

THE CLIMB
2ND DRAFT

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EPISODE ONE

*Note: The social media platform of this world is called HIGH- *
WIRE. It is an amalgamation of FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, VINE, *
TWITTER, SNAP, YOU NAME IT... **

TITLE CARD: "SLAY, WERK, FLEX, STUNT" -- COPPER LEWINSKY

EXT. EMPTY LOT - DAY

An urban wasteland. It's quiet. The grass is thigh-high. A *
nearby STRUCTURE, that once looked like a storybook home, is *
now crumbling. On it's side "**Once upon a time**" is sloppily *
spray- painted.

It's 'urban decay porn' but in vibrant over-saturation. Birds *
chirp. The bright, blue sky suggests something magical could *
still happen here. Then it does...

We hear the sound of LAUGHTER. TWO WOMEN come traipsing *
through the lot. Arms linked. This isn't an acquaintanceship. *
This is a friendship for the ages.

NIA (29, Black, thin and bubbly) and MISTY (28, white, buxom, *
southern, sharp-tongued) are two sides of the same coin.

NIA *
...

... So I was at the top of this
mountain and I was waiting and
grunting--

MISTY

Why were you grunting, you nasty
bitch?

NIA

Dog, I'm tryna tell you, damn. I
was grunting because my tummy was
hurting like I was having the worst
period of my life while being force
fed Taco Bell--

MISTY

Fuck.

NIA

And the pain took me to my knees-

MISTY
 (Still thinking about
 being force fed Taco
 Bell)

Damn.

NIA
 And before I knew it, my puss split
 open and I was on the ground giving
 birth. *

MISTY
 Wait, what? Gross.

NIA
 I know, but listen. So I'm pushing
 and pushing and finally the baby
 comes out and it's me.

MISTY
 How do mean? Like you as a baby?

NIA
 Like me, now. I birthed myself
 fully fucking grown. I was all
 bloody and mostly naked except I
 was wearing a full-length fur coat.
 Like Aretha Franklin.

MISTY
 Hold up. I'm repulsed and
intrigued. *

NIA
 We made up a word for that
 remember?

MISTY
 "Repultrigued."

NIA (CONT'D)
 "Repultrigued."

NIA (CONT'D)
 Dog, don't forget that word.
 We're living in the age of
 "repultrigue."

MISTY
 Uh-huh. Vegan cheese, Donald Trump,
 Crossfit, all that. Every time I go
 on High-Wire I'm repultrigued. *

They walk. Litter CRUNCHES underfoot. Then--

MISTY (CONT'D)

What do you think your dream means?

They stop. Nia, thinks long and hard -- then...

NIA

I think it means that this is like my time or something.

FRANKIE THE WINO (PRELAP)

JACKPOT! I hit that number, motherfucker!

INT. CORNER STORE - DAY

The Clerk, CHALDEAN PAUL, behind a fortress of bullet-proof glass yells at FRANKIE THE WINO, who's drowning in a mixed-match suit. *

Note: In Detroit, the Arab run "corner-store" is ubiquitous. It is to Detroit what the bodega is in New York. *

CHALDEAN PAUL (PRELAP)

You're a loser. You lose, Frankie the Wino! Everyday you lose. At lottery, at life-- *

FRANKIE THE WINO

I hit the number, goddamnit.

Frankie offers crumpled LOTTERY SLIPS.

CHALDEAN PAUL

That's from three weeks ago, man.

Frankie is holding up the line. CUSTOMERS GROAN.

Nia and Misty are off to the side, near the magazine rack, paying this ruckus no mind. It's common place.

Nia is lost in a glossy MAG. Bikini-clad, COPPER LEWINSKY, 30's poses on the cover. Copper is an "LA-type," of beautiful, slightly unnatural in her perfection, with a bulbous backside. *

The caption reads: "COPPER LEWINSKY THE QUEEN OF HIGH WIRE. 50 million Followers and counting..."

Nia studies every inch of her.

NIA

Not. One. Flaw. It's like this bitch is another species.

(MORE)

NIA (CONT'D)

(then)

Can't she at least have a fucked up toe? Just like a pinky nail that grows in jet black, cause it's just like riddled with fungus.

*
*

MISTY

I bet her toes had plenty of fungus when she worked at that strip club.

NIA

Yeah, but that's all in her rear-view.

*

MISTY

(reading, mocking)

I look at myself every day in the mirror and I tell myself: Copper, slay, werk, flex, stunt.

*
*

BOTH

'Be fly or like die.'

*

Misty mimes barfing. Nia laughs. The commotion near the counter erupts, again...

