

BEYOND THE GRAVE

An original screenplay by
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BLACK

Heavy breathing. The kind created only by someone running with purpose. Street sounds also fill the air.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

(in Spanish)

It's strange, the memories that stick in our heads. The ones that stand out the most. Especially the first memory. I remember my first memory clearly. I was running.

CUT TO:

1 EXT. MEXICO CITY STREET - DAY 1

FERNANDO (Late Twenties), runs at top speed through a rough part of town on the outskirts of Mexico City. He runs flat out, desperate to get to his destination.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Some remember the first time they saw their Grandmother's face. Some the first time at the beach or their Mother singing to them. For me it was running. Always running.

BLACK:

Title Card: **Fernando**

2 EXT. MEXICO/TEXAS BORDER DESERT - NIGHT 2

The desert night is as cold and black as one could imagine. The stars illuminate just enough to make out the surroundings. Bushes. Desert Plants. Sand.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

The first time we crossed, I was 4. My mother saved all she could in order to leave my father. She said he used to beat her. I don't remember that.

Suddenly a border patrol truck passes and briefly illuminates the desert. In that brief moment we can see people hiding in the bushes. The truck passes and the engine sound fades.

As the desert returns to the dark, the silhouette of people stepping out of the bush appears. They speak to one another in Spanish and with hushed, whispered tones.

In this group are YOUNG FERNANDO and his MOTHER, a woman in her mid twenties.

As they begin their walk through the night, the border patrol truck makes a u-turn and slowly creeps back.

The group of "Crossers" panic and bolt in different directions. Fernando's Mother drags him by the hand urging him to run faster. The boy tries, but just can't keep up.

His Mother finally drops whatever belongings she was carrying and picks him up. She runs hard and never looks back. Disappearing into the desert. Lost in the dark.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS - DAY

3

Fernando and his Mother stand at the door of a Spanish style house in a well to do San Antonio neighborhood. AUNT CARMEN, late fifties, smokes a cigarette and stands at the door. She listens to Fernando's Mother as she tells her who they are, and what they've been through. She wearily listens.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

We made it to my Great Aunt Carmen's house in San Antonio. She lived in the U.S. a long time. My Mother didn't like her very much. But she gave us a room in her house.

CUT TO:

4 INT. AUNT CARMEN'S HOUSE - DAY

4

Aunt Carmen sits on her couch watching Spanish language TV, smoking a cigarette and doting over Fernando. She strokes his hair as he reluctantly eats a bowl of oatmeal.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Her cooking gave me diarrhea. But she was nice to me. She had no grandchildren. I was the closest thing.

Aunt Carmen's Husband, JUAN, late fifties, sits on a recliner. He is heavy and sweaty. He lustfully watches as Fernando's Mother vacuums the carpet. Aunt Carmen sees this and orders her to clean the bedrooms instead.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

My Mother said she was bossy. That she was always yelling at her. But I don't remember that.

*

CUT TO:

5 INT. AUNT CARMEN'S HOUSE - DAY

5

Fernando sits at the dining room table eating Fruit Loops. A small tv sits on the other end of the table. He watches Plaza Sesamo (Sesame Street in Spanish). Behind him we see his mother washing dishes.

Suddenly Juan, comes up behind her grabbing her breast and bottom. She turns and violently pushes him away and slaps him. He comes toward her again. She picks up a nearby vase and smashes it over his head. He collapses to the floor. Fernando is oblivious to all this. He is transfixed by the bright puppets on TV.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

We didn't stay there very long. My Mother said it was because she broke Carmen's favorite vase. But I don't remember that.

CUT TO:

6 INT. ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

6

An American classroom in every way we remember it. Art on the walls. Notes on the blackboard. Kids at desks. Teacher holding court. The children all recite vocabulary words. We see Fernando, now at 7.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

In three years we moved to Houston then Dallas and finally ended up in Albuquerque. My Mother said New Mexico was exactly that. New. New Houses for her to clean. New children for her to care for. Even a new name that she bought from a man in the back of a laundry mat.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY 7

Kids run around in general chaos. Laughing. Jumping. Skipping. Playing tag. All those things we remember. Fernando too is a part of all this.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

It was new for me too. New Friends that I would never see again. New kids that would never know my name. And new teachers that my mother would never meet.

Fernando's attention is broken from play when he looks over at the fence and sees his Mother on the other side. She grips the fence and cries. Fernando stops playing and walks toward his mother.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

My Grandmother died. I don't remember her. She was the one who named me. And the one who told my Mother to go north. We left New Mexico for old one on Oct. 28th. I was in the first grade in America for exactly 56 days.

He looks back at the kids, who continue playing. Oblivious to his exit.

DISSOLVE TO:

8 INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY 8

Mass in a packed Mexican church. The parishioners listen in rapt silence as the Priest blesses the body and blood of Christ. They find peace and hope in the ritual. Solace in faith.

Two altar boys assist in the service. One is Fernando. Now 17. He stands next to the Priest and holds a tray of eucharist. A long line of people form to receive the sacrament.

One by one, faces of all ages, partake in the "body and blood". This includes a very pretty 16 year old girl. She stares at Fernando as she accepts the sacrament and smiles as she walks away. Fernando watches her go.

When he turns back a man in his 40's approaches. He looks slightly disheveled. Perhaps a man who's down on his luck.

He stares at Fernando, who does his best to avoid eye contact. He man moves on, leaving Fernando slightly disturbed. They clearly know each other.

CUT TO:

9 INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - LATER 9

Inside the sacristy later, Fernando and the younger altar boy help the Priest put away his decorative vestments.

They clean up the chalices, put away the communion wafers and store the huge jugs of cheap red wine.

The Priest, dressed in his "street clothes" prepares to leave and reminds Fernando to lock up when he leaves.

The moment the Priest is gone Fernando and the younger boy pour themselves big glasses of wine. They drink. The younger boy is grossed out but keeps drinking. This clearly happens every Sunday.

After the younger boy finishes his glass, Fernando shows him the door. He pours another two glasses of wine.

After a moment a knock at the door. He opens it and reveals the pretty girl that smiles at him earlier. She is CAMILA. Fernando pulls her inside.

They frantically kiss each other as they pull their clothes off in heated youthful lust. They collapse onto the rug on the sacristy floor and have clumsy half naked sex.

They kiss and laugh all the while. Exhilarated in these moments alone. Pretending to be older than they are.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. MEXICO CITY STREET - LATER 10

Camila and Fernando hold hands as they walk away from the church and through the city streets. They walk silently. Looking at each other coyly.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Camila. I remember the taste of her cherry lip gloss. And the smell of soap on her skin. Her grandmother had ordered it special from England and given it to her when she turned fifteen.

Then in Spanish:

CAMILA

My mother said she'd make her roast chicken. It's really good. I told her it was your favorite dish.

Silence.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

My dad is looking forward to meet you. He wants to meet this "friend" I keep talking about. This artist.

FERNANDO

You told him I'm a artist?

CAMILA

Yeah. You are.

FERNANDO

He probably thinks I'm a loser who can't even pay for dinner.

CAMILA

He doesn't. He's seen your work. He liked it.

FERNANDO

Really? Which one?

CAMILA

The one by the supermarket.

FERNANDO

The rooster. That's a good one.

CAMILA

Too bad they painted over it already.

FERNANDO

What?! When?! I just did that one.

CAMILA

Yesterday.

FERNANDO

They're covering them faster. Fuckers don't know beauty.

They reach the front door of Camila's apartment building.

CAMILA

So when should I tell them you're coming for dinner?

Fernando looks like a trapped animal. Fear in his eyes. Then smiles at Camila and kisses her.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Cherry lip gloss. English soap. She was the only one I let myself love. This is my clearest memory of her.

Fernando pulls himself away.

FERNANDO

How about next week after mass?

CAMILA

(overjoyed)
Really?

Fernando nods.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

Okay. You better show up.

She kisses him again and goes to her door.

CAMILA (CONT'D)

No excuses.

Fernando makes the sign of the cross.

FERNANDO

I promise.

He watches her slowly disappears behind the large door. Sighs.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. MEXICO CITY STREET - NIGHT

11

Spray paint cans shaking, breaks the silence of the night. A hand steadily guides the cans across the white wall of a convenience store. This isn't tagging or cheap graffiti but actual art.

