

STORAGE CITY SPEC SCRIPT

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INT. LOS ANGELES CASTING OFFICE - DAY

MONICA POLITE (40) a plus size African-American woman dressed in a 1970's head madam costume, auditions for CASTING DIRECTOR and PRODUCER seated behind a table. The READER stands next to the camera.

MONICA

"See, that's your problem right there."

READER

"What's my problem?"

MONICA

"The fact that you're asking the question, let's me know you lack the understanding of the world you are living in, Jamal."

Monica takes a step closer to the table.

MONICA (CONT'D)

"The library is now open, and you deserve the reading you are receiving right here. You come at me like you own me, but see you don't own shit, not even the shoes on your feet. My coins pay for everything you think you have, little brother. You want to walk these streets like you a pimp ass gangster, but your little bitch ass don't know this game. I'm the one who put you on and I will take you out. I don't give a fuck we came out the same hole. Now you marinate on that motherfucker."

The Casting Director and Producer clap. The Reader gives a thumbs up.

READER

Powerful.

MONICA

Thank you.

CASTING DIRECTOR

You breathe life into "Money". Well done.

MONICA

Awe, I appreciate that.

PRODUCER

We just love your work, Monica. I got chills.

MONICA

Wow, I'm truly humbled.

Monica blows kisses, it's a love fest.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Thank you guys, stay blessed.

Monica grabs her stuff at the door and exits.

INT. CASTING OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

Monica enters the casting lobby to THREE ACTRESSES almost identical to her, reviewing their sides.

MONICA

Break a leg, ladies.

Monica walks up to SARAH (40) a Caucasian woman with red hair, pushing a stroller back and forth.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Sarah, girl thank you for watching Oberon.

Monica checks on OBERON(3).

MONICA (CONT'D)

Hey OB, mama back baby. Thanks again, Sarah.

SARAH

No problem, it takes a village.

MONICA

That's right girlfriend. What role are you in for?

SARAH

Top Bitch number two.

MONICA

Well that's good, I'm glad the industry has become more open to white women taking on roles as street hoes.

Monica takes off her wig and robe.

MONICA (CONT'D)
Sarah girl, the universe was
looking out for me today when you
walked in. I would have had to take
him in the room with me.

Monica continues undressing to reveal a bodysuit.

SARAH
That would have been a nightmare.
Do you have a minute to go over my
scene?

Monica pulls a dress out of her bag.

MONICA
Yes, let me see your sides.

Monica puts the dress on and ties the belt. Sarah hands her
the sides.

SARAH
I feel a little lost in the
language.

Monica takes the sides and reads over them.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I watched a few clips of Pimps Up,
Ho's Down on YouTube.

MONICA
I love that documentary. They
filmed in my home city of Newark,
New Jersey.

Monica is Jersey proud.

MONICA (CONT'D)
Which clip did you watch?

SARAH
The one with the white Sex Worker,
who used to be...

MONICA
A nurse addicted to... SARAH (CONT'D)
A nurse addicted to crack.

MONICA (CONT'D)
That glass dick.

Sarah gives Monica a confused look.

MONICA (CONT'D)
 Girl, the glass dick! The crack
 pipe. You got to get up on that
 street lingo.

SARAH
 Oh, okay.

MONICA
 Think about that woman. She was
 living the suburban life with a
 good job, but her addiction got her
 on the streets, giving twenty
 dollar blow jobs in a back alleyway
 in Newark.

SARAH
 Wow, what a turn of events.

MONICA
 Close your eyes. See her. Now see
 yourself as her. Put on her shoes.

Sarah's eyes are closed, she is focused. Monica looks at her
 phone and Oberon.

MONICA (CONT'D)
 Now open your eyes, don't think
 about the words, just be.

Sarah's body language has changed. Monica starts reading the
 sides in character.

MONICA (CONT'D)
 "What you got for me, bitch?"

Sarah responds in character.

SARAH
 "Lockjaw and a few Bennies. Ain't
 nothing hitting out here in these
 here "straights", you feel me?
 Jamal's murder done scared these
 fools from bustin' that nut."

Monica claps. Oberon joins in on the clap.

MONICA
 How did that feel?

SARAH
 Better, you always have a way of
 just making it seem easy.

Sarah gives Monica a hug

MONICA

You got this. Go in there and allow yourself to be free and don't judge this woman. She is a survivor, remember that. Break a leg.

Monica looks at her phone.

MONICA (CONT'D)

I got to get up out of here before my husband kills me.

Monica is moving at high speed to leave.

SARAH

Bye lady, bye bye OB.

Monica waves as she turns the corner.

INT. CAR SANTA MONICA BLVD. - DAY

JAY POLITE Caucasian Male (40), full beard, blue eyes, handsome, a little country with LA Hipster style, makes a phone call in traffic.

JAY

Pick up, Monica!

Horns beep, as his phone rings in the car.

JAY (CONT'D)

Fuck off!

Monica answers.

MONICA (O.S.)

What!?

Jay holds the phone in his hand.

JAY

Honey Bear, I'm less than a mile away from you.

MONICA (O.S.)

Which way are you coming from?

JAY

The south side. I'm in traffic near Poppy's Bakery.

MONICA (O.S.)
I'll start walking towards you.

JAY
Just stay where you are, traffic is
starting to move.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD - DAY

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER spots Jay with the cell phone in his hand.
He turns on sirens, drives up to Jay, and motions for him to
pull over.

INT. JAY'S CAR SANTA MONICA BLVD - DAY

Jay sees the Motorcycle Officer signaling.

JAY
Are you fucking serious? Fuck!