CHALDEAN PAUL

Whaa Whaa Whaa. Cry on me a river, you lunatic!

*

Frankie knocks over a display of BETTER MAID CHIPS.

FRANKIE THE WINO

A-rab fascist! You know I hit the number. I hit. I hit. I hit.

CUSTOMERS

Go Frankie/C'mon Man/Just go!

Chaldean Paul reaches for his bat, exits the glass fortress. Nia looks over, for the first time, engaged.

NIA

Chaldean Paul's out the fishbowl.

MISTY

(head in a magazine)

I can't see it, so it's not happening.

Nia heads for the counter.

NIA

Hey, Chaldean Paul, chill.

She places herself between the two men. Misty rolls her eyes like, 'not again' and follows, though hanging back. *

NIA (CONT'D)

(gently)

Frankie, the Wino... You wanna play another 'Daily Digit' on me? Come on. Pick your numbers. Go head. *

(to Paul)

Let him play one on me. *

Paul yields as Frankie grows calm, then rushes to darken in numbers on a new SLIP. Nia hangs close to him like a shield.

FRANKIE THE WINO

I know you. Always with the white girl with all that ass.

Misty rolls her eyes.

MISTY

Duh, sir. We see you everyday.

NIA

We went to school with your daughter, Sheena, remember?

FRANKIE THE WINO

How is she?

Nia and Misty trade a look.

MISTY

(sotto)

We don't fucking know.

NIA

She wasn't very nice to us in high school. But I've seen her on High-Wire. Her baby just started walking and she tries a new recipe every Sunday night. She seems good.

MISTY

Sheena's a bitch, sir.

FRANKIE THE WINO

She got that honest. Her momma some kin to Medusa.

Frankie hands his slip to Paul; Nia, tosses a BUCK on the counter. *

FRANKIE THE WINO (CONT'D)
 When I hit the number, you get
 half, sweetheart.

PAUL
 Budweiser'll get the other half. *

Frankie, tips his hat and exits. Customer applause.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 (grandly)
 Princess Nia. Princess Misty.

NIA
 Mean ass.

CHALDEAN PAUL
 (now smiling)
 I'm your friendly neighborhood,
 Chaldean Paul. A good guy. And a
 Christian. No ISIS up in here!

More Customer applause. Misty grabs a LOTTERY SLIP and pauses
 before filling bubbles.

MISTY
 (to Nia)
 The usual?

Nia watches the working class Customers buying their lottery
 tickets, cigarettes, pop, candy. It's a parade of vices. *

NIA
 Yup.

INT. HOLDON CORP. - DAY

Overhead shot of a small, dreary office. Nia and Misty both
 donning headsets are cogs in this machine. Their bright
 clothes stand out within the cluster of grey cubicles. *

We find Misty on a call, professional but bone dry...

MISTY
 Oh, I'd be happy to do that. Can I
 get your customer ID number... *

RANDY, the MAILMAN well-built but short, passes by. He
 watches Misty suggestively as she works. She rolls her eyes. *

MISTY (CONT'D)

Just one sec.

(to Randy)

What are you, lost?

RANDY

No, I don't think so.

MISTY

Then what the fuck are you looking at?

Randy gestures as if to say 'my bad'. He turns to drop a package at a nearby desk.

MISTY (CONT'D)

(back to the call)

Whenever you're ready with that number...

Nia, in a cubicle kitty-corner to Misty, appears to be working hard, clicking away on her mouse.

We come closer to see that Nia's on Copper Lewinski's High Wire Page, clicking through tons of photos:

-COPPER at a club, popping bottles. CLICK

-COPPER with giant shopping bags on Melrose. CLICK

-COPPER lying on a boat. CLICK

-COPPER with a tall handsome MAN. CLICK

The rhythmic CLICKING of the mouse becomes hypnotic, zoning out the world around her. Faintly Nia's phone is RINGING.

COWORKER O.S.

Nia, phone.

Nia, shaken back to Earth, answers. She's friendly as hell.

NIA

Good morning, Holdon Corp. Yes, sir, absolutely. You know, I'm not sure about that, let me transfer you. Okay. Hold please.

Nia returns to CLICKING. Nia sips from her tea cup. On the end of the teacup string is a typed QUOTE. It reads: "MAKE YOUR LIFE A WORK OF ART."

Nia snaps a PIC of it and uploads it to HIGH-WIRE. She thinks hard before adding the caption: MY TEABAG is MY PASTOR

Immediately, a HEART appears on the post from MissMisty. Nia watches as no other HEARTS appear. *

NIA (CONT'D) *

Come on, people it's inspirational. *

TRAPPER HOLDON (white, rotund) appears. He side eyes Nia for a long beat, then-- *

TRAPPER

Nia, I need to speak with you in my office.

