She waves bye and closes the door slowly.

INT. RAMIRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CARMEN is sitting in the arm chair watching tv. RAMIRA is smiling. The lights are off.

RAMIRA

Hey mom, I'm home.

She goes over to the stove and looks in the pot.

RAMIRA

Ugh, how long this been sittin' out?

RAMIRA turns on the light and CARMEN is laying on the couch, with RICO. CARMEN wakes up from the light.

RAMIRA

How's everything ma, you okay?

She walks over and gives CARMEN a hug and kiss.

CONTINUED: 34.

CARMEN

Hey baby.

RAMIRA grabs the remote and turns to YO! MTV Raps. She then discovers CARMEN has marks on her arm.

(beat)

RAMIRA

(passive)

Mom!

CARMEN

What?

RAMIRA

Your arm.

RAMIRA has a shocked look on her face. She grabs CARMEN's arm. CARMEN snatches her arm away.

CARMEN

The hell you lookin' at? (beat)

CARMEN gets up and rages at RAMIRA. RAMIRA's face is stunned.

RAMIRA

What're you doin'?

CARMEN

You too busy hangin' with them damn friends a yours, you need to be home, doin' somethin' witcha life! 'Stead a bein' a damn hoodrat.

RAMIRA is pissed and angry.

RAMIRA

(yelling)

Everyday I go to fuckin' school and come home and all you do is sit on your ass all day and--

CARMEN smacks RAMIRA hard across the face. RICO awakens slowly, half sleep.

CARMEN

Don't you dare talk to me like
that! If it wasn't for you, I
coulda been--

RAMIRA has a stunned look on her face.

CONTINUED: 35.

RAMIRA

So it's my fault you got pregnant when you were a teen?
(beat)

CARMEN trips over the pills and needles, falling on the floor.

RAMIRA

Fuck this shit!

INT. RAMIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

RAMIRA slams her door, leaning against it. Her head hitting the door hard. CLOSE ON her face, tears running down it. She swallows hard.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

RICO is laying on the couch, he's awake.

CARMEN

Nothin' baby, go back to sleep.

CARMEN scurries and tries to pick up all the needles and pills. She's laying on the floor.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S BEDROOM

WIDE SHOT of RAMIRA taking her jacket off and throwing it. Kicking her dresser talking to herself, pacing back and forth. She collapses on the bed.

FADE OUT:

INT. RECORD STORE - AFTERNOON

ANGELO is in the music store looking at some tapes and equipment, rummaging through some racks of videos.

Sounds of music being played in the background. The song is MC Breed/DFC - ain't no future in yo frontin'. The store is filled with only but a few people and it's a little run down.

CONTINUED: 36.

The STORE CLERK is a tall BLACK guy, SKINNY, trucker hat backward. His eyes are red, he's high, he's standing behind the counter.

STORE CLERK

Aye bruh, find whatchu need?

ANGELO

(distracted)

Nah...still lookin'.

ANGELO is caught off guard hearing laughs and giggles from a girl on the other end of the record store. He looks up and notices ENRIQUE is flirting and kissing on another girl. ENRIQUE has his hands around the girl's waist and ass. Her hands on his face, kissinng.

ANGELO

(to himself)

What the hell?

Stunned look on ANGELO's face.

ENRIQUE continues rubbing on her and laughing. They both turn around and almost notice ANGELO.

ANGELO quickly hides behind a corner with tapes in his hands. STORE CLERK kneels down.

(beat)

STORE CLERK

Whatchu doin' man?

ANGELO

SHHH!!

STORE CLERK

(whispers)

Oh, my bad bruh!

(beat)

STORE CLERK

Why you hidin'?

The STORE CLERK is young, 20s with a laid back personality. He hides behind the corner with ANGELO. ANGELO slowly turns his head and notices the STORE CLERK, next to him.

STORE CLERK is humming the music.

STORE CLERK

Aye man, you ever notice how like when you be starin' at the wall and (MORE)

CONTINUED: 37.

STORE CLERK (cont'd)

see things movin'? Your mind is up and comes way back down.

ANGELO just stares at the STORE CLERK and getting irritated. (beat)

ANGELO

The hell you talkin' 'bout? You high as hel, smokin' too much grass.

ANGELO notices they both exit the store, holding hands and turning the corner fast.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUSIC STORE SIDEWALK - AFTERNOON

RAMIRA walking down the street with her head low, not paying attention or noticing anything.

ANGELO spots RAMIRA walking from out the window, hollers her name and runs to the door.

ANGELO

Aye...Ramira!

RAMIRA looks around, caught off guard.

RAMIRA

Oh, hey Ang.

He has her go into the store with him, he grabs her arm.

RAMIRA

What're you doin'?

ANGELO

(nervous)

Nothin', get in here!

RAMIRA looks around confused.

RAMIRA

What the--. Why you all sweaty for? You look nervous. (beat)

ANGELO

Yea, yea, I'm cool, I'm cool. So uh, what're you doin'?

CONTINUED: 38.

RAMIRA

Uh, nothin'. Just takin' a walk.

ANGELO

(sensitive)

What's wrong?

She shakes her head in disbelief.

ANGELO

You wanna go somewhere?

They both exit the store.

STORE CLERK

(yelling)

Hey, man! You gotta pay for those!

ANGELO

Oh sorry, decided not to get these this time! I be back later.

ANGELO walks back and puts the tapes back and the STORE CLERK just watches him.

STORE CLERK

Oh, aight.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARLEM PARK - LATER

RAMIRA and ANGELO are in a park area, sitting on the grass across from each other close. Their legs are on top of each others legs.

ANGELO

So, what's been goin' on? You can tell me.

RAMIRA's eyes start to water.

RAMIRA

Just me and...my mom. Just been goin' at it, arguin' and shit. Found out she's been pill poppin' and shootin' up. I cam home last night and she had marks on her arms.

ANGELO's eyes widen and RAMIRA starts crying. He consoles her and hugs her.

39. CONTINUED:

RAMIRA

And she been complainin' bout how I don't do shit, I need to do somethin' with my life and--

ANGELO

Wow, I mean, you're only 15, you have plenty of time to think about your life.

RAMIRA

I know, I work, I go to school, she don't do anything but havin' that loser boyfriend layin' up in the house like he owns it. (beat)

ANGELO

(sigh)

Sorry to hear that.

RAMIRA

It's cool. (beat)

ANGELO starts rapping Main Source - fakin' the funk.

ANGELO

At the age of 19, heard the scene, a lot of M.C.'s that do not come clean, frontin' on dealin' hard times in rhymes...

RAMIRA looks up and starts to smile.

ANGELO

There ya go, there's that smile I wanna see.

RAMIRA adds in and starts rapping Main Source - fakin' the funk.

RAMIRA

...you see him in the streets and you see no signs of the hell, and they get on stage and tell...

They both join in.

ANGELO

...some cornball war story, ...some cornball war story, ring the bell (word) you're ring the bell (word) you're fakin' the funk...

RAMIRA

fakin' the funk...

CONTINUED: 40.

They are both laughing. They stare at each other.

RAMIRA

Good times back than.

ANGELO

Yea, you know what I feel like doin'?

RAMIRA

What?

CUT TO:

INT. ANGELO'S BEDROOM - EVENING

CLOSE ON ANGELO's hand pressing the play button on his boombox radio and turning the volume up. You can see the sun setting through his curtains. This scene has a light reddish hue to it.

ANGELO and RAMIRA are in his bedroom. Room is kind of messy, medium size, a piece of cardboard on his floor. A giant Italian flag hanging on his wall. DJ set on his desk. Bigger than RAMIRA's bedroom.

Song is being played on the boombox and it's (Leaders of the new school - sobb story (instrumental)"

RAMIRA is sitting on ANGELO's bed bobbing her head about to go in for a freestyle with the pretend mic in hand.

ANGELO is on his cardboard and starts breakdancing. They both reminisce on when they first met.

CLOSE ON A FREESTYLE 1. Life

- 2. Very lyrical
- 3. Up bringing

ANGELO

Aye, that was crazy. Remember when we used to go out and spray paint the trains?

RAMIRA

Thanks and we almost got caught by 5-0?

ANGELO

(laughs)

Yea. You said Gooney told you about the Dominion right?

CONTINUED: 41.

RAMIRA

Yea.

ANGELO

(serious)

You need to do it!

RAMIRA

(sighs)

If you say so Crazy Legs...but I dunno.

RAMIRA nudges ANGELO in the shoulder, playfully.

RAMIRA looks at the clock. CLOSEUP of clock. It reads 7:45pm.

RAMIRA

I betta get goin'. I'm mad hungry though, might head out with Sharice or somethin later. Gotta get home before mom starts trippin'. One minute she's up, next minute she's down.

Knock. Knock.

ANGELO's door opens and it's his dad, slim built, dark hair with a little bit of grey, looks a little young for his age, early 40s, LUCIANO RIZZO.

LUCIANO

Hey Ang...Oh hey, Ramira! Didn't know you two were here.

RAMIRA

Hey Mista Rizzo, how are you?

LUCIANO

(whispering)

I'm good, I'm good, um, hey, could you guys keep it down a bit, ya motha's tryna sleep.

ANGELO

Oh yea, yea, we will, we will.

LUCIANO closes the door but Angelo stops him before he does.

ANGELO

Hey Dad, uh, is it okay if I go out with Ramira tonight, I won't be out too late.

CONTINUED: 42.

CLOSE ON Ramira as she's looking at Angelo, she has a confused look.

LUCIANO

Yea, that's fine son. Don't be out too late, you have school in the mornin'.

LUCIANO closes the door.

(beat)

RAMIRA

Um, bigtime, I just said I have to get goin' and to be home before 11--

RAMIRA hits ANGELO over the head with a pillow softly.

ANGELO

Hey!

ANGELO walks over to his radio and turns it off.

ANGELO

(nervous)

I know, but uh, I just want to go with you, if you don't mind.

RAMIRA looks at ANGELO confused.

RAMIRA

Oh, fine with me. Me and Sharice could use the extra protection.

They both laugh. RAMIRA gets up and punches ANGELO in the arm.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

RAMIRA and ANGELO are walking down the steps to the subway. They spot SHARICE standing there.

They are moving fairly quickly. The station isn't that filled with many people rushing to get on the trains. GANG MEMBERS spots RIVAL GANG MEMBERS.

GANG MEMBERS are wearing hoodies looking like thugs. RIVAL GANG MEMBERS are in all black looking like hoodrats. GANG MEMBERS walk up to RIVAL GANG MEMBERS and flash their guns on waste, shoulder bumping RIVAL GANG MEMBERS.

CONTINUED: 43.

RIVAL GANG MEMBER

The fuck you bumpin' into nigga?

GANG MEMBER

The fuck you talkin' 'bout, ain't nobody lookin' atchu!

RIVAL GANG MEMBER

Say somethin' else or I'ma end yo shit right now!

RIVAL GANG MEMBER points gun to GANG MEMBERS head.

They are both in each others faces, about to fight. Some OLDER MAN runs over and breaks it up.

OLDER MAN

(yelling)

Fellas! Fellas! Come on now let it go!

The OLDER MAN looks at the gangs with a hard, stern look.

GANG MEMBERS look at each other hard. The two kids don't say anything to each other and just give each other cold glares.

OLDER MAN

Look! Relax! Put the pistol down now!

(beat)

The gangs leave in opposite directions.

GANG MEMBER

Fuck them muhfuckas man!

CUT-IN of RAMIRA.