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD - DAY

Jay pulls over to the side of the crowded street. The
Motorcycle Officer approaches the car.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
Sir, I pulled you over for using
your cell phone while driving.

JAY
I wasn't on the phone Officer. I
just had it in my hand.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
Sir, I saw you talking.

JAY
You saw me talking while I was
basically parked. My car has the
thing where you can just talk. I
just have a habit of holding my
phone when it's on.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
License and registration, sir.

Jay reaches for his wallet.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. - SIDEWALK - DAY

Monica pushing the stroller, spots Jay in the distance.

EXT./INT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. - JAY'S CAR - DAY

Motorcycle Officer returns to Jay's Car.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
Listen, I'm giving you a warning.
Use your hands free device.

JAY
Thanks, Officer.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
Cool beard by the way.

JAY
Awe thanks, man.

The Motorcycle Officer relaxes his cop persona, he goes into full bro mode.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
I'm working on mine. What kind of
products do you use?

JAY
My wife is Black, she has all kinds
of black lady hair potions.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
Nice. My girlfriend is African-
American too.

JAY
Just ask her to get you some Cantu
leave in conditioner.

MOTORCYCLE OFFICER
Thanks for the tip, brother.

JAY
No problem, have a good day.

Motorcycle Officer gives Jay a fist bump before returning to his bike.

EXT. SANTA MONICA - SIDEWALK - DAY

Jay pulls up to the sidewalk. He exits the car to help Monica with Oberon.

MONICA

Did you get a ticket or a warning?

Jay breaks down the stroller.

JAY

Guess?

MONICA

I hope it was a warning, because we can't afford any tickets.

JAY

You got your wish.

MONICA

When I saw you, I started chanting to myself.

Monica puts OB in his car seat. Jay puts the stroller in the trunk.

JAY

Sometimes your praying helps.

MONICA

Chanting is not praying.

JAY

It's all religion.

Jay closes the trunk and walks around to the driver side.

MONICA

I'm not going to debate that issue with you right now.

They get in the car.

MONICA (CONT'D)

I hate to say this, but if that was me, even with my baby in the car, I would have gotten a ticket.

JAY

Why do you think that?

INT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. - JAY'S CAR - DAY\

Monica gives Jay a look and gestures to her face, as if to say it's obvious.

MONICA
Duh, you do have eyes.

JAY
He has a Black girlfriend.

MONICA
How do you know that?

JAY
He was digging the beard.

Monica rolls her eyes.

JAY (CONT'D)
He wanted to know my beard grooming routine.

MONICA
(Shaking her head)
You would meet the cop with a black girlfriend in need of some beard care tips.

JAY
Black lady hair care products.

MONICA (CONT'D)
Black lady hair care products.

They laugh.

JAY (CONT'D)
You have to stop making everything racial. Chant or pray about it.

MONICA
Look, you've been Black adjacent for a few years now, but I've been dealing with this shit all my life. However, you may be right. I will chant for change.

Jay pulls into traffic. Monica's cell rings, Black Eyed Peas, "Let's Get it Started".

MONICA (CONT'D)
Jay it's Sal, hit the button.

JAY
I fucking hate this thing.

Jay hits the Bluetooth button.

MONICA
Hey Sal!

SAL (V.O.)
Monica, great job today! The producers love your work. From the sound of it, you are the one.

MONICA
Yes! I felt it one hundred percent in my soul.

SAL (V.O.)
You got this, I will be in touch later today or tomorrow.

MONICA
Sounds good. Thanks, Sal.

He hangs up.

JAY
Plum, that's exciting! So it went really good?

MONICA
It did. This role will give us the financial stability we've been working towards. No more talks about moving to Florida.

JAY
Let's just get it confirmed before we take Florida off the table. It makes too much sense for us not to consider it. In Florida we can own our home and the beaches are white sugar sand, the water is emerald...

MONICA
Everybody is armed and old! I got the job. You can enjoy the beaches here.

JAY
The sand here is trash, filled with needles and cigarette butts. Gross. In Florida there is no state income tax.

MONICA

The governor is an asshole and they don't film shit there. We need to let your mother know, we aren't moving.

JAY

In Florida football starts at a normal time and they play the Miami Dolphins on network TV.

MONICA

In Florida, they have no respect for the arts!

Monica, very stern.

MONICA (CONT'D)

I'm putting it out to the universe, it's mine and I claim it to be.

JAY

Let's just wait until you start work. I don't want to put the cart before the horse.

MONICA

To see is to believe, to know it is to make it happen. Nam Myoho Renge Kyo.

JAY

Amen.

Monica puts on the They Might Be Giants CD Here Come the ABCs for Oberon.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - EVENING

Monica, Jay, and Oberon stand on the sidewalk studying the multiple parking signs.

JAY

Monica, I don't know if we should park here.

MONICA

The sign says, "No Parking on a Thursday from 6pm-8pm" It's Friday, so we're good, it's 5:45pm.

JAY

This sign says, "Parking 8am-6pm
pay meter, post ticket."

MONICA

So let's pay for fifteen minutes or
wait for fifteen minutes.

A HOMELESS MAN drinking Boba Tea, approaches the family

HOMELESS MAN

Hey, I can watch your car for
twenty bucks.

Monica is caught off guard.

MONICA

No, thank you.

JAY

I appreciate it guy, but I think we
got it covered.

HOMELESS MAN

Your loss, fuckin' yuppies.

MONICA

We're yuppies while he drinks a ten
dollar Boba! Damn entitled LA
Homeless.

JAY

We should be fine. We won't stay
long.

MONICA

Yeah, let's make it short and
sweet. How many artists are in the
show?

They walk towards the Art Gallery.

