

SOCIAL JUSTICE WARRIOR

Written by

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PURE BLACK fills the screen. The sounds of shuffling paper, shifting chairs, and a quiet cough.

SHAUN BARNES (male, 18, black, cisgender) steps into frame. His focus masks the awkwardness of a valedictorian who spent high school buried in books. He's on the verge of coming into his own. He looks down for a moment, then up.

SHAUN

America is racist.

(beat)

That's what my parents told me when I was ten, after we had "the talk." In black families, the talk isn't about sex, it's about how to be black around police.

REVEAL: INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

We're WIDER now and we see the edges of the darkness behind Shaun. It's a chalkboard. He looks at the essay in his hands.

SHAUN

My dad says, "No matter what the police tell you, just do it. Even if it feels unfair. Even if you didn't do anything wrong." The first time he said that was the day police officers pushed him to the ground on our walk home. They said that he "matched the description." Black men always match the description. That night, he told me, "We can do whatever it takes to make it right afterwards, as long as you're still alive."

ANGLE ON: THE CLASS. A small group of about a dozen first-year, all white, STUDENTS sit facing Shaun. They're uncomfortable, but trying to hide it. They search for something to look at: their hands, the clock, the wall.

SHAUN (CONT'D)

People like to say things are better now, but I still get followed around convenience stores and I still hear car doors lock when I walk down the street. And white people still talk to me just a little bit too politely. I know what they're compensating for.

The students' faces each hold uneasy expressions: Does he hate white people? I'm not one of *those* white people. Am I?

SHAUN (CONT'D)

So I taught myself to blend in. Last week when I got to Wolcott, I told my hallmates that my name's Shaun, just like I told you. But that's not what they call me back home. Back home my family calls me DeShaun. I realized after getting here that changing my name won't change the fact that some people don't see me. They only see the stereotype. And I'm tired of it. I'm tired when it's subtle. When I'm "lazy" or I'm "angry." And I'm tired when it's not so subtle. I'm a "thug." A "nigger."

On hearing the n-word, the students all simultaneously sit up, as if hit by a slight electric shock. The LIT PROFESSOR (female, 30's, white, cisgender) searches for a response but comes up empty.

SHAUN (CONT'D)

I don't want to be tired anymore.

Silence. The class isn't sure how to react when: HARPER PENZIG (female, 18, white, cisgender) BURSTS INTO TEARS.

The whole class turns to look at Harper. She's naive, brilliant, earnest, and currently in the middle of a world-broadening revelation.

SHAUN (CONT'D)

Um... are you okay?

HARPER

I can't believe -- it's so terrible!

SHAUN

Uhh... Hey. Hey. It's -- I didn't mean to upset you.

HARPER

But I am upset -- how could I not be upset!

Harper sobs harder. Now Shaun's the one who feels uncomfortable.

SHAUN

Really, I didn't mean to make you cry. Please stop crying. I'm sorry.

Harper wipes her eyes.

HARPER

Thanks. I appreciate that. I just... I want you to know you have my support. I think all of us do, DeShaun.

The students nod in agreement.

SHAUN

You don't have to do that. You don't have to stop calling me Shaun. I was just making a point.

HARPER

What can we do for you then? What can we do to end this?

SHAUN

End... what? Racism?

HARPER

Y'know, just everything. What do you need us to do?

Everybody, including the Lit Professor, looks to Shaun.

SHAUN

Maybe... we can... start listening to each other?

HARPER

Yes. Listening. We're listening, Shaun. The world is listening.

As Shaun searches for a response, Harper starts to APPLAUD. The rest of the class joins in. Harper looks at her classmates. She stands. The class follows. She beams.

SMASH TO:

EXT. WOLCOTT UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - EARLY MORNING

The brick buildings, green quads, and bronze statues of a private university during early fall in Connecticut.

It's an upscale, elite school. Not quite in the Ivy League, but wishes it was.

The buildings change to black and white, then washed out, then high-contrast -- they are on a PHONE, getting ready to be uploaded to Instagram.

MONTAGE:

Harper's hand cycles through various apps on the phone, navigating between Instagram, Snapchat, Text Messages, and Facebook. This is her emoji-laden selfie journey from freshman to sophomore year:

-Harper in a class with "Race, Ethnicity, and Nation in Global Perspective" written on the board.

-A selfie of Harper studying in the library with the caption: "Studying like <fire emoji> <fire emoji> <fire emoji>"

-A Boomerang of Harper in her dorm room with her roommate FRANCES CHUN (female, 18, Korean-American, cisgender) pulling pizza bagels out of the microwave.

-Harper at an Asian-American Association meeting with Frances.

-Harper sorting cans at a food pantry.

-Harper with a clip board outside the Campus Center.

-Harper chanting at a protest with Shaun behind her.

-Harper friend requesting Shaun on Facebook.

-Another Boomerang of students dancing at a Gay Pride Party.

-Harper showing Shaun how to wrap duct tape around the wooden handle of a protest sign.

-A Snapchat of Harper, eyes closed: "asleep in this class"

-A Snapchat of Harper, eyes wide open: "but woke AF"

-A Black Student Union Facebook photo of all their members, including Shaun and Harper (who is the only white person).

-A series of texts between Shaun and Harper, comparing their housing numbers and learning they are both applying to the Intercultural House next year.

-Harper in a Habitat for Humanity t-shirt building a house in Mexico during the summer.

-Harper, Shaun, and Frances moving boxes into the Intercultural House at the start of sophomore year.

-Shaky iPhone footage from the center of a protest that's interrupting an English 101 class.

END MONTAGE -- but the scene continues as iPhone footage.

30 BLACK STUDENTS in #NoRepresentation t-shirts are chanting and marching towards the front of a lecture hall.

BLACK STUDENTS

No representation in our education!
No representation in our education!

The screen suddenly fills with Harper's face. She's holding the camera with her outstretched arm.

HARPER

Do you think a diverse faculty matters?

She WHIPS to WHITE MALE 1, he averts his gaze, closes his laptop, and quickly leaves.

The phone WHIPS past an ASIAN FEMALE STUDENT (not what she's looking for), then stops on another flustered WHITE MALE 2.

HARPER (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Do you think a diverse faculty matters?

WHITE MALE 2

Don't film me. Stop! Stop filming!
This is violating my rights!

He covers the phone camera with his hand. The iPhone goes dark and we're in...

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Black Students swarm the lectern, taking over the class from the OLD WHITE MALE PROFESSOR. At the center is OLENNNA (female, 21, black, queer) who pulls out a small bullhorn.

OLENNA

(into bullhorn)

The Black Student Union demands a more diverse English department! We are fed up with being taught only by white faces!

HARPER

(to herself)

A bullhorn. Fuck me. That's good thinking.

Harper joins the protest at the front of the room. She shimmies through the students to get closer to the bullhorn.

OLENNA

We are staging a walkout until you
meet our demands for a more
inclusive and diverse faculty!

Just as Harper pushes in next to Olenna, she hands the bullhorn off to BLACK STUDENT 1 on her opposite side.

BLACK STUDENT 1

There is value in our perspective!

Harper watches the bullhorn travel further away from her as Black Student 1 hands it off to Shaun.

SHAUN

Value not just for students of
color but for students of all
races!

As Shaun passes the bullhorn to BLACK STUDENT 2, Harper suddenly cuts into the line and intercepts it.

HARPER

(into bullhorn)

I want to hear from people of
color, I want to learn from people
of color!

Black Student 2 reaches for the bullhorn but Harper isn't finished. In fact, she steps forward. Olenna turns to Shaun.

OLENNA

(under her breath)

Get her in check.

SHAUN

(off Olenna's look)
Okay... umm... Harper?
Harper!

HARPER

Which is why allies of all
colors are here to say that
students of color will not be
silenced!

Harper doesn't hear Shaun over the bullhorn so he shouts.

SHAUN

NO REPRESENTATION IN OUR
EDUCATION!

HARPER (CONT'D)

We will fight--

Shaun encourages the other protesters to join his chant.

SHAUN AND BLACK STUDENTS
 NO REPRESENTATION IN OUR EDUCATION!
 NO REPRESENTATION IN OUR EDUCATION!

Olenna starts to lead the protesters out of the lecture hall.

OLENNA
 Our absence will reflect the
 absence of people of color on our
 faculty!

Harper fist bumps the students as they march out past her.

HARPER
 ...Yes it will! Their absence and
 my absence will reflect the absence
 of absent diverse voices here at
 Wolcott!

As they march out, Shaun leads the Black Students in the chant, but that doesn't stop Harper from talking over them.

BLACK STUDENTS
 No representation in our
 education!
 No representation in our
 education!

HARPER (CONT'D)
 Justice will be served for
 people of color! It's our
 duty to stand with our
 brothers and sisters!

Everyone has marched out except Harper, who lingers just inside. Shaun holds the door, motioning for her to join them in the hallway. He looks back at a pissed Olenna.

SHAUN
 Harper! Come on! It's a walkout!

HARPER
 Wolcott's policies re-create
 colonial violence daily--

Shaun grabs Harper's hand to coax her out. She holds his hand up, mistaking it for solidarity. Everyone stares at Harper.

HARPER (CONT'D)
 --and we demand reparations!

INT. INTERCULTURAL HOUSE - DAY

Frances leads a meeting at the Intercultural House, which Wolcott's website describes as "the multicultural on-campus housing option for diverse students."

FRANCES

Let's have some recognition for the
BSU's very successful walk out.

A circle of MOSTLY STUDENTS OF COLOR snap in approval, along with Harper, Shaun, and LIZ MARUSINA (female, 19, white, transgender), an engineer both at school and at heart.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

The next item is the Diversity and Inclusion Town Hall. One of the Jewish Acapella groups e-mailed me and asked if they could perform. We have a slot for them at the beginning. All in favor say "inclusion."

GROUP

Inclusion!

FRANCES

Great. So let's end this meeting with a sharing. I want to open it up to anyone who had an uncomfortable moment, a difficult feeling, or an experienced micro-aggression. It doesn't matter how trivial it is. It just helps to get it off your chest. No judgement. Remember, this is a safe space so whatever we say here doesn't leave this room. I'll start.

Frances picks up a STUFFED ELEPHANT before she begins.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

I was playing Taboo with a friend, and I gave him the hint "where I'm from." He guessed "China." My card said "New Jersey." Also, my parents are Korean.

The students snap their approval. Frances passes the elephant to a LATINO STUDENT next to her.

LATINO STUDENT

A guy behind me in line at McDonald's told me I spoke English really good. His words: "English really good."

Loud snaps of approval. He passes the elephant to Harper.

HARPER

I mean, I don't really have a good one. The woman at the sandwich counter keeps calling me "Sweetie." Sorry, that's lame. Hopefully I'll have a better one next time.

Only a few snaps. Harper quickly passes the elephant to Liz.

LIZ

This frat boy called me an "ugly bitch."

A gasp. Then silence.

LIZ (CONT'D)

But I was like, "awww, you insulted me like I'm a woman!"

Snaps and laughter break the tension. Harper isn't laughing.

HARPER

You don't have to make a joke about it. Listen to me: You are not ugly. That frat guy, he's the ugly one. But you. You, Liz--

Harper takes Liz's hand, looks deep into her eyes.

HARPER (CONT'D)

You are not ugly. You are perfect exactly as you are.

LIZ

Well, not *exactly* as I am, but I'm on hormone therapy so I'm getting there.

More laughter and snaps. Liz passes the elephant to a JEWISH GIRL.

JEWISH GIRL

I heard a girl on my floor call another girl's sweater "worse than the Holocaust."

INT. EUROPEAN INTELLECTUALS 201 CLASSROOM - DAY

DR. SUSAN BRODBECK (female, 40's, white, cisgender) reads from Nietzsche's "Beyond Good and Evil" to a class of 30 STUDENTS. Most are on laptops and pay varying degrees of attention.

SUSAN

"From the beginning, nothing has been more alien, repugnant, and hostile to woman than truth -- her great art is the lie, her highest concern is mere appearance and beauty."

Susan peers over her glasses at the class. She's the sort of professor who reads a physical newspaper every day, lives without a television, and can eviscerate someone at a dinner party with a single cutting remark.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

So Nietzsche is obviously being sexist, right?

Towards the back of the class, Harper nods in agreement. Next to her, Liz takes notes on her laptop.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Or rather, is he proving a point?

Harper stops nodding.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

In your reading, Oppel claims that Nietzsche is actually employing irony here to comment on societal attitudes that he finds ugly.

On the word "ugly," Harper's face sours. She looks at Liz, who has no visible reaction. Harper's hand shoots up.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Yes, Harper?

HARPER

I have a huge problem with this.

SUSAN

Irony?

HARPER

No. "Ugly."

SUSAN

I'm sorry?

HARPER

That word alienates important segments of our community.

Liz looks to the ground. She doesn't want any attention.

SUSAN

Ugly? Who does "ugly" alienate?

HARPER

Women. Transgender students. Anyone who's been called the u-word. You should apologize for saying it.

SUSAN

Why? Ugly is a fairly common word.

HARPER

The reality is, "ugly" is a gendered term to make women feel less than and it is reinforced daily by the sexist expectations of movies, magazines, and online media. And I know for a fact there is a person in this room -- who I will not name -- who has had this word cruelly flung in her face and it is a trigger for her.

Liz sinks deeper in her seat, hiding behind her laptop.

SUSAN

One of my goals as a professor is to always make my class inclusive, that's why I put trigger warnings on the syllabus. I'm sorry if you were offended.

HARPER

That's not an apology. You're apologizing for my feelings, not for your actions.

SUSAN

I hear what you are saying, but keep in mind that in addressing an individual's needs, we cannot lose sight of the larger group's needs. So when teaching a class I try to find a balance. I'd like to open this discussion up. Does anyone else have a perspective on this?

CHURCH (male, 21, white, cisgender, jock) raises his hand.

CHURCH

Actually, ugly is just a word to describe something that doesn't look good.

(MORE)

CHURCH (CONT'D)

So people should be able to say it, and... actually, it's part of the first amendment.

HARPER

I'm not saying it should be illegal, I'm saying that using this word should have consequences, just like any other sexist speech. Have you ever called a man ugly?

CHURCH

I mean, I don't know, I don't really look at dudes like that.

HARPER

Exactly. "Ugly" is like "bitch," except it describes appearance rather than assertiveness. You wouldn't describe someone as "bitchy" in an academic discussion, would you?

CHURCH

Uh... no, I guess not.

HARPER

Then likewise we shouldn't say "ugly." We must remember that demeaning language reinforces stereotypes and stereotypes lead to unconscious bias and unconscious bias leads to prejudice and prejudice leads to bias motivated violence and bias motivated violence leads to genocide. It's a pyramid of hate.

SUSAN

Harper, you've made some very interesting observations. But we're getting off topic. We should really move on, however, I'm happy to talk more about this at my office hours.

Susan turns back to the board. Harper sits back, fuming. She motions to Liz like "Can you believe this?" Liz shrugs.

INT. LEWIS HALL LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

A row of old coin-operated washing machines sit under fluorescent lights in a concrete basement. Several machines WHIR with laundry. Harper's on her phone.

PHONE ON SCREEN: Harper uploads her video from the beginning of the BSU walk out to Facebook. She posts a status update.

HARPER (V.O.)