RAMIRA

(police voice)(joking)
Sharice Thomas, you are under
arrest!

SHARICE turns around surprised.

SHARICE

Shut up girl, you play too much! Where ya'll goin'?

RAMIRA

Just gonna pick up somethin' to eat and head back home.

CONTINUED: 44.

SHARICE

Yea yea, me too, wanna head to that little diner in Brooklyn?

ANGELO

The Chinese joint?

SHARICE

Yea, that one, with that bomb ass food?

RAMIRA

Yea, that's cool.

CUT-IN of LADY EL and the CANO CREW sitting in the train about to get off, talking amongst themselves. They run into RAMIRA, ANGELO and SHARICE as they get off.

Everyone halts and is surprised.

(beat)

LADY EL

Hmm, well, well, well, if it isn't Kid 'N Play, along with the token white boy, bunch a maggots.

LADY EL and her crew laugh.

SHARICE

C'mon El, ain't nobody got time for ya dumb lookin' ass.

LADY EL

Huh?

SHARICE

You heard me. Just shut up and let us on!

LADY EL and her crew block the door.

CHANELLE FOXX

(to Lady El)

You gon' let these bitches talk to you like that?
(beat)

SHARICE

Move!

RAMIRA

(whispers)

Come on Reese just ignore 'em.

CONTINUED: 45.

LADY EL

What? I should break ya face for talkin to me like that bitch.

(beat)

ANGELO

What the hells ya problem, we ain't do nothin' to you!

(beat)

LADY EL

Was I talkin' to you ya immigrant, greaseball, diego?

ANGELO's fist and body clench up and he gets in LADY EL's face. His lips curl up and his face tightens.

SHARICE and RAMIRA grab ahold of each of his arm.

RAMIRA

Come on Angelo! No!

LADY EL

(laughter)

Ya pops must feel ashamed of raisin' a boy that would put hands on a woman. Got these two little girls grabbin' ahold of you...can't even man the fuck up.

LADY EL and her crew just bump through SHARICE, ANGELO and RAMIRA hurting their shoulders. ANGELO's face is red and looks pissed. He looks back at them.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - NIGHT

They all sit down in the back of the subway. There aren't that many people on the subway. There's graffiti scrawls on it, and the seats are torn, covered and filled. Newspapers on the train. Song being played and it's (Sir Mix-a-lot - posse on broadway).

SHARICE

Man, I'm sick of her. Her and her crew with them busted weaves lookin' like broke ass bimbos n' shit!

RAMIRA

I know right.

ANGELO is caught staring ahead.

CONTINUED: 46.

(beat)

RAMIRA

Yo Ang, you ok?

SHARICE

(passionately)

Yo, don't let 'em get to you aight?

RAMIRA rubs ANGELO's arm trying to console him.

ANGELO

Nah, I'm good, just take pride in my culture, that's all.

SHARICE

I can't stand her ass man, I wanna see her ass get clapped.

RAMIRA

Me too.

POV shot of subway lights flickering on and off.

SHARICE

'Sup wit these lights man?

ANGELO

I dunno.

They all look up.

The train stops and they get off. It's cold and dark in the station with very little lighting. Not many people seen and it's real quiet. They walk up the stairs walking towards us.

EXT. SUBWAY ENTRANCE BROOKLYN - NIGHT

VERY WIDE shot of SHARICE, ANGELO and RAMIRA walking up the subway stairs. They spot a CHINESE RESTAURANT sign. It's a little damp outside.

SHARICE

Look, there's that Chinese place ova there.

They all walk in sync with other.

The next two scenes go back and forth.

EXT. BROOKLYN SIDEWALK - NIGHT

CUT-IN of a guy mugging someone, punching and beating him up.

CUT TO: CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The gang jay walking.

CUT BACK TO: BROOKLYN SIDEWALK - NIGHT

MUGGER

Gimme the money, and them sneakers too!

The MUGGER keeps punching and kicking the VICTIM feriously.

VICTIM

(crying)

Oh...damn...

SHARICE

They got some bomb ass food yo!

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

CHINESE WORKER is taking orders. There's other Chinese workers in the back. OVER THE SHOULDER shot from behind the CHINESE WORKER looking at customers. He has an accent, mid 20s, GREASY face, looks tired. Background music fades out.

SHARICE

Yea, I'd like a orange chicken with a white rice, um--

CUT-IN of MUGGER continuing to beat up VICTIM.

CHINESE WORKER

Eggroll?

SHARICE

Yea, um, that duck sauce shit or whateva it's called on the side too.

CUT-IN of MUGGER pointing gun at VICTIM's head. It's pitch black, can hardly see the VICTIM or MUGGER. MUGGER has black mask over his face. He threatens the VICTIM with a pistol.

MUGGER

Shut the fuck up! You say anything and I'ma beat the breaks off you!

CONTINUED: 48.

(beat)

The VICTIM doesn't say anything and the MUGGER pushes the VICTIM's head down.

CUT-IN of RAMIRA ordering food.

RAMIRA

Yea, I'll have the same but change mine with brown rice, with egg roll.

RAMIRA

(speaking to Angelo)

Want anything?

ANGELO

Nah, I'm good.

RAMIRA

You sure? Gotta feed them guns of yours for tommorow's battle.

RAMIRA squeezes ANGELO's muscles. ANGELO laughs.

RAMIRA and SHARICE pay for the food. They grab the bags of food and walk away. CLOSE UP of MUGGER running, hitting the bags that RAMIRA and SHARICE are holding.

SHARICE

Whoa, whoa, what the--yo, watch where the hell you goin'! (beat)

Damn, almost ran us over!

MUGGER stands there and turns around, gets in ANGELO's face instead.

MUGGER

The hell you lookin' at foo?

MUGGER shoulder bumps ANGELO. ANGELO pushes the MUGGER. MUGGER turns around and puts a pistol in his face. (beat)

RAMIRA

Aye, aye, Ang relax, relax!

ANGELO stares and MUGGER runs away.

CUT-IN of the VICTIM laying on the sidewalk weeping and crying.

CONTINUED: 49.

SHARICE

That's not sauce, that's blood!

ANGELO

Dumbass!

RAMIRA

Let's go!

SHARICE

We should get goin'. Got school in the a.m.

RAMIRA

Aight, cool, we're gonna head back home.

ANGELO

Yea, I'ma help clean her off. (beat)

SHARICE stands there looking at them. RAMIRA catches SHARICE staring at them.

RAMTRA

What?

SHARICE

(joking)

Oh, nothin', don't forget Enrique.

CLOSE UP of ANGELO's face looking disappointed and worried.

RAMIRA

(joking)

Pssh! Get outta here!

RAMIRA pushes SHARICE in a playful manner.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

RAMIRA and ANGELO are walking through a back alley, close to the street. They stand under a light post. Sounds of cars rushing by. Their chatting, cold, wet outside.

RAMIRA

So I guess I'll seeya tommorow.

RAMIRA walks away.

(beat)

CONTINUED: 50.

ANGELO

Um, yea, Ramira.

RAMIRA turns around to look at ANGELO.

RAMIRA

Yea.

ANGELO

Um, food smells really good.

RAMIRA

You wanna come in and have some?

ANGELO

No! No, um.

RAMIRA

What?

RAMIRA stares at ANGELO. ANGELO is standing they're tense. (beat)

ANGELO

Um, can I tell you somethin'?

RAMIRA

Yea, sure. Hurry 'cause foods gettin' cold. Hate to reheat it.

ANGELO

Well, you know the record store right? Earlier today?

RAMIRA

Yea. What about it?

ANGELO

Well uh, I was in there and saw Enrique kissing on some other girl. (beat)

ANGELO

They were flirting and what not. (beat)

RAMIRA stops and stares at ANGELO. Her eyes widen. She has a stunned look on her face but plays it off.

RAMIRA

Nah, can't be, musta been someone else, he practices everyday after school for basketball, he tells me (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 51.

RAMIRA (cont'd)

he's serious about his game. Saw him this morning too.

ANGELO

(sigh)

I'm bein' serious. It was him, they were in the back of the store and they were both gigglin' and huggin', they both then walked--

RAMIRA

(in denial)

You know, that's ain't true, Enrique loves me as much I love him, he may not show it but he listens to me--

ANGELO

Yea, and he doesn't even show that he cares or hangs out with you as much but then you show up to all his games, he's selfish but you can't see it.

(beat)

RAMIRA

(aggravated)

You know, I'm tired, it's been a long day, I'll see you tommorow Ang.

(beat)

ANGELO

Ok, aight, I see how it is, just don't wanna see my bestfriend gettin' hurt. I'll see ya.

ANGELO's upset, and starts to walk fast down the sidewalk shaking his head. RAMIRA just stares at him. She walks away. RAMIRA doesn't even follow ANGELO or say anything.

FADE TO:

EXT. BIG KANE'S BASEMENT - LATE EVENING (NEXT DAY)

RAMIRA's walking down the sidewalk slowly, looking for the entrance to the party. POV shots of the different storefront signs. There is music being played in the background (Nas - understand). POV shot of RAMIRA looking at the directions on the paper that ANGELO gave her. There's prostitutes on the sidewalk. Thugs.

CONTINUED: 52.

POV shot of RAMIRA looking at BIG KANE from toe to head looking up slowly. Camera pans BIG KANE from toe to head. A big man dressed in a black hoodie, unlaced boots, skull hat and baggy jeans. He has a deep voice.

BIG KANE

You lost?

RAMIRA

Nah, um, I'm tryna find Big Kane?

BIG KANE

You standin' in front of him.

RAMIRA

Oh, uh, is this where the DJ competition is at?

BIG KANE

(opens door)

Yea.

RAMIRA

Oh, thanks.

INT. BIG KANE'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

This scene has a greenish haze to it. Greenish smoke filling the place. Music vibrating the walls hearing only bass. OVER THE SHOULDER shot of RAMIRA walking in the door, there's a set of stairs that go up and a set of stairs that go down on each side.

The inside is very run down, graffiti covering the walls, trash everywhere, needles on the ground, some hookers and punks in the hallways smoking cigarettes, looking at RAMIRA up and down. They look like they are in their early 20s. RAMIRA looks dazed and confused.

HOOKER #1

(talking to the other hooker) What she doin' here?

(laughs)

Some kids in the hallway shooting dice, talking amongst themselves. RAMIRA walks down the stairs and the long hallway filled with graffiti scrawls, old paint cans on the ground. The music is blasting and blarring. She looks around and the door to the party is the last one at the end of the hallway.

INT. BIG KANE'S BASEMENT - DJ BATTLE - NIGHT

RAMIRA opens the door slowly. Camera pans the crowd, everybody is dancing, music bumping, DJ scratching, the crowd is hype. It's a medium sized party but appears large. RAMIRA looks around and spots SHARICE dancing. RAMIRA walks over there, dodging all the crazy people, trying not to get hit. The party just seems like a typical basement party. Very club scenish and big for a basement.

SHARICE

Didn't know when you'd be here!

RAMIRA

Yea, had a hard time findin' it.

SHARICE

Oh word, you live in Harlem, you know that right?

RAMIRA gives SHARICE a dumb look.

RAMIRA

I know <u>that</u> but neva heard a Big Kane or ever see him.

RAMIRA looks around and notices the crowd forming into a circle. She notices ANGELO with his DJ set on one side and the other DJ on the other side. The RIVAL DJ goes up first, he does some crazy scratches and cuts. The crowd goes wild and ANGELO goes up next and does some scratches. Crowd goes crazier.