Nia, jumps and clicks off High Wire.

NIA

(playfully sings) *

Aye, aye, Captain. *

As Nia rises from her chair she notices MISS WHATSHERFACE (70, the ogre-ish VP) mean-mugging, judging her outfit. *

INT. HOLDON CORP - TRAPPER'S OFFICE - DAY

Nia stares at Trapper's icy glare, unsure of what's coming. *

TRAPPER *

Nia, I've received an anonymous complaint about you.

NIA

From who?

TRAPPER

From "Anonymous."

NIA

Like the hackers?

TRAPPER

Not the hackers. From an anonymous source.

NIA *

Trapper, I've picked out your wife's last three birthday gifts. *

I'm practically your homie. *

Trapper's look suggests he's definitely not her 'homie.' *

TRAPPER *

You're a burst of sunshine around here.

(MORE)

TRAPPER (CONT'D)

But the 'source' complained that you are an ineffective member of the team. Unfocused. Unhelpful. And they suggested...

(chuckles a bit)

That you don't even know what kind of company Holdon Corp is.

NIA

What do you mean?

TRAPPER

That you don't know what we do here.

NIA

Trapper. That's ridiculous. I've been here almost a year. *

TRAPPER

I thought so too at first and then I thought about it some more...

Long beat as they simply stare at each other.

TRAPPER (CONT'D)

I feel silly asking, Nia but what do we do here?

NIA

Wow. I'm not even gonna dignify that with a response. *

She rises indignantly from her seat.

MISTY (PRELAP)

Well you had better.

INT. FORT/CASS PEOPLE MOVER STATION - NIGHT

Nia and Misty take the long escalator ride up to the People Mover track. (An above-ground monorail that loops a few miles around downtown Detroit.) *

NIA

I have till Monday to answer him or I can collect my things. *

MISTY

Damn. *

NIA
I can't believe somebody ratted on
me. I know who it was too.

MISTY
Who?

NIA
Ms Whatsherface. The one I popped
in the head during Rubberband Wars.

FLASH: Nia and Misty in Holdon Corp's break room. Nia fires a
Rubber Band gun at Misty who ducks just as the rubber band
torpedoes Miss Whatsherface's forehead.

MISS WHATSHERFACE
Jesus have mercy in heaven.

Nia gasps.

END OF FLASH

MISTY
(knowingly)
Miss Whatsherface.

NIA
It was an accident. Now, she's
always 'grimming' the hell out of
me.

MISTY
She just looks like that. It
happens when you work the same job
for 50 years without ever sitting
on a dick. Your face gets stuck
like that.

Misty and Nia reach the platform, where a red, mosaic tile
wall surrounds them.

INT. PEOPLE MOVER - NIGHT

Misty and Nia riding in the train car as it snakes through
the city's sky-line. They stand holding a metal rail.

Neon lights buzz around them. Out the windows, a moving
postcard of Detroit's financial district.

MISTY
(then, carefully)
Well, we knew this day would come.
Let me just tell you.

NIA

No. Holdon Corp is temporary, while
I wait for my real life to really
get moving.

MISTY

Dog, this is real. This is your
real life.

Quiet as the reality hits Nia... she has to take a seat.

NIA

Fuck... I have ninety-eight dollars
and sixty-three cents in my savings
account, Mist. I can't lose my job.

Misty sits next to her. Nia drops her head on top of Misty's.
They sit curled together.

MISTY

I won't let you.

(beat)

But, work is not supposed to be
fun, boo bear. You get one Happy
Hour per weekday. Everybody knows
that. That's why they make the
wings half off. And then actual
living happens on the weekends.

NIA

That's so fucking depressing.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Nia and Misty step over A GNARLY HOMELESS MAN lying on the
ground as they walk down the street. Behind them, in the
distance the Renaissance Center (the crown jewel of the sky-
line), looms. Gentrification construction all around them.

NIA

Last thing I knew I was taking a
much needed semester off from
college. Now I work at a glue
factory.

MISTY

Holdon Corp is not a glue factory.

NIA

Doll Factory?

MISTY

No.