One man paints while the LOOKOUT keeps an eye out for police. The painter wears a bandana not only to protect his lungs but his identity.

LOOKOUT
(In Spanish)
Hurry up, Man. Hurry up.

The painter continues at his pace. No change in urgency. No pressure. He flies through cans. Dropping them as he goes. He is feeling this moment. This release.

LOOKOUT (CONT'D)
Come on. Hurry. I think someone's coming.

The Painter swipes the wall a few more times then dumps the last can. He backs up to take in his work. He removes his bandana. It's Fernando.

LOOKOUT (CONT'D)
You done?

FERNANDO
(Impressed with himself)
Yes.

The work on the wall is part Aztec hieroglyphic part Russian Worker propaganda art. The word NATIVE is written below it.

The Lookout pulls out an instant camera.

LOOKOUT
(Re: pose)
You ready?

Fernando leans against the wall next to his work. The Lookout snaps the picture. Just as:

Police lights flash. The cops pop out of their squad car and give chase. Fernando and his Lookout scramble. Running top speed through the streets.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
I knew that it wouldn't be there long. That a couple coats of primer would cover it soon. That it would most likely only live on in my mind. But I remember making it. How it made me feel. That I belonged somewhere. These moments I remember most of all.

Fernando and his Lookout weave through alleys. When:

FERNANDO
I'll call you tomorrow.

LOOKOUT
(handing over the picture)
Okay.

The two split up at the end of the alley and really turn on the speed. Leaving the cops behind and totally out of breath. It's a joke. Fernando and his friend are like a fart in the wind. Gone.

CUT TO:

12

INT. FERNANDO'S APT. - LATER

12

Fernando quietly enters the modest flat that he shares with his Mother. He tries to move to his room with ninja stealth but: The lights go on and his Mother, (now mid 30's) is standing in the doorway smoking a cigarette. Busted.

FERNANDO
(frozen)
Hi Mom.

MOTHER
Where were you?

FERNANDO
With Ernesto.

She walks toward him.

MOTHER
You know I don't like him. He's no good. His parents are trash.

Fernando shrugs as he tries to walk past her.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
That girl, Camila kept calling here tonight. I don't like that either. She should have some self respect and stop chasing after you like that. Don't fill her head with things. Make her promises. I know how boys are. Saying things to get...

She looks down and sees paint on Fernando's hands. She grabs them and he quickly pulls them away.

FERNANDO
Ernesto was painting his brother's bike.

His Mother hauls off and smacks him. Fernando takes it.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

It was a bike.

She smacks him again. Harder.

MOTHER

I told you. No More. Do you want
to end up like your father?
Getting locked up for something
stupid?! Huh?!

Silence.

FERNANDO

Sorry.

MOTHER

(softens)

I expect more from you. Something
different than the people around
here.

She reaches out to caress where she slapped him. He pulls
away. She steps closer to him and touches his face.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(gently)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean... did
you eat today?

Fernando musters a nod.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Okay. Go to bed.

Fernando crosses to his room. He stops at the door.

FERNANDO

He was at mass again.

MOTHER

Did he say something to you?

FERNANDO

No. He never does.

MOTHER

Just ignore him. Like always.

FERNANDO

Maybe I should talk to him.

MOTHER

No. Ignore him. We never needed him before. We don't need him now.

Fernando goes.

CUT TO:

13

INT. FERNANDO'S ROOM - SAME

13

Fernando enter his very neat room. The place appears as orderly as an army barrack and as sterile as a hospital.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I'd been in that room for ten years. The longest I'd ever been in one place.

The walls are painfully bare. He closes his door and the back of it is covered in Polaroids of himself next to his artwork. He takes the newest photo and tapes it next to all the others. A makeshift gallery.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

We hung no family pictures on the walls. No crucifixes. No certificates of merit or plaques from soccer teams I had been on. It wasn't allowed.

He flops on his bed, kicks off his shoes and puts on some headphones. He turns on some tunes and lays out.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

The furniture wasn't even ours. Like we never really lived there. We were just watching someones place until they returned from a long trip. A safari. Sailing the pacific. A bike tour through India.

His eyes begin to slowly shut. Through the music we hear the distant sound of a phone ringing. Fernando's eye close. We are left in: **BLACK**

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Like we never existed. Always ready to run.

FADE IN:

14

INT. FERNANDO'S ROOM - LATER

14

Fernando is shaken out of his deep sleep by his Mother. It's still dark out. She is fully dressed. There is urgency in her voice and manner.

MOTHER

Fernando wake up. Get up. Now.

FERNANDO

(Groggily)

What's the matter?

MOTHER

Get up now. Put your shoes on.

FERNANDO

Why?

MOTHER

(No time for this)

Your shoes, now! Get up.

He grabs the shoes slowly and begins to put them on. She begins to pull his photos off the back of the door. This wakes him up.

FERNANDO

What are you doing?!

Tries to stop her.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

Stop! That's mine! My work!!!

MOTHER

We have to take it down now!

FERNANDO

You're tearing them! That's all I have left of them! Why are you doing this?!

The phone rings. His Mother finally stops. Frozen by the ringing.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

What is it?

MOTHER

(fear in her voice)

They found you. The police. They know who you are. They found you. They'll take you away.

(MORE)

MOTHER (CONT'D)

They'll take you away from me.

(grabs his face)

They know where we live. They know. I told you this would happen.

FERNANDO

(pulling his face away)

I covered my face. They can't know.

MOTHER

They know your name Fernando. They know.

He realizes what this means. Sits at the edge of the bed. Time to run again. She opens the door and leaves.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(as she goes)

Five minutes.

CUT TO:

15 INT. FERNANDO'S APT. - LATER

15

Fernando exits his room dressed and carrying a backpack stuffed to the gills. The apartment feels even more bare than before. His mother waits by the open front door. He crosses to her, looks back at the empty place. The lights go off. The door closes behind him. **BLACK**

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Like we never existed.

CUT TO:

16 I/E. L.A. BUS - MORNING

16

A man sleeps with his head leaning against the bus window. It is Fernando, now **27**. The sun has barely risen and he is already heading to work. He is fully knocked out. Mouth open, kind of out.

The bus stops. A hand grabs his shoulder and shakes him. It's his Mother. She is now ten years older and heavier. The years have not been good to her.

MOTHER

Wake up. You'll miss your connection.

He looks around and sees it's his stop. He also sees that his connecting bus is already there. He kisses his mother, jumps up off the bus and hightails it to make the connection.

He does, and disappear behind the closing bus doors.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. PASADENA - LATER

17

The bus pulls up to a stop in an affluent Pasadena neighborhood. A stream of women housekeepers, some in uniform, step off the bus and spread out toward their respective homes.

Fernando's Mother steps off too. Zombie-like, she follows some of the women up a winding road leading to the string of mansions at the top of the hill.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

It was in these years that my mother truly vanished. A gear in an invisible machine that she willingly stepped into. Becoming faceless was the price for a better life. A small sacrifice she thought.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. GOLDBERG'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

18

Fernando's Mother punches numbers into a keypad. Huge mansion gates open to reveal a gorgeous home. The grounds are lush and the building stately. Whoever lives here has true wealth. She enters.

CUT TO:

19 INT. GOLDBERG'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

19

The lights come up in what can only be described as the most beautiful kitchen in the world. Marble. Sub Zeroes. Wine fridges. Espresso machines. Everything is custom and beyond high end.

Fernando's Mother gets right to work preparing for when the owners awaken. Coffee has to be made. Eggs prepped. Bread sliced. Oranges squeezed.

Her hands move with precision. She's done this a million times. Muscle memory is in place. Thought is almost erased.

IN THE NEXT SECTION IT WILL APPEAR AS IF FERNANDO'S MOTHER IS FADING FROM JOB TO JOB. FINALLY RETURNING TO THE GOLDBERG'S KITCHEN PREPARING BREAKFAST.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

In ten years my mother had cooked.
Cleaned. Ironed. Sewed.
Unclogged. Bandaged. Disciplined.
Reassured. And lied for people who
knew nothing about her. Sometimes
not even her real name.

CUT TO:

20

I/E. LA BUS - SAME

20

Fernando rides the bus to work. He looks out at the city and while stopped, sees a storefront covered in gang graffiti. The shop owner paints over it with primer. Trying to erase the ugly images those symbols conjure.