HOST #2

Looks like a battle goin' on!

Camera panning the entire crowd. ANGELO goes into battle mode and the crowd is hyping him up. CUT-IN of his hands going back and forth. CUT-IN of a bunch of thugs standing in the corner, dressed in all black, hard faces, beanie caps.

RAMIRA pans the crowd and notices those guys in the corner. (beat)

RAMIRA

(whisper to Sharice)

Aye, look, look!

SHARICE

What!

CONTINUED: 54.

RAMIRA

Those guys in the corner, look how they lookin'.

The thugs are scoping ANGELO, looking mean.

HOST #2 (O.S.)

Aight, aight ya'll, second round goin' down.

The thugs have gold teeth and guns on their waists.

RAMIRA

Oh shit, they got heat!

One of the guys pulls out the gun and shoots at the ceiling. The crowd scurries away causing a ruckus. ANGELO jumps down and runs into the thugs. They grab him.

ANGELO

Aye! What the hell?

SLIM

Sup' muhfucka! (beat)

SLIM

You heard me. Sup bitch, can't speak?

ANGELO is surrounded by the thugs.

RAMIRA

Yo, we gotta get Ang!

ANGELO

(to himself)

That voice.

(beat)

(to the guy standing behind

Slim)

You the fool that ran into us yestaday almost knockin' us over!

They are in each other's faces almost kissing about to fight. Gang tells SLIM to cool it. SLIM pushes ANGELO.

ANGELO

What, you wanna fight?!

SLIM

Ha, you pretty boy ain't built for this homeboy, got my squad to back me up. Ain't even worth it. CONTINUED: 55.

ANGELO throws a punch at one of the members. SLIM fires a shot in the air again. RAMIRA and SHARICE run quickly.

BOUNCER

(shouting)

Ok, everybody out now!

EXT. BIG KANE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

SHARICE and RAMIRA are by an alley. They spot ANGELO holding his arm.

RAMIRA

He looks at SHARICE and RAMIRA, they both run up and hug him. He hugs her tight.

RAMIRA

You okay?

ANGELO

Yea, yea, I'm good! Just a little sore nose is all.

SHARICE

Damn, I thought ya'll was finna get down!

Everybody's exiting the building and talking amongst themselves scurrying out.

RAMIRA

You gon' be alright?

ANGELO

Yea, yea, I'm good. Thanks.

RAMIRA

Okay.

(long beat)

RAMIRA looks down.

RAMIRA

Um, sorry 'bout last night--

ANGELO

Nah. It's cool, don't worry 'bout it.

SHARICE looks confused.

CONTINUED: 56.

SHARICE

Did I miss somethin'?

RAMIRA

No.

SHARICE

Oh, okay.

RAMIRA hugs both ANGELO and SHARICE.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

RAMIRA walks in her front door. CLOSE UP of CARMEN, she has a black eye. She's washing dishes. CARMEN looks nervous as RAMIRA's home.

RAMIRA

Hey I'm home.

CARMEN

(nervous)

Mija, how's everything?

RAMIRA

(sigh)

Fine, just tired.

RAMIRA takes off her jacket. She looks at CARMEN and notices a black eye on her.

(beat)

RAMIRA

Mom!

CARMEN

What?

CARMEN turns her face trying to hide it.

RAMIRA

What do you mean what?! Your face, look at your face!

CARMEN

Oh, it's nothin' I ran into the door.

(beat)

CONTINUED: 57.

RAMIRA

(sarcasm)

Right, so you ran into the door and it just happened to hit you directly in the eye? Right, so you gon' let this asshole come up in here and beat on you?! I'm not stupid, I know what's goin' on!

CARMEN

(calm)

Baby, please don't fuck this up for me. He's helpin' with the bills and I ca-

RAMIRA

So he's prolly out gettin' some from another broad right now!
(beat)

RAMIRA looks upset and walks in her room. She doesn't look pleased.

CUT TO:

RAMIRA's bedroom.

CLOSE UP of RAMIRA's head against the door.

RAMIRA

Fuck.

CUT TO:

INT. CORNER STORE - EARLY MORNING

Corner store has some spanish music playing in the background. Typical ghetto cornerstore. RAMIRA is only in it. POV shot of RAMIRA seeing ENRIQUE from a distance walking with another girl. He doesn't see her, she hides behind an aisle.

ENRIQUE (O.S)

(to girl)

Wait here, I'll be back. Gonna grab some pop.

RAMIRA

(whispers)

Oh, my God!

CONTINUED: 58.

She waits until he walks down and then turns her back. He taps her on the shoulder. They hug, he goes in for a kiss but she wipes away.

ENRIQUE

(nervous)

Oh, hey babe!

ENRIQUE (CONT)

What's wrong witchu?

RAMIRA

Oh, nothin', just gettin' some snacks.

(beat)

Who was that girl?

ENRIQUE

What girl?

RAMIRA

Don't play with me Enrique, that girl you were huggin' up on right there.

ENRIQUE

Just a friend.

RAMIRA

Oh really? Just a friend huh, so you kiss all your female friends? These lips only need to be lockin' with yours.

ENRIQUE

Well, speak for yourself, you hang with that Antonio kid.

RAMIRA

It's Angelo.

ENRIQUE

Whatever his name is.

RAMIRA

Well, I don't go around kissin' him, he's just a friend, just like you got friends, and besides you haven't been callin' me or anything lately.

CONTINUED: 59.

ENRIQUE

Neither do you. (beat)

RAMIRA

(aggravated)(sigh)

Look, I've been stressed out lately, you neva care, I tell you about my problems, I tell you about everything and you brush it off like it ain't nothin'! What happened to the old us? We used to be so close!

CUT-IN of the girl waiting and looking. Cashier looks down the aisle.

ENRIQUE

(aggravated)

Yea, you messed it up till you started hangin' more with that loser and you rather rap than kick it with me, I saw you two in the bleachers at my game the other day, huggin' all close 'n shit.

RAMIRA

(aggravated)

Huggin' all close? Well, you must be blind because Sharice was sittin' right there. And, maybe because he cares Enrique. I care about you and love you. Why can't you do the same for me? A boyfriend 'spose to care and be there for his girl when she's there for him! Don't you love me? (beat)

ENRIQUE walks away, RAMIRA stands there, eyes watery, face red.

RAMIRA

ENRIQUE!

ENRIQUE walks back to the girl putting arm around her and ENRIQUE looks back walking out. RAMIRA has pissed written all over her face.

CUT TO:

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - LATE MORNING

The bell rings.

RAMIRA walks in the classroom slow holding her books close to her chest.

MISS SMITH

Ya late Miss Menendez!

RAMIRA

Sorry.

The class squaks, throws things and oohs at her. She sits in her chair looking around, notices ANGELO not there.

RAMIRA

(whispers)

Aye, you seen Angelo anywhere?

STUDENT #1

Nah.

RAMIRA

(whispers)

Have you?

STUDENT #2

Nah, haven't seen him.

RAMIRA sits back in her chair. Kids pass notes in class, being antics. MISS SMITH is writing on the chalkboard.

MISS SMITH

Ok class take out last nights homework. Javier, what's the question to number 1.

JAVIER

Shit, I dunno.

MISS SMITH

Excuse me?

STUDENT #3 snickering.

STUDENT #3

You's a dummy.

JAVIER

Huh? I know you ain't talkin' to me!

CONTINUED: 61.

Kids continue to throw things, JAVIER pushes his desk over wanting to fight. Kids in classroom start taunting.

MISS SMITH

(yelling)

Hey, gentlemen!

Knock. Knock.

VARIOUS shots faces in the classroom as they hear a knock at the door. The whole classroom quiets down.

PRINCIPAL SHAEFFER

Uh, Miss Smith, we need to see uh, Ramira...Menendez to my office please.

The classroom stares at RAMIRA. RAMIRA gets up, she walks out to go into the office.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL SHAEFFER'S OFFICE - DAY

RAMIRA and PRINCIPAL SHAEFFER sit across from each other at a circular table. She looks out the window daydreaming not caring. PRINCIPAL SHAEFFER is a tall man wearing a dress shirt with sleeves rolled up, dark hair and big glasses. His office is a little messy.

PRINCIPAL SHAEFFER

Um, Miss Menendez, I want to take a look at your grades here, they've been drastically dropping in the previous semester. Now, uh, is there anything going on at home or...

(beat)

RAMIRA just stares at him.

PRINCIPAL SHAEFFER

If you need a tutor, I can partner you up with one of our tutors or they can help you after school.

RAMIRA continues looking out the window, not listening to PRINCIPAL SHAEFFER.

PRINCIPAL SHAEFFER

Uh, Miss Menendez, are you listening? CONTINUED: 62.

RAMIRA

Oh, yea, sorry I'll do better.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

RAMIRA walks out to the hallway, the hallways are empty. She then bumps into another student named RENEE. She's a quite. Dark brown hair, glasses. Average built.

RENEE

Oh, sorry!

RAMIRA

No problem.

RAMIRA enters the bathroom.

Next two scenes go back and forth.

RENEE gets a drink and overhears LADY EL and her crew behind a corner. She peaks behind the corner.

CUT AWAY of RAMIRA looking in the mirror, fixing her hair and rapping to herself.

LADY EL

You got that tape?. Can't wait to kill these niggas this Saturday.

LADY EL (O.S.)

(whispers)

Need to make a tape though, get some studio time.

CUT AWAY of RAMIRA feeling queasy, as she's looking into the mirror, she runs to the toilet and throws up.

The scene goes in and out, blurry and the camera goes clear and unclear.

LADY EL

Like, we can think a somethin' though.

JAZZY O

Yea, yea.

RAMIRA flushes toilet and walks out.

RENEE walks the opposite direction from LADY EL.

RAMIRA walks out the bathroom accidentally running into LADY EL and the CANO CREW.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 63.

LADY EL

Oh shit, look who's here. (beat)

RAMIRA lays on the floor and her books fall down. CHANELLE FOXX kicks her books as they walk away.

The CANO CREW laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY BUS - EVENING

AERIAL VIEW of the subways. RAMIRA is on the back of the city bus listening to her music on her cassette player. She's writing in her notebook at the same time. Song is being played through her headphones. We can hear it.

Different shots of poor Harlem. She gets off the bus.

EXT. SIDEWALK - EVENING

She runs down the sidewalk, tripping over a can. She walks up the steps to her apartment building.

INT. RAMIRA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

She runs into her bedroom and calls SHARICE.

Telephone Conversation

SHARICE

(tired)

Hello?

RAMIRA (O.S.)

Sharice, it's me.

SHARICE

Hey whussup, I been tryna get ahold a--

RAMIRA

(whispering)

I know, I know, look, have you seen Angelo, he hasn't been in class all--

CONTINUED: 64.

SHARICE

I know, heard he got beat up!

RAMIRA

Beat up?

SHARICE

Yea, think he got jumped by some dudes in Central Park, thinkin' it was those guys from that DJ party. GOONEY tol' me.

RAMIRA drops the phone and runs out the door. CLOSE UP of the phone as it's laying on the floor.

SHARICE (O.S.)

Hello? Hello...you still there?

EXT. HARLEM SIDEWALK - NIGHT

RAMIRA runs down the street a few blocks.

RAMIRA and SHARICE running through the park looking. ANGELO lays on the ground weeping and bruised up. It's almost dark outside. He's bleeding heavily, through the mouth and nose, laying under a tree.

RAMIRA

Oh my God, Angelo! You okay?

SHARICE

You aight?