Injustice is institutional. Led a protest yesterday. I will continue to fight! #victory #racism #wewillovercome - with Shaun Barnes and 4 others.

She clicks Facebook's search bar and types in "gary penzig." A few options come up. She picks the humorless-looking GARY PENZIG from Seattle, Washington (male, late 40's, white, cisgender).

She scrolls through his photos. There's mostly pictures of him with a WOMAN (mid-30's, Asian) and their TWO CHILDREN (4 and 6). She keeps scrolling, further and further, until she finds an older photo. It's Gary and a middle school-aged Harper, who is smiling and holding up a science fair ribbon.

SHAUN (O.S.)

S'up?

PHONE OFF SCREEN. Harper turns to find Shaun with an overflowing laundry bag. He starts loading a machine.

HARPER

Hi.

SHAUN

So... what did you decide to do about the Dr. Brodbeck thing? You gonna talk to her?

HARPER

It's a waste of time to talk with close-minded people. Would you talk to a KKK member?

SHAUN

Uh, no. Probably not.

DING! PHONE ON SCREEN: Shaun glances at his text messages.

OLENNA (V.O.)

Did you tell her yet?

SHAUN (V.O.)

Don't worry i got it

OLENNA (V.O.)

She better not show up to the next
BSU mtg. She's OUT <black clapping
hands emoji>

Shaun puts away his phone and returns to his laundry.

SHAUN

Hey, so there's something I need to--

HARPER

Let me guess. You want to start
planning the next BSU protest.
Don't worry, I have some ideas.

SHAUN

Y'know, I was thinking maybe the
BSU isn't the best way to protest
at Wolcott.

HARPER

Are you kidding? The BSU is the
only group with a real agenda:
faculty diversity. I was thinking
we should stage a die-in at
President Tilton's house because
he's killing our education.

SHAUN

Maybe.

Unsure of how to continue, Shaun focuses on his laundry.

HARPER

I have another idea for the BSU.

SHAUN

C'mon, Harps. You must have
something else to think about.

HARPER

I think you should run for
president.

SHAUN

Seriously?

HARPER

Seriously.

SHAUN

I don't know if that's a good idea.

HARPER

You're a rising star! The BSU's focus on faculty diversity was all your idea. You have to run.

SHAUN

I don't know...

HARPER

Please? I obviously can't be president so I need to live vicariously through you. Do it for me?

SHAUN

Okay. Okay, fine, I'll run.

Harper steps forward and touches Shaun's arm.

HARPER

Good. Maybe I'll vote for you.

Harper smiles. He smiles back. Beat. Suddenly self-conscious, Shaun fiddles with the laundry machine. Harper gives him a look.

SHAUN

What?

HARPER

What?

SHAUN

What's that look?

HARPER

Nothing.

Harper suddenly kisses Shaun. It's sweet... for a second. Then it turns into a sloppy 19-year-old make out session.

INT. SHAUN'S ROOM - MORNING

Harper and Shaun are squeezed into his twin bed in his messy room. Harper stares at the ceiling as Shaun slowly wakes up.

HARPER

Hey...

SHAUN

Hey...

HARPER
So...

SHAUN
Yeah...

HARPER
That was fun.

SHAUN
(smiling)
It was.

Beat.

HARPER
Hey, do you think the BSU would
help me protest Dr. Brodbeck?

SHAUN
What?

HARPER
I know it wasn't racially motivated
but there's a certain amount of
white privilege involved.

SHAUN
Harper, I have to tell you
something...

HARPER
What?

SHAUN
Fuck... um, I totally disagree with
them, but the BSU eboard... wants
you out of the group.

HARPER
But I've been part of the BSU since
first semester freshman year.
Before you even joined!

SHAUN
It's not a competition.

HARPER
I know. I'm just saying I was.

Awkward silence.

HARPER (CONT'D)
They don't like me?

SHAUN

No, it's... I think they just want a group where black folks can talk openly.

HARPER

They can talk openly when I'm there. I won't judge anyone. I'm an ally.

SHAUN

I'm sorry, Harps. I'll quit too.

HARPER

What? No! You can't quit. You have to run for president, remember?

SHAUN

You still want me to do that?

HARPER

Of course. Wolcott needs you. Promise me you'll run.

SHAUN

Okay. I promise.

Harper snuggles up next to Shaun. They spoon for a moment. It's peaceful, but something's on Harper's mind.

HARPER

Can I ask you something?

SHAUN

Hm?

HARPER

Nevermind.

SHAUN

Okay.

HARPER

It's just... I'll never really know what it's like to be like you.

SHAUN

Like me?

HARPER

Y'know. A person of color.

SHAUN
(smiling)
Too bad for you.

A quiet beat as Harper nuzzles into Shaun.

HARPER
Has anyone ever... said it to you?

SHAUN
Said what?

HARPER
You know.

SHAUN
What?

HARPER
The... n-word.

SHAUN
"The n-word." If you want to say
it, then say it.

HARPER
What? No! I can't.

SHAUN
You have permission.

HARPER
Permission from who?

SHAUN
Me. As a representative of the
entire black race.

HARPER
That's tokenism.

SHAUN
(playful)
Come on... say it!

HARPER
No! You're testing me.

SHAUN
It's not a test.

HARPER
You're trying to trick me.

SHAUN
How about we say it together.

HARPER
No.

SHAUN
On the count of three. One...
two... three: nigga.

Harper's silent. Shaun exaggerates shock.

SHAUN (CONT'D)
You didn't say it! You lied to me!

HARPER
Shut up. I'm not gonna do it.

SHAUN
If you don't say this with me,
right now, I'll never be able to
trust you ever again.

HARPER
Are you sure?

SHAUN
Yes. Come on: One...

Harper grudgingly follows along.

SHAUN (CONT'D)	HARPER
Two... three...	Two... three...

As they reach the word, Shaun drops out after the "n" sound.

SHAUN	HARPER (CONT'D)
N--	Nigger.

SHAUN
(mock serious)
The fuck did you just say to me?

HARPER
Hey, you didn't say it!
That's not fair! That is not
fucking fair!

Harper playfully punches Shaun and he responds by rolling on top of her.

SHAUN

Come on, I was just playin. Though
it was weird to hear that hard "r."
"Nigg-Errrrr."

HARPER

Shut up. Shut up.

She rolls him so she's on top.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Stop. Oh my god. Am I a racist?

SHAUN

You're not a racist.

HARPER

I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have said
it.

Shaun thinks for a second.

SHAUN

Yeah. You probably shouldn't have.

HARPER

You know what? This has taught me
something very important.

SHAUN

What?

HARPER

I hurt you with my words. Just like
Liz was hurt. Just like I was hurt.

SHAUN

"Ugly" isn't the same as nigger.

HARPER

Of course not! Definitely not. I
was gonna say though, that if we
let the little injustices go, we
make room for bigger ones.

Shaun's not sure if he follows that logic. Harper picks up
her phone.

SHAUN

What are you doing?

HARPER

Correcting a little injustice.

PHONE ON SCREEN: Harper types an e-mail.

HARPER (V.O.)

Dear Dean Gordon, I am writing to share an experience I had with a faculty member that I believe was an inflammatory micro-aggression. Dr. Susan Brodbeck visited--

INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

A spacious office with large framed old maps on the walls.

DEAN SAUL GORDON (male, 50's, white, cisgender, culturally Jewish) sits at a mahogany desk reading Harper's e-mail, concerned and confused.

DEAN GORDON (V.O.)

--violence upon me by using an inappropriate and purposefully alienating term--

INT. SHAUN'S ROOM - MORNING

Harper types, self righteous.

HARPER (V.O.)

--that hindered my ability to learn in a safe space.

INT. SUSAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A small and functional bedroom with a tasteful modern black-and-white aesthetic and lots of bookshelves. Susan reads the e-mail on her laptop.

SUSAN (V.O.)

The insulting--

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY:

DEAN GORDON (V.O.)

--patriarchal sexism?--

SUSAN (V.O.)

--disrespects not only my gender!--

HARPER (V.O.)

--but the genders of all from--

DEAN GORDON (V.O.)
--nonbinary--

HARPER (V.O.)
--to--

SUSAN (V.O.)
--transgender! I trust that the
University will take appropriate
action!

INT. SUSAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING - BACK TO SCENE

Susan closes her laptop.

SUSAN
You're fucking kidding me.

MARK (O.S.)
Honey?

MARK PEREZ (male, 40's, hispanic, cisgender), Susan's salt-of-the-earth, long-term boyfriend, sits on the edge of the bed.

SUSAN
Sorry, it's nothing. Keep going.

MARK
Were you listening to any of it?

She wasn't. Susan smiles, doing her best to look innocent.

SUSAN
Would you mind starting again?

Mark reads from a piece of paper.

MARK
Dr. Susan Brodbeck has fifteen years of experience as a scholar-activist specializing in social movements. As an associate professor at Emory, she received the Cromwell prize for excellence in teaching and since joining Wolcott has been published in the American Historical Review, Comparative Studies...

Mark notices Susan is looking at her laptop.

MARK (CONT'D)
I'm not starting over again.

SUSAN

I was listening. Do I sound impressive enough?

MARK

Yes. You sound very impressive and that's because you are very impressive. Don't worry. You're going to get tenure this year.

SUSAN

I didn't worry enough at Emory and I got completely fucked. Six years down the drain.

MARK

Maybe things are supposed to happen a certain way. If you had stayed at Emory, we never would've met and I'd probably still be with Kathy.

SUSAN

Are you bringing up your ex-wife to make me feel... *better*?

MARK

You know what I mean. You are brilliant and your book is amazing.

Susan softens and kisses Mark on the cheek.

INT. NOVEL IDEA BOOKS - EVENING

A cramped local bookstore, political stickers adorn the register and quippy greeting cards sit next to it.

A small sign with Susan's picture announces the release of her book, "19th Century Societal Norms And Their Emerging Effect On The Greater Social Consciousness." Susan's reading from her book in front of a small audience of PROFESSORS.

SUSAN

(reading)

...the resulting societal shifts used to be far smaller, and far slower, occurring only after a significant clash of ideologies such as a war or a rebellion. Now we see rapid and monumental ideological shifts resulting from far less significant clashes. Sometimes in just 140 characters.

There is a smattering of laughter. Susan smiles and looks to Mark who smiles back at her.

INT. NOVEL IDEA BOOKS - LATER

The Professors mill about drinking wine and eating cheese. Susan chats with Dean Gordon as Mark looks on.

SUSAN

Honestly, Saul, it really means a lot when the administration shows up to support faculty scholarship.

DEAN GORDON

Of course. We think you're a great talent.

SUSAN

Oh, thank you.

DEAN GORDON

But... I did come here to bring up one item. As you may have seen, a bias incident report has been filed--

SUSAN

The one by Harper Penzig?

DEAN GORDON

They're anonymous actually.

SUSAN

You left her e-mail address on when you forwarded it.

DEAN GORDON

Oh, um... Please don't tell anyone. They're supposed to be confidential.

MARK

What's a "bias incident report?"

DEAN GORDON

It's a way for students to file a complaint after they've encountered an act of discrimination. Wolcott has to track reported bias incidents because they are now a metric used for US News and World Report's school rankings.

SUSAN

Will this affect my tenure process?

Dean Gordon takes a breath.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Saul. Come on. Do you know why Harper filed it? Because I used the word "ugly."

DEAN GORDON

Ugly?

MARK

Ugly!

SUSAN

Ugly.

DEAN GORDON

That's... I was not aware of that. Unfortunately, the complaint will still have to be reviewed by your department chair. And President Tilton. It's policy, I'm afraid.

SUSAN

You've gotta be fucking kidding me.

MARK

Can't you just... make it go away or something?

DEAN GORDON

I can't. The administration has to remain neutral in student-teacher disputes. But you can, Susan.

Dean Gordon hands her a folded paper from his jacket pocket.

DEAN GORDON (CONT'D)

This is a retraction of the bias incident. If you can get Ms. Penzig to sign it by tomorrow, the complaint can be dismissed before the board sees it.

SUSAN

I'm sure that won't be a problem. It's just a misunderstanding. I'll grab her after class.

INT. EUROPEAN INTELLECTUALS 201 CLASSROOM - DAY

As STUDENTS take their seats, Susan scans the room.

SUSAN

Has anyone seen Harper Penzig?

LIZ

(reluctantly)

She told me to tell you she's
boycotting your class.

SUSAN

Wonderful.

INT. LIBRARY STUDY AREA - DAY

Harper sits at a cubicle, headphones on, listening to hip-hop and typing on her laptop. She feels a tap on her shoulder and turns to find Susan smiling at her. She takes off her headphones.

They both WHISPER to each other throughout the scene.

HARPER

Dr. Brodbeck? What do you want?

SUSAN

You skipped my class today and I
was worried. I don't want our
disagreement to get in the way of
your education.

HARPER

It won't.

SUSAN

Honestly, Harper, I admire you.

Harper regards her skeptically.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

You have so much passion. It
reminds me of when I was an
undergrad protesting apartheid and
trying to get my school to divest
from South Africa. I want Wolcott
to be a more inclusive school just
like you do.

HARPER

No, you don't. You couldn't even apologize for what you said in class.

Susan takes a deep breath.

SUSAN

You're right. I didn't mean to use language that alienated you. And for that, I do apologize.

Harper wasn't expecting this.

HARPER

Thank you. I... I appreciate that.

SUSAN

Of course. Now do you think we can put this whole thing behind us?

HARPER

I guess. Sure.

SUSAN

Great. Just to make it official, would you mind signing this little thing?

Susan produces the retraction form and hands it to Harper.

HARPER

What's this?
(reading)
"Retraction of bias incident."

SUSAN

Once you sign it, we can get back to having a productive conversation about the issues that are important to you.

Harper looks at the document, thinking. She hands it back.

HARPER

I'll sign it... when your classroom is a safe space for students.

SUSAN

My classroom *is* a safe space for students. It's a place where students can learn and feel safe to express their views in a generous environment. A safe space.

HARPER

That's not what a safe space is.
It's a place where people are safe
because they don't feel threatened.

SUSAN

Right. To express their views.

HARPER

No. To not be attacked. Which is
what you are doing to me right now.

Harper closes her laptop and shoves it in her bag before walking off. Susan follows. They're getting a little louder. Some LIBRARY STUDENTS look up.

SUSAN

Harper. Harper! I tried. I asked
you come to my office hours, but
instead you immediately filed a
bias incident over a regular word!

HARPER

There's no such thing as "regular."
"Ugly" is a tool of the patriarchy
purposely used to belittle women.

SUSAN

Men can be ugly. Steve Buscemi is
ugly.

HARPER

First, I don't really know who that
is, and second, calling a man ugly
is like calling some random person
cheap but calling a woman ugly is
like calling a Jewish person cheap!

SUSAN

You're comparing what I said to
anti-Semitism?

HARPER

I'm proving context is important.

SUSAN

Context *is* important. I wasn't
describing a *person* in class, I was
describing an *idea*. You're ignoring
both the context and my intent.

HARPER

Intent is subjective.

SUSAN

My subjective intent was never to upset you.

HARPER

I don't believe you!

SUSAN

I don't believe you.

More Library Students stare. Susan follows Harper behind a bookshelf. They are now approaching normal speaking volume, and beyond.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

You're being so immature right now--

HARPER

I'm not being immature! You're being stupid!