JAY

I'm not sure. We are here to
support Brad.

INT. MARKET STREET ART GALLERY - EVENING

Monica holds Oberon.

The three of them stare at a large canvas, a color field of
mustard yellow with a small, crudely rendered crinkle cut
French fry in the center.

JAY

Well, you got to hand it to Brad,
he's making it happen. These are
clean, well constructed canvases.
Beautiful facture

Jay hands Monica a glass of wine and gives Oberon a cookie
from the plate of snacks.

MONICA

You built the canvases.

JAY

Point being they look slick. Well
executed, and they made it to the
main gallery.

MONICA

It didn't just make it to the Main
Gallery.

Monica points to the red dot on the painting's title card.

MONICA (CONT'D)

It sold for ten-thousand dollars.

Oberon with a cookie in one hand reaches for the French fry

MONICA (CONT'D)

If this sold for that much, you
should be able to sell yours for
twice that. You're a maximalist
Love.

JAY

I do fill every inch don't I...

MONICA

Damn right, baby.

They kiss.

INT. MARKET STREET ART GALLEY - EVENING

BRAD (30) the artist, Caucasian man, free spirit vibe, walks
up to Jay, Monica and Oberon.

BRAD

Jay, my guy, my brother, my mentor,
my friend.

Brad gives Jay a huge bear hug.

JAY
Proud of you, buddy.

Brad hugs Monica and Oberon.

MONICA
Congratulations on the sale.

BRAD
Thanks, it's been a whirlwind. I signed a contract for three of my "Consumption Reflection" paintings to appear in a feature film.

MONICA
What?

JAY
That's amazing man...

MONICA
How much does that pay?

Jay nudges Monica to stop.

JAY
Brad, you don't have to tell her.

BRAD
It's all good man. The film is shooting for three months. I'll make ten-K...

Jay takes a sip of wine.

MONICA
For three months?

Monica puts Oberon down and holds his hand.

BRAD
No, ten-K per month.

Monica takes a sip of wine.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Per painting.

Monica chokes on her wine.

JAY
Holy shit man, that's great.

Jay gives Brad a high-five.

BRAD
Monica are you okay?

Monica clearing her throat.

MONICA
I'm fine, it just went down the
wrong tube.

Jay finishes his full drink with one long pull.

JAY
No more van life for you, Richie
Rich.

Brad pats Monica on her back.

MONICA
I'm good. Congrats!

BRAD
I'm not rich yet, Jay.

Brad gives a little buddy punch on the shoulder. The two guys
laugh.

BRAD (CONT'D)
I love living in my van. I feel
free. I can change my scenery every
day if I want.

Brad waves at some people across the room.

JAY
I can dig it, man.

BRAD
Dude, I'm renting a studio space at
the new Mission Artist Co-op, you
have to come check it out.

JAY
Will do.

BRAD
I know some artists who would love
to buy some canvases from you.

MONICA
Well, Jay is a very talented
artist, not just a canvas creator.

BRAD
You know I'm big fan of your art,
Jay.

JAY
Yeah man.

BRAD
Hey, there's an after party at the
co-op.

JAY
We didn't budget in a sitter
tonight.

BRAD
It's cool, bring the kid. I have to
talk to some peeps.

Brad starts backing away.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Love you guys.

Brad turns and walks away.

INT. MARKET STREET ART GALLEY - EVENING

Jay, Monica and Oberon sit on a bench in front of a huge
painting.

Monica continues to clear her throat.

MONICA
What just happened? Did I die?
Thirty grand a month, for fucking
French fry paintings.

Jay, unjaded and up beat.

JAY
They do say something, pallet wise.
They are... striking and the
facture...

MONICA
Shut up with the fucking "Facture"
already. We have to get your work
in a film. If we could bring in
that kind of income and my series
salary, we could buy a small home
deep in the Valley.

Monica takes a sip of her wine.

JAY

Yes, my work begs examination. It's dense...

MONICA

It tells a story.

JAY

Yes, narrative and complicated. You've got to stand with it a while. I'm not sure it would read on film. This is simpler, more direct...

From a distance Monica's name is called.

SARAH (O.S.)

Monica!

INT. MARKET STREET ART GALLEY - EVENING

Sarah approaches them, arms open. Monica stands to greet her.

MONICA

Sarah?

Sarah gives Monica a hug.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Girl, twice in one day. Who do you know here?

She points to one of Brad's paintings of a French fry with big bug eyes and a ketchup package splitter around it.

SARAH

I'm dating the artist.

MONICA

Brad?

Sarah extends her hand to Jay who stands and shakes her hand.

SARAH

You must be the husband.

JAY

Jay.

SARAH

Sarah. So nice to meet you.

Sarah reaches for Oberon, he reaches for her. Sarah picks him up.

SARAH (CONT'D)

And yes, my little buddy from earlier today.

MONICA

How long have you been dating Brad?

SARAH

Just a couple of months. I have some news.

Jay and Monica tune in.

MONICA

You're pregnant?

SARAH

No. I got booked on the show!

MONICA

You better get it..."Top Bitch #2"

SARAH

No, I got the role of "Money"! I can not believe it! First off, thank you for that adjustment, but what sealed the deal was this little guy.

Monica is trying to process what she is hearing.

MONICA

How was OB involved.

SARAH

Apparently, one of the producers saw me holding him and thought he belonged to me.

JAY

Oh that's so cute.

Monica gives Jay a side eye.

MONICA

Let me understand this.

Monica's attitude has shifted, Jersey girl hand on her hip, neck rolling. Monica's voice goes full Eastie.

MONICA (CONT'D)

They gave you the role of "MONEY"! Because you was holding my biracial baby.