They reach the front doors of a bar. The sign out front reads: HAPPY HOUR SPECIALS

MISTY (CONT'D)

The golden hour is upon us. *

Nia slaps on a smile as they enter... *

INT. FLOOD'S BAR AND GRILLE - NIGHT

Misty and Nia enter this village tavern of sorts. Nia waves politely to different BAR PATRONS (some were Customers in the liquor store, now looking to shake off the week). *

The place is over-flowing with the Friday "Happy Hour" crowd. Hard-working folks aged 25-50s. But overwhelmingly Younger Women and Older Guys in Steve Harvey suits. *

As the girls make their way through the crowd, we take in Floods in a stylized manner, full of extreme close-ups that makes it feel like a music video. That and the music is thumping. The windows foggy. Walls sweating. *

- The BARTENDER pours shots of Cognac.

- A BIG BOOTY-WOMAN freaks on the dance floor.

- A FAT GUY puffs a cloud of cigar smoke.

Nia and Misty reach their bar stools and Misty indicates for TWO GUYS to get up for them. They obey and our girls sit. They're smashed between TWO old, SWEATY GUYS with toothpicks hanging out of their mouths who eavesdrop on their convo. *

They point to the BARTENDER with a GIANT AFRO, who nods knowingly and begins making their drinks.

Screaming over the music... *

NIA *

When I was six years old and people used to ask me, 'what are you gonna be when you grow up?' You know what I used to say?

NIA (CONT'D)

A fucking lion.

MISTY

A lion.

MISTY (CONT'D)

I know boo. And I used to tell people I wanted to be emotionally supported. That's why we're friends; we think outside the box.

*
*

NIA

Then, how'd we still end up right back in the fucking box with everybody else?

MISTY

I'm not in a box.

NIA

Dog, a cubicle is a box. And boxes are not reflective of our bad-ass bitch-ness.

*
*

MISTY

Why does every woman on Earth have to be a bad-ass bitch?

*

NIA

Ask fucking Beyonce. I dunno. But I am aware that we must slay while those motherfuckers get to be traffic cones.

*
*
*
*
*

They watch Two MEN, 60s dressed head to toe in ill-fitting BRIGHT ORANGE down to the Gators, chat up GLAMOUR GIRLS half their age.

*
*
*

The Bartender drops off their drinks. Nia guzzles. Misty yells out into the crowd.

MISTY

To the freakin' weekend!

The crowd HOOTS. Misty and Nia clink glasses but Nia's is already empty.

*

Dissolve to Nia and Misty in a booth. Nia won't stop talking as Misty bops in her seat. They do another shot.

*
*

CORNER BOOTH:

*

NIA

Remember Barbie's three-story dream house?

*

MISTY

(sulks like a child)
Never got one.

*
*

(MORE)

MISTY (CONT'D)

My mom blew the guy at Toys R Us
and everything but it wasn't in the
cards.

*

NIA

Okay, well I had the three story
Malibu one with the elevator and
the pink Corvette.

MISTY

So jelly.

NIA

All that time, playing with that
Black Barbie and you know my mom,
she had to be Black so I could--

NIA (CONT'D)

Identify.

MISTY

Identify.

NIA

Exactly. Well, I sort of thought
that was like... a preview.

*

MISTY

Well in all that time you spent
playing Black Barbie in her Malibu
dream house did you ever stop and
ask yourself what the hell her
Black ass did for a living?

*

*

*

*

*

*

NIA (CONT

*

Nia, thinks. Then--

*

NIA (CONT'D)

*

She was dope for a living.

*

Misty spies REV GOODMAN 30, (think Jerrod Carmichael) through
the crowd. He's not a man of the cloth, but the manager of a
Community Center in a very dangerous community, so close.
Decent, kind, and a smart-ass.

*

MISTY

(facetious)

Here comes King 'what up doe.'

*

Rev's eye is on Nia as he fights through the crowd.

*FLASHES from HIGH WIRE: We see content from Rev's page.
Pictures of him working with SENIORS at community center,
planting urban gardens, working with KIDS, wearing shirt that
says 'Detroit for Detroiters' and 'Detroit vs Everybody'*

*

*

*

*

FLASH his HIGH WIRE, Brainfarts (like tweets): "Service is the rent you pay for the space you occupy. -- Martin Luther King Jr."

*
*
*

REV
Ladies. What up doe?

*

NIA
Rev.

*
*

MISTY
False Prophet.

*

REV
Nothing you can do when a nickname sticks.

NIA
Hey Rev--

REV
See...

*

NIA
I'm about to lose my job. You got something for me over at the community center?

MISTY
(edging him out)
She's not losing her job. She's pouting and momma's gonna allow her to pout until Monday morning. Then momma's gonna give her the info that's gonna keep her gainfully employed.

*

NIA
"Gainfully" might be a bit much.

*

The SONG changes. It's "Just in Case" by Jaheim -- the ballroom hustle song in Detroit. This is everybody's jam. 'Ahhhh Shits' all around.