SUSAN

You're trying to fulfill some infantile need for attention. I'm sorry your generation can only feel self worth through the gaze of others.

HARPER

And I'm sorry your pathetic ego is so fragile you can't even admit when you're wrong! Instead, you defend outdated, normative, offensive language!

SUSAN

If it's relevant to academic discussion, it's not offensive!

HARPER

So what? Anybody can say anything in your class? Would you call me a... a... dirty cum cunt?

SUSAN

I would never call you that!

HARPER

So now there are things that you won't say! Why? Because it's offensive! If you really believed in your argument, you'd call me a dirty cum cunt!

SUSAN

And what you did was slander. So now we're equal. Here's a pen.

Slowly, Harper signs the paper and hands it back to her.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Thank you.

HARPER

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

SUSAN

Don't do that. Don't you quote Martin Luther King at me. You don't have the right.

Susan walks away as Harper shouts after her.

HARPER

Why are you continually trying to delegitimize my experiences!

EXT. CAMPUS CENTER - DAY

Frances and Harper stand near the entrance of the campus center, holding armfuls of signs that read: "Dr. Brodbeck Teaches Hate Speech 101." Harper looks around.

HARPER

What time is it? Why is no one here yet?

Frances looks at the time on her phone.

FRANCES

Maybe they're late? We had 12 people "interested" in our "Dr. Brodbeck Hate Speech Rally" event on Facebook.

HARPER

"Interested" means "I want to look like I care but I'm definitely not coming." I should have known. I barely get 10 likes when I post about being an ally or white privilege or even intersectionalism. And they're all from members of the Intercultural Alliance.

FRANCES

The students on this campus are completely apathetic. It's so depressing. What should we do?

EXT. HISTORY DEPARTMENT - DAY

A VERTICAL IMAGE OF AN IPHONE VIDEO FILLS THE FRAME:

Poor sound, wind. In the middle of the busy academic quad, Susan walks briskly with her head down. Harper follows, yelling directly at her and holding a "Hate Speech 101" sign.

HARPER

Dr. Brodbeck teaches hate speech!

Susan says nothing and picks up her pace.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Ignoring a student is nothing new for Dr. Brodbeck.

FRANCES (O.S.)

(from behind the camera)
Too proud to address the lowly peasants.

HARPER

Whose university?

FRANCES (O.S.)

Our university!

HARPER

Whose university?

FRANCES (O.S.)

Our university!

Some nearby STUDENTS turn to watch this bizarre scene.

The image stays vertical but the video TILTS 90 DEGREES.

HARPER

Frances! You can't start it vertical then turn the phone horizontal! It doesn't work like that!

FRANCES (O.S.)

Oops, sorry! I was trying to keep her in frame--

HARPER

Hurry up!

Harper starts running after Susan, Frances follows, the camera shaking badly. They get in Susan's face. The image turns back to VERTICAL.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Dr. Brodbeck! Dr. Brodbeck!

Susan turns.

SUSAN

Why are you doing this?

HARPER

We're bringing attention to our cause!

SUSAN

What cause?

HARPER

Violent hate speech in the classroom.

SUSAN

You signed the retraction.

HARPER

Because you blackmailed me!
(yelling out)
Dr. Brodbeck extorted me!
Blackmail! Shame! Shame!

SUSAN

I'd be happy to talk to you if you turn off the camera.

HARPER

What's the point if there's no record of our dialogue? What are you so afraid of?

SUSAN

Being taken out of context for one.

HARPER

You should be able to stand behind everything you've ever said.

Susan starts to respond, but thinks better of it and instead, hurries away with her head down. Harper and Frances follow.

HARPER (CONT'D)
Whose university?

FRANCES (O.S.)
Our university!

INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A defiant Harper sits across from Dean Gordon.

DEAN GORDON
You cannot publicly accuse a professor of blackmail without any corroborating documentation.

HARPER
But I'm telling the truth!

DEAN GORDON
Dr. Brodbeck has unequivocally denied your claim.

HARPER
So what? Just because she's a professor she has more authority than me?

DEAN GORDON
If you pursue this, you could face disciplinary sanctions for defamation.

HARPER
Then I want to unsign my retraction of the bias incident.

DEAN GORDON
You want to retract your retraction?

HARPER
Yes, exactly.

DEAN GORDON
Ms. Penzig, I'm afraid once the retraction paperwork has been submitted and approved by the relevant department heads, the bias conduct guidelines don't allow us to reopen a closed bias incident. I mean, that would be unnecessarily bureaucratic.

Harper looks frustrated.

INT. INTERCULTURAL HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON A TUBE TV: A digitally fuzzy clip of a right wing cable news host, PETER O'MALLEY (male, 50's, white, bloated, 3rd Generation Irish-American), lecturing his audience:

O'MALLEY

The three most persecuted groups in America are Christians, the Wealthy and White Men.

An abrupt cut to an old movie clip of a MAN looking at a SLEEPING WOMAN. Romantic music plays as he kisses her. She wakes up and smiles. Then a cut to O'Malley again:

O'MALLEY (CONT'D)

Women buy makeup because they want us to look at them. So I say, look!

The TV plays more old movie clips of men kissing sleeping women juxtaposed with right wing cable news.

WIDEN OUT:

Frances looks at a wood-paneled tube TV, arms folded. Harper stands next to her, considering.

FRANCES

You really think it's good?

HARPER

This is the most powerful installation you've made yet.

FRANCES

Do you think I should write "this is rape" in red lipstick or black?

HARPER

Oh, red for sure. It's a commentary on western beauty standards.

Harper goes to her laptop on the dining room table.

HARPER (CONT'D)

For this post, do you think I should say they "denied my intelligence" or "denied my rationality?"

FRANCES
Why not both?

HARPER
Yeah. Smart.

LAPTOP ON SCREEN: Harper's editing a Facebook post with her protest video attached. We only see the end of it.

HARPER (V.O.)
Dr. Susan Brodbeck, Dean Saul Gordon, and the entire Wolcott Administration denied my intelligence. They denied my rationality. But they cannot deny my emotions.

Harper hits post and waits. A notification pops up. Harper smiles and clicks the globe. One like. From Frances.

HARPER
Just a like? No comment?

FRANCES
What do you want me to say?

HARPER
Actually, can you share it? I need more than just my friends to see it.

FRANCES
I could send it to this girl in my art class who's an editor at The Whisperer. Maybe they'd write about it?

Harper's face lights up.

HARPER
Yes! Amazing.

Frances goes to her phone and starts typing.

INT. THE WOLCOTT DAILY WHISPERER - NIGHT

A STUDENT JOURNALIST posts an article titled, "Student Accuses Wolcott of Promoting Hate Speech" to The Wolcott Whisperer's website. Comments begin to appear.

SPLIT SCREEN MONTAGE: One side of the screen is the commenter in real life and the other side is their comment.

A WHITE JOCK wearing a Wolcott sweatshirt on an outdoor basketball court types into his phone.

WHITE JOCK (V.O.)
I bet she's a fucking liar.

A FEMALE LATINA in biology lab.

FEMALE LATINA (V.O.)
As a POC on campus, I'd like to applaud her for taking a stand. We need white voices to support us.

A BOHEMIAN WHITE FEMALE drinking chai at a coffee shop.

BOHEMIAN WHITE FEMALE (V.O.)
This article comes from a place of privilege and is sexist and racist.

A BLACK MALE in his dorm room.

BLACK MALE (V.O.)
Black bodies are dying in the streets and that's what we need to be focusing on.

A messy, nerdy, white COMP SCI MAJOR in the computer lab.

COMP SCI MAJOR (V.O.)
It shouldn't matter what color the bodies are, black, red, yellow, white, blue, or purple, you racist.

A 16 YEAR OLD WHITE PREFROSH plays Xbox in his family's living room.

WHITE PREFROSH (V.O.)
I've been a professor in the English department for ten years and I've never seen such sheltered crybaby students.

An OLD WHITE MALE PROFESSOR types on his phone as STUDENTS file into class.

OLD WHITE MALE PROFESSOR (V.O.)
I'm a black woman on campus, and I think we need to be more tolerant of each other and less tolerant of drivel like this.

More commenters appear, the overlapping voices and arguments rise until it reaches a CACOPHONY.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. AUDITORIUM - EVENING

A sign reads: "Wolcott University presents 'A Conversation on Diversity and Inclusion Town Hall' presented by The Intercultural Alliance"

An ACAPELLA version of a very, very explicit hip-hop song can be heard from inside the auditorium.

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

A nerdy coed acapella group, all glasses, frizzy hair and too-long ties, perform the song on stage.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Harper peaks out from the curtains. As the song continues, Harper pulls out her phone and takes a Snapchat selfie with the audience behind her.

PHONE ON SCREEN: A blurry picture that's mostly Harper and a bit of the audience in the background. Harper writes:

HARPER (V.O.)

This is what diversity looks like.

She posts it to her Snapchat stories. PHONE OFF SCREEN.

HARPER

The turn out is way better than last year's. Do you think the crowd just looks bigger from the stage?

SHAUN

I think the Whisperer writing about your Facebook post made a difference.

HARPER

Really?

SHAUN

People love a controversy.

HARPER

It's not controversial.

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The acapella group finishes up.

ACAPELLA MEMBER

Thank you! We are the
Passovertones. Our fall show is
November 5th, check us out on
Facebook and goodnight!

They all run off the stage to APPLAUSE as Dean Gordon walks out. He looks out over the audience.

DEAN GORDON

Thanks to all the student groups
for coming tonight and providing a
wonderful introduction for what I'm
sure will be an enlightening
conversation.

The Dean unfolds a piece of paper and reads off it.

DEAN GORDON (CONT'D)

I'd also like to thank the
Intercultural Alliance and the
Intercultural House who organized
this event, along with President
Tilton, the Center for the Study of
Race and Ethnicity, the Office of
Excellence In Inclusion Education,
the Institutional Diversity
Committee, and Darius Jackson, who
is the Co-Vice chair of the
Diversity Student Leader Society of
the College of Information and
Communication.

The Dean puts the piece of paper away and gestures to a large screen behind him.

DEAN GORDON (CONT'D)

There's a new addition this year, a
"hashtag" for this event, pound
sign W-D-I-Town-Hall.

A tweet appears on the screen from the official Wolcott account: "Excited for a great #WDITownHall."

DEAN GORDON (CONT'D)

Anything with that hashtag will
appear on this screen to truly give
our student body real-time
feedback.

(MORE)

DEAN GORDON (CONT'D)

We're also streaming on Wolcott's YouTube page so we are not only having this conversation here, but around the world. I do hope those in "I.R.L." -- in real life -- will participate and ask questions of our panelists. And now I will turn this discussion over to our student leaders who will each introduce themselves.

Lukewarm applause as a diverse group of STUDENT LEADERS, including Shaun and Harper, take their seats at a table with identifying paper placards and a single microphone. Shaun picks up the mic.

SHAUN

Hi. I'm Shaun Barnes, and I'm representing the Black Student Union.

He passes the mic to ASHLEY (female, 19, white, cis, person of size).

ASHLEY

Ashley Hale, Coalition for Women's Issues.

She passes the mic to NIDA (female, 21, American-Pakistani, cis).

NIDA

Nida Kermani, Muslim Students Group.

She passes the mic to Harper.

HARPER

Harper Penzig, Intercultural Alliance.

She seems like she's going to pass it down again, but just repositions it.

HARPER (CONT'D)

I'm a cis woman, a second-year student at Wolcott, a bisexual, a child of divorce, and an agent of change against our shared institutionalized problems. My preferred gender pronouns are she/her/hers or they/them/theirs.

Harper stands, mic in hand.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Starting my freshman year, I've fought diligently to give a voice to those less privileged. I've participated in rallies, sit-ins, and protests and this summer I built a schoolhouse in a very poor part of Mexico. But I'm not here to talk about that. We're here to talk about our shared cultural experiences. Because we can make this campus a better place. Follow me at HarpsPen on Twitter and on Instagram at Harpspen1 for more thoughts on social change. And remember - diversity means differences both visible and invisible but Wolcott must be indivisible. Thank you.

Harper drops the mic on the table. A silent beat. TIM (male, 19, Asian-American, cis) hesitates, then retrieves the mic.

TIM

Timothy Shu, Asian American Association.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A laptop monitor streaming the Diversity and Inclusion Town Hall.

HARPER

(onscreen)

What a wonderful night of experiences we've been having. I know that I now better understand the battles my fellow marginalized students and friends fight every day. Don't you?

REVEAL: Susan's watching Harper online in her cramped, dark office, surrounded by messy piles of paperwork. She eats a handful of Skittles and scowls.

HARPER (CONT'D)

(onscreen)

Let's give ourselves a round of applause.

Harper claps and the audience follows suit. Susan shuts her laptop. She can't take it anymore.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

Harper has the mic.

HARPER

Let's start a conversation. I want to hear from you. Please, any questions for me or our panel.

Behind Harper, #WDITownhall tweets appear: "We're changing lives and minds #WDItownhall" "This is what progress looks like #WDITownhall" "Say goodbye to racism #WDITownhall."

HARPER (CONT'D)

As a reminder, if you are a cis het white male, please give someone else the opportunity to speak first because you dominate the rest of our cultural discourse.

Harper squints but can't see into the audience because of the bright lights. Olenna takes the mic.

OLENNA

Hi. I have a friend in that class you wrote the post about... Wasn't the word that the teacher used "ugly?" Is that a bad word now?

Murmurs from the student body.

HARPER

Yes. I know. I know. Some of you may think I'm overreacting. But let me ask you this: if we don't say the n-word or the c-word or the f-word -- the one for the queer-identified, "fuck" is okay -- then why do we say "ugly?" It's because we don't yet recognize its invisible connotations. Of demeaning women. Of insulting people with disabilities. Until just a few years ago, it used to be okay to say "tranny" or "retarded" but we realized that those words hurt certain groups of people, so we stopped. That's progress. And I think we're seeing that same progress here on campus today with this word.

The murmurs die down. All eyes on Harper.

HARPER (CONT'D)

When you say ugly, the marginalized
relieve that pain and internalize
that misogyny. I can prove it.

Harper turns to Ashley, the person of size.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Ashley, you are ugly.

Stunned, Ashley isn't sure how to respond.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Now how did that feel? How did that
feel to be called "ugly?" How did
it feel to you in the audience when
I called her that?

Harper doesn't give anyone a chance to answer.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Ugly happens and we can't ignore
it. Ashley can't ignore it. We
cannot be visually impaired to the
fact that ignorant people call
wonderful people like Ashley
"ugly." Because to Ashley, "ugly"
means "fat." Doesn't it, Ashley?
People are out there calling you
fat and ugly. And that is not how
we should be speaking to each
other.

Harper puts her hand on Ashley's shoulder, in support.

HARPER (CONT'D)

From now on, when we hear the word
ugly, we should think of Ashley.
And her feelings.

Harper turns back to the audience.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Just as white people must spend
time and effort to identify white
privilege, we must to do the same
with beauty privilege. To ignore it
is offensive. That is why I will
continue to write and speak and
fight until Wolcott is a free place
for all cultures and identities!

A few members in the audience applaud. A question from deep in the back of the auditorium. Harper shields her eyes but can't see the AUDIENCE MEMBER.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

If I said there is no god, would that be considered offensive?