ANGELO

(muffled)

No...I'm really hurt and sore. Where the hell are those guys, I'ma kill 'em!

ANGELO tries to get up wanting to kill someone, flexing his muscles.

RAMIRA

Wait! Wait! Just relax.

FADE TO:

INT. NYC HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

ANGELO is laying in the hospital bed, he's wearing a gown and has bandages where his cuts are. RAMIRA is by his left side holding his hand and really concerned. Her eyes are red from crying. SHARICE is standing, pacing back and forth, talking to herself.

RAMIRA kisses ANGELO's hand. He smiles. LUCIANO comes rushing in the room.

LUCIANO

(sympathetic)

What the hell happened to you?

LUCIANO is tapping him on the face and he's a little bit angry. ANGELO kind of grumbles.

SHARICE

Um, Mista Rizzo, sir, Angelo got jumped by some gang from a show he had the other night.

RAMIRA

Yea, there was a big fight afterward between these two and--

LUCIANO

You kids need to stay out of trouble, hear me!
(beat)

Everyone stares at LUCIANO. A close up of each face.

SHARICE AND

RAMIRA

Yes, sir.

CUT-IN of RAMIRA's hands still rubbing ANGELO's left hand.

RAMIRA

SHARICE and LUCIANO look at her. They both are hesitant to say anything.

LUCIANO

Okay, that's fine, I'ma head home, Sharice, you need a ride?

CONTINUED: 66.

SHARICE

Um, no sir I--

LUCIANO

(clears throat)

Sharice, you need a ride?

SHARICE

Oh yea, yea! I'll see ya'll later, get well Angelo, seeya.

ANGELO

Thanks.

SHARICE gives ANGELO some dap. LUCIANO and SHARICE walk out the door. It's quiet in the room. RAMIRA continues to stare at them till they walk out.

RAMIRA

(passionately)

You okay buddy?

ANGELO

(smiles)

Yea, I'm good, now that you're here.

RAMIRA cracks a smile.

RAMIRA

(soft)

You know, I'm sorry about the other night.

ANGELO

(soft)

It's cool, I wasn't mad at all, just lookin' out for you, that's all.

RAMIRA

(smiling)(blushing)

Thanks.

RAMIRA kind of looks down and is hesitant.

ANGELO

(soft)

Anything you wanna talk about? You can tell me.
(beat)

CONTINUED: 67.

RAMIRA

(sigh)

Nah, I mean, just Enrique broke up with me and--

ANGELO

Really?

RAMIRA

(depressed)

Yea, I was in the corner store the other day, saw him kissing another girl. he walks back to where I am. I confronted him, we get into an arguement, he walks off and leaves. He's jealous because I hang with you all the time, and Sharice. He mad cause he feels I don't care about him and I think it's dumb, he's so self centered.

ANGELO

Doesn't surprise me, was waiting for you to see. So he acts like an ass and jealous 'cause you don't spend 100% of your focus on him and yet he fucks around with other girls?

RAMIRA

Pretty much. I was too blinded and dumb to realize it and not believe you.

RAMIRA holds her head down.

ANGELO

Yea, you were. I would never hurt or lie to you, you know that right?

RAMIRA

I know. I'm sorry. It was just bothersome, and we been together for awhile too and was starting to really fall for him.

(beat)

ANGELO looks at RAMIRA being concerned.

ANGELO

(depressed)

Yea, I know.

CONTINUED: 68.

Time passes and RAMIRA falls asleep in the hospital room in the chair. She wakes up, the clock reads 2am. RAMIRA wakes up and realizes the time.

(beat)

RAMIRA

Oh man, I better get goin'. I'll see you tommorow. You gon' be okay?

RAMIRA puts on her coat.

ANGELO

Yea, I will. Thanks.

RAMIRA walks toward the door.

She waves to ANGELO as she's leaving, closing it slowly, still watching ANGELO. He waves slowly and smiling. Her eyes start watering as she closes the door.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S BATHROOM - EVENING (NEXT DAY)

RAMIRA is brushing and combing her hair, she's rapping to herself. Room is messy. CLOSE UP of RAMIRA looking into the mirror, she's very tense looking. She brushes her teeth.

FADE TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S APARTMENT - MORNING (NEXT DAY)

RAMIRA is laying on her bed sleeping as time passes by. She misses time as it goes by, missing her first class in school. Her clock beeps and it's past 10 oclock.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - MORNING

CUT-IN of SHARICE sitting in class, looking around, wondering where RAMIRA is.

CUT BACK TO:

RAMIRA

Oh shit!

RAMIRA's eyes open, sun beating on her face. She wakes up quickly and hops out of bed. Puts her clothes on, grabs her stuff and runs out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARLEM SIDEWALK - DAY

RAMIRA's running fast down the street and holding her books with her bag on her back.

Running through the back entrance of the school. Shot of a school official walking by. RAMIRA ducks down low and hides behind a wall breathing heavy. She creeps by and walks into class as the bell rings. The teacher doesn't notice.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

This scene, both characters are whispering. SHARICE looks and notices RAMIRA coming in sneaky.

(beat)

SHARICE

(whispering)

Yo, where the hell you been?

RAMIRA

(sigh)(whispering)

I overslept at the hospital last night and then overslept at home, didn't hear my alarm go off.

(beat)

SHARICE

(whispering)

Damn, that's crazy, was hopin' you were ok?

RAMIRA

(whispers)

Yea, I'm good. Did the teacher say anything?

SHARICE

(whispers)

Nah, you good. So tell me somethin'.

RAMIRA

(whispers)

Uh-huh.

SHARICE

(whispers)

I saw Enrique this mornin' talking about, I'm single blah, blah, blah. What's all that about?

(beat)

(Deat)

CONTINUED: 70.

RAMIRA

(whispers)

Yea, I know. I'll tell you later.

SHARICE has a confused look on her face.

SHARICE

(whispers)

Ah, I see. Did you finish that assignment from--.

RAMIRA

(whispers)(interrupts)
AH, NO! I forgot to get it.

RAMIRA puts her head down.

SHARICE

(whispers)

Damn.

RAMIRA

(whispers)

Oh well, I'm already failing this class so I don't care.

MISS SMITH

(clears throat)

Ladies in the back!

SHARICE AND

RAMIRA Sorry!

(beat)

RAMIRA

(sigh)(whispers)

I hate my life.

SHARICE is shaking her head. RAMIRA puts her hands over her face.

SHARICE

(passionate)(whispering)
You'll be alright girl, just keep
ya head up aight! It could be

worse.

SHARICE rubs RAMIRA's back and comforts her.

CONTINUED: 71.

RAMIRA

Thanks.

SHARICE

How about we go get something to eat after school aight? On me.

RAMIRA

Yea. Sounds good.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARLEM SIDEWALK - LATE AFTERNOON

RAMIRA and SHARICE walking down the street jay walking, they are talking amongst themselves. Cars honking, people cussing loudly. A taxi screeches it's tires almost hitting them.

SHARICE

Aye! Watch it stupid ass!

TAXI DRIVER

(mumbling)

(speaking in a foreign

language)

The TAXI DRIVER gives SHARICE the middle finger and drives off.

SHARICE

(to herself)

Stupid!

RAMIRA

You wanna go to that little bistro right here?

SHARICE

Yea.

EXT. BISTRO - LATE AFTERNOON

They sit down from across each other. The waitress brings them menus.

(beat)

RAMIRA

Let's see, I'ma have some empanadas and some patata bravas, whatchu gettin'?

CONTINUED: 72.

SHARICE

I don't know yet. Long as it looks good, I'ma eat it!

RAMIRA

(laughs)

You're crazy!

Bistro is small, not the best looking. Not that many people outside.

SHARICE

So, what's up with you and Enrique? (beat)

She shrugs her shoulders.

RAMIRA

I dunno, we broke up.

SHARICE

Really? What happened?

RAMIRA

Was in the corner store the other day and saw him holdin' hands with some girl.

SHARICE

What?

RAMIRA

Yea, was hidin' behind an aisle in the back, I had my back turned and played it off. He came in the back to get something. I turned around and he was super shocked to see me.

SHARICE

Damn.

RAMIRA

I already knew. He hugged me and I pushed him off. I said who's that girl? He was all like, just a friend and I'm like wow, so you go and kiss on your friends and he brought up Angelo and we just got into it. So he left.

(beat)

CONTINUED: 73.

SHARICE

That's messed up.

RAMIRA

I know.

RAMIRA and SHARICE walk out the bistro. They both get up and walk down the street. They bump into RENEE on the way.

RAMIRA

Hey Renee, what's --

RENEE accidentally bumps into SHARICE and RAMIRA out of nervousness.

RENEE

(nervous)

Oh hey ya'll what's up?

SHARICE

Hey where--

RENEE

Gotta go, see ya'll later!

RENEE runs down the sidewalk and trips over a rock. SHARICE and RAMIRA look back.

SHARICE

(quietly)

Damn, what's her problem?

RAMIRA

(shrugs shoulders)

I dunno. Beats me. Ran into her in the hallway the other day, was acting the same way.

They continue walking on their way down the street, talking amongst themselves.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMIRA'S JOB - EVENING

RAMIRA is seen stocking the fruit baskets and rapping to herself. It's quite busy at her job. RAMIRA is moving in a slow manner. She spots ENRIQUE and that girl from afar. She stands there and stares at them. RAMIRA has a sad look on her face.

(beat)

CONTINUED: 74.

JIMMY

(agitated)

Miss Menendez, hurry up, got customers waiting!

RAMIRA

Sorry Jimmy, I'll get it.

RAMIRA runs over to the cash register and rings everyone up.

RAMIRA

Will that that be all sir?

CUSTOMER #1

Yea, yea!

RAMIRA

Have a nice day ma'am.

The second customer leaves and doesn't say anything.

0

Hey, I got this, you finish stockin'.

RAMIRA

Thanks.

RAMIRA continues stocking the baskets and spots ANGELO walking. They make eye contact. They both smile. He walks over to her with sunglasses on.

ANGELO

How's it going?

RAMIRA

(sigh)

Not much, you feelin' ok?

ANGELO

Yea, I got a slight bruise on my rib cage and eye.

He takes his shades off and it's a slight black eye.

RAMIRA

Ouch! Put the shades back on.

ANGELO

(laughs)

CONTINUED: 75.

JIMMY

(interrupting)(yelling)

Ramira!

RAMIRA turns around and looks at her manager.

JIMMY

(yelling)

We have customers waiting, get to work, this ain't time for pity pat! (beat)

Different shots of the customer stopping and staring.

ANGELO

(rushing)

Well, I'll seeya.

RAMIRA

(nervous)(rushing)

Seeya.

RAMIRA has her head low, and embarrassed.

RAMIRA

Man, why does Jimmy always give me such a hard time man?

Q

(laughs)

Maybe because you give him a reason too!

RAMIRA

(sigh)

I dunno.

0

Maybe if you quit bullshittin', he wouldn't be on ya.

RAMIRA

(agitated)

Damn Q, why you always in my shit?!

Q just shakes his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARLEM ALLY - MIDNIGHT

RAMIRA and ANGELO running around outside laughing and giggling.

Camera running behind them shaking, they are in allies and both have spray cans, spraying their names on walls vandalising buildings. RAMIRA has a snapback hat on backward with her hair down. It's hard to make out RAMIRA and ANGELO since the camera is going haywire. The scene is greenish and dark, as the moonlight flashes on them. Background music is (Cypress Hill - I ain't goin' out like that). They smash against the wall and hug each other.