The paint roller bringing peace to a chaotic world.

TIME LAPSE SHOT. WE SLOWLY PUSH IN FROM A WIDE SHOT TO A CLOSE UP OF FERNANDO'S FACE.

Fernando sits on the bus for his daily ride to work. The world speeding up around him. A steady stream of passengers flow on and off the bus.

The days and nights pass. The bus route repeats continuously.

Through all of this Fernando is awake. His eyes gently blinking. As if he is trying to wake from a nightmare and the next blink will bring him out of it.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I hadn't picked up a paint can
since leaving Mexico. I had
promised my mother that I would
never put us in danger again.

CUT TO:

21 EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - LATER 21

Fernando tends to the lawn and garden of the quiet residents of Forest Lawn Cemetery. Clipping. Trimming. Pulling weeds and laying down soil. Pruning bushes and cutting flowers. Throwing out bouquets left for loved ones.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Instead it was shears and trimmers and everything else that could cut me from that life. These years were all a blur. All the same. Quiet. Still.

Pre Lap the next scene.

CUT TO:

22 INT. TERESA'S ROOM. - NIGHT 22

Fernando gives his final few thrusts while he lays on top of TERESA. She's a pretty young dark skinned Latina. They both quietly moan then abruptly stop. They lay motionless for a moment then he rolls off and settles in beside her. Both naked and spent.

Chopin's Impromptu in F-sharp OP.36 is being played on what sounds like a Casio keyboard in the next room. They don't speak. Then:

TERESA

(in Spanish and reluctant)
You can stay the night, if you like.

FERNANDO

Can't. Work.

Quiet again.

TERESA

They promoted me. I can wait tables now. It's better money. But we have to pool our tips, which sucks.

FERNANDO

Still good.

TERESA

I have to learn the names of the wines. That's the hard part.

(MORE)

TERESA (CONT'D)

The Italian ones are easy. The French and German ones are tricky...

FERNANDO

(re: the music)
What's that?

TERESA

The kid in the next room.
(banging on the wall)
She plays too late!
(yelling to the kid)
And I'm gonna tell her mother if she doesn't stop now!

The playing stops.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Her mother works all night. She plays till she falls asleep sometimes. Gets annoying.

Fernando gets up and begins to dress.

TERESA (CONT'D)

We don't have to come here if it bothers you. We can go to your place next time. I'd like to see where you live.

FERNANDO

That's not a good idea.

Quiet again.

TERESA

You married or something?

He buttons his shirt. Says nothing.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Forget it. I don't want to know.

He's now dressed. He turns to her. Leans in. Kisses her mouth. She tries to pull him in. He gently grabs her hands and stops her.

FERNANDO

(softer)
I'm not married. I live with my mother. I'll call you. Goodnight.

CUT TO:

23 INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

23

Fernando steps out of Teresa's room and into the hall of this large run down single family house. It's late and quiet. Across from him is a room with no door. A thin curtain is the only privacy there is.

He moves the curtain and see that the room is filled with bunk beds stacked three high. It's dark and the inhabitants are all asleep.

He is startled when a door opens from the room next to Teresa's. A LITTLE GIRL, Maybe 9, pokes her head out. She wears glasses and pajamas.

They stare at each other for a moment.

FERNANDO

Hello.

LITTLE GIRL

Hello.

Awkward silence.

FERNANDO

(trying)

Did you need something?

LITTLE GIRL

No.

FERNANDO

Okay. Goodnight.

She slips back into the room and closes the door behind her.

Fernando walks toward the front door. He passes more rooms with more people. They sleep wherever they can. Cots. Beds. Even on the floor.

He leaves.

CUT TO:

24 EXT. L.A. STREETS - LATER

24

Fernando walks home through desolate streets. No one is walking. Few are driving. It's as if the city is his. He passes the storefront's newly painted roll gate. He stops and looks at this perfect blank canvas. Lost in the possibilities. It calls to him. Then: No! He can't. He begins to walk again.

Suddenly, a squad car pulls up along side him. Radio chatter can be heard from the car. The cops scope him out. At first he tries to ignore them. That's too suspicious. Instead he turns and looks right at them. They stare back. Then: They drive off. Fernando continues home. Relieved.

CUT TO:

25 INT. FERNANDO'S ROOM - MORNING 25

The silence is broken by a blaring alarm clock. 5AM. He hops up and sits at the edge of the bed, kills the alarm and rises to get his day started.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. L.A. BUS STOP - LATER 26

Fernando and his Mother stand waiting with a few others for the bus. His Mother chats up other women who also waits. Before long the bus arrives, the doors open and they begin to board.

Fernando's Mother still chatting with the woman in front of her, takes a step up into the bus and suddenly stops in her tracks. Her knees give out and she immediately falls back and crumples to the ground. She grips her chest and violently convulses.

Fernando and a few of the passengers try to pick her up. Fernando is frozen and in shock. He doesn't know what to do and it shows.

The BUS DRIVER hops out and helps lay her on the sidewalk and clears the others back from her.

BUS DRIVER

She's having a heart attack.
Someone call 911.

He begins chest compressions.

Fernando holds her hand which she grips tightly. He knows this is bad. The Bus Driver continues to work furiously.

She stares at Fernando fiercely. The look in her eye has purpose. She may be slipping away but Fernando knows exactly what the look is telling him. He shakes his head. No. Her look continues. He shakes his head again. No. Tears roll down her eyes as the Bus Driver presses down on her chest.

Run. Run. Run.

Again he won't. Shakes his head. No.

With every compression from the Bus Driver the strength in both her hands and eyes fade. She pulls her hand away from Fernando and pushes him away. He reaches for her hand again and again she pushes him away.

Finally her eyes fade and her hand drops to her side. Her body has gone totally limp.

The Bus Driver stops his attempts to resuscitate. He looks up to Fernando. The world has slowed to a crawl.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)

She's gone. I'm sorry. Is she your mother?

Fernando frozen.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)

Hey? Did you know her? Is she your mother?

Fernando slowly nods. The Bus Driver gently reaches out and touches Fernando's shoulder.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)

(sympathetic)

I'm so sorry. I have to call this in. Do you have family you need to...

With that Fernando runs off. With tears rolling down his face he does the only thing that he's ever known. Run.

He runs through the streets of L.A., with no destination and no plan except to put as much distance between him and the questions that would be asked. Questions that would lead to deportation.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

My Mother's name was Liliana Padilla. Not Maria, Juana or Lupe. She was never late for work. She never took a sick day. Never paid the rent late. Never borrowed a cent she couldn't pay back. Never drank too much. Never did drugs. Never slept with a man to make her life easier. She never owned a car or house. Had never been to the theatre or stepped inside a museum. Hadn't loved a man other than my Father.

(MORE)

FERNANDO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
She never talked about her
childhood or what her dreams were.
She never existed here. Not until
the day she died on that sidewalk
in Boyle Heights. She didn't have
to run. Not anymore. But me? I
had to keep going.

FADE OUT.

Title Card: **Elena**

27 EXT. L.A. STREETS - MORNING 27

Franz Liszt's Grandes Etudes de Pagnini S, 141-3 plays.

Dawn in Los Angeles. The sun is just showing itself. The
Traffic begins to swell and people begin to flood the street.
They board buses. Pack the platforms waiting for the metro.
File onto escalators. Squeeze in elevators. Ride bicycles.
Jog. Walk to work. And some are just getting home.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. L.A. BUS STOP - SAME 28

The bus stop is packed with waiting passengers. A bus pulls
in and the people quickly line up to get on. At the back
exit a couple of people get off. Including a pretty woman in
her late twenties.

She is dressed in the type of clothing wore by the custodial
staff at a hotel or hospital. She looks exhausted and drags
herself home.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
Not all the memories that stick in
my head are mine. Some were told
to me.

CUT TO:

29 EXT. TERESA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 29

She approaches a familiar place. It's the house Teresa
shares with all those people. Before entering she says hello
to an elderly neighbor next door having her morning coffee.

CUT TO:

30 INT. TERESA'S HOUSE - SAME 30

Inside the house is buzzing with people preparing for work or children preparing for school. Mother's dress the younger ones as the older ones finish up any last minute school work.