HARPER

Of course not. We are respectful of all faith traditions.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

In 1804, a student was expelled from Wolcott for publicly stating he was an atheist.

HARPER

Can we turn the house lights up?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

He was expelled for being offensive. So my question is: how do we decide what's considered offensive?

The house lights come up REVEALING SUSAN with the microphone.

HARPER

Dr. Brodbeck. This is the professor who viciously attacked us with the u-word.

SUSAN

The progress that allows atheists to express their views freely on campus comes from a society that pushed against what the status quo considered offensive: interracial relationships, women voting, even liberalism itself. That all came from free speech and an open dialogue.

In the audience, PHONES start to come out and record. Tweets start showing up on the screen behind them. "#WDITownhall professor showed up!!!!" "Shits abt 2 go down #WDITownhall" "catfight #WDITownhall"

HARPER

Let me ask you this: do you believe racism and sexism exist?

SUSAN

Of course.

HARPER

So there are groups that are oppressed.

SUSAN

Obviously.

HARPER

And is language one way to oppress a group? Like for instance, a racial slur?

SUSAN

I see what--

HARPER

So hypothetically, if we used less racially negative language, there would be less oppression in the world?

SUSAN

Yes, but--

HARPER

Then what you are asking for is a more oppressive society! Do you know who else allowed hate speech to fuel oppression? The--

SUSAN

--Don't say--

SUSAN (CONT'D)

--Nazis.

HARPER

--Nazis!!

HARPER (CONT'D)

I think the voices of women, the LGBTQIA community, and minorities are more valuable than a misogynist's, homophobe's, or racist's right to spout hatred!

The audience applauds.

SUSAN

I agree! We agree with each other, Harper! I'm just trying to get you to see the other side. That diversity includes a diversity of opinions too.

HARPER
That's something *Republicans* say!
Are you a Republican?

SUSAN
Oh god, no! Of course not.

HARPER
Because you sound like one!

SUSAN
You're not letting me finish--

HARPER
I will not be silenced! I will not
be a victim!

SUSAN
You're not the victim, you're the
bully!

HARPER
You blackmailed me!

SUSAN
That's a lie! You're -- you're
lying! Just shut up! Shut up for 10
seconds so I can explain how
language--

The audiences starts to boo Susan.

HARPER
Don't lecture me!

SUSAN
I'm your teacher! Lecturing you is
literally my job.

HARPER
Then how come I'm the one teaching
you tonight?

The audience roars. Tweets on the screen behind the stage:
"Shut up, bitch! #WDITownhall" "prof border beck is a hater
#WDITownhall #bigot" "racist shit going down @ #WDITownhall"

SUSAN
Censorship isn't progressive, it's
paternalistic!

HARPER
You're paternalistic! You're the
patriarchy!

SUSAN
No, I'm not!

HARPER
Yes, you are!

SUSAN
No! Not-- no!

HARPER (CONT'D)
Yes! Uh-huh! Yes!

SUSAN
You're asking to create a culture
of fear and hostility--

HARPER
You mean a culture that's no longer
racist, homophobic, or sexist!

Major applause. "she's teachin da teach #WDITownhall"

SUSAN
That's the problem! Who gets to
decide what's racist, homophobic,
or sexist?!

HARPER
I do! I decide what's racist,
homophobic, or sexist!

SUSAN
So what? What does that even mean?
Are you actually going tell people
what they can and can't say?

HARPER
That's a great idea! Yes! Somebody
needs to! I will! We will! We're
going to come together as a
community and define what's hate
speech! And we're going to create a
group to enforce those rules!

SUSAN
Then how are you any better than
the politicians who decided gay
marriage was offensive?!

The crowd BOOS Susan, drowning her out.

HARPER

Don't listen to her! She's just an old who doesn't understand that the future of Wolcott is free from hate and so is the future of humankind.

The crowd stands, CHEERING. Susan, realizing the battle is lost, hands the microphone back to Olenna and storms out.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Harper Penzig on Facebook, Harpspen on Twitter and Harpspen1 on Instagram for meeting details! Let's take back Wolcott!

EXT. INTERCULTURAL HOUSE - NIGHT

On the porch, STUDENTS drink and lounge on worn-out wingback chairs and a lumpy, faded pleather couch. Muted THUMPING BASS comes from the party inside. Frances takes a drag of a vape pen, hands it back to some NEO-HIPPIES and heads inside.

INT. INTERCULTURAL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Frances walks through a CROWD of drunk college kids as loud, classic-to-them early 00's hip-hop plays.

She stops in the kitchen to refill her drink with high proof, low-quality alcohol. Harper barges through the crowd.

HARPER

WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DRINKING?!

FRANCES

MALE TEARS YOU FUCKING BITCH!

They hold their drinks high and scream.

HARPER

We're reclaiming bitch, you bitch!

FRANCES

Third wave, biatch!

They hug. Harper looks at the kitchen table cluttered with liquor bottles. She grabs a bottle of Goldschläger.

HARPER

Mmmmm, smells like cinnamon and it's got fuckin' gold flakes, you bitch!

FRANCES

You bitch!

Harper pours way too much Goldschläger into her solo cup.

INT. INTERCULTURAL HOUSE - LATER

Harper and Frances, smashed, yell over the music at Liz.

HARPER

...but yeah, point is, I'm open to it. Totally. So I qualify, right?

FRANCES

But you've never actually been with a girl, so how do you know?

HARPER

That doesn't matter because I could be. I could be.

LIZ

You bring up another great point. You're right, I officially deem you bi.

Harper's too buzzed to register the sarcasm. She puts her hand on Liz's shoulder.

HARPER

You are the most oppressed person I know. The most. But you have the best attitude.

LIZ

Thanks?

Harper gives Liz a sloppy hug. Frances joins in.

EXT. INTERCULTURAL HOUSE BACK YARD - NIGHT

A grass lawn worn down to mostly dirt from a generation of college kids partying outside. A GUY fills his cup from a too-warm keg, resulting in mostly foam. Clumps of STUDENTS smoke.

Shaun stands in the center of a cluster of his BLACK FRIENDS. They're in the middle of roasting ANDRE (male, 19, black, bald head and mustache).

SHAUN

This dumbass failed Orgo. And your stupid ass still wanna be a doctor.

ANDRE

You sayin' I'm dumb? Boy, you so dense yo' head got a fucking moon orbiting it.

The group screams and laughs.

SHAUN

Yeah, but when I talk to you I hear a fucking echo comin' out your ears you ol' Steve Harvey head ass looking boy!

The group reacts, running away laughing then running back. Harper suddenly breaks into the circle.

HARPER

(slurring)

What's so funny? What's so funny, tell me. What was it?

SHAUN

We were just making fun of Andre.

HARPER

That's mean. Don't be mean.

She looks at Shaun's friends.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Hey guys. What's up? Hi. Hi.

She goes for fist bumps and tries to turn them into a more complicated exchange. It doesn't work.

HARPER (CONT'D)

How's the BSU? You miss me? Just kidding, I'm kidding. You guys gonna vote for Shaun for BSU president? You should! Do it! Just kidding. I'm not involved anymore. Nevermind. Nevermind. Hey! What did you guys think of my speech?

Shaun's friends look at each other.

HARPER (CONT'D)

It's archived. It's archived on our official YouTube channel if you missed it. It's official. I posted it on Facebook too, you should watch it.

ANDRE AND FRIENDS
Whatever/Maybe/I guess...

SHAUN
No, but for real guys, it was kinda legit. The audience went crazy.

HARPER
Yeah? You liked it?

Harper playfully walks her fingers up Shaun's arm.

SHAUN
Okay, you don't have to do that.

HARPER
I want to ask you something.

SHAUN
What?

HARPER
Something personal.

He glances to his friends, uncomfortable. They snicker.

SHAUN
Maybe not here...

ANDRE
Oh, I think you should definitely ask him here.

HARPER
I wanted to ask you...

Harper leans in close.

HARPER (CONT'D)
...do you think if we face swap on Snapchat, it counts as blackface? I'd never do that. I'd never face swap with you.

SHAUN
Hey Harper, can you--

HARPER
Ugphp!

Harper starts to throw up, but catches it in her mouth. Her cheeks are full. Some of it leaks out.

SHAUN

Oh shit! Are you gonna--

Harper nods, and tries to swallow, but she coughs, spurting out more vomit. Shaun jumps back.

SHAUN (CONT'D)

Fuck!

Harper covers her mouth with her hands and runs off. All of Shaun's friends look at him.

ANDRE

You smashing though, right?

SHAUN

Yeah.

ANDRE

Dope.

Shaun and Andre fist bump in agreement.

INT. HARPER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Harper stumbles into her room, red from drinking with spots of puke on her clothes. She drops onto her bed and holds up her phone for another compulsive check of Instagram. As she slowly falls asleep, and the phone falls out of her hand and hits her face.

INT. INTERCULTURAL HOUSE - DAY

Shaun lounges on a futon, scrolling through Twitter on his phone. Liz sits at a table, eating leftover pizza while attacking a problem set. In the corner, Frances works on an art project, gluing dishwashing gloves to a mop.

FRANCES

Does it make you regret being born
a male yet?

Shaun considers Frances' creation.

SHAUN

Not yet. But I think you're close?

CLUNK! The three look at each other -- what was that sound?

Their question is answered seconds later as Harper enters, dragging a large cork board and wearing a backpack.

SHAUN (CONT'D)
Finished sleeping off your
hangover?

HARPER
I woke up like two hours ago. And
I've been working on this.

Harper lifts the board and puts it on a table against the wall. Attached to the board are dozens of notecards, each one with a curse word or racial epithet on it: "cunt," "wetback," "oreo," etc. They are organized into different categories, including "identity," "gender and sex," "misc."

SHAUN
What the fuck is that?

HARPER
A start. This is the beginning of
Wolcott's official language guide.
I am finally defining hate speech.

She opens her backpack and dumps out piles of notecards, some of them land on Liz's notebook.

LIZ
I think this is the sort of
behavior we're supposed to report
to health services.

Liz picks up a card, reading it:

LIZ (CONT'D)
"Disabled." What is this?

HARPER
Turn it over.

LIZ
(reading)
"Person with disability."

Harper takes the card from Liz and pins it to the cork board under "abelism."

HARPER
We need to put the *person* first. So
we don't say "disabled," we say
"Person with disability." I've
created this board to identify the
hidden dehumanizing stereotypes
that have crept into our everyday
speech. First we identify them,
then we ban them.

FRANCES
Oh, let me try!

Frances grabs a card.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
"Poor Person."
(thinks)
Person of Poverty?
(flipping card over)
"Person of low economic status
related to a person's education,
occupation, and income." Fuck.
That's way better.

Shaun holds up another card with "American" written on it.

SHAUN
What's wrong with "American?"

HARPER
It fails to recognize the entire
continent of South America.
American refers to one country when
it actually describes two
continents therefore reinforcing
the damaging idea of United States
superiority. "U.S. citizen" is how
we need to describe ourselves.

Harper starts making piles of the cards on the table.

HARPER (CONT'D)
I was hoping you could help me.

SHAUN
You want us to create and sort
racist cards?

HARPER
Exactly.

FRANCES
I'm in.

LIZ
I'm gonna pass. I have a problem
set due tomorrow. Good luck.

HARPER
That's okay, Liz. I don't want to
burden you any more than society
already has.

Liz gathers her books. Harper holds up a pile.

HARPER (CONT'D)

So Shaun, do you want to start with racist slurs?

SHAUN.

I mean... I guess?

INT. INTERCULTURAL HOUSE - DAYS LATER

The table is littered with empty cans of disgustingly cheap beer. The cork board's filled with notecards, and there are several neat piles on the table under separate headings. Harper, Frances, and Shaun sit at the table, sorting.

FRANCES

I finished gendered language.

She points to four piles, each one smaller than the last.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Here's what trans and nonconforming people can say, here's what gay and lesbian people can say, what women can say, and finally, what straight white males can say.

She pushes forward a significantly smaller pile.

HARPER

Great progress. I can't believe we're almost there.

FRANCES

I'm gonna take a bong break. Wanna join?

HARPER

Nah, we'll finish up what's left.

Frances leaves. Harper looks over the loose notecards.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Looks like we still have sexual and religious language left.

SHAUN

Let's do sexual. For sure.

Shaun and Harper slide over next to each other, arms nearly touching. Harper picks up the first card.

HARPER

"Suck a dick." Homophobic and sex negative.

SHAUN

How did "sucking a dick" become a bad thing? It's great! It's doing something good in the world. Sucking a dick is an inspirational act. It should be a compliment.

HARPER

You've been so helpful with these cards, Shaun. You're really sucking a dick tonight.

SHAUN

Why, thank you, Harper! Thank you for recognizing how hard I've sucked dick for you.

They both laugh. Shaun leans in to kiss Harper. Harper grabs Shaun and throws him on the table, knocking over the remaining piles. She straddles Shaun and they hook up on top of graphic sexual terms and religious epithets.

INT. SHAUN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

In bed, Shaun sleeps as Harper scrolls through her phone.

PHONE ON SCREEN: Harper checks for any new likes or shares on the meeting announcements she's posted on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

HARPER (V.O.)

Tomorrow. 4PM. Intercultural House. Because fighting injustice can't wait.

Harper sits up, waking Shaun. He pulls her back into bed.

SHAUN

No. Where are you going?

HARPER

I have to work on what I'm going to say at this meeting. I haven't even come up with a name for the group.

SHAUN

Stay in bed. 5 more minutes.

HARPER

I can't.

SHAUN

30 seconds. 10 seconds. C'mere.

HARPER

I'm not gonna lay awake in bed
while you sleep.

SHAUN

I'm not sleeping. I wanna... talk.

HARPER

Really? About what?

Shaun cuddles up to Harper.

SHAUN

(sleepily)

Uh... what, um... what were you
like in high school?

HARPER

I was... boring.

SHAUN

No way.

HARPER

I was. There was this one semester
I was lab partners with Jackie
Callon, who was one of the popular
girls. It seemed like she liked me.
I thought we were going to be
friends. Once she even told me I
should do plays because I was so
dramatic. But she ignored me
outside of class. And I couldn't
join drama club because after the
divorce my mom had to work so I had
to take the bus home right after
school. I dunno, I never really
made any close friends in high
school. But since coming here...
now I can join anything. And I feel
like I've finally found friends who
really care. Friends who actually
listen to me.

She turns to Shaun. He is asleep.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Goddamn it.

INT. INTERCULTURAL HOUSE - DAY

Harper, nicely dressed, carrying a binder, walks down the stairs. When she reaches the bottom, she stops in disbelief. The living room is crowded with STUDENTS, a few familiar faces from Intercultural Alliance meetings but also many new ones, including frat guy Church, from Brodbeck's class. Harper is visibly relieved that people actually showed up.

HARPER

Hello and welcome, everyone. Thank you for choosing to be here. After the town hall, you finally became aware of something that's been obvious to me of for a long time: Wolcott needs to take broader steps to combat all anti-black, transphobic, cissexist, misogynistic, ablest, homophobic, islamophobic, xenophobic, anti-semitic, racist, oppressive and violent speech acts. That's why I've called this meeting. So I can officially introduce you to my new group: The Student Alliance For Equal Speech or "SAFES."