ANGELO

(laughing)

Oh man, look at that shit!

RAMIRA

Sick! Not bad for a couple a toys, huh?

ANGELO

Yea, not b--

Sounds of a can rustling. (long beat)

Fear runs across RAMIRA, ANGELO and SHARICE's faces. Loud footsteps of someone.

ANGELO

(whispering)

What was that?

Main music fades out.

RAMIRA

(scared)(whispering)

I dunno.

Sounds of someone walking. RAMIRA walks out to see who it is. She bumps into JAZZY O.

JAZZY O

What the-- (beat)

JAZZY O

The hell ya'll maggots doin'?

CONTINUED: 77.

RAMIRA

Move Jazz!

She blocks RAMIRA from passing through.

RAMIRA

Move bitch!

JAZZY O raises the back of her hand and slaps RAMIRA down and she is bleeding pretty badly on the ground.

SHARICE

What the f--!

RAMIRA gets up and chucks a can at JAZZY O's head.

JAZZY O

AH! Bitch, what the f--

RAMIRA gets up and takes a swing at JAZZY O, punching and hitting her badly. The two brawl, while police cars sirens are on, they all dart out of the way running. SHARICE gets up and starts running with RAMIRA and ANGELO, they both climb a fence.

CUT-IN of JAZZY O running the opposite way, and gets chased by the police cruiser.

JAZZY O

Oh. shit!

JAZZY O misses the officer and is in a side alley.

CUT-IN of RAMIRA, ANGELO and SHARICE running down an alley, they see flashing police lights and dodge down a trespassing entrance and jump it, SHARICE slips and falls, camera running behind them.

CUT-IN of JAZZY O bleeding from her nose, lip cut.

CUT-IN of SHARICE, ANGELO and RAMIRA running into an abandoned building, door busted open and tripping on gravel, cutting her hand.

SHARICE

Ramira!

RAMIRA

(agony)

AHH!

CONTINUED: 78.

ANGELO

Here, lemme help you.

ANGELO takes out his bandana ties it around RAMIRA to keep the blood in.

SHARICE

Damn Jazz!

Sounds of police cars going by slowly. Everyone is dead quiet. Not making a peep. The cars park on the side. Sounds of officers getting out of their cars. Lights flashing. Everyone is sweating and nervous, looking around.

OFFICER #1

Saw them go in there.

Flashlights flashing in warehouse. Poverty stricken, run down, no one in sight.

OFFICER #2

I don't see anyone.

INT. LADY EL'S ROOM - MIDNIGHT

LADY EL sitting on a couch with her other home girls, CHANELLE FOXX, SHEISTY, LUCIOUS and ACE. Run down apartment, poverty, weed smoke, music being played on the boombox.

CLOSE ON FREESTYLE

LADY EL raps about

- 1. Weed
- 2. Her crew
- 3. Beating up Ramira

Everyone laughs and gives her dap.

LADY EL

Man, where the hell Jazzy at?

LADY EL and her crew sitting on the run down couch, smoking weed and laughing, passing the joint around. Front door busts open. JAZZY O comes in with a bloody nose.

LADY EL

What the--

SHEISTY

What happened to you?

CONTINUED: 79.

JAZZY O

(struggling)(breathing)

Ran into Ramira...and her two side bitches.

CHANELLE FOXX

Huh?

JAZZY O

(out of breath)

Yea, ran into her on the block...got in a fight. She chucked a can at me.

(beat)

Camera panning everyone in the room, from left to right. Everyone is shocked and perked up.

LADY EL

Yo, where they at?

JAZZY O

I dunno, must a ran...saw some cops and darted.

CUT-IN of RAMIRA, ANGELO and SHARICE.

SHARICE

Whoo, that was so close, thought they had us.

(beat)

SHARICE

(sympathetic)

You okay girl...?

RAMIRA

Yea, yea, I'm good. Seems to stop bleeding.

ANGELO

Yea, it did stop.

RAMIRA gets up feeling light headed.

RAMIRA

Yo, we should get outta here, before we get caught again.

CUT-IN of LADY EL's Room.

CONTINUED: 80.

SHEISTY

Shit is crazy yo!

SHEISTY takes a hit of the joint.

CUT-IN of wheels rolling really fast. SKATER dodging traffic and people, riding by RAMIRA, hitting her accidentally.

She falls to the ground, and gets dirty. It's damp outside and dark, as well as chilly. SKATER helps RAMIRA up.

SKATER

Aye, sorry 'bout that.

RAMIRA

Ah, it's cool.

SKATER helps RAMIRA up and brushes the debri off.

RAMIRA

Ouch.

SKATER

You ok?

RAMIRA

Yea, I'm good. Thanks.

CUT-TO:

INT. LADY EL'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

The next two scenes go back and forth.

LADY EL

I need to record this demo real soon.

ACE

I know this dude where we can get some studio time.

CUT BACK TO:

RAMIRA has her walkman on, on the subway to the Dominion. She's bobbing her head to a rustic beat. Someone is staring at her. She stares back and they look away. Emotional beat playing in the background.

CUT-TO:

EXT. DOMINION - NIGHT

RAMIRA is outside of the Dominion, and she's staring at the sign from her POV, blinking red letters. The sign is chipping, run down, only but a few letters light up. No one in sight. A very run down spot in the South Bronx. POV of the sign. RAMIRA walks in and opens the door. She has dirt on her hand from the door. Wipes it on her clothes.

Rats and mice in the hallway. It's semi-dark, graffiti scrawls everywhere. RAMIRA walks down the hallway and into the corridor, it's very quiet in there. She walks into the place where there's the stage. Walking slowly not knowing where to exactly go.

CUT-IN of CANO CREW - Night

LADY EL

Nah, too much right now, gonna do it at Boog's spot. He got all the equipment, not the best quality but it's free.

CUT-TO of RAMIRA at the Dominion.

RAMIRA walks up to the mic. She's nervous. Palms sweaty, blood on her sweater. CLOSE ON her lips.

CLOSE ON FREESTYLE 1. Poverty

- 2. Struggles
- 3. Lyrical content

EXTREME CLOSE UP of her lips. She's cut off by someone and hears something. She stops abruptly and looks around. She's pretending she's battling. Background music cuts off. JANITOR is an old crusty black guy.

JANITOR

Ayo, what're you doin' here?

RAMIRA

Huh, who said that?

JANITOR

You ain't 'sposed to be here, place is closed right now, for cleaning.

RAMIRA

Oh my bad.

She grabs her stuff and walks out fast.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

A guy and a girl are caught kissing and making out. Someone is tagging. She sees a shadowy figure moving.

Eerie music being played into background. RAMIRA walking through the subway tunnel, ghetto, run down, bright lights ahead. Shot of rats crawling. RAMIRA is blinded by the train lights and the shadowy figure disappears. She exits the tunnel and ends up on the street. It's pitch black. Shots of drug dealers and prostitutes walking. She hears loud music from a car. They hit a puddle and water splashes her.

RAMIRA

AHH! Damn it!

The people in the car are laughing.

RAMIRA

Damn it!

RAMIRA is drenched, cold and upset. She walks through the neighborhood.

FADE TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

RAMIRA is walking through the apartment hallway. Junkie's in the hallway, man standing outside his door.

INT. RAMIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She goes in her place and flops on her bed, face down. She looks toward her clock and it reads 12:35am. She gets up slowly and goes to the kitchen.

CLOSE ON the note on fridge. It reads 'Ramira, I'm out tonight. Food is on the stove, Mom.' RAMIRA walks over and lifts the lid up on the pot of cold tortallini.

She grabs a bowl and fixes herself some with nothing to drink. She goes to her room and sits on her bed. POV of RAMIRA hand touching the button on her answering machine. One of the messages says:

SHARICE

(on machine)

Hey girl, just checkin' to see how your hand is. Hit me back.

(beep)

CONTINUED: 83.

VOICE MESSAGE

Next - message - at 10:35pm.

ANGELO

(clears throat)(on machine)
Hey Ramira, it's Ang. Wanted to see
how you were doin', just checkin'
up on ya -

CUT OFF.

The answering machine cuts off by a knock on the door. RAMIRA looking around worried. She continues eating. Another knock on the door. She looks around again. Her room is messy, table light on giving off dim look. RAMIRA gets up and goes to the front door. She looks through the peek hole. No one there. She walks away, hearing another knock on the door.

RAMIRA sighs and is agitated.

RAMIRA looks through the peekhole and sees ANGELO making a weird face.

RAMIRA

(sighs)

Damn Angelo.

She unlocks the door, and opens it.

ANGELO

(laughing)

Did I scare you?

She gives ANGELO a stern look.

ANGELO

What?

RAMIRA

(sigh)

Nothin...just a long day.

ANGELO closes the door and locks it.

ANGELO

How's your hand? Your clothes are damp.

RAMIRA

It's okay, yea, a car ran through a puddle and splashed me when I snuck into the Dominion on my way home.

84. CONTINUED:

She shows him the cut.

ANGELO

Ouch. You was in the Boogie Down?

RAMIRA

Sorry 'bout your bandana, it's all bloody.

RAMIRA looks at ANGELO while taking her hoodie off.

ANGELO

It's cool.

RAMIRA

Yep. Just to practice and then a janitor came in and said I need to leave.

(beat)

ANGELO

(looks at Ramira intensely) Sorry to hear that, Ram.

ANGELO gets up and hugs RAMIRA firmly. They laugh and giggle.

ANGELO

Aye, you get my message?

RAMIRA

Yea.

ANGELO

You wanna come with me to this lil party?

RAMIRA

Mm, I dunno, I don't have an extra sweater to take--

ANGELO

Hear, take my jacket, it'll be fun. Gooney and Sharice gon' be there and some of my crew. Just to kick it, get ya mind off things. (beat)

RAMIRA

Yea, I suppose.

ANGELO opens the door for RAMIRA.

CONTINUED: 85.

ANGELO

Ladies first.

RAMIRA

(qiqqles)

Thanks Romeo.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEMENT PARTY - NIGHT

RAMIRA and ANGELO are walking to the door, they're giggling and stumbling down the sidewalk like they're drunk. Camera pans sign, 'ROSCOE'S EATERY'.

RAMIRA

Roscoe's Eatery? It's here?

ANGELO

Nah, it's round back. Come on. (beat)

RAMIRA chases ANGELO around the side alley. ANGELO opens the door for both of them. They enter. The scene is a haze, lights flickering. Sounds of loud music playing, unable to make out what it is. Graffiti scrawls, water dripping from pipes. ANGELO bangs on door.

ANGELO

(bangs)

Aye!

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT PARTY - NIGHT

Dirty couches, loud music, in KID's living room. KID is GOONEY's older brother, they look similar, 20s, gold bottom teeth, black hoodie.

KID(O.S.)

I'm comin'.

ANGELO

(bangs on door)

Aye, Kid!

KID

(opens door)

Aye, sup bruh.

KID looks at RAMIRA.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 86.

RAMIRA

I'm Ramira.

ANGELO

What cha'll doin'?

KID

Coolin' right now bruh.

Shy look on RAMIRA's face.

SHARICE

Aye, what's good ya'll?

SHARICE walks over and hugs RAMIRA.

SHARICE

Aye didn't know you'd be here. Did you get my message?

RAMIRA

Yea, yea, I got it.

SHARICE

Really? How's ya hand?

All of them are sitting down and relaxing. Time passes. ANGELO goes and talks to his friends while SHARICE and RAMIRA sit and chill.

SHARICE

So how's you and ya boy?