The Woman greets them with a "Good Morning" as she passes. They return the greeting. She passes Teresa's closed door and arrives at the next one down.

CUT TO:

31 INT. ELENA'S ROOM - SAME 31

She opens it and reveals the little girl with the glasses that saw Fernando standing in the hallway. Her name is ELENA. The Woman is ELENA'S MOTHER. Elena sits at the edge of the bed sketching in a notebook.

She smiles when she sees her Mom. Elena only speaks in English, while her Mother only speaks in Spanish.

ELENA

Good Morning.

Elena's Mom drops her purse on the floor and begins stripping her clothes off.

ELENA'S MOTHER

Morning. Are you still doing homework?

ELENA

No. Just drawing my father.

Elena's Mother rolls her eyes as she continues to undress.

ELENA'S MOTHER

Ugh. Not this again.

ELENA

So, did he have blue eyes? Or brown?

ELENA'S MOTHER

Elena, please.

ELENA

(keeps sketching)
I'll make them blue this time.

Elena's Mother sees multiple sketches around the room. They are all of men with half drawn faces.

ELENA'S MOTHER
You're wasting so much paper.

ELENA
We're making a family tree in
class.

Elena's Mother takes that in. She turns to Elena gently:

ELENA'S MOTHER
Brown. They were brown.

ELENA
(switching crayons)
Oh.

ELENA'S MOTHER
(kneels by Elena)
We're okay, right?

ELENA
(still sketching)
Yeah.

ELENA'S MOTHER
Look at me.

Elena stops sketching and engages.

ELENA'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
We never needed him before. We
don't need him now. Understand?

Elena nods.

ELENA'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
Did you eat breakfast yet?

ELENA
Lucky Charms.

Elena's Mom slips into sweatpants and a YALE sweatshirt.

ELENA'S MOTHER
Elena, I don't like that stuff.
It's all processed. I left
tortillas and black beans for you.
All you had to do is heat it up.

ELENA
Lucky Charms is easier.

ELENA'S MOTHER

At your age I could already make
eggs and bacon. Did you practice
last night?

ELENA

Yes.

Elena's Mom puts on some Uggs.

ELENA'S MOTHER

You brush your teeth?

Elena breathes into her Mom's face. Her Mom nods in
approval.

ELENA'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Ears?

Elena shows her Mom that they are clean.

ELENA'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Did you go to the bathroom?

ELENA

Yes.

ELENA'S MOTHER

Made your lunch?

ELENA

Lunchables.

ELENA'S MOTHER

(with a smile)

Then what are we waiting for?

Elena's Mom gets up grabs Elena's ridiculously heavy school
bag and they head out the door.

CUT TO:

32

EXT. L.A. STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

32

Elena and her Mother hold hands as they make their way toward
the school bus stop.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Elena's Mother left Mexico when she
was 16 and 6 months pregnant. She
received a 2 week travel visa when
her Father bribed a secretary at
the consulate.

(MORE)

FERNANDO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A rubber stamp and signature was all it took for him to send his only daughter and future grandchild away. She arrived in Los Angeles with a Baby in her belly and \$1200 in a Hello Kitty backpack.

They arrive at the stop and Elena joins her friends. The bus arrives and the kids all pile in. Elena's Mother watches the bus pull away and makes her way back to the house and to bed.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Her mother went into labor in the middle of the night. She took a cab to the closest hospital and was alone in the delivery room. She went back to work 5 days later.

CUT TO:

33 INT. L.A. PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM - LATER 33

The kids in the classroom all stand and recite the pledge of allegiance. As Elena speaks aloud, the fingers of her right hand over her heart tap gentle as if playing an imaginary piano.

CUT TO:

34 INT. L.A. PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM - LATER 34

The kids all sit at their desks scribbling notes. Elena is totally focused on her work. As she writes the fingers on her other hand again play an imaginary piano.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Her mother made sure she listened to American radio and watched American cartoons and read American comic books.

CUT TO:

35 EXT. L.A. PUBLIC SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - LATER 35

At recess Elena and some girls jump rope. As Elena turns her side of the rope her other hand again plays against her pant leg.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

She wanted her to like westerns and pick up trucks and baseball and hotdogs and country music and Nascar.

CUT TO:

36 INT. L.A. PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARY - LATER 36

Elena sits quietly reading a Nancy Drew mystery. She is totally engrossed, but the fingers never stop.

FERNANDO

She wanted her to have play dates and pool parties and sleep overs. Go to dances. Pass notes to boys. Braid hair and paint toe nails. And she did.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. L.A. PUBLIC SCHOOL ENTRANCE - LATER 37

The end of the school day is upon us. Kids are being loaded onto buses and parents wait in student pick up lines. Its organized chaos.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

When Elena started the first grade her Mother found a crumpled up flyer in her backpack that advertised a bake sale, a trip to Washington D.C. and after school piano lessons for \$145 a month.

CUT TO:

38 INT. L.A. PUBLIC SCHOOL CORRIDOR - SAME 38

Elena carries her school bag and wheels another bag behind her as she walks down the schools main corridor. Again her fingers never stop tapping away.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

She was about to tear it up like all the other notices and bulletins she had found before. But she stopped herself.

CUT TO:

39 INT. L.A. PUBLIC SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER 39

Elena pushes open the doors of the school's auditorium. She enters the empty hall and walks by the empty rows of seats. And elderly woman stands by a large grand piano on stage, arranging sheet music.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Her mother hated the idea of Elena being locked up alone in that room for all those hours while she worked. So she pulled the money out of an old padded bra and put it in an envelope.

40 INT. L.A. PUBLIC SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER 40

Elena now sits and plays the piano on stage. The older woman sits on a chair next to her and turns the sheet music as needed.

Elena has been playing the Franz Liszt piece we have been hearing this whole time.

Her hands move across the keys with power and emotion and grace. Her speed and technique can only be called genius. She is nothing less than a virtuoso.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

90 minutes a day, 5 days a week. That's all it was at first. A way to kill time. By the third grade she could play Chopin and Mozart. By the fourth grade she could play anything put in front of her with just a glance at the sheet music. 90 minutes a day, 5 days a week would change her life.

Elena reaches the powerful end of the tune. Her flawless performance matching anything at Carnegie Hall. The finale leaves her breathless.

She smiles at her teacher. Then:

ELENA

(catching her breathe)
Okay. Let's to do it again.

CUT TO:

41 INT. LA BUS - LATER 41

Elena sits on a crowded Metro bus doing homework. Her books open on her lap. She tries to balance them but the bus's movement makes it hard to concentrate.

She looks out the window and sees the same painted storefront seen by Fernando.

The streets are crowded with rush hour traffic. The sidewalks filled with weary people trying to get home.

She watches them for a moment. Wondering if this will be her life too. Constantly moving to survive.

CUT TO:

42 INT. ELENA'S ROOM - NIGHT 42

Elena lays on the bed she shares with her mother. She wears pajamas and reads a book while she plays Chopin's Impromptu in F-Sharp Op. 36 on an electric keyboard with her free hand. She can hear the muffled sound of sex coming through the thin wall separating her and Teresa's room.

ELENA
(shaking her head)
Gross.

The moaning from the other room comes to a end.

ELENA (CONT'D)
Finally.

Now only muffled voices bleed through. Elena continues to play. Suddenly she hears banging on the wall and Teresa's voice is heard clearer.

TERESA (O.S.)
(muffled)
She plays too late! And I'm gonna
tell her mother if she doesn't stop
now!

Elena stops playing. She gets off the bed and puts her keyboard under the bed.

ELENA
(to herself)
I was only trying to cover up the
sounds of you moaning. Nobody
wants to hear that. But you don't
see me banging on your wall.

She lays back on the bed and picks up her book. It's Fifty Shades of Grey. Elena reads a particularly dirty section of the book out loud to herself. After a moment:

ELENA (CONT'D)

Now, I have to pee.

She gets up, opens her door and steps out. She finds Fernando standing in the hall. She remains by her door. Frozen.

FERNANDO (O.S.)

Hello.

ELENA

Hello.

FERNANDO (O.S.)

(trying)

Did you need something?

ELENA

No.

FERNANDO (O.S.)

Okay. Goodnight.