She turns the binder around and holds it proudly above her head. The cover has a photo of a smiling multi-racial group of friends with "SAFES" written over them.

HARPER (CONT'D)

I have a plan to eradicate hate speech on campus. We will start by recognizing our own unconscious bias and privilege through perspective-taking exercises...

EXT. QUAD - DAY

HARPER (V.O.)

...like Privilege Walks.

A line of STUDENTS from SAFES stand shoulder-to-shoulder on the grass. Harper stands to one side. It's a PRIVILEGE WALK.

HARPER

If being sexually active improves your reputation, take a step forward.

All the MALES uniformly step forward. As the Privilege Walk continues, we hear Harper from the SAFES meeting:

HARPER (V.O.)

A micro-aggression is like a paper cut. One paper cut won't kill you. But there are students on our campus who are getting paper cut after paper cut, day after day. Internalizing discrimination, internalizing micro-invalidations, internalizing hate. This starts to affect their mental health.

HARPER

If your ancestors came to the United States by force, take one step back.

A few STUDENTS OF COLOR take a step back. Passing students whisper and giggle to each other -- what is this thing?

INT. INTERCULTURAL HOUSE - DAY

Harper continues to lead the SAFES meeting.

HARPER

If you get enough paper cuts, eventually you will bleed to death. The student body is bleeding out and we hold the tourniquet! This:

She holds up a manual titled "The Wolcott University Inclusive Language Guide. First Edition."

HARPER (CONT'D)

The Wolcott University Inclusive Language Guide which we created here at the Intercultural House. This is how we stop the bleeding!

EXT. CAMPUS CENTER - DAY

Harper and SAFES MEMBERS march into the campus center.

HARPER (V.O.)

Once we are aware of our own privilege and biases, we use the Inclusive Language Guide to identify them in others.

INT. CAMPUS CENTER - DAY

MONTAGE: Harper leads a group of STUDENTS from the SAFES meeting, pointing out various people in the campus center.

-A girl wearing turquoise jewelry walks by.

HARPER
Cultural appropriation of
traditional Indigenous jewelry.

-A bathroom sign of a stick figure in a dress.

HARPER (CONT'D)
Gender non-inclusive and gender
normative clothing.

-The group follows Harper up the stairs.

HARPER (CONT'D)
Ableist. I bet you didn't even
notice we were walking up stairs.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

A FIGURE clad in a black hoodie puts up Shepard Fairey-style posters of Harper's face with the word "Warrior" underneath.

HARPER (V.O.)
Now we are ready for the next step:
peer implementation. We enforce the
inclusive language guide so the
student body will no longer be able
to claim ignorance of hate speech. I
call this: "radical inclusiveness."

As the figure runs away, their hood falls, revealing Frances.

INT. CAMPUS CENTER - DAY

SAFES MEMBER 1 argues with a WHITE STONER wearing dreads and a Bob Marley shirt.

SAFES MEMBER 1
Dreadlocks are appropriative of
Rastafarian culture!

WHITE STONER
The Vikings had dreadlocks!

SAFES MEMBER 1

There's a picture of Bob Marley on your shirt!

WHITE STONER

What do you care, you're fucking white!

HARPER (V.O.)

This is how change begins.

EXT. QUAD - DAY

Back to the privilege walk. There's now a noticeable gap between groups of privileged and less privileged students. Out in front is Church.

HARPER

Now take a look around, this is how much privilege society has granted you or taken away from you!

Church looks behind him, stunned at the results. Harper approaches.

HARPER (CONT'D)

You're in Delta Nu, right? I want to talk to you about your Halloween party...

INT. ACADEMIC SPACE - DAY

A sterile multipurpose room somewhere on campus.

HARPER (V.O.)

This will be a difficult fight. So we will need a true safe space for self-care. A place where we can go when we feel triggered. A "Trigger Room."

TIME LAPSE: SAFES STUDENTS bring in games and toys, like Scrabble, Play-Doh, and coloring books. The room is transformed into a kindergarten play area.

HARPER (V.O.)

I've already blocked out the History Department common room 24/7 for the entire year.

Susan enters, her face a mix of confusion and horror upon seeing the room. She's very much triggered. She steps over a bean bag chair as she crosses to her office door.

HARPER (V.O.)

Because the History Department is where we will start our final phase: academic implementation.

INT. EUROPEAN INTELLECTUALS 201 CLASSROOM - DAY

Susan lectures class, including Harper.

SUSAN

Before you choose your paper topic, I'd recommend brainstorming--

HARPER

Dr. Brodbeck! I request that you refrain from using the word "brainstorming" as it is non-inclusive.

SUSAN

Excuse me?

HARPER

Per the Inclusive Language Guide, "Brainstorming" has negative connotations to those who suffer from seizures. Persons-with-disabilities, like persons-with-epilepsy, object to that term.

SUSAN

Do you have epilepsy?

HARPER

No.

SUSAN

You know I'm not going stop saying "brainstorming," Harper.

HARPER (V.O.)

We will meet resistance. So we escalate.

INT. HISTORY DEPARTMENT CLASSROOM - DAY

A HISTORY PROFESSOR lectures his STUDENTS.

HISTORY PROFESSOR
After much westernization--

A WHISTLE rings out from the class.

HISTORY PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
Who did that?

SAFES MEMBER 2
Your use of "westernization" as
synonymous with "progress"
disregards the contributions of all
non-western cultures. I
conscientiously object to this
reinforcement of western
superiority!

HISTORY STUDENT
Shut up!

SAFES Member 2 blows the whistle again. Students look
annoyed.

INT. ANOTHER HISTORY DEPARTMENT CLASSROOM - DAY

An older, white, HIPPIE PROFESSOR, wearing an African Dashiki
walks into class, and a WHISTLE immediately blows.

HIPPIE PROFESSOR
I haven't even said anything yet!

SAFES MEMBER 3
The dashiki has a cultural history
tied to Africa and is therefore
appropriative.

HIPPIE PROFESSOR
I got this in Africa when I was
volunteering. As a gift from an
African--

A WHISTLE immediately blows again as well as an AIRHORN.

SAFES MEMBER 4
I object to your whitesplaining!

The Hippy Professor looks defeated.

MONTAGE OF QUICK CUTS:

SAFES MEMBERS in different classes blowing whistles and
interrupting HISTORY PROFESSORS.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

A line of Harper's warrior posters. A SENIOR draws a dick on Harper's face, then walks away.

INT. TRIGGER ROOM - DAY

It's a different SAFES meeting but Harper is giving the same lecture to a crowded room of NEW MEMBERS. They listen in rapt attention as Harper finishes. The movement has grown.

HARPER

SAFES is a team effort. Collective allyship. That's how we'll finally make Wolcott safe for everyone.

The New Members enthusiastically snap in approval.

INT. HISTORY DEPARTMENT STAFF ROOM - DAY

Dean Gordon has totally lost control of a rowdy staff meeting. The HISTORY PROFESSORS are yelling at Susan.

HISTORY PROFESSOR

I've been confiscating whistles like I'm some sort of high school gym teacher!

HIPPIE PROFESSOR

Last week, I said "standard deviation" and half the class yelled that "'standard' is enforced normative language."

SUSAN

They're interrupting me too! This is Harper's fault, not mine!

PROFESSOR 3/CRAIG

Picking a public fight at a town hall is downright stupid!

SUSAN

So is sleeping with a student, Craig!

The room goes silent.

DEAN GORDON

I'm going to pretend I didn't hear that.

SUSAN

Sorry.

CRAIG

Sorry.

DEAN GORDON

I think we all need to take a moment and remember that we are responsible for the emotional, physical, and academic well-being of our students.

SUSAN

Then what are they responsible for?

DEAN GORDON

There is no Wolcott without the students' tuition.

A ROAR comes up from the Professors.

DEAN GORDON (CONT'D)

Everyone, please! Please! I understand your concerns but if you could all just calm down--

SUSAN

Us? It's Harper and her goons who need to calm down! Why won't the administration step in and set some boundaries for these students? They're just a vocal minority!

DEAN GORDON

The administration can't get involved in a situation where we could be perceived as curtailing our students' right to protest. We believe an educator's role is to use any dispute as an opportunity to reframe the discussion. For example, Professor Collins teaches law and she can't use the word "violate" because a student complained. She's making it work. She now says, "this 'disobeys' the statute, or 'disregards' the law." She sees it as a fun little game.

HISTORY PROFESSOR

If you don't do anything there are going to huge consequences!

SUSAN
(to the Dean)
See!

HISTORY PROFESSOR
No, Susan, for you. Do you think
this department will continue to
support your bid for tenure if this
continues? You need to fix the
mess you've made.

Susan looks around helplessly, the Professors all nod in
agreement.

INT. FACULTY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Susan sits with WILLIAM, CHRISTOPHER, and JOHN, (male, 40's,
white, cisgender) in tailored suits, the male Stepford Wives.

WILLIAM
Ah, Susan! Thank you so much for
meeting with us. William.

CHRISTOPHER
Christopher.

JOHN
John.

Susan shakes each of their extended hands.

SUSAN
I was a little surprised to get
your e-mail. You really think you
can help me?

WILLIAM
We work for a non-profit
organization that fights the
restriction of free expression on
college campuses.

CHRISTOPHER
Freedom Restorers for Education and
Expression. You can call it "FREE"
for short.

JOHN
We do.

They all laugh. William hands Susan a business card.

CHRISTOPHER

We have Google alerts set for terms like "triggered," and "safe space" at basically every northeastern school. It led us to that article about you in Wolcott's newspaper, and the YouTube video of you at the town hall. We watched and let me just say this: What you are doing is *really brave*.

WILLIAM

So very, very brave.

JOHN

(nodding)

Brave.

SUSAN

Thank you.

WILLIAM

Susan, something is happening to our college campuses. Something dangerous. Something evil. Something *unamerican*. Kids all over the country are putting a muzzle on rational debate. Since when does offensiveness dictate academic material? This is *America*, not some censorship state under Sharia law.

JOHN

(shaking his head)

Millennials.

WILLIAM

How are we supposed to teach students if they find everything "triggering?" Are they exempt from class?

CHRISTOPHER

Should teachers just sit there in silence?

JOHN

Total silence!

SUSAN

It's a nightmare. They're interrupting my classes with whistles and airhorns and the administration won't do anything!

WILLIAM

These kids are in a toxic cult that alienates them from society by teaching them to accuse everyone else of racism. It's unconscionable.

JOHN

Crisis.

CHRISTOPHER

Without academic freedom, how are colleges going to create the next generation of free market leaders?

Susan's smile fades.

WILLIAM

It's okay to be offended! Are we supposed to go to jail every time we say "Merry Christmas" instead of "Happy Holidays?"

JOHN

Christian rights are under assault.

CHRISTOPHER

It's mob rule! We had to defend a college paper that lost funding because they published an op-ed critical of black culture.

JOHN

Black unwed mothers are the biggest impediment to economic progress.

SUSAN

Oh, shit.

WILLIAM

"Oh, shit" is right! People need to realize that institutional racism is over in this country.

SUSAN

Okay, thank you for your time.

Susan gets up.

WILLIAM

What's wrong?

SUSAN

What's wrong? You're motherfucking conservatives. This group isn't about free speech, it's about pushing your asshole agenda on young kids. Rich white men pay millions of dollars to create groups like this to freak out when someone says "undocumented" instead of "illegal." You're part of a system that's leveraged bigots, anti-Semites, and idiots to vote for you so you can disenfranchise minorities, immigrants, and women. You use corrupt, underhanded methods to keep your limp, shriveled, aging dicks wrapped around positions of power. It's sickening.

William shrugs.

WILLIAM

Yeah, that's basically it.

They all laugh. Susan turns to leave.

CHRISTOPHER

We can get you on O'Malley.

She stops.

WILLIAM

We're not dumb, Susan. And neither are you. We're here because smart young people are overwhelmingly liberal and we need to introduce them to our values without actually calling them "conservative."

CHRISTOPHER

Like how white supremacists are now "alt-right."

JOHN

Branding.

WILLIAM

Exactly. For us, "free speech" is a much more attractive term. And the thing is, for this one issue, this one time, we are on the same side. Peter O'Malley has the top rated news show on the air.

SUSAN

He's a loud bigot who makes his money scaring old people.

WILLIAM

Maybe, but you'll get a national stage to make your point. And with the attention that follows... Wolcott's administration will have to take your side.

SUSAN

Jesus. I can't believe I'm still listening to this.

Susan heads to the door.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Be sure to fuck yourselves on your way out.

WILLIAM

You have our number!

The three smile at each other.

INT. EUROPEAN INTELLECTUALS 201 CLASSROOM - DAY

Susan stares at Harper and her SAFES members, who are ready to pounce with whistles and airhorns. Susan waits a beat, then starts her lecture:

SUSAN

Today we'll be discussing Rousseau's belief that civilization--

A chorus of HIGH PITCHED WHISTLES. Susan closes her eyes and takes a deep breath, but continues:

SUSAN (CONT'D)

--has moved us away from our primitive--

WHISTLES and AIRHORNS.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Alright. Fine. Today, we are going to be 100 percent compliant with the SAFES Inclusive Language Guide.

In the class, Harper smiles.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Please put away all laptops, books, and phones as there may be offensive language on them. Now, to avoid any triggering terms, we are going to sit in silence for the rest of the class. There will be absolutely no talking as this class is a *safe space*.

The students look around, unsure. Harper's smile fades.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Anyone who doesn't follow these new rules gets a zero added to their cumulative grade.

The students start to put away their things.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Oh, and there will be a quiz at the end of the class. So while you are sitting silently, think really hard about Rousseau.

Susan sits at her desk and pulls out a book. The class looks around in confusion. Harper inhales sharply.

INT. READING WEEK COFFEE - DAY

The bohemian campus coffee shop. Ratty chairs, mismatched tables, free tampons in a cup at the register. A sign for the shop is defaced to spell out "Weak Coffee."

Frances and Harper sit on a couch, studying art history.

HARPER

...we obviously all failed the quiz. Dr. Brodbeck is just doing this to get back at me. She's so petty.

Frances holds up a flash card with a painting on it.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Rothko.

FRANCES

Correct.

HARPER

And now the whole class is pissed at me when it's clearly her fault.
(MORE)

HARPER (CONT'D)

But she is not going to stop me. We have to be resolute in the face of adversity. That's the lesson the civil rights movement taught us.

Shaun enters behind the couch.

HARPER (CONT'D)

So?!

SHAUN

(sadly)

Sorry, Harps...

Shaun hops over the couch.

SHAUN (CONT'D)

But you're looking at the next BSU President!

Frances squeals and Harper gives Shaun a hug.

HARPER

That's fucking awesome!

SHAUN

And the best part is they've already approved my plan for another protest against the lack of faculty diversity. We're going to form a human chain around Conwell Hall and only let in the professors of color. All three of them.

FRANCES

That's so fun!

SHAUN

It gets even better: I want SAFES to participate with us.

Harper's expression turns sour.

HARPER

Oh, cool, but right now SAFES is really primarily focused on hate speech.

SHAUN

So?

HARPER

So I don't think SAFES is going to be able to help with any other causes this semester. We don't want to muddy our message.

FRANCES

But we partnered with Delta Nu for their halloween party.

Harper glares at Frances.

SHAUN

Thing is, I kinda already promised them that you'd be onboard for it.