RAMIRA

My boy?

SHARICE

Yea, ya boy Skee.

SHARICE

Ya'll gon' hook up right?

RAMIRA laughs. Covers face in embarrassment.

RAMIRA

(laughs)

Reesekins, he is not my boy okay!

SHARICE smiles at RAMIRA.

SHARICE

Mmm Hmm...right, right. Just messin' witchu.

CONTINUED: 87.

RAMIRA

(pushes Sharice playfully) Oh man, them teeth and those glasses. Damn.

She imitates SKEE, talking through her nasal.

SHARICE

(imitating Skee)

H-hi Ramira, h-hears your pencil, y-you dropped it.

RAMIRA

(laughing along with Sharice)
Oh my God!

SHARICE

Why you got on Angelo's jacket?

RAMIRA

Car splashed water on me, on my way home, sounded like the Cano Crew from a distance.

SHARICE

They some dumb bitches I swear.

GOONEY is seen talking to some girl. RAMIRA and SHARICE over hear.

GIRL #2

Oh you mean Tamara Jenkins? She be puttin' on such a front, I swear, lives with both parents, father's a pastor.

RAMIRA looks at SHARICE in such a shocking way, but try to be nonchalant about it.

GOONEY

That's crazy.

GIRL #2

Yea, she moved hear from Vermont, she just a wannabe. Walkin' round like she big and bad. She ain't shit but a ho and trick. She really 19 but failed her junior year.

RAMIRA watches ANGELO on his turntables, other people are dancing.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAMIRA'S JOB - EVENING

RAMIRA walks to work whistling. She's walking towards us.

RAMIRA

Hey Q, you seen Jimmy?

0

Yea, he's around back.

RAMIRA

Thanks.

RAMIRA walks back to the bosses office.

INT. JIMMY'S OFFICE - CONT.

RAMIRA knocks on the door and the boss is sitting.

RAMIRA

Hey, Jimmy came here to pick up--

JIMMY

Yea, uh, wanted to talk to you about something.

RAMIRA

(hesitant)

Yea.

JIMMY

Have a seat.

RAMIRA sits down. Very stiff and nervous.

JIMMY

Over the past few weeks been noticing that you've been late and not puttin' in any effort, been gettin' complaints and--

RAMIRA

But my--

JIMMY

Doesn't matter Miss Menendez, I can't have my workers late. You need to be on time everyday as scheduled!

(beat)

CONTINUED: 89.

JIMMY

Sorry, but I'ma have to let you go.

RAMIRA

(shakes head)

Ok.

RAMIRA walks out of the office.

EXT. HARLEM PARK - NEXT DAY

RAMIRA sits there lonely on a park bench, it's gloomy and brisk outside. ANGELO is seen walking with his dad talking and spots RAMIRA in the park alone.

ANGELO

Hey dad, I'ma go on over to here.

He runs over. WIDE SHOT of him running. He sits next to her.

ANGELO

(out of breath)

Hey, what's up?

RAMIRA shrugs her shoulders.

ANGELO

What's? (shrugs shoulders)

RAMIRA

I got fired from my job, yesterday.

ANGELO

What?

RAMIRA

(sad)

Yea, from bein' late and not showin' up. Boss said there's been complaints from customers.

ANGELO

It'll be okay.

ANGELO hugs her.

RAMIRA

Now I ain't got the money to pay for part of the rent. Can't blame anyone but myself.

(beat)

ANGELO consoles RAMIRA.

CONTINUED: 90.

ANGELO

It'll be fine. Look at me.

He grabs her chin and looks into RAMIRA's eyes.

ANGELO

It'll be fine, just hang in there.

FADE TO:

INT. ANGELO'S BEDROOM - EVENING

ANGELO and RAMIRA walk in his room and sit down, on his bed. (Background love music playing softly and it's A Tribe Called Quest - bonita applebum.

RAMIRA

(sighs)

So tired of everything. Just with my mom and her new boyfriend and the job.

ANGELO gets up and takes his jacket off. RAMIRA takes her ponytail out and her hair is down. ANGELO sits next to her. They sit and talk.

(long beat)

ANGELO consoles her and they happen to look up at each other slowly, eyes staring into each others. Passionately. Music still playing. He grabs her chin and kisses her lips slowly and passionately. ANGELO grabs her waist and RAMIRA grabs his face. They both get into it and RAMIRA puts her hands around him and french kissing deeply. Both eyes closed. RAMIRA pulls away slowly. They have their heads down being shy, not believing what just happened.

(long beat)

RAMIRA

(nervous)

Uh, I think I should go.

ANGELO

(clears throat)

Ok, um, I'll walk you to the door.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

They both get up and he walks her to the front door. They both hug very awkwardly. RAMIRA puts her hair back in a ponytail. RAMIRA is walking down the hallway.

CUT TO:

CONTINUED: 91.

ANGELO closes his door and he's standing there, with his head against the door.

CUT BACK TO: ANGELO'S APARTMENT BUILDING

RAMIRA walking downstairs and into the streets, slowly, looking back up at his window.

CUT BACK TO:

ANGELO walks to his bedroom and looks out the window.

ANGELO stares blankly at RAMIRA with her back turned walking. ANGELO closes his window.

CUT BACK TO: SIDEWALK

RAMIRA turns around and watches him as he turns his light off. She stands there looking as if she wants to run back in there.

CUT BACK TO: ANGELO'S BEDROOM

ANGELO lays in his bed staring at the ceiling, moon lighting up his room. Main music fades out.

Next scene features flashback of ANGELO and RAMIRA when they were little. They are both 6 and 7 years old.

FLASHBACK:

LITTLE RAMIRA

Ow!

Some kids are pushing LITTLE RAMIRA down. LITTLE ANGELO pushes them. $\,$

LITTLE ANGELO

Hey! Quit messin' with her!

LITTLE ANGELO runs over and pushes the kids and they start fighting. He helps her up and brushes the dirt off.

LITTLE ANGELO

You okay?

LITTLE RAMIRA

Yea, I'm okay. Thanks for helping me.

LITTLE ANGELO

No problem, what's ya name?

CONTINUED: 92.

LITTLE RAMIRA

(shy)

Ramira. You?

LITTLE ANGELO

Angelo. You from here?

LITTLE RAMIRA

Yea, down the street.

LITTLE ANGELO

Yea, me too. In this buil-

LITTLE ANGELO's mom CARA opens the door.

CARA

Angelo, time to come in.

LITTLE ANGELO

Aight, hey nice talkin to ya Ramira.

LITTLE RAMIRA

Uh, yea, you too. Seeya.

Flashback ends.

ANGELO's eyes are watery. RAMIRA is going home on the subway real quiet out. She's sitting there staring out the window.

Next scene: Flashback of LITTLE RAMIRA and LITTLE ANGELO again.

LITTLE RAMIRA

Hey, show me that one spin move you did.

LITTLE ANGELO spins and his feet breaking his mom's lamp when flipping in the air. Sounds of crashing and breaking. (beat)

CARA (O.S.)

What's goin' on in here? What're you doin'?
(beat)

LITTLE ANGELO and LITTLE RAMIRA are looking at each other in shock.

LITTLE RAMIRA

(whisper)

Oh no, we're doomed!

CONTINUED: 93.

LITTLE ANGELO

(whisper)

We're doomed? I'm the one that's doomed!

CARA comes in and starts yelling in Italian. LITTLE RAMIRA starts giggling.

Flashback ends

RAMIRA sitting on the subway staring out the window and her eyes are watery. Some guy stares at RAMIRA as she's wiping tears. His eyebrows raise up. She snaps out of it and realizes the guy is staring. RAMIRA gets off the subway.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

She's walking in the hallway. She walks in her room and lays on her bed. She slowly looks at ANGELO and her as little kids picture on the nighstand. She smiles and then turns over and turns off the light.

CUT TO:

INT. BIG KANE'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

RAMIRA, ANGELO, SHARICE, GOONEY and others kids are in the basement, playing dice and chilling. Background music bumping. CANO CREW walking down the stares. No sight of JAZZY O or SHEISTY.

CHANELLE FOXX

Yo, it looks like a broke down version of Yo! MTV Raps in here.

CANO CREW laughs.

SHARICE

And ya'll look like a bootleg version a Salt n Pepa without the money or fame!

ANGELO, RAMIRA and GOONEY all laugh loud.

ANGELO is sitting on the couch. Got his legs on the table.

LADY EL

Got this immigrant sittin' here like he own this shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: 94.

(beat)

LADY EL

What! Can't speak bitch? Talk! (beat)

ACE

Man, forget these niggas.

LADY EL and her crew go back upstairs and are talking amongst themselves. RAMIRA is rapping to SHARICE and being goofy. RAMIRA does a funny freestyle towards the CANO CREW. Everyone laughs.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMPTY BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

A basketball court that's now abandoned, old cars and benches broken down. The court is across from an abandoned building. Small crowd in the court forms a cipher. Everybody is chanting. Street lights are on, barely giving off enough life.

RAMIRA and SHARICE are just walking and look around, dazed. Local emcees show what they have. SKREECH, a local emcee, does a freestyle, following his hand gestures. When he's done, the crowd goes crazy.

Up next is a local female emcee named ANGELINA aka ANGEL DUST. She spits a 16 bar freestyle, the crowd goes crazy and her metaphors are insane. RAMIRA's face is shocked and amazed. SHARICE pushes RAMIRA into the cypher and she looks back.

As RAMIRA does her freestyle, the crowd goes crazy and impressed by her skills. She's approached by RAMONE JONES, SPANISH, a young guy who offers her free studio time, and owns his own recording studio.

(beat)

RAMONE

Sick freestyle!

RAMIRA

Uh, thanks.

RAMONE

I'm Ramone, and I have my own recording studio not to far from here--

RAMONE hands RAMIRA a business card.

CONTINUED: 95.

RAMONE

If you don't mind, you can come by the studio, if you want, free studio time. All the info is on that card.

RAMIRA

Aight, thanks.

RAMONE leaves and SHARICE runs up and attacks RAMIRA in a playful manner.

SHARICE

Aye, that was dope. Who was that guy?

RAMIRA

Uh, some guy named Ramone, says he owns his own studio and says I can have free studio time, gave me this card.

SHARICE

That's what's up.

A broke down car comes rolling up in the court real slow. Everything is silenced down. The music is coming from the car, gets louder as they get closer. Everyone turns around. (beat)

ANGELINA

(quietly)

The fuck?

CANO CREW hops out the car and starts taunting everybody, standing on the park bench and starts rapping.

LADY EL

Cano Crew up in this bitch, ya'll niggas in the front ain't shit--

RAMIRA and SHARICE look at each other. The crowd ooh's.

LADY EL (CONT)

All ya'll get smacked around like pinball, Cano Crew came to bust open devourin' ya'll raw.

SHARICE

Man fuck these bitches! (beat)

CONTINUED: 96.

LADY EL

What?

LADY EL jumps off the park bench into SHARICE and RAMIRA's face.

SHARICE

You heard us bitches, fuck you. All of you!

LADY EL raises her wrist up and RAMIRA takes a metal pipe and blasts her in the ear. Crowd goes crazy and runs around exiting the park.

LADY EL bleeds from the left ear, RAMIRA and SHARICE exit, quietly while everyone is running around.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

It's damp, cold and sprinkling.

RAMIRA

Shit! We gotta get outta here quick!

(beat)

SHARICE

What the hell were you thinkin' to blast her in the ear like that?

SHARICE and RAMIRA walk fast, looking around.

