

HER VOICE

Written by

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1 INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY 1

We slowly zoom in close on a cell phone, sitting on top of a few school books, on a classroom desk. The cell phone is playing a slideshow of photos and video of **TASHA, 17**, a fun-loving teen who is in her junior year of high school. The photos and video show a short timeline of TASHA at school, at track and field practice, laughing with friends, studying in class, and hanging out with her family. She is joyful, and laughing in most of the footage but then her demeanor begins to shift. She's not as joyful; she's unmotivated and depressed.

FADE IN TITLE:

"HER VOICE"

The cell phone and books are taken away by an unseen person.

CUT TO:

2 INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY 2

We see the same books being shoved into a backpack. Reveal TASHA sitting alone in an empty classroom, seemingly finishing up a solo study session. She closes her bag and gets up from her seat and walks out of the classroom.

3 EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY 3

TASHA emerges from the exit door of her school. She hesitates and looks left and looks right cautiously before she completely steps away from the door.

We follow TASHA as she is walking away from the school on a nearby sidewalk. An unseen presence glooms over her as she walks, anxious about her surroundings. She keeps looking over her shoulder, but nothing is behind her.

Suddenly, another girl, **BRIDGET, 17** jumps out in front of her and pushes her to the ground. TASHA screams and looks up at BRIDGET from the ground.

BRIDGET

(laughs)

I don't even know why you try to
hide anymore.

TASHA tries to get up from the ground, BRIDGET pushes her back down forcefully.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Stay down! Don't try to get brave now, you know what's up.

TASHA tries to get up but BRIDGET pushes her back down.

TASHA

Stop pushing me! What do you want?!

BRIDGET

Come on now, shit hasn't changed.

BRIDGET puts her hand out and signals TASHA to give her something. TASHA looks at BRIDGET in fear. She slowly pulls out a handful of money, no more than about seven dollars and some change. BRIDGET snatches it away from her hand.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

That's it? That's all your bum ass parents gave you?

TASHA hesitates before reaching into her pocket one more time. She pulls out a \$10 bill and gives it to BRIDGET. Her hands are shaking.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Yeah, thats it. That's what I thought.

BRIDGET pushes TASHA back down to the ground and begins to walk away. TASHA sits in the same spot and begins to cry. She looks defeated.

CUT TO:

4

INT. HOME LIVING ROOM - DUSK/NIGHT

4

MOM, 40, is sitting at her computer in the living room. TASHA walks through the front door of her home and is obviously disheveled and trying to hide the fact that she's been crying. TASHA tries to walk straight to her room before her MOM notices.

MOM

Hey baby girl-- baby girl! Oh my God, what happened to you? Tasha, come here. Now!

MOM is immediately concerned. TASHA stalls before going upstairs to her room. She is obviously embarrassed and slowly walks over to MOM. As TASHA is walking towards MOM, an overhead light reveals scratches and bruises on her face. MOM grabs her face and is even more concerned.

MOM (CONT'D)
Who did this to you?!

TASHA doesn't respond immediately. Instead she looks down and becomes emotional and ashamed.

MOM (CONT'D)
Baby girl, you gotta tell me who
did this to you...

TASHA looks up at MOM with tears in her eyes. MOM looks back at her as if she wants to cry as well.

TASHA
(embarrassed)
This-- this girl at school...
Bridget.

MOM looks even more concerned.

MOM
Oh no... What happened baby? Did
you get into a fight?

TASHA
No.

MOM
So how did *this* happen?

MOM gently grabs TASHA's face and references her scars.

TASHA
She's a bully ma. All she does is
pick fights with people and take
their stuff. I tried to fight her
off this time but--

MOM
THIS time?? How many times has this
girl put her hands on you?

TASHA doesn't say a word. Instead she puts her head down again in shame.

DAD, 40, comes through the front door from a long day at work. He's unaware of the situation at hand.

DAD
Hey babies...

MOM and TASHA don't say anything right away. DAD comes in and puts his work bag down by the front door. He begins walking toward MOM and TASHA, who are both emotional.

DAD (CONT'D)
What's up babies, y'all okay?

As DAD gets closer, he looks at TASHA's face and becomes angry.

DAD (CONT'D)
Whoa whoa, what the hell happened?!
Somebody did this to you??

TASHA is even more ashamed and begins crying. DAD looks at MOM for answers.

MOM
Some girl at school been messing
with her...

DAD's anger turns in to disappointment. He's more upset at the situation, than TASHA.

DAD
Come here baby girl.

TASHA falls into her DAD's arms and begins to cry even more. DAD looks over at MOM with concern.

DAD (CONT'D)
Look, I'ma make sure this doesn't
happen again. It's gone be me and
you for the summer, okay? Go
upstairs and get cleaned up
sweetheart.

TASHA nods her head and goes upstairs to her room. MOM and DAD are left behind.

DAD (CONT'D)
Shit... how long this been going
on?

MOM
(saddened)
She didn't say.

DAD sighs.

DAD
I think it's time.

MOM looks up at DAD slightly confused.

MOM
Time? Time for what?

DAD
I think I have a plan...

CLOSE IN on DAD having an epiphany. CLOSE IN on MOM as she is unsure about this idea, but trusts her husband anyway.

CUT TO:

7

INT. EMPTY BOXING GYM - DAY

7

WIDE/ESTABLISHING SHOT of an empty gym, lights are off except an ambient "emergency light." The front door opens after a BEAT and we see the silhouette of a man walking through.