She slips back into the room and closes the door behind her. She stands by the door for a moment.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

In that moment Elena realized that she had never spoken to an adult man without her mother present. It was the first memory we would share.

Elena hears the front door shut. She slowly opens her room door and quietly slips out to the bathroom.

CUT TO:

43

INT. ELENA'S ROOM - MORNING

43

Elena is shaken awake by her mother.

ELENA'S MOTHER

You overslept! Get up!

Elena's Mother moves around the room frantically gathering her school supplies and bags.

ELENA'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
Get moving! Get out of bed.

Elena sits up. And watches her mom buzz around the room.

ELENA
Can I stay home with you today?

ELENA'S MOTHER
(still preparing)
You haven't missed a day. Don't
you want to keep your perfect
attendance? Are you sick?

ELENA
I'm really tired.

Elena's Mother places a hand on her forehead.

ELENA'S MOTHER
No fever. Get up and get dressed.
You can't miss school. I need to
sleep before work and I know you
are going to keep me up. Come on.

Elena slowly gets up.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. L.A. STREETS - LATER

44

Elena and her mother race toward the school bus. It's doors
are closed and begins to pull away.

Elena's Mother catches it and bangs on the door. It stops
and let's Elena on. Once inside, the bus pulls away.

Elena's Mother walks back toward the house. She greets
people she passes. People going to work. Parents walking
their children to school. She is exhausted. In desperate
need of sleep.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
Elena's mother worked two jobs.
One shampooing and blowdrying hair.
The other, as part of a night
cleaning crew in an office
building. 17 hours a day. 85 hours
a week.

She reaches the house and heads inside.

CUT TO:

45 INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - SAME 45

Elena's Mother walks into a still busy house. The families who share the house all respectfully greet each other and try not to get in each other's way.

Children in school uniforms sit at the kitchen table eating breakfast. A line of patient tenants has formed outside the bathroom. Babies are tended to as mothers get their older children ready. This is truly a full house.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Growing up she always wanted to be a nurse. She was a good student. Eager to learn. But circumstances changed and she adapted.

CUT TO:

46 INT. ELENA'S ROOM - SAME 46

Elena's Mother strips off her work clothes and puts on sweatpants and her Yale hoodie.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Adapted to little sleep and little money. 17 Hours a day. 85 hours a week. Every day feeling the same. Blurring into one another.

She pulls her curtains closed and lays on the bed. Finally the moment she's been waiting for. Sleep.

BLACK:

FERNANDO (V.O.)

But not today. Today was different.

47 MUFFLED VOICES SHOUT. GENERAL PANIC AND SCREAMS. FOOTSTEPS RUNNING THROUGH THE HOUSE. 47

48 INT. ELENA'S ROOM - LATER 48

Elena's Mother is awoken by the sound of chaos outside her door. She gets up and reluctantly opens her door.

CUT TO:

49 INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - SAME 49

She steps out into the hall. The other tenants run around in a panic. They say to one another: "La MIGRA", "Don't open the door". "Let's get out the back." Outside someone is pounding on the door. It's ICE (Immigration Customs Enforcement).

ELENA'S MOTHER
(to Teresa)
What's going on?

TERESA
Immigration. What do we do?

Without missing a beat, Elena's Mother runs back into the room.

CUT TO:

50 INT. ELENA'S ROOM - SAME 50

She shuts the door and locks it. She takes a breath and contains her panic. She quickly pulls clothing from a dresser. At the bottom of a drawer she finds a tampon box. From the box she pulls an envelope marked "ELENA".

She pulls a backpack from the closet and stuffs the envelope and some clothing into it. She also stuffs sheet music and an iPod into one of the pockets. She zips it up.

She looks around the room. Anything else? Did she forget something?

Suddenly the pounding on the front door stops.

CUT TO:

51 INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 51

Elena's Mother reemerges from her room, without the bag. She and a few other tenants stand there silently. Some cry. Some whisper "the house is surrounded.", "No where to run.", "I can't go back."

Elena's Mother looks at the face of a baby being held by a frightened mother. Oblivious to what is happening. Lucky.

Suddenly the pounding on the door starts again. Everyone inside jumps from fear. No one is sure what to do. The whispers begin again. "What do we do?", "Do we open the door? Let them in?", "Someone tell them to go away."

While the tenants talk to one another, an old woman who has been sitting in the corner, gets up and crosses to the door.

She begins unlocking the front door. Elena's Mother sees this and screams out:

ELENA'S MOTHER
DON'T OPEN THE DOOR!

But it's too late the Old woman swings the door open and ICE agents storm into the house. Weapons drawn. Agents yelling in Spanish "Down!" "Get Down!"

The tenants do this.

Elena's Mother takes a knee. Agents make their way through the house looking for more people. She closes her eyes hoping this is just a nightmare. No. It's not.

ELENA'S MOTHER (CONT'D)
(a whisper)
Elena.

BLACK:

52 EXT. L.A. STREETS - LATER

52

Elena walks home alone from school. She is almost tipping over from the weight of her back pack. Even so, her steps are quick and deliberate. She avoids making eye contact with anyone. She has only one objective: Get home.

CUT TO:

53 EXT. ELENA'S HOUSE - LATER

53

Elena approaches her house and is immediately uneasy. The house is dark. The usual volume of tenants is missing.

She sees that the front door has a pink notice stapled to it. She looks around the neighborhood. All is quiet. She approaches the front door and pulls the notice off. It's an INS declaration. The front door is padlocked shut.

Then: Ppppppssssshhhhtttt. Elena turns and sees a neighbor calling her from a window. It's an OLD WOMAN. She waves Elena away from the house.

OLD WOMAN
(in Spanish)
What are you doing? They took them
away.
(MORE)

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
You have to go somewhere else.
Immigration came today. You
shouldn't stay there.

ELENA
(trying Spanish)
My mother?

OLD WOMAN
(after a moment)
Everyone. They are all gone.

A horror creeps across Elena's face. A pain. An uncontrollable fear.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
Don't go in! They may come back.

Elena needs to see for herself. She drops her school bag and:

CUT TO:

54 EXT. ELENA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 54

Elena is around back. She pushes open a window. Slowly crawls through it into the house.

CUT TO:

55 INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 55

Elena appears from the bathroom. She looks around quietly to find that the house has been ripped apart.

Clothes, books and papers are scattered everywhere. She looks into the other rooms as she makes her way toward her own. Kids homework and artwork lay on the floor.

She passes Teresa's room. Everything has been gone through. She reaches her door. It's open.

CUT TO:

56 INT. ELENA'S ROOM - SAME 56

Inside, clothes are hanging out of drawers, sheets and towels are crumpled on the floor. The bed is stripped bare.

Elena drops onto the bed. She begins to truly realize that she is alone. She starts to cry.

Just then she hears someone at the front of house. She freezes.

CUT TO:

57 INT. ELENA'S HOUSE - SAME

57

Elena pops her head out of her room. She looks out toward the front door and see a shadow on the floor outside. Then calls out.

ELENA
(through the tears)
Hello?

The shadow stop. Whispers begin. Barely audible Spanish.

ELENA (CONT'D)
Hello?

The shadow move away from the door. She can hear the footsteps as they walk off the front porch.

Elena, startled, retreats back into her room, slamming the door behind her.

CUT TO:

58 INT. ELENA'S ROOM - SAME

58

She locks her door and presses against it with all her might. As if an imaginary monster lurks on the other side. She is frightened, alone and has nowhere to go. And she knows this.

She raises her head and looks at the door. Her tears slowly stop. She backs away from the door and sees that a note was written on it with lipstick.

"La bolsa" (The Bag) "Te amo" (I love you).

Elena steps toward the door. She reaches out and touches her Mother's lipstick then touches it to her lips. She turns and crosses to the bed.

She pulls it away from the wall. Behind it is a heating vent. She pries it open. She pulls the backpack from inside the wall. It's her mother's Hello Kitty backpack. She opens it. And pulls out the envelope.

Elena opens the envelope and pulls out a typed letter. The letter includes instructions. Steps in a detailed plan.

"DON'T BE SCARED. REMEMBER WHAT WE PRACTICED. FOLLOW THE PLAN. I WILL BE BACK. I WILL FIND YOU. GO TO SCHOOL. PRACTICE. EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY. FOLLOW THE PLAN.