HARPER

You promised the BSU before you even talked to me?

SHAUN

Yeah, because I know you believe in the BSU and the need for a more diverse faculty as much as I do.

HARPER

I did, then they kicked me out. And now they come crawling back to me, asking for my help?

SHAUN

No. They're not asking. I'm asking. It's my idea, Harper. We can make a real difference together.

HARPER

I'm not making a real difference?

FRANCES

You're definitely making a real difference!

HARPER

You're using me at the expense of my mission because you think your cause is more important than mine.

SHAUN

I don't really want to compare them.

HARPER

No, no, compare them. Compare them. I will.

(MORE)

HARPER (CONT'D)

Because what I see in SAFES is a campus wide movement to create a school that welcomes every single person and it is blowing up my social media. But all you can think about is yourself.

SHAUN

Or maybe I just figured my girlfriend would support me instead of trying to sabotage me.

HARPER

Dude. Girlfriend? ...We're just hanging out.

Shaun stares at Harper, injured but hiding it. He gets up.

SHAUN

Okay. Then I'm gonna go hang out somewhere else.

He leaves without another word.

HARPER

What the fuck? What was that?

FRANCES

I know? Right? What's his problem?

HARPER

Whatever, let's just get back to studying.

Frances holds up another card with a picture of a painting on it. Harper looks at the door, just in case Shaun re-enters.

FRANCES

Harper?

Harper turns back.

HARPER

That's... I don't know, Rembrandt?

FRANCES

Caravaggio.

HARPER

This is stupid.

She looks back at the doorway again, then back to Frances.

HARPER (CONT'D)

I mean, who cares about art history anyway? Paintings are just rich people exploiting the talent of the lower class. What did art ever do for anyone? Its never changed anything. I shouldn't have to take this test. I need to drop this class. Fuck this.

Harper slams her textbook shut.

INT. SUSAN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Susan pulls a couple blouses from the closet. Mark sits on the bed, holding a glass of white wine and a bag of Skittles.

SUSAN

Which one do you like?

She holds up two blouses.

MARK

Neither, because going on TV is a stupid idea.

SUSAN

(dry)

It's a smart idea. Know how I know? Because I am a very, very smart person.

She grins. He pulls her close.

MARK

You are. But maybe you should try talking to her.

SUSAN

Great idea. Why didn't I think of that?

Susan trades Mark her blouses for the Skittles and wine. She eats the candy, then immediately slams back the wine.

MARK

I meant again. You're going on a show you said was "the death of western discourse."

She holds up some notecards.

SUSAN

I have my talking points. All I have to do is stick to these and I can control the conversation.

(reading a notecard)

"I believe academic freedom is the most important tool we have to expose young minds to people and perspectives different from their own."

MARK

So last week, a customer came in with a broken pool pump. Wasn't under warranty, totally the customer's fault. But when he complained, I said "yeah, I see your point. I can't offer you a full refund but what I can do is offer you 20% off on a replacement part." I lose 20%, but I'm keeping the customer. It's a compromise.

SUSAN

I'm not going to compromise with some nineteen year old micro-dictator trying to destroy my career.

MARK

You have to be the mature one.

SUSAN

I'm plenty fucking mature. That's why I'm not engaging but instead I'm going on TV to make my case that Harper's completely and utterly wrong.

Susan eats another handful of Skittles.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I'm a pariah in my own department when I'm inches away from tenure. People watch O'Malley. They care about it. And those people are going to contact Wolcott and let the administration know they are not happy with how the school is treating me.

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

After this, there's going to be so much pressure, the board will have to give me tenure or risk the wrath of the stupidest parts of the American public, and more importantly, the alumni donors.

Mark smiles weakly and gives Susan a kiss on the forehead as she goes back to her notecards.

EXT. DELTA NU FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

A BIG FRAT DUDE, dressed as an astronaut, bounces people from the party going on inside. A group of females approach, consisting of a SEXY ANGEL, SEXY NURSE, and SEXY CAT (all white, cisgender).

BIG FRAT DUDE

Sorry. I can't let you in.

SEXY ANGEL

What? Why not? Isn't this "Scary Bros and Halloween Hos?"

BIG FRAT DUDE

Not anymore. This halloween party was thrown in conjunction with SAFES and according to their guidelines, you're dressed as a religious figure which is culturally insensitive. This one--

Big Frat Dude consults a SAFES printout then points to the Sexy Nurse.

BIG FRAT DUDE (CONT'D)

--reinforces a gender stereotype, not to mention being completely medically inaccurate. I'm pre-med.

SEXY CAT

What about me? I'm a cat.

BIG FRAT DUDE

You mean you're dressed as a literal interpretation of a crude slang for the female anatomy? Not to mention your sexualization and objectification of yourself. I don't think so.

The girls walk away, disappointed.

SEXY CAT

Wait. Why is that guy allowed to tell us how we can and can't dress?

SEXY ANGEL

(looking at her phone)
Zeta Psi has an ice luge.

SEXY CAT

Time to get fucked uuup!

INT. DELTA NU FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

It's a packed house for the Halloween party. Everyone is dressed in a SAFES-approved costumes: mostly astronauts, some generic zombies, and one Waldo.

Harper, as Rosie the Riveter, stares at her phone while Church, as Maverick from Top Gun, drunkenly rambles to her.

PHONE ON SCREEN: Harper texts Shaun. It's all blue bubbles from Harper and not a single gray reply from Shaun.

HARPER (V.O.)

Hey.
Hello?
Sup
where r u?
WTF

CHURCH

You know, ever since that privilege walk, I've been thinking. I like, totally understand racism and sexism now, it's, like, awesome not to be racist anymore. So I want to thank you for that.

HARPER

You're welcome.

CHURCH

And I've been trying really hard to check my privilege tonight.

BACK ON PHONE: Three dots pop up -- Shaun's typing a response. They disappear. No text comes. She types:

HARPER (V.O.)

Cool ignore me whatever

Harper finally faces Church.

HARPER

Let's get drunk.

Harper grabs Church's arm and leads him into the crowd.

INT. O'MALLEY STUDIO - NIGHT

Susan sits alone at a large U-shaped table. She swivels in her chair a little as the CREW scurries about. A SOUND GUY finishes fixing Susan's mic. Susan nervously looks around.

Peter O'Malley heaves himself into the seat across from Susan without acknowledging her. He studies his notes.

SUSAN

Never been on TV before.

O'Malley doesn't look up.

PRODUCER

And we're on in 5... 4... 3...

O'MALLEY

(to Susan)

Nice legs.

Susan stares at O'Malley in disbelief.

PRODUCER

2...

The crew goes silent as the camera lights turn red.

O'MALLEY

And in our "Breaking Amuse" segment, Wolcott University's whiny students and cowardly administration are allowing students to turn classrooms into "safe spaces" meaning no "offensive" words. Here with us leading the charge against this nonsense is Dr. Susan Brodbeck. Welcome to the show.

SUSAN

Thank you for having me.

O'MALLEY

You are a stalwart defender of free speech, taking on the "safe spaces" ruining our universities.

SUSAN

I think a free and open exchange of ideas on our campuses is of paramount importance, yes.

O'MALLEY

In my day, no one questioned the professors. Now it's impossible for you to actually teach because of this student group at Wolcott, "SAFES." Tell me about the girl who's been terrorizing you.

SUSAN

I'm not here to single anyone out.

O'MALLEY

Then I'll do it for you. Here's a clip from a "Town Hall" with the ringleader of Wolcott's intolerant left, Harper Penzig.

INSERT: A clip from The Diversity and Inclusion Town Hall fills the studio monitors.

SUSAN

But who gets to decide what's racist, homophobic, or sexist?!

HARPER

I do! I decide what's racist, homophobic, or sexist!

BACK TO SCENE:

O'MALLEY

Are crybullies like her liberal cowards or speech Nazis?

SUSAN

I believe academic freedom is the most important tool we have to expose young minds to people and perspectives different from their own. It is a crucial weapon in the fight against the institutional and unconscious racism--

O'MALLEY

Woah, woah, woah! We are talking about the destruction of the First Amendment here. These students are terrorists. We shouldn't have to watch our every word!

SUSAN

Shutting down the opposition,
muzzling critics, making it
impossible for dissenting voices
to be heard is the beginning of the
end.

O'MALLEY

Yes! Let's be okay with calling
people what they are: gays,
illegals, violent Muslim
extremists.

SUSAN

I mean -- let's not--

O'MALLEY

These liberal "millennials" bully a
million white males everyday and no
one says anything to stop them but
as soon as one gay kid hangs
himself they all lose their minds.
That's not fair to the majority in
this country.

SUSAN

I thought -- I'm trying to talk
about the ability of teachers to
work in a college environment.

O'MALLEY

This Harper Penzig is everything
that's wrong with America today:
Yes or no?

SUSAN

I can't answer that question.

O'MALLEY

Of course you can answer the
question! It's a yes or no
question! It couldn't be more
simple. She's calling you a sexist
and a racist. Are you a sexist and
a racist?

SUSAN

No, absolutely not!

O'MALLEY

But that's what she's calling you!
And she accused you of blackmail!

(MORE)

O'MALLEY (CONT'D)

Her vicious lies are going to follow you for the rest of your career.

SUSAN

So let me just--

O'MALLEY

No one will hire you now that she's branded you a racist, crooked college professor!

SUSAN

Peter-- Peter--

O'MALLEY

She is trying to shut you up by taking a crap on your reputation and you can't answer the question?

Susan doesn't respond quickly enough for O'Malley.

O'MALLEY (CONT'D)

These students and administrators are spineless scum. Someone needs to stand up and defend the First Amendment rights of every citizen in this great nation. Here is your chance to clear your name and let everyone know you're not a racist! Right now, what do you want to say to Harper Penzig and the gutless administration that's hanging you out to dry? You have the last word. Go.

SUSAN

Uh-- Um-- I think...

The bright lights shine on Susan. It's quiet. Everything moves slowly. She stares out, searching. Then, reality rushes back in and:

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Our society is becoming more divided, not less, because of people like Harper Penzig. Liberals used to represent the working class but today middle America doesn't trust us because of fanatics like her. She wants to force you to listen to her. Listen to her bastardization of progressive ideals by silencing everyone else.

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Do you know what the first priority of every totalitarian state is? Silence the opposition. I'm the opposition. Silencing my voice is an act of bias. I'm going to file a bias incident against Harper Penzig for censoring my views in my own classroom! Using her power to silence critics like me is an even more biased act than hate speech! And it spells the end of democracy!

O'MALLEY

There you have it! This political correctness is the disease corrupting our nation. A rash. A festering blister. And the reason our society is going down the tubes. Thanks for being here, Professor.

SUSAN

Thank you.

O'MALLEY

O'Malley fans, be sure to let this Harper Penzig know how we feel when we are threatened. At HarpsPen on Twitter and e-mail her at harperpenzig@wolcott.edu.

A graphic pops up with Harper's information.

SUSAN

(sotto)

You're giving out her real e-mail?

O'MALLEY

And as always, unlike liberal college campuses, I promise to keep the O'Malley Show free from identity politics. Coming up next, are Mexican gangs using small towns in the US to move drugs to Canada? You should be scared.

A slick INVASION OF THE MEXICANS graphic comes up.

INT. CHURCH'S ROOM - NIGHT

A black light, a Scarface poster, and a mini-fridge with a keg-tap. Harper's buzzed; Church's smashed.

They fall into his bed, kissing, with Harper on top. She doesn't notice her phone clatter to the ground. Harper unzips his costume.

CHURCH

Wait, I don't know-- I'm just, I'm drunk. I'm pretty drunk.

HARPER

We can stop whenever you want. But you just look so hot in that flight suit.

Harper slides her hands across his body.

CHURCH

Really? D'ya think so? I'm fat.

HARPER

No, those are your muscles. Your muscles are sooo big.

CHURCH

I don't know.

HARPER

Come on, let me see, baby.

Church demurs, and flexes his bicep.

HARPER (CONT'D)

You look fucking hot.

CHURCH

You think so? I don't go to the gym enough. I'm gross... person.

HARPER

C'mon, let me see.

Church shimmies out of the top of his jumpsuit. They make out until Church slowly stops, eyes closed. Passed out.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Church?

Harper sighs, annoyed. She rolls him against the wall so there's enough room for her to sleep next to him.

UNDER THE BED: Harper's phone lights up...

INT. CHURCH'S ROOM - MORNING

Harper, tired and hungover, fixes the bandana of her Rosie the Riveter costume. Church is still fast asleep.

Harper searches for her phone and finds it under the bed. It BUZZES. Harper ignores it and sneaks out.

EXT. DELTA NU FRAT HOUSE - MORNING

As Harper walks out she bumps into a SORORITY GIRL who's barefoot, holding her heels. They look at each other with disgust. Harper pulls out her phone.

PHONE ON SCREEN: Harper wipes away a 5% low battery warning.

Then: HUNDREDS OF MESSAGES JAM THE NOTIFICATION BAR. DING! DING! DING! BLOOP! DING!

HARPER

What the fuck?

Harper starts power-walking across campus. She pulls up Twitter and sees a slew of negative tweets.

@MAUZILLA (V.O.)

@harpspen fuck u

@SCOTT15ADDER (V.O.)

@harpspen ur a dumb bitch

@DIZKIT (V.O.)

@harpspen hope u die

@SIDS4EVA (V.O.)

#hasharperwokenupyet @harpspen

BUZZ! DING! BLOOP! She's still receiving notifications.

HARPER

Fuck, fuck, fuck! What is happening?

@ELVINID (V.O.)

Ooo i cant wait 2 c @harpspen's reaction #hasharperwokenupyet

HARPER

(screaming at her phone)
I have woken up!!

Harper, not looking where she's going, charges into a bush. She drops her phone. PHONE OFF SCREEN.

A MALE STUDENT eyes Harper. She's covered in leaves and dirt.

HARPER (CONT'D)

What!

MALE STUDENT

(snickering)

Walk of shame?

HARPER

Fucking-- go judge someone else,
sexist!

Harper climbs into the bushes to retrieve her phone. She looks at it again and starts running.

PHONE ON SCREEN: BUZZ! BUZZ! The notifications are nonstop. Harper goes to Facebook and sees new posts on her wall.

HIGH SCHOOL FRIEND (V.O.)

OMG was that u on O'Malley?

70 likes. 15 comments. Harper scrolls down.

FRIEND OF A FRIEND (V.O.)

Not cool Harper Penzig

254 likes. 45 comments.

Harper switches to text messages as she enters:

INT. CAMPUS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Harper reads the text messages in reverse chronological order. They start frantic, then become more and more calm as they are from earlier in the morning.

Harper clicks on Frances' messages.

FRANCES (V.O.)

ARE YOU OKAYYYY?!?!?

It's everywhere!!

Hello???????

Hello?????

Text me.

Harper?

Dis is cute

A gif of a baby panda falling over. Harper clicks on Shaun's messages. There's only one:

SHAUN (V.O.)

This is fucked.

HARPER
WHAT IS GOING ON!?

Harper quickly clicks over to a text from Liz.

LIZ (V.O.)
Um... <http://watcher.com/wolcott>

Harper clicks on the link and sees the article about her on a clickbait website: "College Campuses Just Got Worse Because Of This Girl." Harper plays the embedded YouTube video:

HARPER (V.O.)
I do! I decide what's racist--

Harper clicks through to YouTube: 56,742 views. Harper tries to scroll but her phone freezes. A zero battery icon appears and it shuts down.