SARAH

Well, that's part of the reason. I was going to call you. Could I bring OB with me to my table read. They want to meet my baby.

Monica gives a look of shock. She takes Oberon out of Sarah's arms very calmly. Monica hands Oberon to Jay and turns back to Sarah.

MONICA

Sarah, I would never loan my baby out to some opportunistic, thirsty ass wannabe like you. The fact that you didn't correct them, tells me exactly who you are. I'm a very nice person, but don't fuck with me when it comes to my child. I'm his mother.

JAY

Plum, remember your chanting...

Monica puts her hand up to stop Jay from saying more.

MONICA

Yeah. I got this Jay.

Monica steps up to Sarah.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Just because I'm a Buddhist doesn't mean I'm going to let anybody walk all over me.

Jay stands by.

MONICA (CONT'D)

I gave birth to this baby and breast fed him for a year and a half. Go have your own biracial baby or a baby with van life Brad, but you will never use my son as a prop, you colonizer.

Monica picks up her wine and finishes it.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Let's bounce, Jay!

Monica turns to Sarah.

MONICA (CONT'D)
 "Bounce" as in let's get the fuck
 up out of here.

Monica walks towards the exit. Jay to Sarah.

JAY
 Nice meeting you.

Jay rushes after her with Oberon in his arms.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES SIDEWALK - EVENING

Monica busts out of the gallery doors. Tears roll down her face. Jay and Oberon are right behind her.

JAY
 Plum, there's going to be other
 parts.

MONICA
 I'm so sick of this happening to
 me. She wanted to use our baby.
 That's some bullshit! Bitch, hell
 no!

JAY
 Yeah!

Jay, matching Monica's New Jersey energy.

JAY (CONT'D)
 Please miss us with that bullshit,
 girl!

Jay gives a high-five to Oberon.

MONICA
 Fuck you Hollywood!

JAY
 Yeah, fuck you.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LA SIDEWALK JAY'S CAR - EVENING

Jay and Monica reach their car to find a ticket. The Homeless Man from earlier walks up to them. Now eating Dim Sum with chop sticks.

HOMELESS MAN

You should have let me watch your car.

Monica sniffing the air.

MONICA

Jesus, that dim sum smells terrific.

HOMELESS MAN

Fung's Golden Palace right around the corner.

JAY

We can't afford it.

Jay snatches the ticket off the car window.

HOMELESS MAN

I feel you man, gotta have priorities.

Monica finishes putting Oberon in his car seat and closes the door. As Jay and Monica get in the car.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)

You folks have a goodnight.

JAY

You too.

Thanks

MONICA

INT. LA DOWNTOWN JAY'S CAR - EVENING

Monica turns to Jay.

MONICA

How much is the ticket?

JAY

Let's look at it tomorrow.

MONICA

Now I'm hungry.

JAY

How about pizza?

MONICA

We can afford Mexican.

JAY

Lucy's here we come!

INT. LOS ANGELES JAY AND MONICA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jay, Monica and Oberon's home is a crowded one bedroom apartment with compartmentalized areas for wardrobe and makeup, painting studio, and baby tummy time area. Bright canvases fill the walls, studio style and books, toys and scripts are everywhere. Fudge, a female blue-grey Pitbull scurries around underfoot seeking food and affection.

Monica sits on the couch finishing a taco. Jay stands looking at his art.

JAY

Plum, it's not the end of the world.

MONICA

You don't understand. This wasn't about my ability to do the role, it's about keeping a black woman out of a job.

JAY

Not that again. It sounds like she was given the role because she checked all the diversity boxes.

Monica gives Jay a look as she takes a chip from the bag.

MONICA

Diversity!? She was holding MY biracial baby. If I was holding him they would've thought, "Another single black mother! We can't hire her. She doesn't have a partner to help with childcare."

JAY

This is liberal Los Angeles. Stop pulling the race card.

MONICA

You don't think LA is racist? You're a straight white man, I don't expect you to get it.

Jay is thrown off, he walks over to sit next to Monica.

JAY

Plum, I don't want to argue with you. I want to help. How can I support you?

Tears roll down Monica's face.

MONICA

It's just another day of disappointment. No job, the rent is going up again and now another ticket. What is the universe trying to tell us?

Jay hugs her.

JAY

To get the hell out of California.

Monica chuckles and wipes her face.

JAY (CONT'D)

I texted my mom.

MONICA

Why did you do that? Can I get a fucking day before you're moving us to Florida!

JAY

I told Bea we would facetime her. I think if you talk to her, you might change your mind about moving.

MONICA

I don't want to leave LA, my whole life is here.

JAY

Oberon and me are your whole life now. We need to think about him. Your career will always be here. I want to own something to leave to our son.

Monica takes a deep breathe.

MONICA

You're right, let's call your mom.

INT. JAY AND MONICA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jay's phone is ringing for a video call. BEA POLITE (68) a well kept Caucasian woman who appears younger than her age, answers the phone. She appears to be outside, with voices in the background.

BEA

Hi son, hey Monica. Where's my baby boy?

MONICA
He's sleeping.

BEA
Give him a kiss from his Beamaw.

JAY
Mom, I've been talking to Monica
about us moving to the Panhandle.

BEA
Monica, Honey, I know this is not
what you want. I know it's not
Hollywood. But listen, there is a
theater in town. I just went to a
play last week. I'm good friends
with the director and the Bay
County Film Commissioner. Both of
them are Democrats! They could use
you here.

MONICA
Is it an Equity Theatre? How far
are you from Miami?

Bea looks confused.

JAY
Plum, Miami is eight to ten hours
away form the Panhandle.