CLOSE IN on man's hand flipping on a light switch.

REVEAL DAD as the lights come up. TASHA walks in shortly after.

TASHA
(laughing nervously)
Umm Dad, where are we??

DAD
This is my old man's gym.

TASHA
"Old" is the perfect way to describe it..

TASHA blows the dust off an unused piece of equipment.

DAD
(laughs)
Aye watch it.. I used to come here with my dad all the time. We used to train like we were going toe-to-toe with Muhammad Ali himself!

TASHA is confused because she has no idea who Muhammad Ali is.

DAD looks back and realizes TASHA is confused by her silence.

DAD (CONT'D)
Baby girl... Nevermind.

DAD continues walking through the gym.

DAD (CONT'D)
I brought you here because I can't have you out here getting into fights.

TASHA

But the girl was hitting *me* Dad! I didn't do anything to her!

DAD

I know. But I can't have you out here getting beat up either.

TASHA looks ashamed.

TASHA

It's like-- no matter what I do or say, she's right there... pushing me around, taking my stuff. I don't know what to do, Dad.

DAD

That's why I brought you here. I didn't think I would ever have to do this with you, shoot I was hoping yo mama would give me some boys so I could show them. But I need to teach *you* how to defend yourself.

TASHA

Dad.. I don't want to do this.

DAD

Baby girl, you ain't got no other choice. Now, I'm not saying go out here and start beating people up just because you can. I'm saying you need to protect yourself from these clowns. Me and yo mama can't always be there to save you.

TASHA isn't immediately convinced to take on this new journey. She is still very timid.

DAD (CONT'D)

Look baby girl, you gotta face your battles head on. This girl is not gonna go away on her own. And you can't let people push you around. Not a man, a female, nobody. You can't go through life being under somebody else's foot.

TASHA looks down at her feet.

DAD (CONT'D)

Keep your head up Baby girl, that's number one...

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

You gotta be confident, or these people will walk all over you.

CUT TO:

8

MONTAGE

8

- A) CLOSE IN on DAD giving TASHA boxing gloves. She looks up slightly confused.
- B) WIDEN OUT to DAD showing TASHA a proper stance when boxing. Tells her to move left, right, forward and back.
- C) TIGHTER on DAD telling TASHA to be confident and keep her fists close to her face.
- D) DIFFERENT DAY - DAD helps tape up TASHA's hands and puts the gloves on her hands.
- E) DAD teaches her proper punches.
- F) DAD teaches defense techniques. Teaches her not to be afraid.
- G) TASHA is tired. She wants to give up but DAD keeps her moving.
- H) DIFFERENT DAY - TASHA is quicker on her feet and more confident.
- I) TASHA dodges punches from DAD left and right.

DAD (V.O.)

It's not going to be easy. A process is never easy. We have to build up your strength, your speed, and most importantly, your confidence. There will be days where you hate me for what we are doing; other days, maybe not so much. All I need you to do is listen to me. Think about who you will be 6 months from now, a year from now. If you keep putting in the work, you will see a difference. And no one will ever look down on you again.

END MONTAGE

TASHA throws a powerful punch that knocks DAD back. TASHA is more confident and stronger than ever.

INSERT DUTCH ANGLE of TASHA.

TASHA
This is insane.. But I like it!

FADE TO:

9

EXT. SCHOOL SIDEWALK - DAY

9

TASHA is waiting outside of her school for MOM to pick her up. As she is waiting, BRIDGET comes out of nowhere and confronts her.

BRIDGET
(laughs)
Aye check it out, you know the routine. What you got for me today?

TASHA doesn't say a word.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
Hellooooo? Can you hear me?

BRIDGET proceeds to tap on TASHA's head to aggravate her. TASHA's reflexes kick in and she swipes BRIDGET's hand away. BRIDGET becomes more upset.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
Oh-- Girl I will beat your ass right now, stand up!

TASHA puts her backpack down and stands up in BRIDGET's face. BRIDGET is slightly shocked but gets right back in her face.

TASHA
You ain't gone do shit!

BRIDGET pushes TASHA back and we see TASHA hold a firm stance with her legs. She gains more confidence and raises her fists close to her face.

BRIDGET isn't sure what to do, so she throws a punch. TASHA dodges the punch with ease. TASHA continues to throw aimless punches and TASHA finds an opportunity to block her punch and push her to the ground. TASHA climbs on top of BRIDGET.

BRIDGET
What the hell?? Get off me!

TASHA raises her fist and contemplates hitting BRIDGET. BRIDGET flinches and closes her eyes. In that moment, TASHA realizes that BRIDGET is afraid.

TASHA

This will be the *last* time you put your hands on me. If this happens again, I will hurt you. And that's a promise!

BRIDGET looks at TASHA and contemplates fighting back. Instead, she frees herself from TASHA and is stunned as she looks back. BRIDGET runs in the opposite direction.

TASHA is left standing alone. She realizes that she's finally overcome her biggest fear. She is ecstatic!

WE HEAR a CAR HORN honking from across the street.

CLOSE IN on MOM looking at her daughter in approval. She signals TASHA to get in the car. TASHA grabs her backpack and runs toward the car.

TASHA gets in the car and MOM drives off down the street, into the distance.

FADE TO BLACK.