*
*

Bar Patrons fill the dance floor. Nia bops in her seat.

*

NIA (CONT'D)
Rev, you ballroom?

*

REV
Ballroom hustle class every Wednesday nights at the center. You know who started that...

*
*

NIA

You did.

The two of them gaze at each other. There's serious chemistry between these two.

MISTY

Ya'll so damn corny.

Misty's phone BLINGS. She discreetly checks a TEXT. Nia, folded into Rev's eyes doesn't notice. Then suddenly--

MISTY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna go.

NIA

We've got 20 minutes of happy left.

MISTY

I'm on full. The freakin weekend...
to be continued...

(to Rev)

Hey, false prophet, time to get her
on the dance floor... Dumb ass.

NIA

What you gonna do for the rest of
the night?

MISTY

Sleep.

Misty kisses her friend on the cheek and slips out.

REV

Your girl's rude as hell, but she
made at least one valid point.

Rev extends his hand, and Nia accepts it.

On the dance floor: Everyone's doing the 'ballroom hustle.'

Some Patrons are paired in couples, others in a line dance.
Think smoother, sexier, electric slide, with more spins.

- A MAN caresses the small of a WOMAN's back.

- GIRLFRIENDS heartily laughing together taking 'usies.'

- Nia and Rev smile as they face each other. Nia does a goofy
dance at first. Rev looks at her concerned.

NIA

Just kidding.

He grabs her hand and they fall into a groove.

- Close on: Feet kicking, a LADY's architectural hairstyle, gold teeth-smiles, spins, tight dresses, Stetson hats...
Detroit culture announcing itself in the tiniest of details.

Close on smile after smile. These are Friday night smiles.
For this moment all is well in the world.

We find Nia and Rev again in a slow and sexy groove; they make eyes. *The Crowd disappears* as if Cinderella were waltzing with the Prince at the ball. They're the only ones on the dance floor.

REV

How come you won't let me take you out?

NIA

Cause I'm not interested in where that leads.

REV

It leads to joy. Who's anti-joy?

NIA

I'm anti love, marriage and a baby carriage. And you're too charming. Gotta be something wrong with you.

REV

I'm a Prince Charming type, you can just accept that.

NIA

You said Prince Harming?

REV

Ch... Charming. I come from a long line of romantic warriors.

NIA

Nigga. I come from a long line of type 2 diabetes. So what?

REV

So I'd lay off the Red pop. And I'd enjoy dancing on these feet while you still got em.

A big ass smile escapes her. Him too. She holds him tighter.

NIA

Nutcase.

REV

So no love, marriage and a baby
carriage huh? Ain't that why women
come to happy hour?

*
*

NIA

You don't know shit about women.

REV

So teach me. What do you want?

Nia smiles coyly.

NIA

I want you to stop talking. It was
just starting to feel like Friday.

She presses herself against him. She exhales and *the crowd returns*. But Nia and Rev are still in their own world, eyes locked inside the packed dance floor.

*
*

INT. MODEST HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

*

Remarkably loud Sex MOANS and GROANS ring out as we scan
panties and boxer briefs strewn across the carpet. We tilt up
to the bed where we find...

*
*
*

Misty, riding the hell out of SOMEONE. Finally we see, it's
Randy, the mail man from the office. He's only a mailman but
still has the same confidence from high school when he was an
All State Point Guard.

*
*
*
*

He's ripped but overly sensitive. This is the kind of man who
cries. In fact, he's crying now.

*
*

Misty's seconds away from coming... If he would stop talking.

*

RANDY

You look so sexy--

*
*

MISTY

Shut the fuck up.

*
*

RANDY

So... sexy--

*
*

MISTY

Shut the fuck up.

*
*

RANDY

How's my dick.com feel?

*
*

MISTY
Huh? I don't get it.

RANDY
It's dirty talk.

MISTY
Randy, the Mailman ... Shut! The
Fuck! Up!

Quiet. This is a woman in charge of her own orgasm and now
she's coming--

EXT. IMMACULATE STREET - SHERWOOD FORREST - NIGHT

This is the boughie part of Detroit. Where, brick homes with
manicured lawns are owned by professionals and tucked away in
tight-knit communities.

A sign reads: SHERWOOD FORREST, A Patrolled Community.

A car pulls up. Rev in the driver's seat. Nia, shotgun,
checking out the house.

REV
Nice crib.

NIA
My dad's.

An awkward moment as Nia goes for the door handle, then--

REV
So that's it?

Nia, full to the brim with wanting, lets some of it pour out.