BEA
That's about right. Now, I'm not
sure about the equality theatre
thing, but I will find out.

Monica shakes her head at Bea's misunderstanding.

BEA (CONT'D)
Look you two, I could really use
your help out here. Oh and Monica,
Atlanta and New Orleans are only a
five hour drive away.

Monica is interested.

MONICA
Oh now we talking, Atlanta is the
Hollywood of the South.

BEA
And look...

Bea tries to turn her phone camera for Jay and Monica to see the beach, but it's still facing her.

JAY

Mom, you have to hold your phone up facing the ocean and take it off selfie mode.

The screen on the phone goes dark, but you can still hear Bea.

BEA (O.S.)

I just hate this dang thing.

The phone call ends.

INT. JAY AND MONICA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jay and Monica are looking at his phone. The screen goes dark the call ends.

JAY

She wanted to show you the beach.

Jay's phone dings for a text message. It's a picture of the beach and a bonfire from Bea. He looks at his phone and shows it to Monica.

JAY (CONT'D)

Look Monica, mom sent a picture.

Monica takes Jay's phone to look at the photo.

MONICA

Yeah, it's beautiful.

She becomes a little emotional.

MONICA (CONT'D)

But I've never lived in the south. We're a mixed family. Will I have to learn how to use a gun?

JAY

I lived in the Panhandle before moving here and it has it's issues with race, but it's changing. We owe it to Oberon to give it a shot.

Monica in a southern accent.

MONICA

This here Yankee is going south.

Jay gives Monica a hug and kiss. Monica puts on a front.

TITLE CARD: Three MONTHS LATER, DEEP IN THE PANHANDLE OF FLORIDA.

OPENING CREDITS STORAGE CITY- THEME SONG

The Storage City theme song plays as we view the beautiful beaches and condos along the Gulf of Mexico, we cross St. Andrew's Bay onto the mainland where the condos are replaced by strip clubs and pawn shops and eventually the smoke filled stacks of the paper mill, before we finally pull into Storage City.

EXT. STORAGE CITY - FRONT - NIGHT

A police vehicle is parked in front of the manager's office, with two men handcuffed in the backseat. The trunk is filled with packages of methamphetamines. An officer closes the trunk, gets in the vehicle and drives off into the night, lights flashing.

EXT. STORAGE CITY OFFICE - SIDE OF BUILDING - NIGHT

ROGER, a slender Caucasian man who looks much older than his 25 years, steps out from the shadows. He watches the deputy drive away. Roger walks towards the A Buildings with his dog.

INT. STORAGE CITY OFFICE - DAY

Two old metal office desks sit side by side. On one desk, cluttered with boxes and magazines, the name plate reads "ELLA SILVA." On the wall hangs a beautiful glamour photo of an older woman with long white hair, under the photo the name "Ella Silva" appears again. The other desk is well organized with neat stacks of receipt books with a vintage adding machine whose paper trail dangles to the floor. A name plate reads "Bea Polite".

Monica puts a box on the cluttered desk and returns to sweeping out the corner.

Sitting at the organized desk, Bea Polite searches through shoe boxes of index cards.

WANDA (35), a Caucasian woman with small cuts all over her arms, stands pensively before the desk.

BEA
Wanda, what was your last name?

WANDA
Cosgrove.

Bea grabs another box labeled "C".

BEA
That's right, now I remember. This is my daughter-in-law, Monica.

WANDA
Hi Monica.

Monica, dressed in a floral linen short set, stands out like a sore thumb as she sweeps the office.

MONICA
Nice to meet you, Wanda.

She pauses her cleaning to shake Wanda's hand.

WANDA
How's Ms. Ella?

BEA
I haven't seen or spoke with Ella in about a month.

WANDA
I know she said something about getting a hip replacement.

Wanda to Monica.

WANDA (CONT'D)
I just love your outfit, Ma'am.

MONICA
It's vintage Jones New York, for the professional woman.

Monica does a turn and pose, she's happy someone notices her sense of fashion.

MONICA (CONT'D)
I found it at a thrift store in the San Francisco Bay Area, many moons ago.

Bea reveals Wanda's index card for her storage unit.

WANDA

I've never left the state of Florida. Well no, I do go to Alabama, but that's just down the road.

Bea takes a seat and writes on Wanda's index card.

MONICA

Wow! You should definitely visit California. I tell people God gave Cali the most passionate tongue kiss, and that's why she's so beautiful.

Monica drifts off thinking of California.

WANDA

Maybe one day.

BEA

Seventy dollars will bring you current.

Wanda hands Bea cash.

WANDA

Have a good day ladies and nice meeting you, Ms. Monica.

Monica snaps out of her thoughts, stands and curtsies.

MONICA (IN A CLASSICAL THEATRICAL VOICE)

The pleasure was all mine, Lady Wanda. You can just call me Monica. All that Ms. And ma'am stuff makes me feel old.

WANDA

That's just how we talk in the South, ma'am.

Wanda smiles and opens the door.

MONICA

Have a glorious day.

BEA

I'll be down to open your unit.

Wanda exits. Monica returns to cleaning.

MONICA

She seems nice. I noticed she's a cutter.

BEA

Yeah, she's been through a lot with her boyfriend.

INT. STORAGE CITY OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Bea reaches into the top drawer of her desk and pulls out her bright red, Storage City Company fanny pack.

MONICA

I have to get used to being called Ma'am. It makes me feel so old.

BEA

You won't notice it after a while.

Bea fills the fanny pack with circular red padlocks and puts it around her waist.

BEA (CONT'D)

I know you have some very stylish clothes, but you shouldn't wear them here.