HARPER
Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

PHONE OFF SCREEN. Harper runs towards TWO STUDENTS in the Campus Center Cafe.

HARPER (CONT'D)
Hey! Hey! Do you have a charger? I need a phone charger!

CAFE STUDENT 1
Nice costume.

HARPER
Fuck you!
(to the other student)
Do you have a charger? It's literally life or death for me!

CAFE STUDENT 2
Jesus. Sure, go ahead, take it.

Cafe Student 2 hands Harper a black cord. Harper runs over to a wall outlet, plugs in the charger and--

HARPER
THIS IS FOR A FUCKING ANDROID!

Harper violently throws the cord back at Cafe Student 2. It lands very short.

Harper accosts passing STUDENTS, like she's asking for a fix:

HARPER (CONT'D)
 iPhone charger? I need an iPhone
 charger, now! Please!

A GRAD STUDENT (male, Pakistani) hands her a cord, confused.

HARPER (CONT'D)
 Thank god!

Harper plugs it into the wall and charges her phone.

HARPER (CONT'D)
 Come on! Come on!

PHONE ON SCREEN: It boots up again. Harper goes to her text
 messages and texts Frances.

HARPER (V.O.)
 Bring me a iPhone charger! Campus
 center! ASAP!!!!

DWOOP. Text sent. Harper clicks over to Twitter.

@JESUSTRUEVOICE (V.O.)
 @harpspen Dum cunt

@_IAMOPEN_ (V.O.)
 @harpspen you should be beaten to
 death like the whore that you are

@MFZODIAC (V.O.)
 @harpspen u a dumb bitch kinda hot
 tho

BUZZ! An e-mail from Banana Republic.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
 Sweaters you should know! Don't
 miss 20%--

GRAD STUDENT
 Are you done? I have to go to lab.

The Grad Student holds out his hand for the charger back.

HARPER
 Fucking one second!

@ANGUS5271 (V.O.)
 @harpspen sew ur vagina shut u dumb
 whore

INT. SUSAN'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Mark makes breakfast. Susan's on her laptop at the table.

LAPTOP ON SCREEN: Susan scrolls through Google images, the search bar says "Harper Penzig."

There are a lot of memes of Harper's screaming face with the words "I do! I decide what's racist!"

Susan clicks a photo of Harper with the caption "When my girlfriend and I go out to eat." At the bottom, it reads "I do! I decide what's for dinner!" Susan giggles.

MARK

What?

SUSAN

Nothing.

Susan scrolls to the next image. It's the same photo of Harper but photoshopped with a Hitler mustache and a Nazi uniform. Susan stifles another laugh. Mark looks over at her laptop. He shakes his head disapprovingly.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

What?

MARK

She's a kid, Susan. I know they look like they're adults but they're just kids.

SUSAN

She's ruining my life and I can't enjoy a harmless cartoon of her?

MARK

You blamed her for destroying America on TV.

SUSAN

I was defending myself!

Mark shoves his phone in Susan's face.

MARK

You think those pictures are funny, but do you think these are funny?

PHONE ON SCREEN: Susan looks at Twitter.

@BOIRUSE (V.O.)

@harpspen kill urself

@RAYNEYDAY909 (V.O.)
I have a jug of acid with ur name
on it @harpspen

@DEVSLAY (V.O.)
@harpspen fuck off to afganistan u
terrorist #unamerican

@CHRUISTCRACKER (V.O.)
@harpspen i hope ur boyfriend beats
u to death

SUSAN
(horrified)
Who are these people?

MARK
People who watch O'Malley.

SUSAN
How do I write back to them?

Mark takes the phone. PHONE OFF SCREEN.

MARK
You don't. You can't. And
definitely not from my account.

INT. CAMPUS CENTER - MORNING

Harper, still tethered by a power cord, types furiously on
her phone as the Grad Student waits nearby.

@SASSAFRATZER (V.O.)
@harpspen i hope ur dog gets hit by
a car

HARPER (V.O.)
@sassafratzer i don't have a dog,
so that's an empty threat!

SWISH. Tweet sent.

Frances enters, holding a charger, and hurries to Harper.

FRANCES
Sorry it took me forever, I was
super high.

HARPER
Give me that!

She grabs the charger and thrusts it directly into the Grad Student's hands.

GRAD STUDENT
This one isn't mine.

HARPER
They're literally all the same!

Harper goes back to typing.

@DEPCLARKE (V.O.)
@harpspen liberal fascist pussy

HARPER (V.O.)
@depclarke thx pussies are strong
and beautiful

SWISH. Tweet sent.

FRANCES
Hey, so I don't know how to tell
you this but--

HARPER
I already know! Brodbeck put a clip
of me on the O'Malley show and it
went viral and now a bunch of
inbred idiots are trolling me
nonstop!

FRANCES
It's not just that. Someone took a
picture of you here. It's on the
front page of Reddit.

Frances hands Harper her phone.

PHONE ON SCREEN: A blurry picture of Harper texting in the Campus Center. The title reads "#HasHarperWokenUpYet has been on her phone since I got here."

HARPER
(to the Campus Center)
Who the fuck took a picture of me?!
You are violating my privacy! If I
could leave this wall I'd fucking
find you!

FRANCES
Shhh! Someone else might record you
and post that!

HARPER

Frances, there are people who are making fun of me! On the internet! If I don't tell these assholes right from wrong, it'll just reinforce their bad behavior and it'll never end!

Off Frances' worried look.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

Harper sits at a table engrossed in her phone, her untouched food sits in front of her.

PHONE ON SCREEN: She's responding to another tweet.

@SPIKEYYY (V.O.)
@harpspen eat a dick dum bitch

HARPER (V.O.)
@spikeyyy u first

SWISH. Tweet sent. She navigates to her Facebook wall, where someone's posted a video of a screaming goat. She replies.

HARPER (V.O.)
Good to know you haven't changed since high school. Complex societal inequalities are clearly too challenging for you to even attempt to understand as is evidenced by this video. You're a assbag.

BING. Messaged posted.

HARPER
Damn it.

Harper clicks edit.

HARPER (V.O.)
an assbag.

INT. OUTSIDE PRESIDENT TILTON'S OFFICE - DAY

The phone is ringing off the hook. President Tilton's ASSISTANT struggles to answer all the incoming calls.

ASSISTANT
President Tilton's office, please hold. President Tilton's office...
(MORE)

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
I can ask him about getting your
name taken off our building--

INT. PRESIDENT TILTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Dean Gordon sits cowed in the stately office of PRESIDENT TILTON (male, 50's, white, cisgender, silverfox). Tilton stands, towering over the Dean. He's frighteningly calm.

PRESIDENT TILTON
Do you know what my job is? My job
is to travel the country and golf
with very rich Wolcott Alums, then
take their money. Do you know what
your job is?

DEAN GORDON
Dean of Faculty?

PRESIDENT TILTON
No. To allow me to do my job. Right
now, those rich alumni are calling
me, very, very upset, which means
you are very, very bad at your job.
I want this story gone before it
becomes a Jonathan Chait essay.

DEAN GORDON
The student in question is facing a
bias incident conduct hearing next
month--

PRESIDENT TILTON
Make it tomorrow. And Saul? If you
don't contain this, I'll expect
your resignation.

Dean Gordon nods frantically.

INT. INTERCULTURAL HOUSE - DAY

SAFES MEMBERS are packed into the living room and flood out
onto the porch. Harper's on a chair clutching the elephant,
trying to lead the raucous meeting.

SHAUN
People are laughing at us!

HARPER
Everyone -- I have the elephant!

SHAUN

Harper, this video makes us look real fucking bad.

HARPER

You don't have the elephant!

SHAUN

You screaming that "you decide what's racist" just hit over three million views!

HARPER

YOU DON'T HAVE THE FUCKING ELE-- wait, did you say three million? Holy shit. Are you counting re-uploads and Facebook?

SHAUN

We're getting slammed by think piece after think piece. It's all over Medium. I mean, I expected something from The National Review and The Atlantic, but Huffpo and Slate and Jezebel and Vox? Fucking Vox is after us?

The crowd chatters in agreement.

HARPER

Don't -- don't listen to him. He has a personal vendetta against me because I don't want to be his girlfriend!

SHAUN

This has nothing to do with that!

HARPER

And he tried to leverage our sexual relationship for favors from SAFES. Now he's here interrupting my meeting because he's jealous I spent last night at Delta Nu.

SHAUN

(hurt)
You did?

Rumblings from the SAFES Members.

HARPER

Yes, I did. And if you value judge my choices, you are slut shaming. I am not afraid of my sexuality.

SHAUN

We need distance SAFES from this video. And from her.

HARPER

I created SAFES! Without me, none of this exists!

SHAUN

Jesus. Fucking stop already. I'm so sick of the show.

HARPER

The show?

SHAUN

The Harper show.

HARPER

The fuck?

SHAUN

It's a performance. The protests, SAFES, it's just a performance you put on to make yourself look cool.

HARPER

What could possibly make you think I spend any of my time trying to look cool?

SHAUN

Are you. Fucking. Serious.

HARPER

I am fucking serious! I am!

SHAUN

You just call yourself an ally--

HARPER

Fuck you!

SHAUN

--because that makes you sound like a good person! Let's be real--

HARPER

Fuck you! Fuck you!

SHAUN

--the only reason you were hooking up with me is because I'm black.

HARPER

(breaking down)

That's not true! I'm not! It's not a show! I-- I-- I don't know what I'm supposed to do! If I do nothing I'm complicit in a racist system and if I do too much you're saying I'm performing so there's no way to help and now you're mad at me for trying and I can't ask you what to do because it's not your job to explain it to me and I remember when I tried to help you kicked me out of the BSU so I found a different way to help but now you're saying that's not help and you're mad and they're all mad and I'm crying now because any little thing I do gets the whole campus in an uproar and I'm getting mean comments but also hundreds of likes and you're standing here yelling at me for doing it wrong and it's paralyzing!

Stunned silence.

SHAUN

So what?

Beat.

SHAUN (CONT'D)

I'm supposed to feel bad for you?
I'm supposed to feel bad for you.
You're so privileged your only problem is other people's problems.

Shaun turns to the group.

SHAUN (CONT'D)

To save SAFES we have to take it in another direction. All those in favor of Harper stepping down as leader say "inclusion."

CROWD

(resounding, unanimous)

Inclusion!

HARPER
 No! You can't do that! I started
 this group! It's mine!

Frances moves to comfort Harper.

FRANCES
 SAFES is based on radical
 inclusion. It's everyone's.

HARPER
 Fuck you. They know I'm the best
 leader for this group. Follow me --
 the only thing we have to lose is
 our chains!
 (chanting)
 SAFES, united, will never be
 divided!

She canvases the room, trying to get people to join in.
 Nobody responds. Harper looks to Frances, who is frozen.

HARPER (CONT'D)
 (whispering, desperate)
 Frances?
 (loud)
 SAFES, united--

Frances doesn't move. Harper tries to rouse the crowd.

HARPER (CONT'D)
 --will never be divided!
 (whispers)
 Follow me out.
 (loud)
 SAFES, united--
 (whispers)
 C'mon follow me. Start chanting.

Harper marches right out the side door into BRIGHT LIGHT...

EXT. SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

HARPER
 --will never be divided!

Harper's all alone in a small yard covered in the brown grass
 of late fall. The door thuds shut behind her.

INT. TRIGGER ROOM - DAY

Harper turns off the fluorescent lights and drops into a bean bag chair. She lays motionless a moment, then pulls out her phone and masochistically checks her feeds.

PHONE ON SCREEN: Harper opens an e-mail from a Wolcott administrative account.

DEAN GORDON (V.O.)

Dear Ms. Penzig, This e-mail is to inform you that we have rescheduled the bias incident review for your non-peer dispute to tomorrow at 3PM in Carmichael Hall. Please be advised that possible outcomes of disciplinary action include loss of scholarship and housing as well as dismissal from Wolcott. We advise you bring--

Harper hears CHATTING and LAUGHTER coming down the hallway towards the Trigger Room. It's distinctly Susan's voice. Harper bolts out the back door as Susan and some HISTORY PROFESSORS enter.

SUSAN

Think we can burn all this crap yet?

She gestures to a shelf of toys as the Professors laugh.

INT. FRANCES' ROOM - EVENING

Frances doodles on a sketch pad when she hears a KNOCK at the door. She opens it and a crying Harper blows past her.

HARPER

Everyone hates me!

Harper grabs Frances, sobs into her shirt. Frances hugs her.

FRANCES

Hey, hey, it's okay. I'm sorry about SAFES. I don't know why I didn't say anything in the meeting. I froze. I should've defended you.

Harper looks up to Frances with her tear-stained face.

HARPER

Yeah.

FRANCES

Do you... want to... stay in here tonight?

HARPER

Really? That'd be okay?

FRANCES

Sure, it's okay. Yes. Totally.

HARPER

Thanks.

Frances takes Harper's hands in hers. As Harper looks up, Frances suddenly rams her face into Harper's for a kiss. It holds a beat: Frances, eyes closed, sensual. Harper, nose smushed, grossed out. They part.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Frances?

FRANCES

You've been so open about being bi, and how you knew, even though you've never been with a girl... that's how I feel too.

Beat.

HARPER

Are you fucking kidding me?

FRANCES

You're bi... right?

HARPER

Yes. I am! I'm totally bi! But it sucks that someone I thought was my friend only wants to sexually objectify me!

FRANCES

No. I-- I really like you. I've always liked you. I was hoping we could be more than just friends.

HARPER

So were you ever even really my friend or did you just want to hook up with me this whole time? You're as bad as a straight white male.

Frances starts to cry.

FRANCES

Don't say that. Please don't say that.

HARPER

I can't believe you'd try to take advantage of me when I'm at my most vulnerable!

FRANCES

I'm sorry, please don't tell anyone. Please don't. I--

Frances reaches for Harper's hand. Harper yanks it away and runs out of the room, leaving Frances sobbing.

EXT. FRAT ROW - NIGHT

Harper walks through a squad of SCANTILY-CLAD GIRLS headed to the frats. On the Delta Nu porch, she spots Church making out with a BLONDE in a mini-skirt. Harper puts up the hood on her oversized sweatshirt and keeps walking.

INT. TARGET - NIGHT

Smooth jazz. White tile and fluorescent-lit aisles. Harper silently pushes a cart when she sees some COLLEGE KIDS. She heads in the opposite direction.

INT. TARGET DRESSING ROOM - LATER

SERIES OF SCENES:

-Harper wears a faux-designer dress and tucks the tag behind a strap. She takes a picture in the mirror with her phone.

-PHONE ON SCREEN: Harper crops the picture tightly then darkens the edges with a vignette.

-Harper takes out a red solo cup, fills it with iced tea and tosses in a ping-pong ball. She takes a picture.

-Harper jumps and tosses her hair as her PHONE FLASH GOES OFF. Her phone is wedged behind the clothing hook.

-Harper looks at the jumping picture. Not good enough. She repeats the process until she is satisfied.