NIA
Hey, Rev...You really want to know
what I want?

Making the choice to be vulnerable with him.

NIA (CONT'D)
I wanna be fulfilled.

Rev searches her eyes seriously and then breaks into a
guffaw.

REV
You wanna be fulfilled.

NIA *
Yes, asshole. *

REV *
So you got white girl problems. *

NIA *
No. *

REV *
(teasing) *
Yeah, you do. You should tuck your *
hair behind your ear while you say *
that. *

NIA *
Good bye. *

Nia turns to exit, then lets him have it: *

NIA (CONT'D) *
Isn't that what Rev Dr. Martin *
Luther King Jr. died for, anyway... *
So I could one day have white girl *
problems? *

REV *
(still laughing) *
Hell naw. Dr. King ain't die so you *
could bitch and moan like Taylor *
Swift at a sleepover. *

NIA *
Okay. Fuck off. I want to be *
fulfilled. And dick has never been *
fulfilling. So I'll see you when I *
see you. *

REV *
(joking) *
My dick is very fulfilling. *

NIA *
I don't think so. *

REV *
Bet. *

But Nia's out the car, slamming the door shut behind her. *

REV (CONT'D) *
(calling after her) *
I was joking. It was jokes. Nia! *

INT. MCINTEE HOUSE - DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

Castle-like elegance abounds.

African-American art worthy of the Huxtables, hangs on the wall. Hardwood floors and ceiling beams. This house seems to have a golden, sepia glow.

Nia sits having a sterile, dinner on the 'good plates' with her father GOSSETT MCINTEE 60s, warm and funny. He's always playful, but he lacks a certain polish that suggests he didn't always have a house this nice.

Her father's new family is also around the table. Everyone sitting stiffly in high-backed chairs.

Nia's Step-mom BABE, high-powered and gorgeous, with pore-less chocolate skin. Her Step Sisters, MAYA, 13 and ZORA, 14 are a leggy teenage dream. (Think Sasha and Malia)

As they eat, Nia looks up at a framed PHOTOS side by side. One is, recent, of Gossett and his new family taken at a professional studio. The other is a photo of Nia from college on U of M's campus.

Nia swallows any comment she might make about that inequity.

Maya and Zora looking at their bedazzled PHONE.

BABE

No screens on the table.

NIA

Remember when it was elbows? No
elbows on the table?

Quiet.

MAYA

Ma, I wanna get leggings like this.
From Copper Lewisky's new line.

Maya shows Babe a pic of Copper in sheer leggings.

BABE

(disgusted)

When did leggings become pants?

GOSSETT

Long time now. Even big girls
wearing em. I saw this big ole girl
waiting at the bus stop, didn't
have no business even looking at a
legging.

BABE *
Copper Lewinsky is a menace. *

NIA *
Big girls look good in leggings. *
It's like saying, all thighs *
matter, motherfuckers. *

BABE *
Don't swear in front of the girls. *

FLASH of Maya and Zora's HIGH WIRE, they are posing lewdly *
behind their school, middle finger to camera. *

Their now seated at the table like angels. *

GOSSETT *
Yeah, cause the lady bugs have *
delicate ears. *

Gossett playfully covers Zora's ears. *

ZORA *
Daddy, you're retarded. *

BABE *
That word is out of bounds. Say *
he's touched. You're father's *
touched. Gossett, you're touched, *
honey. *

They all laugh. Gossett and family have a rapport. Nia tries *
to get in on it... *

NIA *
Copper Lewinsky is a business *
woman, though. People forget that. *

BABE *
Oh please. You think Sheryl *
Sandberg meant 'lean in' until *
you're bent all the way over? *

NIA *
Whatever. Companies pay her *
millions to pose with their *
products on High Wire. And whether *
you love her, or you love to hate *
her, her name's still coming out of *
your mouth. *

Nia and Babe are incredibly polite, but this is the beginning *
of an argument. Gossett escapes the cross fire. *

GOSSETT
 (ending the convo)
 Best thing about eating at home,
 free refills.

Gossett hops up, to refill his GLASS in the kitchen.

BABE
 I would have done that, baby. It's
 your birthday.

Gossett's attention is snagged by the game playing on the
 small kitchen tv. Babe's not finished with Nia.

BABE (CONT'D)
 So you're a Copper Lewinsky fan?

NIA
 She's... repultriguing.

BABE
 Excuse me.

NIA
 It's kind of like intriguing.

BABE
 What's there to be intrigued by?
 She has no talent. She doesn't
 sing, dance, act, rap, think.
 Nothing. She does nothing.