MONICA

I don't know what to put on in this heat. I thought about wearing a tank top and some booty shorts, but that's not proper work attire.

BEA

If you don't care about it getting dirty, it might be the perfect outfit for work.

Bea puts the cash in a lock box.

MONICA

My ass cheeks hanging out is a good look for work? Are you serious!?

BEA

I'm just saying you should dress comfortable, in something you don't care about as much as a vintage short suit.

MONICA

I haven't seen any plus size stores around here for the trendy big girl. I don't want to look like somebody's Meemaw.

Bea laughs but Monica is serious.

BEA

Come with me to take the red lock off.

Monica takes a deep breath.

MONICA

Do you really need me? It feels like Satan's having a BBQ out there, plus Jay and Oberon are on the way back.

BEA

He has a key, this is part of your job. You need a sun hat, put that on the list.

Bea takes her foldable sunhat out of her pocket.

BEA (CONT'D)

Let me get you a fannypack.

MONICA

Oh, I'm good. I don't do fannypacks

BEA

The red fannypack holds your red lockout locks. It's an essential part of the job.

MONICA

It's fire engine red! It does not go with what I have on.

BEA

Function over fashion, dear.

EXT. STORAGE CITY GROUNDS - DAY

Storage City sits on three unfenced acres, right off a rural highway, bordered by a trailer park, a gas station and some dense woods.

It consists of four long metal buildings, A,B,C and D. A modest, unkept home stands just south of building A. A large faded, hand painted sign stands near the highway.

Bea and Monica are wearing their Storage City fannypacks. Monica is dripping in sweat. Bea is used to the heat. She has her sun hat on with a cooling cloth around her neck. Monica is struggling.

MONICA

I literally have dropped at least five pounds off my body out here! This humidity is oppressive.

BEA

You'll get used to it. This is your business.

MONICA

I don't like walking around here. It's hot and dirty and I'm afraid Lilith the sinkhole will swallow me up.

BEA

You named the sinkhole?

MONICA

Yeah, I did name it. Lilith... It's biblical.

EXT. STORAGE CITY SINKHOLE - DAY

Roger stares vacantly into Lilith the sinkhole. He holds a rope leash tethered to a large gray Pitbull sitting next to him. Lilith sits at the Eastern edge of the facility-- deep, wide and expanding, riddled with trash and discarded belongings; a toilet, a soiled couch and a car engine are visible.

Bea acknowledges Roger.

BEA

Hey Roger.

Roger continues to look down into the sinkhole.

ROGER

Hi Ms. Bea.

BEA

What you doing? I hope you're not adding to the trash in Lilith.

Roger is confused.

ROGER

I don't believe I know her, Ma'am.

Monica is keeping her distance from the sinkhole and Roger.

BEA

Roger, this is my daughter-in-law, Monica.

Roger looks up, shielding his eyes from the sun with his hand. Monica waves from the distance.

BEA (CONT'D)

Monica, come on over here...

MONICA

I'm terrified of any area where the Earth just swallows itself... and rats.

Monica staying put.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Hey Roger!

Roger waves back.

ROGER

Ms. Bea, the sheriff took the Dassy brothers last night.

Bea is excited.

BEA

You don't say?! Terry and Garry? That's the best news I've heard all day. Have you seen Ella?

ROGER

No, ma'am, I haven't.

EXT. STORAGE CITY SINKHOLE - DAY

Bea walks up to Monica and hands her a small notebook and three red locks from her fanny pack.

BEA

Why don't you go on and red lock
these three units on Building C.

Monica pulls a plastic water bottle from her pocket and takes
a long swig.

MONICA

What? I'll just stick with you.

BEA

No, no, you got this. I'll take
care of Wanda and meet you in the
office.

Bea starts walking fast to the office.

BEA (CONT'D)

I need to talk to the sheriff.

MONICA

About what?

EXT. STORAGE CITY A BUILDING - DAY

Bea walks back towards the office, crossing to the shady side
of building A, passing the abandoned Manager's cottage. She
yells back at Monica.

BEA

I'll tell you later!

EXT. STORAGE CITY C BUILDING - DAY

A disgusted Monica trudges slowly towards building C,
noticing all the broken doors, discarded belongings and
general disarray that is Storage City. Sweat runs down her
face as she squints her eyes and takes a deep breath.

Monica looks at the notebook and fumbles with the locks.

MONICA

(mumbling to herself)

C12, 23 and 30. White sugar sand
beaches my ass, what a dump.

She locks each unit in turn and heads back to the front of
the property.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Done and done.

EXT. STORAGE CITY C BUILDING - DAY

A work truck hastily rounds the corner, parks in front of C12. C12 RENTER (30s) Caucasian, jeans, dirty t-shirt, sweaty, jumps out of his truck.

C12 RENTER
What the fuck is this?

He notices the red lock and becomes agitated. He sees Monica.

C12 RENTER (CONT'D)
Hey! Are you working here?

MONICA
Yes, how can I help you?

C12 RENTER
I need to get in here now!

MONICA
Ok, you can meet me in the office
to get you current.

C12 RENTER
Get me current?

MONICA
You can pay your bill. You're past
due. Thus the red lock.

C12 Renter grows visibly more agitated

C12 RENTER
Thus? What the fuck is this?! I
always pay my bills! Where is Miss
Ella? Who the fuck are you?

MONICA
Hi, I'm Monica Polite.

Smiling she reaches out her hand to shake.

MONICA (CONT'D)
I'm part of the ownership group

C12 RENTER
You listen to me, nigger...

Monica's smile disappears, her eyes grow wide and her
shoulders broad as she instinctively steps back.

MONICA

Whatever, man. If your dirty broke
ass would pay your bills, I
wouldn't have to talk to you.