RAMIRA

I dunno right now Reese! And what were you thinkin', "Fuck the Cano Crew"? If you woulda kept ya mouth shut--

SHARICE stops walking.

SHARICE

You bein' for real right now?

RAMIRA

Yes! I am. (beat)

SHARICE

Fuck it then!

SHARICE shakes her head and walks in the opposite direction. RAMIRA walks through the hood, over looking her shoulder.

INT. RAMIRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

All the lights are out. You can hear sounds of sex, moans and groans. Bed shaking.

CARMEN

Oh, shit, who is that?

RAMIRA

It's me mom. Sorry. Not looking.

RAMIRA covers her eyes looking for the light switch. CARMEN and CARLOS scurry and put on clothes to cover them up.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CARMEN comes in and sits on her bed next to RAMIRA.

CARMEN

You okay babe?

RAMIRA puts her head on CARMEN's shoulder, tears fall down her face.

RAMIRA

I'm okay mom, just, I'm fine. Nothin' major.

CARMEN

Look at me baby.

CARMEN

You're my daughter. I know when somethin's wrong.

RAMIRA

Mm, nothin', just wanna go to bed.

CARMEN

(passionately)

Ok.

CARMEN hugs RAMIRA and leaves the room and closes the door. RAMIRA gets up and takes weed out of her drawer. Takes papers out and rolls a joint and smokes it.

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO - DAY

RAMIRA takes the card out. Studio building seems rather furnished. She walks up to the secretary.

RAMIRA

Excuse me, is there a Ramone Jones here?

SECRETARY

Yes, down the hall, take the elevator to the 2nd floor and you should see it.

RAMIRA

'kay, thanks.

INT. RAMONE'S STUDIO - DAY

Studio is well furnished. Something RAMIRA is not used to seeing. Leather seats, music builds intensity. RAMIRA knocks outside the door.

RAMONE (O.S.)

Come in.

RAMIRA

Uh, Ramone?

RAMIRA opens the door.

RAMONE

Oh, hey, what's up? Ramira right?

RAMIRA

Not too much. Just came by to see the studio.

RAMONE

Yea, yea, come in. Just sittin' here makin' a raw beat. Could use a sick emcee to spit over it.

Studio about the size of RAMIRA's living room. Booth, mic stand and control board real professional. RAMIRA keeps staring at the mic booth.

RAMONE

So what's up, tell me about yourself, how long you been rappin'?

CONTINUED: 99.

RAMIRA

Since the beginning, back when I was 9, influenced by the greats and--

RAMONE

I think you got a lot of potential, like just hearin' that freestyle in the park--

RAMIRA

Yea.

RAMONE

Killed it.

She gets in the booth, puts headphones on. She's nervous, sweaty, shaking. RAMONE plays his beat, she pulls out her notebook and raps.

- 1. Raps about her life.
- 2. Mom.
- 3. Struggles.
- 4. Bullies.

RAMONE stops the beat. (beat)

RAMIRA

Was I okay?

RAMONE shakes his head.

RAMONE

Were you okay? You have a lotta talent, it's a wonder why I never heard you before?

RAMIRA

(shy)

Thanks. I just do it for fun, not really tryna be famous.

RAMIRA does two more tracks, very lyrical and has metaphors. Time passes. RAMONE gives RAMIRA the tape and takes her bag.

RAMONE

Yea, you can come back whenever.

They give each other dap.

CONTINUED: 100.

RAMIRA

Thanks.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

RAMIRA walks the poor streets of Harlem, crossing a busy intersection. Car almost hits her. Honks horn, yells profanity. It starts to rain. RAMIRA puts her hood up. She drops her cassette tape in a puddle accidentally, then picks it up. Shaking the water off.

CUT TO:

INT. GOONEY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

RAMIRA busts through the door. Soak and wet. Drenched and scaring everyone. Cat screeches and runs. Everyone looks around and perks up.

GOONEY

What the --?

RAMIRA's out of breath.

RAMIRA

Aye, look what I got.

GOONEY

What? What's that?

RAMIRA

Just listen.

RAMIRA plays the tape.

GOONEY

Whoa, that's sick! So uh, I guess you took my advice and recordin' right?

RAMIRA

Yea, yea, it's a diss track to Lady El, just somethin' fun. Went to a free rec--

GOONEY

Yo I heard you busted her ear open last night.
(beat)

CONTINUED: 101.

RAMIRA

Who told you?

GOONEY

Sharice.

RAMIRA

Oh.

RAMIRA looks down.

GOONEY

What's wrong?

RAMIRA

Oh, nothin'.

GOONEY looks confused.

RAMIRA

I'ma go head and go though. Just wanted to show you right quick.

INT. GIRL'S BATHROOM - DAY

SHARICE walks in the bathroom, puts on lip gloss and fixes her hair. RAMIRA walks in and pauses. SHARICE doesn't pay any attention. Ignores.

RAMIRA

Hey.

SHARICE

Hey.

RAMIRA

How're you?

SHARICE

Good. You?

RAMIRA

Good. Made a demo tape.

SHARICE

That's nice.

(long beat)

RAMIRA

(sigh)

Reese, I'm sorry 'bout the otha day. Didn't mean it like that--

CONTINUED: 102.

SHARICE doesn't make eye contact.

RAMIRA (CONT)

Was just mad.

SHARICE hugs her tight. Catches her off guard.

SHARICE

It's cool, don't worry 'bout it girl. I apologize too. We cool?

RAMIRA

Yea, thanks. Aye look made a tape, at that studio. Just feel this is my only way.

SHARICE

Whatchu mean? (beat)

RAMIRA

Fired from my job the other day.

SHARICE

Really?

RAMIRA

Yea, like I'm serious now! Like I'ma go out and do it!

SHARICE

That's what I'm talkin' bout!

RAMIRA

I feel this is my only way out, my only choice out this shit hole. From work, to family to school. This is all I have.

RAMIRA pulls out her mini boombox and plays it outloud.

CUT TO:

Bathroom stall. SHEISTY, she overhears the tape outloud. She sits on the toilet smirking, listening.

CUT BACK TO:

SHARICE

Oh damn, that's sick!

CONTINUED: 103.

RAMIRA

Thanks, same thing Ramone and Gooney said.

SHEISTY comes out the stall, washing hands.

SHEISTY

Aye, who is that?

RAMIRA

Oh, uh, that's me.

SHEISTY

Really, that's dope. (beat)

RAMIRA and SHARICE look at each other.

RAMIRA

Thanks.

SHEISTY

I know this dude who works at the radio, he does this thing called, "Underground Airplay", and airs indie or unsigned artists songs.

RAMIRA

Oh really?

SHEISTY

Yea. Sometimes he has artists get on the radio and does a freestyle. Good promotion if you tryna get your name out there.

RAMIRA looks at SHARICE.

RAMIRA

Cool. I'm in.

SHEISTY

Aight, I'ma let 'em know.

SHEISTY grabs the tape and smirks as she's leaving.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT

GOONEY, RAMIRA, SHARICE and ANGELO are all outside this abandoned house. This building is run down. Beat, scary, windows broken.

CONTINUED: 104.

SHARICE

Man, I can't believe this house still standin'.

GOONEY

I heard someone died in there.

SHARTCE

Nigga, ain't nobody died in there.

GOONEY

Wanna bet? Also heard some dude got raped in there by another dude.

(beat)

SHARICE just looks at GOONEY. RAMIRA just laughs. ANGELO looks at RAMIRA up and down. Everyone bursts out laughing, pushing GOONEY around.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT

Everyone goes in and destroys the house. They take spray cans and spray paint graffiti all inside, busting windows, throwing things. Laughs and giggles all through out. We hear the music building intensity. Scene is going haywire, fast motion.

Couches and furniture being thrown around, kids cussing for a moment. There's flashing lights and sirens. Everyone stops and stares. Everyone rushes out. GOONEY's foot gets stuck.

GOONEY

Shit ya'll, I'm stuck.

ANGELO

It's 5-0, everybody out!

RAMIRA

Wait! Gotta get Goons!

RAMIRA helps him out.

POLICE

Hey, who the hell's in here?

Everyone darts out the way and exits out the back door.

POLICE

Hey, they were just here.

CONTINUED: 105.

SHARICE

RUN!

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

The gang runs and ends up being in the park near the basketball court. They goof around. Main music fades out. RAMIRA and ANGELO sit on a park bench while GOONEY and SHARICE run around chasing each other.

ANGELO

Hey.

RAMIRA

Hey.

RAMIRA and ANGELO are nervous. He rubs his head.

ANGELO

How's everything?

RAMIRA

Good. How's everything with you?

ANGELO

Good.

(beat)

ANGELO

Um, about that kiss the other night.

RAMIRA

I know, I wasn't expecting it.

ANGELO

I know, um, I'm sorry if I uh, came onto you too fast, couldn't help it.

RAMIRA

No, no, uh, don't be I really liked it a lot actually.

ANGELO

Really?

RAMIRA

Yea, um, you know I hope it doesn't make anything between us awkward?

CONTINUED: 106.

ANGELO

No, you crazy. You'll always be my best friend.

RAMIRA smiles. GOONEY and SHARICE goof around and act a fool.

RAMIRA

Same here.

RAMIRA

Oh yea, I got free studio time.

ANGELO

Really? How?

RAMIRA

Was here with Sharice and this studio owner approached me to record some stuff after he heard me spit. This girl at school said she can get my shit played on the radio too, called 'Underground Airplay'.

ANGELO

Oh word, that's dope. Happy for you. Never heard of 'Underground Airplay'.

RAMIRA

Me either, must be somethin' new.

They hug.

CUT TO: BOOG's basement.

The gang goes downstairs and set up. Weed smoke fills the room. They talk shit. SHEISTY walks downstairs.

SHEISTY

Aye look.

LADY EL

Aye, sup?

LUCIOUS

'Sup.

SHEISTY

(laughing)

I gotta surprise for ya'll.

CONTINUED: 107.

CANO CREW

Surprise?

LADY EL

What is it?

SHEISTY

Just listen.

SHEISTY plays RAMIRA's record and the diss track to the CANO CREW. The look on LADY EL's face looks like she wants to fight. Teeth clenched. Everyone looks stunned.

SHEISTY

Ramira "aka" Uniq. I was in the bathroom stall and overheard her and Sharice talkin' and they played the record.

LADY EL

And--

SHEISTY

And, I lied and said I'd take this tape to the radio and let them play it.

CHANELLE FOXX laughs.

LADY EL

Damn!

CUT TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

RAMIRA enters the door and CARLOS is sitting on the couch eating an apple in his boxers and wife beater. RAMIRA doesn't say anything. She's washing dishes. He continues to watch her.

RICO

So, what's up baby? Why you always so quiet when I'm around?

RAMIRA doesn't turn around. (beat)

RICO

What's wrong, say somethin'?

CONTINUED: 108.

RAMIRA

Where's my mom?

RICO

She's out, she'll be back. Just you and me right now baby.

CARLOS gets up and walks over to RAMIRA. He walks behind her and touches her hair.

RICO

Mmm, smells good.

RAMIRA

Look get off a me you pervert!

She knock's the apple out of RICO's hand.

RICO

What's wrong?

RAMIRA

I said get the fuck off a me, you fuckin' pervert!

CARLOS grabs her and RAMIRA smacks him as soon as CARMEN walks in.

(long beat)

CARMEN

What the hell?

CARMEN comes back with groceries. She's stunned at what she's seeing.