Elena sits on the bed. She slowly wipes away the tears. She takes a deep breath. Pulls out her pre-paid cellphone and dials a programmed number.

ELENA

(best phone voice)

Hello, Mrs. Jennings. This is Elena Perez. Yeah, I'm good. It's just... Sorry to bother you, but my mom has to work a few double shifts this week and she doesn't want me to be alone. Yeah. She was wondering if I can have a sleep over with Maya? She would ask herself but her English isn't very good. Yes, three night are good. She gave me money too. For groceries. Okay. Thank you, Mrs. Jennings. Okay, I'll see you tonight.

She hangs up. Sits for a moment. Then dials another programmed number.

ELENA (CONT'D)

(Phone voice again)

Hi, Mrs. Walters. This is Elena Perez. Yeah, I'm good. It's Just... my mom was wondering if she could ask for a small favor...

CUT TO:

59

INT. L.A. PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

59

TIME LAPSE SHOT. WE SLOWLY PUSH IN FROM A WIDE SHOT TO A CLOSE UP OF ELENA'S FACE.

Elena sits at her desk in her homeroom. The world speeding up around her. A stream of kids and teachers file in and out of the class.

The days and nights pass in a blur.

Through all of this Elena is awake. Her eyes gently blinking. As if she is trying to wake from a nightmare and the next blink will bring her out of it.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

In school you are taught fire drills. On Planes, what to do in case of a water landing. Elena's Mother had prepared her for this. She packed 3 international calling cards, her birth certificate, social security card, and \$1200. The exact amount she came to America with.

FADE OUT.

Title Card: **Virginia**

60

INT. BURBANK AIRPORT BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

60

JOHN and VIRGINIA wait for their luggage to appear on the carousel. They are both around 40. She is Asian and he is a White man.

They stand in silence. Actively ignoring one another. Then:

VIRGINIA

You could've defended me. Said something. Anything.

He remains quiet.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

I felt completely alone. Do you know how awful it feels to get somewhere and be totally sandbagged like that? I was expecting a few misunderstandings even an awkward moment or two. But not... I know your family is a little emotionally disconnected, but this was just fucking crazy.

(trying to soften)

I'll admit it, I can sometimes be a bit much. A bit brash. But what do you want from me? I'm fucking American. Sometimes we do away with pleasantries. We get to the point. I say things how they are. I'm honest. I mean, I know they never really liked me. I didn't fit into whatever ideal woman they hoped you'd find. But God damnit, I am your wife. And you stood there and said nothing.

Silence.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Is that it? You have nothing to say. You haven't spoken in like four time zones and you still have nothing to say.

John grabs the last suitcase off the carousel. Virginia walks over to a DRIVER that holds up a sign.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

(to the Driver)

Yup that's us.

The Driver takes the suitcases and wheels them away. John and Virginia follow.

CUT TO:

61 INT. TOWN CAR - LATER

61

John and Virginia sit in the back of the town car. Still in silence. The car moves through traffic. Then:

VIRGINIA

(hushed)

I'm just tired. I'm tired of having to defend myself. I feel like I'm constantly being attacked. My family attacks me here your family attacks me there. And I feel like there is no let up. Everything I do or say is discussed and analyzed. Like I can't make good decisions. Wise choices. Do you know what my Mother said when we got married? She said "if it doesn't work out you can always come home." Who says that to their daughter on her wedding day? And don't get me wrong, they love you. They think you are amazing. It's me they have a problem with. It's me they assume will screw this all up. I'll be the bad wife or whatever. Almost like it's pre ordained. And it sucks.

Again Silence. She takes his hand.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

You married me. You got down on one knee and asked.

(MORE)

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

You saw something in me that made you want to ask that. Something special. Something that other people didn't. You needed me. No one before you ever needed me. I need you to tell me that you still see that... something. If you do, I'll know we aren't that far gone. That there is still something there. I know you're disappointed. But you have me. Isn't that all you ever wanted?

John takes off his seat belt and turns to face Virginia. He takes a deep breath and opens his mouth to speak. When:

SMASH!!!! The town car is t-boned by a semi truck. The crash is devastating. The car is flipped and rolls. Glass and metal and body work fly through the air. It is a tremendous wreck.

The car finally stops and ends up on it's roof laying in a ditch by the L.A. river. Fuel and coolant leak from the car.

Inside the car there is no movement. Glass is everywhere. Deployed air bags have deflated. The cars engine is silent. The driver is motionless up front. John's mangled body rest face down on the ceiling of the car. He too is motionless.

Virginia, still strapped into her seat, hangs upside down. Her arms and legs dangle. Her fingers move. Her eyes open and close gentle. She doesn't attempt to speak or cry or yell. Her blurry vision finally clears, only to see John lying dead before her.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

That was the last memory Virginia had of her husband. The one she would always remember. The one that would haunt her. That she shared with me years later.

Hands reach into the car and help unbuckle and remove Virginia from the wreck.

FADE TO:

TIME LAPSE SHOT. WE PUSH INTO A CLOSE UP OF VIRGINIA'S FACE.

Virginia is hooked up to machines and tubes and electro monitors and all types of medical equipment. A steady stream of doctors, visitors and hospital staff stream in and out.

Flowers and balloons and food are brought around and taken away.

The days and nights pass.

Through all this Virginia is awake. Her eyes gently opening and closing like they did in the car. Gently blinking. As if she is trying to wake from a nightmare and the next blink will bring her out of it.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Virginia and John Harrison were married in a castle in the English countryside. A town an hour away from where John had grown up. A castle Virginia had found in a wedding magazine. He wanted to marry in Los Angeles but she insisted on the castle. It was old and the walls felt cold and moss had grown on the cobblestone floor. Much of her family couldn't attend, which she liked. She wore a tight white dress and a veil. Her mother wanted it to be more traditional Asian, but she insisted on being modern. The women wore purple gowns. The men wore kilts and tuxedos jackets and wing-tipped shoes. Her Father was uncomfortable and wanted to wear his own suit, but she insisted on the kilt. The wedding went as planned. So did the honeymoon. They returned to the house in Pasadena that she insisted they buy. Years went by. He wanted children. She wanted to travel and shop and drink and smoke and go dancing with friends and stay up late. He wanted children. She insisted on none.

FADE TO:

WE PULL AWAY FROM VIRGINIA'S FACE TO REVEAL SHE IS NOW IN HER HOME. TIME LAPSE SHOT.

Virginia's massive house is an expression in modernism. The home is filled with pop art and Eames chairs and couches that seem more suited to fill a gallery. The home feels cold.

She sits on the couch clenching a bottle. She occasionally drinks from it.

Again people come in and out. Days and nights pass. She does not move from the couch. She's stuck. In every sense of the word.

CUT TO:

THE FOLLOWING IS FLASHBACK FOOTAGE OF WHAT LEAD UP TO THE ACCIDENT.

64 INT. DRIVER'S HOUSE - DAY

64

The Driver from the accident wakes from his bed. His room is disheveled. Cigarettes fill a bedside ashtray. Empty whiskey bottles crowd the nightstands. He rises from the bed and makes his way to the bathroom down the hall.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

The night before the accident, Virginia and John's driver had marked one year since the death of his wife.

CUT TO:

65 INT. DRIVER'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

65

The Driver looks at himself in the medicine cabinet mirror. He brushes his teeth. Buttons his shirt and knots his black tie. Then takes a swig off a small bottle of whiskey.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

They had run marathons together and hiked Mt. Whitney. Went beach camping every summer. Skiing in Tahoe every winter. She was his high school sweetheart.

CUT TO:

66 EXT. BURBANK PARKING STRUCTURE - LATER 66

The Town car pulls into a space in the parking structure.

CUT TO:

67 INT. TOWN CAR - SAME 67

The Driver sits in the car for a moment. He looks around takes another swig from the bottle. He hides it in the center console. Pulls out some gum and pops a few sticks in his mouth. Looks at himself in the mirror. Gentle slaps his cheeks to wake up. Grabs a small white board and gets out.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

She died of leukemia. He held her hand as she took her last breath. He made sure his was the last face she saw. It was a smiling face.

CUT TO:

68 INT. BURBANK AIRPORT BAGGAGE CLAIM - LATER 68

The Driver waits in the baggage claim area holding a sign. He patiently waits for his passengers. Behind him we see Virginia talking to John. Their conversation is barely audible.