Babe burns her eyes into Nia, daring her to respond.

NIA
 But isn't that what's so genius
 about it? She actually found a way
 to be Barbie. To be sexy for a
 living.

BABE
 Wow, Nia. I had no idea you were so
 shallow.

NIA
 It's an inventive career path.

BABE
 Copper Lewinsky has no class.
 There's nothing worse than a woman
 with no class.

NIA
 (through a smile)
 I know about class. My mother had
 class. She was a class act.

Babe is stung by this. There's a lot more to the thick
 tension between these women. Nia tucks away a deep wound and
 tries to playfully engage her sisters who are checking their
 devices under the table.

NIA (CONT'D)
 But lets not ruin daddy's birthday
 party with all this bad
 conversation.

MAYA
 This would be such a jankey party.

ZORA
 The one tomorrow's gonna be much
 more lit. Like much more.

A proverbial record scratch. Nia's face falls.

NIA
 What do you mean?

BABE
 Oh, I sent you an email...

NIA
 I'm in front of the computer all
 day. I never got anything.

BABE
 (swerving)
 At Holdon Corp, right. How are
 things going there? That's like the
 third job Gossett's had to get you.

NIA
 (Quietly)
 Misty also put in a good word.

Nia, looks to her dad in the kitchen, in a near trance, his
 eyes glued to the game. He watches actively, rising up from
 his stool a bit, every time a player goes for a rebound.

NIA (CONT'D)
 So there's a party.

The most painful silence. Nia eats, eyeing her father,
 desperate for him to pipe up. But he either won't or is too
 engrossed in the game to notice.

The girls bury their heads in their devices. Babe begins to clear the table. *

GOSSETT *

Whoo! Shit, these boys look good
this season. *

Off Nia. *

INT. MODEST HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT *

Misty and Randy in a post-coital cuddle. Randy's transfixed, playing with her hair. *

RANDY

You're the sexiest woman I've ever
been with. *

FLASH from HIGH WIRE: Randy's page. Pics of he and his WIFE at Christmas, a BBQ, church, his Wife donning a choir robe. A LOOP of her singing hymns with a raspy gospel vibrato. *

MISTY *

How you think your wife would feel
about that? *

RANDY

I'm telling her. As soon as she
gets back from her choir trip.

MISTY

Bullshit.

RANDY *

(getting emotional) *

I love you. *

Quiet as he's waiting for her to say it back. Misty eases out of bed and starts dressing. *

RANDY (CONT'D) *

Damn, you gonna leave me hanging? *

MISTY *

I'm my mother's daughter, dude. *

RANDY

You said your mother was a ho. *

MISTY

My mom just didn't understand the
rules of being a woman at that
time. *

(MORE)

MISTY (CONT'D)

If she'd been born now she'd be
empowered. She'd have her own
perfume line. She wouldn't be a ho.

RANDY

What are you saying?

MISTY

You don't sleep with your old high
school boyfriend because you're in
love, Ran. You do it because it's
something easy to do.

RANDY

You're not that fucked up, Misty.

MISTY

I am. Which is why I like my life
nice and simple and boring. No
upsets. No homewrecking. Plus you
won't leave her, Randy. You're a
Trent.

RANDY

A what?

MISTY

Before I moved here, I watched my
Ma screw her way through half of
Mississippi. And I learned that
there are only three kinds of men
in the world and you're a Trent.

RANDY

Do Trents have big dicks?

MISTY

Trents don't leave their wives.
Trents will always stick it out.

Misty exits to the bathroom.

RANDY

(yelling after her)

I'm a Randy, baby. One of a kind.

He mimes a lay-up.

INT. MODEST HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Misty, sits on the toilet and pees. Sitting in this pastel
bathroom, full of Christian iconography, she drops her head
into her hands as she wonders, what the fuck am I doing here?

INT. NIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Later that night, Nia sits on her toilet, her face covered in green goop (a beauty masque). She uploads a LOOP onto HIGHWIRE. It's vine-like looped video of her and Gossett, alone in the den.

NIA (LOOP)

I'm here with my dad celebrating his birthday and I'm wondering if you could tell the people at home, ...just what kind of a guy was Jesus? I understand y'all went to grade school together.

GOSSETT (LOOP)

That Negro was a handful.

The two die laughing. The video loops. Under it reads. #FAMILY BONDING #MYDADDYOLD #LOVEHIM #BORNB.C.

Instantly a HEART appears from MISSMISTY. Nia waits as nothing else happens.

NIA

Come on, people it's funny.

A few more HEARTS DING on the post. Nia freezes the video on her father's radiant smile.