C12 RENTER

Fuck you bitch, I pay my bills.

MONICA

I don't know who the fuck you think
you're talking to, but let me
reintroduce myself, because now you
done showed your ass. I'm Monica
Moore from Newark, New Jersey,
please don't get it twisted.

C12 RENTER

Well...

MONICA

"Well." I ain't the one
motherfucker!

Monica pulls out her phone.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Let me just record.

Monica presses the record button. They lock in a silent stare
for a moment.

Bea comes into sight, rounding the corner in a hurry.

BEA

Monica?! What is going on?

Monica continues recording.

MONICA

This man thought he was going to
threaten me. So as my American
right, I started to record him
acting a fool.

C12 Renter busts a 180, and sweet as pie, starts speaking to
Ms. Bea.

C12 RENTER

Ma'am, I need to get in my storage.
I'm on a job. Is Ms. Ella here? She
knows me.

MONICA
(Shaking her head,
chuckles)
Mmmhum, this mofo is diabolical.

Monica and C12 Renter side eye each other.

BEA
(To C12 Renter)
Ella is not here. You are past due,
well past as I recall. You could
come to the office and settle up
and we'll remove the lock.

C12 Renter speaks to Bea, while still giving looks to Monica.

C12 RENTER
Listen dear, I've always paid. I've
been here for years. I promise I'll
pay by the end of the week. Go on
and open it up now, honey. I got a
job to finish.

BEA
No payment, no access.

C12 RENTER
Fuck this!

C12 Renter spits on the ground between him and Monica. He
gets in his truck, slams the door, quickly reverses.

C12 RENTER (CONT'D)
Cunt!

He peels away.

MONICA
I got your punk ass on video!

BEA
Christ almighty. What the hell was
that, Monica? You need to de-
escalate these situations.

Monica abruptly turns, starts walking towards the office.

BEA (CONT'D)
Monica?

Bea hurries to catch up with Monica, grabbing her by the
shoulder.

BEA (CONT'D)
Monica? What is it?

Monica turns with tears in her eyes.

MONICA
He called me a nigger!

BEA
No he didn't...

MONICA
He looked right at me and called me
a nigger. That hasn't happened to
me... in decades.

BEA
Stupid fucking red neck.

Bea holds Monica as she cries.

BEA (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry, dear.

MONICA
Part of the reason we moved here
was to work for ourselves. To own
something... a business, a home
hopefully. He had no respect for
me.

Monica lifts her head up.

MONICA (CONT'D)
(Sobs)
He had no respect for the fanny
pack.

BEA
What a piece of shit animal.

Monica cries and they both laugh a little.

BEA (CONT'D)
Don't show Jay that video.

MONICA
I didn't record him, I don't have
enough space on my phone for
videos.

BEA
You had me fooled.

They laugh.

EXT. STORAGE CITY UNITS HOURS LATER - DAY

Jay wears a fannypack with extra red locks on the belt, he carries a tool bag as he walks with Monica holding a clipboard.

JAY
Plum, how you feeling?

MONICA
Not great.

JAY
What's wrong?

Monica looks at her clipboard.

MONICA
I'll tell you later.

JAY
Did my mom say something to you?

MONICA
No, could we just talk about it later? We need to open unit B60.

JAY
I'm not doing anything until you tell me what's wrong.

They stop at Unit B60.

MONICA
I just want to do this and get home.

Jay steps up to the door of unit B60.

JAY
I don't like when you keep stuff from me.

Jay sets his tool bag down.

MONICA
I'm not keeping anything from you, I just want to tell you later.

Monica looks at her clipboard notes.

MONICA (CONT'D)

This one has been delinquent for months.

Jay pulls a hand held grinder out of his tool bag.

JAY

Stand back, Honey Bear.

Jay turns on the grinder, sparks fly, he cuts the lock, and it falls to the ground.

JAY (CONT'D)

Done and done.

MONICA

Open it up.

Jay rolls up the door, revealing a fully furnished living space.

INT. UNIT B60 - DAY

SUPER: MOMENTS EARLIER

There is a television mounted to the ceiling, a makeshift kitchen, a full living room, a queen sized bed with a night stand and a bathroom with a camping shower bag hanging over half a plastic barrel and a bucket style marine toilet. A portable AC unit vented through a hole in the back wall keeps the unit bearably cool.

RICHARD (30) a fit, shirtless, tattooed male takes his coffee out of the microwave in his makeshift kitchen area.

Richard takes a seat on the couch, drinks, his coffee and watches Fox News.

Richard hears Monica and Jay's voices getting closer and turns his television down.

Richard now hears them checking the lock on his door. He turns the television and AC off with remote controls, he gets up and looks around for his cat.

Richard stands, coffee in hand, and walks quietly to the bed and gently picks up his cat.

The grinder screams on and Richard, cat and coffee in tow, silently navigates through the living space to the wall separating units.

Richard holds his coffee and cat in one arm, with his other hand he slides open a barely visible piece of sheet metal, revealing an opening between the units.

INT. UNIT B59 - DAY

Richard steps through the hole into storage unit B59, sliding the metal closed behind him. This unit looks like a mechanic's workshop.

Richard sits on a stool sipping coffee and quietly listening to Monica and Jay.

EXT./INT. UNIT B60 - DAY

Monica and Jay are in full shock looking at the living space of Unit B60

MONICA

What the fuck is happening here?

Jay starts to walk into the unit.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Jay don't go in there!

Jay stops at the edge of the doorway.

JAY

Why? This is my property.

MONICA

This is a residence. Look around, someone is living here. I'm not sure what kind of tenant laws apply to a situation like this.