Virginia walks toward the Driver.

VIRGINIA

Yup, that's us.

The driver turns to them and grabs their bags.

CUT TO:

69 INT. TOWN CAR - LATER 69

We ride up front this time with the Driver. Virginia is in the back seat with John. The Driver tries not to eavesdrop. He pulls a hand off the wheel and notices it shaking. He tries to shake it away. But it stills shakes.

He looks up at the dash at a picture of his wife. Lost in thought for a moment. He looks up in time to see he is driving through a red light. **SMASH!!! BLACK.**

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I like to think that his last moment was a happy one of his wife. Maybe the first time they kissed. Or of a dance they shared. Or of her simply brushing the hair from his face.

FADE IN:

70 INT. TOWN CAR - DAY

70

Virginia hangs upside down in the mangled wreck. The seatbelt holds her in place. A hand reaches out to her. Grabs her shoulder. We reveal it to be Fernando. He is dressed in his uniform from the cemetery. He pushes glass aside and crawls into the car. He gently holds her and unbuckles the seatbelt.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I saw the accident happen. Her husband was killed instantly. The driver died later that day. The car caught fire after I pulled her out. When she was well enough, she came looking for me and thanked me for saving her. She tried to give me money. I didn't take it. Instead I asked for a job cutting her lawn every week. She said yes. Today, I would need more than employment from her.

PRE LAP: DOORBELL.

CUT TO:

71 INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

71

Doorbell. Inside Virginia's very well decorated bedroom there is only darkness. The window shades are drawn. The light that does sneak in shows that empty prescription and vodka bottles are scattered about.

Doorbell. Under the crumpled comforter there is movement. But not much.

Doorbell. The Comforter flies off and exposes a disheveled Virginia. Her hair is a mess and she is sleeping in pajamas and a robe. She gets up. And makes a bee line through the house toward the front door.

Doorbell.

VIRGINIA
I'm fucking coming!!!!

She reaches the front door. And flings it open.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
What?!?!?!?!?!?

Outside she finds Fernando and Elena. They carry Elena's bags and keyboard and school books.

FERNANDO
(smiles meekly)
Hello.

CUT TO:

Title Card: **Elena & Fernando & Virginia**

72

I/E. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/GUEST BEDROOM - LATER

72

Virginia gives Elena a tour of her enormous house. She takes her from room to gorgeous room. For Elena it might as well be the White House. She's never seen anything like this.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
I told Virginia everything. How I went looking for Teresa when she didn't returned my calls. How I found Elena playing the same song she played the first time I had seen her.

The Kitchen. The Dining Room. The Pool. The Den. Only in her wildest dreams would a place like this exist.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
How she arranged sleepovers and playdates for herself.

Then Virginia shows her a door to a room that is off limits. Her body language tells us this.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
How she never missed a day of school or a piano lesson or a homework assignment.

Virginia helps Elena fold clothes and puts them away in an empty dresser, in a massive guest room.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

How she had been alone for 9 days
and no one noticed.

She shows Elena her own grand bathroom. No sharing here.
She points out where fresh towels and soap can be found. And
leaves Elena to freshen up.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I told all this to Virginia and she
agreed to let Elena stay until her
mother was found. I thanked her
and left. She wanted to help. I
also think she was lonely.

CUT TO:

73

INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

73

Virginia and Elena sit at table in the kitchen. Elena is
sucking down the fast food on the plate in front of her.
Virginia sits with a tumbler full of Vodka in her hand.
Elena plays an imaginary piano as she eats.

ELENA

(while eating)
You have a nice house.

VIRGINIA

(emotionless)
Thank you.

Silence.

ELENA

You live here all alone?

VIRGINIA

Yes.

ELENA

You're lucky. I wish I had a house
like this. It's big. There are
lots of places to hide. You can
play hide-n-seek and no one would
ever find you.

VIRGINIA

I guess.

ELENA

It must feel nice not having to
share a bathroom.

(MORE)

ELENA (CONT'D)

No one knocking on the door every five minutes cause they have to pee.

Virginia takes a swig. Stares at Elena's finger movements.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Your pool is nice too. Can I swim in it?

VIRGINIA

Do you know how?

ELENA

No.

VIRGINIA

Then, no.

Silence.

ELENA

Can you teach me? I can pay you for lessons. I have money.

VIRGINIA

When exactly is your bedtime?

ELENA

8:30.

Virginia looks at her watch and stands and walks away from the table taking her drink with her.

VIRGINIA

(as she goes)

Finish your food. Turn out the lights when you're done.

ELENA

Okay. Good night.

Elena sits alone and continues eating, unfazed.

CUT TO:

74

INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - MORNING

74

Virginia is fully passed out in her bed. The room is dark and silent when:

The automatic curtains are pulled back exposing the room to the morning light. Virginia's face cringes at the feeling of sun on her face. She pulls the covers over her head.

The covers are pulled off her face.

ELENA

Excuse me? Excuse me?

Virginia slowly opens her eyes. And see's Elena's smiling face hovering over her.

ELENA (CONT'D)

(bright eyed)

Good morning.

VIRGINIA

What the fuck do you want?

ELENA

I have to go to school.

VIRGINIA

So go.

She rolls over and tries to go back to sleep.

ELENA

(shaking Virginia)

Excuse me?

Virginia rolls back over and looks at her.

VIRGINIA

Hand me my phone. I'll call you an Uber.

ELENA

I can't. Stranger Danger. I'm a little kid. I don't know what kind of crazy person is gonna pick me up. They do very little vetting.

VIRGINIA

Fuck! You're not gonna stop are you?

ELENA

I'm gonna be late.

VIRGINIA

Just take a sick day or something. You want me to call in for you? Pass me my phone.

Elena doesn't move.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
Shit. You're one of those kids
aren't you?

ELENA
I have perfect attendance.

VIRGINIA
Look, missing one day of school
won't make a fucking difference.
They don't fucking care.

ELENA
You curse a lot.

VIRGINIA
Come on? What do you say? Just
pass me my phone, I'll make the
call and I can go back to sleep.

Elena doesn't move. Virginia knows this is a losing battle.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
I've gotta find your fucking Mom.

CUT TO:

75 I/E. VIRGINIA'S CAR - LATER

75

Virginia is seriously hung over. Still in her pajamas and robe, she wears sunglasses as she turns the corner and pulls into the drop off lane of the school. It's packed. Children, mostly Latino, are everywhere.

The building is an old run down schoolhouse in East L.A. Virginia's gleaming Porsche is really out of place as most of the other cars are older and more modest. People stare at her and the car.

David Bowie's "Life on Mars?", plays on the radio.

VIRGINIA
Jesus Christ. It's like going to a
Dodger game. Is it always like
this?

ELENA
Yeah. Why?

VIRGINIA
There are so many of you.
(catching herself)
Kids, I mean.

ELENA
(duh)
Well yeah. It's school.

Quiet.

ELENA (CONT'D)
(noticing the song)
Who is this?

VIRGINIA
(are you kidding)
Bowie? Life on Mars?

Elena shrugs and shakes her head.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
What the hell are you listening to?
This is David Bowie. He was a God.
Could play like every instrument.

ELENA
(sincere)
Impressive.

VIRGINIA
Fucking right, impressive.

Virginia finally gets to the front of the line. A parent opens the door to let Elena out.

ELENA
I'll see you later.

VIRGINIA
Okay.
(stopping her)
Wait! Do I have to pick you up
too?

ELENA
Yeah.

VIRGINIA
Oh. Okay.
(stopping her again)
Wait! What time?

ELENA

5 o'clock.

VIRGINIA

5 o'clock. Good, I'll be here.

ELENA

Okay. I'm going now. Bye.

The door shuts as:

VIRGINIA

(trying)

Have a good day.

Virginia is alone again.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

(looking at her watch)

5 o'clock. I gotta fucking kill
nine hours.

CUT TO:

76 EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - DAY

76

A funeral is in progress. It is a very small group of older people surrounded by many empty chairs. The Priest gives his incantations, blessings and the like. The day is bright and sunny and masks the sadness of the mourners.

Fernando and his boss, OLIVER, watch from a distance.