-PHONE ON SCREEN: She creates a photo collage of the mirror selfie, the beer pong cup, and the dancing pose. It looks like she's out partying. She posts it to Instagram:

HARPER (V.O.)
 #party #college #thegoodlife

EXT. TARGET PARKING LOT - NIGHT

An expansive, nearly empty lot. The store is at half light in the background. It's clearly after closing. Harper sits alone on the curb, scrolling on her phone.

A call comes in: DAD. She picks up.

HARPER
 Hello?
 (listens)
 I'm good. Not much.
 (listens)
 Yeah, there have been protests. How do you know about them?
 (listens)
 On TV? What show?
 (listens)
 There are a lot of comedy shows, Dad. How do you not know--
 (listens)
 No, it's fine. Don't ask Linda. Did they mention any students' names?
 (listens)
 I was just curious. Sure, I'll stay away from the protests.
 (listens)
 Before you go, Mom wanted me to ask you about Christmas.
 (listens)
 No. It's not Thanksgiving this year, you have me for Christmas.
 (listens)
 All the way through New Years. Sorry.
 (listens)
 Okay. Text me if you remember which show it was. Thanks. Bye, Dad.

Call end. Harper looks like she might cry.

PHONE ON SCREEN: She googles "Wolcott late night talk show joke." The results show thumbnails of videos from various talk shows. She's everywhere. She navigates to Instagram. Her photo now has 7.5k likes and 114 comments. She smiles.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Harper walks along campus totally engrossed in her phone. As students stare at her, she walks past a wall of defaced and ripped "Warrior" posters.

DEAN GORDON (PRE-LAP)

The Bias Conduct Review Board will now consider the bias incident filed by Dr. Brodbeck against Ms. Penzig.

INT. LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Dean Gordon, flanked by ADMINISTRATORS, presides over an ad-hoc trial. Susan and Harper sit across from each other in silence. Shaun, Frances, Liz, and some other STUDENTS and PROFESSORS sit in the back.

DEAN GORDON

Dr. Brodbeck, your filing of a bias incident has accused Ms. Penzig of silencing your views based on your political beliefs. Is this accurate?

SUSAN

It is.

DEAN GORDON

The conduct board and myself have reviewed the relevant documents and e-mails you submitted to support your claim, as well as the testimonies from your colleagues which clearly corroborate your version of events. Ms. Penzig, do you wish to have any of your witnesses testify on your behalf?

Harper looks back to Liz, Frances, and Shaun. They scowl. Shaun crosses his arms.

HARPER

No.

DEAN GORDON

Then would you like to say anything in your defense?

HARPER

No. Not in my defense. But I would like to say something.

Harper stands.

HARPER (CONT'D)

When I came to Wolcott I was... lonely. I didn't know anyone. I didn't even know myself. I wanted a community. I needed a community. So I built one for myself and for marginalized people. Because, in a very small way, I understand what it's like to be an outcast.

Liz looks over to Frances and Shaun.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Last night, I realized that my experience here was shaped by the people who supported me. They've changed my life and I hope in some small way I've changed theirs. And I want to thank them. All of this was all worth it if I've made even one person feel a little more included.

DEAN GORDON

Well, Ms. Penzig, as you are not actually refuting this claim, the board has no choice but to impose the heaviest sanctions on you as is consistent with our code of conduct. The board hereby revokes the recognition of The Student Alliance For Equal Speech, as well as dismisses Ms. Penzig from Wolcott, which will be a permanent separation of the student from the university without an opportunity to re-enroll in the future.

LIZ

Sorry, I-- can I say something?

DEAN GORDON

Yes?

LIZ

So I'm not really into taking a stand or anything. But Harper... she went out of her way to defend me. Even when it was annoying, or she went too far, or I didn't want it or whatever, she still tried to help me.

(MORE)

LIZ (CONT'D)

I think you should reconsider and allow her to at least stay at Wolcott.

FRANCES

(blurting out)

Me too!

Frances stands up next to Liz.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Harper's had a major positive impact on my life too. I'm sorry I violated your trust, but you helped me realize something about myself and gave me the courage to finally say: I'm gay.

Frances looks around for approval, people are unfazed.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

So, uh, yeah, I also think she deserves to stay at Wolcott.

Liz and Frances look at Shaun.

SHAUN

What?

Frances nudges him.

SHAUN (CONT'D)

Fine. Harper, you just... frustrate me. But you get shit done. And if I'm being honest, I admire that. I get it. You needed us to be your community. And I think we needed you. I needed you. I'm... sorry. We're proud to be your community.

HARPER

Uh, I wasn't talking about you. You're not my community.

SHAUN

What?

HARPER

This is my community.

Harper holds up her phone.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Why would I care about *you*? You betrayed me. You stole SAFES from me, something it took me *nearly a semester* to build! Last night, I realized this is where I get love and support and some very inspirational memes about feminism. My real friends are here--

She shakes her phone in front of Shaun.

HARPER (CONT'D)

--the rest of you, and the rest of Wolcott are assholes. Except for you Liz, I can't imagine the challenges you've faced.

DEAN GORDON

Okay then. Please know that none of this changes the board's decision and due to the sensitive nature of the situation we are going to expedite the process. These sanctions will go into effect immediately.

Susan smiles.

HARPER

Before we leave this room, I have some demands.

DEAN GORDON

Demands?

HARPER

I demand to be put back in charge of SAFES and I demand my language guide be put into effect in every academic department across the entire school.

DEAN GORDON

I'm sorry, I believe you've misunderstood this situation.

HARPER

Have I? Let me explain "this situation" to you. Last night my dad called me. And my dad *never* calls me.

DEAN GORDON

What does that--

HARPER

He called me because he heard a joke about Wolcott on TV. That means my movement reached *him*. Do you know how many followers I have since I went viral? 956 thousand. Everything I type is seen by 956 thousand people.

Harper looks at Susan, then to the Dean.

HARPER (CONT'D)

I've written an actual letter, stating that I intend to sue the university, Dr. Brodbeck and even you, Dean Gordon, for creating an unsafe, discriminatory, and hostile learning environment.

SUSAN

On what grounds?

HARPER

You don't get it. It doesn't matter. Have you seen all the bad press Wolcott has gotten recently?

Harper holds up her phone.

HARPER (CONT'D)

If I click this button, my letter about suing Wolcott goes out to all my followers. My side of the story will get retweeted and reblogged and podcasted by the people who love me and put on cable news and YouTube vlogs and late night comedy shows by the people who hate me. It doesn't matter if they believe me, it'll be everywhere. One touch and Wolcott's name becomes synonymous with discrimination.

She holds her thumb over her phone like a finger on a detonator.

DEAN GORDON

Oh, dear god.

HARPER

Make me the head of SAFES or I'll send this school's reputation to hell.

SUSAN

You can't be taking this seriously. She's just a narcissist with a Twitter account!

DEAN GORDON

Hold on. Everyone just hold on here. Let's not do anything rash.

Harper's finger hovers over the phone.

DEAN GORDON (CONT'D)

Is it alright if I let all the students and professors go?

HARPER

Dr. Brodbeck stays.

DEAN GORDON

Yes, of course. I'd like to speak with both of you actually. Everyone else out! Now! Quickly!

The students and professors casually exit. The Dean turns back to Susan and Harper.

DEAN GORDON (CONT'D)

I believe there is a way out of this. Susan, if you sign a retraction--

Dean Gordon shuffles through his papers for a form.

DEAN GORDON (CONT'D)

--we can make this all go away.

SUSAN

There's no way I'm signing that.

DEAN GORDON

What if I personally see to it that you get tenure this year and that Ms. Penzig is removed from your class. Everybody wins.

SUSAN

But then she gets away with this! And gets to keep destroying our school!

DEAN GORDON

No, her letter would destroy our school! Wolcott's on the verge of becoming the butt of every joke in the Northeastern College Conference. We could drop five spots in the rankings and start losing students to Hamilton or Colby or, god-forbid, Tufts! Think of the alumni giving! Please, Susan.

Beat.

SUSAN

(to Dean)

Fuck you.

(to Harper)

And definitely fuck you.

HARPER

Fuck you too! I'm gonna do it!

DEAN GORDON

Wait! Ms. Penzig. We can make a deal! What if-- what if-- what if you put the phone down and I'll tell you what I'm prepared to offer.

HARPER

It better be good.

DEAN GORDON

You can keep your status at the university and we will reinstate you as the head of SAFES--

SUSAN

You can't do that!

DEAN GORDON

--and you can oversee the incorporation of the SAFES language guide into the student handbook.

HARPER

Done. I accept.

Harper lowers the phone and clicks it to sleep.

DEAN GORDON

But you have to agree to disable and delete all your social media accounts.

HARPER

You mean I have to stop posting?

DEAN GORDON

No, you'd have to actually delete everything. No Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or whatever else out there exists or will exist during the time you are at Wolcott. You have to stay quiet.

HARPER

That's... that's an infringement on my free speech!

SUSAN

Ha!

Harper wakes her phone again, threateningly.

DEAN GORDON

You get the chance to make all the important changes you want at our school and they'll stay that way as long as you stay offline. Now, please, give me the phone.

Harper considers. Susan looks back and forth between them.

SUSAN

I never thought I'd see the day that you compromised your ideals.

HARPER

I'm not compromising.

SUSAN

You're handing all your power over to the school. To a white man!

DEAN GORDON

Susan, please! Harper...

The Dean steps toward Harper.

HARPER

Don't take another step or I swear, I'll do it!

DEAN GORDON
No, don't do it!

SUSAN
Go ahead and do it!

HARPER
I will! I'll do it!

DEAN GORDON
No!

SUSAN
Yes! Post the letter! So I'll never
have to see your smug face again.
Then I can go back to educating
young minds while you and the
internet debate whether or not a
white guy can eat a burrito!

HARPER
Does he understand the culture that
created the burrito?

SUSAN
The culture?

HARPER
And the context.

SUSAN
The context of a burrito!

HARPER
And the intent!

SUSAN
The intent is he's fucking hungry--

HARPER
So a hungry white guy can do
whatever he wants?

SUSAN
He sure as fuck can eat whatever he
fucking wants you fucking stupid
moron!

HARPER
I'm not stupid! I've got a message!
A message of fucking compassion
that I'll share with millions
starting right fucking now!

Harper hits the post button on her phone. DWOOP.

SUSAN

Good! You just ruined your life!

HARPER

No! I just saved thousands of lives! Because my example--

DEAN GORDON BURSTS INTO TEARS.

DEAN GORDON

Why are you doing this to me?!

They turn to look at the Dean.

DEAN GORDON (CONT'D)

I've been Dean of Faculty for 30 years. 30 years! And I have never ever met a student so disrespectful or a professor so obstinate! I liked this job! And now, because of you two, Tilton is going to fire me! So-- so--

Something behind his eyes clicks over from pathetic to pissed. He's reached the point of no return.

DEAN GORDON (CONT'D)

FUCK YOU! FUCK YOU! That's right! I said fuck! Because you both deserve it! You deserve fuck! You're expelled and you're fired and I want you off this fucking campus by tomorrow and fuck you, you fucking, you fucking-- jerks!

EXT. WOLCOTT CAMPUS - MORNING

The yellow fall sun rises through naked tree branches and brick buildings. Life goes on as normal. A STUDENT tapes a Passovertones acapella flyer over the remains of a warrior poster.

INT. FREEDOM RESTORERS' OFFICES - DAY

A sleek, modern office. Through glass walls, we see Susan talking to William, Christopher, and John from FREE. We can't hear them.

William calmly slides a folded piece of paper across the table. Susan looks at it and is visibly shocked. William puts out his hand. Susan isn't sure if she should shake it.

INT. SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Susan paces around the living room as Mark watches.

SUSAN

--and academia no longer supports free speech, which is what their organization is all about. That's the most important thing.

MARK

But they're conservatives.

SUSAN

It's triple my old salary. We could buy a house.

MARK

You'll be the spokesperson for a bunch of conservatives.

SUSAN

Their political views don't matter because for this one issue, this one time, we're on the same side.
(unconvincing)
It'll be fine. I'll be fine.

EXT. CONWELL HALL - DAY

Shaun, Olenna, the BSU, and SAFES MEMBERS form a human chain around the building. WHITE PROFESSORS are stuck outside.

As Harper walks past, she catches Shaun's eye. Then she gives him the finger. He ignores her.

INT. TRIGGER ROOM - DAY

Harper enters, looking for something. She finds it underneath the table: the bullhorn. She tucks it in her bag.

She picks up a coloring book and some crayons. She sits at the table and draws. She finds it relaxing.

Susan, carrying a cardboard box of her things, walks out of her office and sees Harper sitting there, scribbling in a coloring book. They both stop. They say nothing.

Susan plops her cardboard box down on the table. Her stress ball jangles loose and rolls over to Harper.

Susan looks at the ball, then at Harper. Harper rolls the ball back to Susan, maybe little too hard. Susan takes this as a challenge and sends the ball back at Harper even faster.

Harper picks it up and lobs it to Susan. It harmlessly bounces off her palm. Harper smiles, satisfied--

THEN SUSAN WHIPS the ball towards Harper's head. It barely misses her and knocks a Connect Four to the ground, checkers spilling everywhere.

Harper grabs the nearest throwable object, a mound of Play-Doh, and chucks it at Susan. It misses and sticks to the wall next to her.

Harper and Susan circle the center table.

Susan closes the distance and nails Harper with a beanbag chair. Susan swings again and Harper grabs a hold of it, creating an impromptu tug of war.

HARPER

There's no violence allowed in a safe space!

The beanbag catches a sharp edge of the table and rips open, spilling Styrofoam pellets all over the floor.

It quickly turns into an all out brawl as Harper and Susan fight using the various toys around the room. They destroy everything in the process.

-Harper throws Monopoly houses at Susan.

-Susan mashes Play-Doh into Harper's hair.

-Harper shoots a Nerf bow and arrow gun at Susan's face.

-Susan whips Harper with a blanket.

-Harper attempts to strangle Susan with a Slinky.

-Susan jams a bunch of crayons into Harper's mouth.

-Harper uses a doll to shield herself from a Koosh ball.

-They crash into the photocopier, paper and ink go flying.

-Susan pushes Harper down and knocks over a bookshelf.

SUSAN

Enough! Enough, okay? I'm sick of this!

Susan stops pursuing Harper.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

All of this bullshit only happened because of you. My entire career ruined, and not because you're being marginalized by society, but because you are so goddamn selfish, Harper. You only care about yourself. That's why you have no real friends and that's why everyone hates you.

Harper looks down. She's on the verge of throwing up, or sobbing hysterically or -- she looks up. Quietly:

HARPER

You're a hundred times more selfish than me. A thousand.

Susan is stunned -- what?

HARPER (CONT'D)

All I wanted was two seconds. For people to stop and think for two seconds before saying something that could hurt someone else. Those two seconds of thought could change everything -- for you, for the troll on the internet, for the classmate who dismisses me as a crazy bitch. Discrimination isn't obvious anymore. It's not even conscious. But it's there, deep in our minds -- in all of us. And each time you don't take those two seconds to recognize that, you tell the world that your time is too precious, that you are too important to give even the slightest consideration to others. Think about the things you've called me. "Immature." "Stupid." Empty insults. But they make you feel good. Make you feel like you've won. Like you're better than me. All I'm trying to do is make the world a little less shitty and a little more fair. A place where we treat each other just a little bit better.

(MORE)