JAY

Are you serious?

MONICA

In California this person would have all sorts of rights.

JAY

Fuck that, this is Florida.

Jay enters, but Monica steps away from the unit.

MONICA

I think we should tell your mom. She might know who lives here.

JAY

She doesn't know shit about
somebody living in this unit.

Monica standing outside.

MONICA

Just put the red lock on it!
Whoever's living here, is gonna
have to come see us.

Jay pulls out his phone and takes pictures.

MONICA (CONT'D)

This place creeps me out.

INT. UNIT B59 - DAY

Richard continues to listen to Monica and Jay's conversation.

MONICA (O.S.)

How are people living in storage
units in this heat?

Richard blows his hot coffee and takes a sip.

EXT. UNIT B60 - DAY

Roger walks up to Monica.

ROGER

Hey Monica, what's going on?

MONICA

Do you know somebody is living
here?

ROGER

Oh, that's Richard's place.

Monica looks puzzled. Jay exits the unit closes the door and
snaps on a red lock.

JAY

Richard?

Jay walks over to them.

ROGER

He's not very nice to me...

MONICA

Does Bea know about Richard living here, Roger?

ROGER

Yes, ma'am.

Roger walks away.

MONICA

I'm so sick of this shit.

Monica walks with angry purpose towards the office.

JAY

Monica, wait.

Jay rushes after Monica.

INT. UNIT B59 -DAY

As Monica and Jay disappear around the corner, Richard quietly rolls up the storage door and steps out with his cat in hand.

EXT. UNIT B65 - DAY

Richard calmly walks the other direction to Unit B65 and knocks on the door.

INT. UNIT B65 - DAY

THE DUKE a tall well dressed Caucasian man (60s) stands up from his leather chair. Unit B65 is also set up like a residence.

Guitars hang of one wall, a wardrobe of western shirts hang on another, records and books are neatly displayed on shelves.

The Duke opens his roll up door to Richard.

RICHARD

Duke man, that fucking snitch Roger told Bea's son I live here.

THE DUKE

You hold your composure, boy. I'll get Roger back in line. Did he see your little escape route?

RICHARD
No, but he took pictures.

THE DUKE
Don't worry, Ella will be back...

The Duke pulls a pack of unfiltered Camel Cigarettes from his shirt pocket. He lights one and takes a long drag.

THE DUKE (CONT'D)
You get on to your place and let me go talk to that boy about running his mouth.

RICHARD
Yes, sir.

INT. STORAGE CITY OFFICE - DAY

LARRY DASSY, a tall man wearing a motorcycle club vest, stands talking to Bea. The patch on the back of his vest reads Satan's Sailors and depicts a devil's head with an eye patch and a flaming anchor. Bea is seated at her desk with Oberon on her lap. He is looking at a show on her cell phone.

LARRY
I'm looking for Ms. Ella.

BEA
I'm sorry to tell you she's not here.

LARRY
Maybe you can help me. I'm Larry Dassy.

BEA
You related to Garry and Terry?

LARRY
Yes, ma'am, they're my little brothers. I know this is going to sound just crazy, but them boys left their dog and my mother here.

BEA
What do you mean here? I haven't seen a woman with a dog all day.

INT. STORAGE CITY OFFICE - DAY

Monica and Jay rush into the office. As Monica begins to speak, Jay interrupts her.

JAY
Hey mom, all done red locking.

Monica walks past Larry towards Oberon, looking back at Jay

MONICA
I'll take him.

Monica picks up Oberon.

BEA
This is Larry Dassy, he's looking
for his mother and dog.

Monica and Jay look confused.

MONICA
Did she wonder off or something?

JAY
We can help you look for her.

LARRY
She's here in my brothers' storage
unit.

BEA
I red locked that unit this
morning. If someone with a dog was
in there I would have heard them.

LARRY
My brothers worked out a deal with
Ms. Ella to live in their storage
unit. Terry called me from jail to
come get Loretta...

BEA
Loretta is your mom?

LARRY
No, Loretta's the dog.

Monica and Jay give a concerned look.

MONICA
What is going on around here?! It's
hot as hell outside and people are
living in storage units.

BEA

Jay take Larry to the unit, I'll call the sheriff just in case we need emergency services.

Jay and Larry rush out of the office.

INT. STORAGE CITY OFFICE - DAY

Bea calls the sheriff. Monica puts Oberon in his play area.

MONICA

What if that lady is dead in there with Loretta? Oh my goodness what if Loretta is dead! The animal rights groups alone will shut this place down... not to mention the yelp reviews.

Monica is in a panic.

BEA

Monica just relax she might have left this morning. Plus Terry said ...

MONICA

Larry

BEA

Whoever! They said they've been living in there. These people are resilient

Monica starts chanting under her breath.

MONICA

I don't want to go to jail in the South of all places. Bea, do you know how many people are living here?

Bea, holding the phone waiting for someone to answer, flashes a quick incredulous look, which fades into a smirk.

BEA

Now I realize I don't know. There's no record of these extra tenants, and the rentals I do have on record? Well, the money is not balancing.

MONICA

Ella's been stealing from the company, and letting people live here off the books. That old bitch is the devil.

Someone picks up from the sheriff office.

BEA

Yes, hello. This is Bea Polite. I need the Sherriff here right away, we may have a dead woman and dog down here at Storage City!

EXT. STORAGE CITY - SKY VIEW - DAY

A rising view reveals the full three acres of Storage City. From above we see The Duke confronting Roger at the sinkhole, while Richard rolls down his shop door behind him, and Jay and Larry quickly approach the Dassy unit. A police siren can be heard getting louder in the background.

THE END