NIA (CONT'D)

You're such a dick.

INT. NIA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nia washes her face. Then she studies herself in the mirror. A fierceness in her eyes. Then, we begin to hear a HUM. Finally, we realize it's the roar of a crowd, which builds to a robust thunder.

LIGHTENING QUICK FLASHES as if eerily breaking through the fabric of time and reality--

- ALTERNATE NIA mills about a chic party that makes Floods look like a hole in the wall. She looks Movie Star gorgeous, with long, flowing purple hair. She snakes through the crowd all eyes are on her. PARTYGOERS clamoring to be near. Everyone sees her.

- A CORK POPS.

- The clinking of CHAMPAGNE GLASSES.

-ALT Nia poses for PHOTOS *

-ALT Nia at the top of the Renaissance Center (the jewel of
Downtown Detroit's skyline). She's naked, bloody, wearing a
full-length fur coat. *

We pull back to see the sweeping neon of the Detroit skyline
with Nia on top of the world, presiding over it. *

Below the city sounds grow LOUDER and LOUDER. The sound of an
ALARM stands out. *

SMASH CUT TO: *

INT. EMPTY LOT - DAY *

Nia and Misty trudge through the empty lot. *

NIA
I can't believe it's fucking
Monday. I blinked and the whole
weekend was over. *

MISTY
In a flash.
(then)
You ready? *

Nia nods. *

NIA
I'm in a fly over state of mind.
Bring on the minutia. *

They stop and sit on a couple of nearby MILK CRATES. *

MISTY
Okay so Holdon Corp was founded in
1916 by Trapper's like great
grandfather... *

NIA
Okay. *

Misty continues talking, but the sound goes out as if Nia is
learning of a cancer diagnosis ala the Breaking Bad pilot.
After a few beats it returns. *

MISTY
You got it? *

NIA
Yeah, I got it. *

INT. HOLDON CORP - TRAPPER'S OFFICE - DAY

Nia, wearing a bright smile, focused, stands before Trapper who's seated at his desk.

NIA
So mostly I just make copies, get
coffee answer the phone, but
Of course I know what we do here.
In a bigger sense...

TRAPPER
I'm listening.

NIA
We...

Nia moves to sit when her attention is pulled to a PAPER WEIGHT on Trappers desk. It's shaped like the iconic Ren Cen, a building comprised of three shiny glass cylinders.

- A LIGHTENING QUICK FLASHBACK of Nia from her dream, atop of the Ren Cen.

Now, Nia's in her head. She can't seem to continue. She looks through the glass doors of Trappers office, to the cubicles beyond it, where Misty is nodding at her, giving a thumbs up.

TRAPPER
Go on.

NIA
We um, what we do here is we um...

BLING... Nia looks down at her phone. High Wire is on the screen. Rev (RevvedUp) has HEARTED her post MAKE YOUR LIFE YOUR ART. And commented..."So do it. Be fulfilled :)"

Nia smiles.

TRAPPER
Nia. You're not helping yourself
right now.

Nia struggles to put her thoughts and emotions in order. A hard swallow.

NIA
Sorry. What we do here is and I'm
pretty sure this goes for
everyone... We, pretend that we
want to be here all day.

(MORE)

NIA (CONT'D)

We try to stifle this nagging
fucking feeling that we might be
bigger than this job. Bigger than
our lives. Bigger than this city.

TRAPPER

Nia, --

NIA

Hold on.

Nia stands, she takes a deep breath and she... ROARS. A full
on, full-bodied, fiercely odd ROAR.

Trappers mouth flops open, thoroughly confused. Office
Workers turn, gawk at Nia through the glass. They snicker
amongst each other. "I always knew she was nuts." "Are they
firing people today?" "Damn, and it's only Monday." etc.

Misty face palms, but she gets it...

MISTY

(to herself)

A fucking lion.

TRAPPER

Nia. What... the fuck?

Fierce determination in her eyes:

NIA

I quit.

EXT. HOLDON CORP - DAY

Nia is being escorted out. The door is held open by a large,
stern SECURITY GUARD. Nia steps onto the street, a mix of
adrenaline and embarrassment. Her breath heavy but her head
held high as she carries a large box (filled with the
contents of her desk.)

The door shuts behind her and Nia leans against the brick
building, steadying herself. Then, something in the sky snags
her attention. And she stares upward for a long beat,
squinting from the sun, but eyes still up. Finally, we see
what she's looking at... COPPER LEWINSKY. Her sexy, smirk
plastered across a billboard.

And off Nia gazing up at Copper, we SMASH to BLACK.

END OF PILOT