CARMEN

(yelling)

What the hell is goin' on?

RAMIRA

Mom, it's not what it looks like. He kept touchin' and grabbin' me!

RICO

No I didn't. I asked her a question ans she slaps me for no reason!

CARMEN looks at both of them.

RAMIRA

(tears)

You really gonna believe him mom?

CONTINUED: 109.

CARMEN

Get out.

RAMIRA

Mom.

CARMEN

I said get the fuck out! (beat)

RAMIRA walks out not saying a word.

INT. SHARICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

RAMIRA knocks on the door.

SHARICE

Hey girl, sup?.

RAMIRA

Um, nothin'. Can I stay the night?

SHARICE

Yea, I don't think my parents'll mind. What happened?

RAMIRA

Mom kicked me out.

SHARICE

What?

RAMIRA

Yea, her boyfriend kept touchin' me, I slapped him when mom came in. She didn't believe me and she kicked me out.

SHARICE

Oh geez!

RAMIRA has a scared look on her face. Her and SHARICE go to bed and RAMIRA sleeps on her couch.

FADE OUT:

EXT. SIDEWALK - EVENING

It's raining heavy. RAMIRA runs and spots SHEISTY walking down the street. She's walking fast and turns a corner. She notices RAMIRA after her. She walks faster.

RAMIRA

Hey, Sheist.

She grabs her shoulder.

RAMIRA

Hey, did you give my tape to that guy?

SHEISTY

Nah, not yet.

RAMIRA

Well?

SHEISTY keeps walking, trying to get away from RAMIRA.

SHEISTY

Well what?

RAMIRA

So when you gon' do it? You promised me remember?

SHEISTY

SHEISTY (CONT)

Look, I been busy lately, aight?

RAMIRA

If you can't do it, could I have my tape back!

SHEISTY

Look, meet me at the court tonight and I give you ya tape back.

RAMIRA

Oh, ok, yea. I be there!

SHEISTY starts walking faster and jogging. RAMIRA just stares. RAMIRA runs the opposite direction.

INT. RAMIRA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

RAMIRA awakens from the sun. She's getting up to go to the kitchen. She see's RICO laying on the couch. He awakens. RAMIRA doesn't notice. RICO awakens slowly and puts a knife to RAMIRA's neck.

RICO

Mmm, you smell so good. Been wanting to do this for awhile.

He unbuckles his belt and pants. RAMIRA knocks the knife out of his hands quickly.

RAMIRA

What the fuck yo?

The knife falls to the floor. They start pushing and shoving. They brawl. RAMIRA pushes RICO. CARLOS grabs RAMIRA.

RAMIRA

AH! Get off of me you sick bastard!

RAMIRA starts crying and screaming. CARMEN is awaken by this and come's rushing out of the room.

CARMEN

(yelling)

Hey, hey, what the fucks goin' on in here?!

RAMIRA

(yelling)

Mom, help! He's trying to rape me. He put a knife to me!

CARMEN grabs CARLOS and he smacks CARMEN. She falls to the ground leaving her a cut lip. She touches her lip, it's bleeding.

RAMIRA

Look! Don't fuckin' touch my mother like that bitch!

RAMIRA picks up a knife and threatens RICO.

CARLOS

(to Carmen)

You're such a fuckin' joke, Such a good for nothin' bitch! You're worthless!

CONTINUED: 112.

RAMIRA beats RICO, kicks him in the nuts. CARMEN gets up. She's crying. Stressed. Bleeding. Black eye. She's very stern.

CARMEN

(yelling)

I loved you, I was everything and you wanna come in here and touch my daughter? You sick bastard, sick, sick bastard!

CARMEN takes a pot of boiling beans and throws it on RICO. He stings and burns.

RICO

(screams)

AHHH!

He dashes out of the door and doesn't come back. (long beat)

RAMIRA looks at CARMEN and they run over and hug each other tight on the floor. They're both crying.

CARMEN

RAMIRA

(breathing hard)

It's ok mom.

CARMEN

I love you.

CARMEN kisses RAMIRA on the forehead.

RAMIRA

I love you too.

FADE TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

RAMIRA sits on a park bench waiting for SHEISTY.

CUT TO: INT. CAR:

SHEISTY

(to Lady El)

Aye, there she go right there.

CUT BACK TO:

CONTINUED: 113.

The CANO CREW pull's up in a car slowly, bumping music. RAMIRA lifts up her head and doesn't realize it's them. They all get out of the car. RAMIRA's stunned.

LADY EL

'sup bitch, ready to get ya wig split?

CANO CREW justs laughs. RAMIRA stands there stiff.

LADY EL

Guess what I have? Sheisty told us you'd be here.

LADY EL flashes RAMIRA's tape in her face. RAMIRA tries to grab it.

RAMIRA

(yelling)

You set me up Sheist!

SHEISTY just stands there looking scared.

CHANELLE FOXX

We heard the shit you spit about us ho.

LADY EL

Yea, and we aint' like it.

LADY EL smacks RAMIRA to the ground. She falls hard. Her nose is bleeding. They laugh. JAZZY O kicks her, so do the other members. They grab her and drag her. SHEISTY sits back smirking, crossing her arms.

They put her on top of a car and beat her. LADY EL keeps beating her. SHEISTY steps in.

SHEISTY

Ok, ok, guys stop it, let her live, let her live!

They look at her and slowly pull away. LADY EL spits on her as they leave. They get in the car and drive away while leaving her on the ground. RAMIRA coughs and in serious agony.

CUT TO:

INT. GOONEY'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Smoking, drinking. Music. Laughter. Everyone sits around. RAMIRA walks in.

GOONEY

Sup Ram-- ooh damn, the fuck happened to you?

SHARICE

Oh shit, lemme see.

RAMIRA

I got jumped and set up!

SHARICE

Set up?

RAMIRA

Sheisty ass. She's not to be trusted.

GOONEY

For real? The one who said she'd get your tape on air?

RAMIRA

Yea, she lied and said she was gon' give it to the radio, but instead she fucks with the Cano Crew on the low and she gave it to them to let Lady El hear.

(beat)

SHARICE

Damn, that's some shit though.

RAMIRA

Yea. Neva trust a person who calls them self Sheisty.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMIRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

She grabs her stuff and gets ready for the battle. She's tense. Not saying much. She has a band aid on her cheek.

RAMIRA

Mom, I'ma be out tonight.

CONTINUED: 115.

CARMEN

Where you goin'?

RAMIRA

Sharice's.

Mom smokes a cigarette.

CARMEN

What happened to you?

RAMIRA

Nothin'.

CARMEN

Baby, what happened?

RAMIRA

Mom! Nothin', don't worry 'bout it
ok?

CARMEN takes a big hit of cigarette. RAMIRA leaves.

RAMIRA

(attitude)

I'll be back.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

Dark. No one really on the bus. RAMIRA is tense, doesn't say anything or blink. Fists balled up tight. Feet shaking. She stares and focused.

EXT. DOMINION - NIGHT

Battle night. The bus arrives in the South Bronx. RAMIRA gets off. She stares at the sign. Red letters blinking. DOMINION. Some people shoulder bump her and people are rushing in. She enters.

She goes to the bathroom before the show. Green. Hazy. She looks sick, sweating. SHARICE enters. RAMIRA walks out.

SHARICE

You ready?

RAMIRA

I think.

CONTINUED: 116.

SHARICE

You think?

RAMIRA

RAMIRA and SHARICE are face to face tense. SHARICE grabs RAMIRA's shoulders.

SHARICE

Now I want you to fuckin' murder them tonight, shut this shit down aight? Rap like you ain't rap before.

RAMIRA

Yea.

SHARICE

Ok, let's do it.

They give each other dap.

INT. DOMINION STAGE - NIGHT

Blarring lights. Grungy. Ghetto. Music blarring loud. Screams of the crowd. DJ scratching some beats.

HOST

Aight aight ya'll! It's goin' down tonight. We got Uniq and Crazy Ace up to battle first.

RAMIRA gets up on stage. Scared, shook. Shots of the crowd booing.

CROWD MEMBER

Who the fuck is this bitch?

She spots the CANO CREW on the other side. JORGE, SHEISTY in the crowd, smirking. SHARICE, ANGELO and GOONEY all in the audience watching.

DJ cuts the track and the beat drops. CRAZY ACE goes first. Lame, wack, crowd boo's. RAMIRA aka UNIQ goes up next. Crowd goes nuts, she's sick. CROWD cheers. She's shocked. She advances to the next round.

HOST

Aight, looks like Uniq advances on to Mook in round 2.

CONTINUED: 117.

2nd Battle, a guy. He's wack, lame horrible. RAMIRA battles and she's killing it.

3rd Battle, LADY EL, CROWD quiets down. Bandage on her ear. RAMIRA has a bandage on her cheek They stare, LADY EL rips it, kills it. RAMIRA battles, sicker. LADY EL pushes RAMIRA. CROWD is speechless. She walks and RAMIRA is stunned. CROWD cheers. Her crew runs on stage, lifts her up. Chants champion.

EXT. DOMINION - NIGHT

Everyone exits. RAMIRA walks out.

SHARICE

Aye, you fuckin' killed that shit girl. Proud a you!

RAMIRA

Thanks.

GOONEY

Yo, you smashed on 'em!

GOONEY hugs RAMIRA.

They hug. RAMIRA walks and caught by ANGELO.

ANGELO

Hey, can we talk?

RAMIRA

Yea.

ANGELO

You fuckin' smashed it tonight!

RAMIRA

Thanks.

(beat)

They walk in a private area.

ANGELO

Um, I was wondering, like we been friends since we were little and I love you more than a friend.

RAMIRA

So do I. I have feelings, ever since we were little, was just too afraid to say anything.

CONTINUED: 118.

ANGELO

Me too.

ANGELO kisses RAMIRA. They make out in the middle of the street. SHARICE stares and is stunned.

SHARICE

What?! Didn't know ya'll liked each other like that!

SHARICE stands there looking and smiling. GOONEY comes up and kisses SHARICE without noticing.

SHARICE

Hey, what the hell Goon?

ANGELO and RAMIRA laugh. They hold hands, walk off and talk.

ANGELO

I love you.

RAMIRA

I love you too.

FADE TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Following line appears over a black screen.

10 years later.

RAMIRA and ANGELO are walking in the park, sitting on a bench, reminiscing on when they were teens.

RAMIRA

Remember back when we were teens and would always go in that abandoned house and be reckless?

ANGELO

Yea, good times and the first time we kissed and it was to Bonita Applebum?

RAMIRA

Yea, I miss that song. (beat)

They're daughter playing in the park on the playground. They smile and reminisce.

CONTINUED: 119.

RAMIRA

Come on Reyna.

REYNA comes running. ANGELO picks her up. He kisses her. ANGELO and RAMIRA both kiss.

FADE OUT

Following line appears one line at a time.

RAMIRA and ANGELO are now married with a daughter living in the upper East Side of Manhattan. RAMIRA is a full time radio DJ.

RAMIRA works for a radio station. ANGELO is a full time DJ and also works as an editor for a Hip-Hop magazine.

SHARICE graduated from Columbia University, pursuing her career as an actress, engaged.

GOONEY is pursuing his career as a music producer.

CARMEN quit drugs and went to rehab. She now works as a factory worker. Her and RAMIRA are on good terms.

LADY EL and the CANO CREW split up. LADY EL got 3 years jail time.

CHANELLE FOXX and JAZZY O quit the gang lifestyle, and pursuing careers as secretaries.

FADE OUT