CUT TO:

77 EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - LATER

77

The Mourners have left and now Fernando and Oliver are busy breaking down the event. Chairs are folded and stacked. Canopies are disassembled. Astroturf is rolled up.

As the last bits are taken care of:

OLIVER

(stacking chairs)

I'm telling you man, this woman was so damn fine she would have stopped your heart. Now, I usually don't mess around with white girls, I stick to my own, you heard.

(MORE)

OLIVER (CONT'D)

But this one was so delicious that I just needed a taste of the white chocolate. You know what I'm saying?

Fernando smile and continues with work.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

So anyway. She was just sitting there on this bench looking like heaven fell out the sky and landed on Figueroa. And as I walk by I give her a smile. And she says: "Hello". Well, I say "Hello" back. Then she says "Would you like to sit down?" Well, of course I would. So I sit down and we exchange pleasantries about the weather and how the day is going. You know, all that bullshit you say to break the ice. And it's going really well. I make a joke and she laughs. I compliment her looks without sounding creepy or aggressive. I even make a "Strangers On A Train" reference which she totally gets. I mean, she knows Hitchcock. Now, I'm in love. Now, this is about to go down. So, I'm about to ask her out for a drink, maybe dinner, maybe more. And as the words are about to leave my mouth, she says: "Can I show you something?" I say: "Of course." So she digs in her bag and pulls out a little booklet. She presses it up against her breasts so I can't really see what it is. She says: "I just wanted to share this with someone special." Now, I need to know what it is. I mean, now I really want to see what she wants to share with me. Finally, she hands it to me. And you know what it is? It's a god damned WATCHTOWER. Turns out this bitch is a Jehovah's witness.

Both men crack up.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

I missed four buses talking to a bitch that don't believe in Birthdays and Christmas. Ain't that some shit?!

As they laugh. Oliver and Fernando look around to see if anyone is nearby. Fernando gives him the all clear nod. With that, Oliver drops down into the open grave and pries opens the top half of the coffin.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Oliver was a child star in the 90's. His father brought him here from the Bronx after doing a cereal commercial that made him famous.

Inside is a very old and very dead man. Oliver searches him for any valuables.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

He starred on a sitcom that had either a robot or an orangutan in it. Then one summer he grew two feet taller and was replaced on the show.

He pulls out a silver flask, removes a chain from his neck. Takes rings from his fingers and a watch from his wrist.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

After drugs, gambling and taxes. He lost everything. Now he works here. The cemetery where his father is buried.

Oliver pauses for a second and looks the dead man in the face.

OLIVER

(whispered)

You can't trust anyone.

He shuts the coffin.

CUT TO:

78

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

78

Virginia pushes a shopping cart through the aisles of a brightly lit supermarket. In her cart are bottles of wine and liquor.

She looks at all the snack choices and is overwhelmed. A YOUNG MOTHER in her late twenties passes her. She pushes a cart of her own with a toddler sitting in it.

The Young Mother stops and grabs a snack box off the shelf and moves on. Virginia follows behind and does the same.

Aisle after aisle, Virginia follows along and grabs everything the Mother does. Finally the Mother stops and turns around.

YOUNG MOTHER

What are you doing?! Stop following me!

VIRGINIA

I wasn't... I mean, I didn't mean...

YOUNG MOTHER

What's the matter with you?

VIRGINIA

I need to pick up food for a kid.

The Mother looks at Virginia's cart and sees the bottles of wine and liquor mixed in with the snacks.

YOUNG MOTHER

How old is the kid?

VIRGINIA

(baffled)
Six?

YOUNG MOTHER

Are you asking me?

VIRGINIA

No. Like ten or something.

The Young Mother shakes her head. Starts pulling baby food out of Virginia's cart.

YOUNG MOTHER

You don't need this. Or this.

Pulls formula. And other assorted baby goods.

YOUNG MOTHER (CONT'D)

None of this.

VIRGINIA

Thank you.

YOUNG MOTHER

Go back to the snack aisle and get lunchables or whatever. Kids love it.

(grabbing a bottle of vodka)
And you might wanna put a few of these back.

Virginia grabs it back from her.

VIRGINIA

Take it is easy cowgirl. Let's not go fucking crazy.

Virginia wheels her cart away.

CUT TO:

79

EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - LATER

79

It's lunch time and Fernando and Oliver sit under a tree eating. Fernando also sketches in a small black book with his free hand.

OLIVER

(mouth full)

We got 16 digs this week. I got you all week right? Don't tell me you gotta go mow a lawn somewhere.

FERNANDO

No. You got me.

OLIVER

Good. I don't like the other guys so much. I feel like they're talking about me. Always speaking in Spanish.

FERNANDO

Maybe you should learn Spanish.

OLIVER

Shit. Americans only learn a language to get through high school. Or to impress a girl. Then it's over. No habla nothing.

Fernando shakes his head. Continues sketching.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

(re: the sketch)

You finished?

FERNANDO

Almost.

Fernando makes his last few strokes of the charcoal pencil. He flips it over and shows Oliver what he's been drawing. It's a stylized Oliver holding up a **black power** fist. It's signed Native. Fernando carefully tears it out and hands it to Oliver.

OLIVER

(sincerely impressed)

That's hot man. You are good.

(digs in his pocket)

Here.

Oliver tosses him the watch that he pulls off the old man. It's a Rolex.

FERNANDO

I don't want this, man.

OLIVER

Why not? I got like three of those shits already.

FERNANDO

It's bad luck.

OLIVER

Bad Luck? Man, you got no papers, I picked your ass up outside a Home Depot and you help me dig holes for dead people. You are well passed bad luck.

Fernando considers this and puts on the watch.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

See. Now you look pimp. Rocking a Rolex. Girls gonna love you. In fact, we should go out tonight.

FERNANDO

No. I can't.

OLIVER

Why not? You need to let off some steam. Dance out those demons. Plus, I know you ain't getting no pussy since your homegirl got locked up.

Fernando shakes his head again.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Come on! One drink. One dance.

Fernando thinks this over. He looks at Oliver.

FERNANDO

Next time. I promise.

Oliver nods his head. Knew this would be the answer. It always is.

OLIVER

Alright. Alright. I'm going to hold you to it. And then... we gonna get turnt up!

Fernando sheepishly smiles.

CUT TO:

80 EXT. L.A. STREETS - EVENING 80

The evening rush hour is in full swing. The streets are full of people rushing home from work. Cars lock up the street as the evening sun turns everything purple and red.

81 INT. BUS - SAME 81

Fernando is stuck in traffic with the rest of the rush hour commuters. He thumbs through his sketch pad. Looking over the doodles that he dares not put on a wall.

He looks up and sees the storefront with new metal roll-gate. The STORE OWNER is closing up for business.

Fernando stares at the empty metal canvas. He rises and moves to the front of the bus. Never taking his eyes off the roll gate.

FERNANDO

(to the bus driver)

Can I please get off?

The bus driver opens the door.

CUT TO:

82 EXT. L.A. STREETS - SAME 82

Fernando steps off the bus and pauses in front of the store as the gate is lowered completely. It is still blank.

A rarity in a neighborhood filled with taggers. The STORE OWNER notices Fernando staring.

STORE OWNER
(Spanish)
You need something pal?

Fernando, still staring at the gate, shakes his head. The owner tries to figure out what Fernando is looking at.

STORE OWNER (CONT'D)
What are you looking at?

FERNANDO
Where are you from?

STORE OWNER
(confused by this)
Guatemala.

Fernando nods and smiles then walks away. The Store Owner is confused by this interaction. He looks at the gate trying to figure out what Fernando was looking at. Then gives up and finishes locking up.

CUT TO:

83 INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

83

Virginia sits drinking wine at the kitchen island which is covered in workbooks. She watches as Elena does her homework. Her little fingers tapping the imaginary keys as she works. Virginia sees the fingers moving and drinks.

VIRGINIA
So, she's from Mexico City?

ELENA
(Not looking up)
Yes.

VIRGINIA
That's a big city. I've been there...
(almost to herself)
With my husband once.

Elena shrugs.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
Do you know what neighborhood? Or part of town?

ELENA
(shrugging)
I've never been there.

VIRGINIA
What about any family here? Uncles
or Aunts?

ELENA
No. My mother was the only one
that came here.

VIRGINIA
Where's your dad?

ELENA
(half pauses at this)
I don't know him.

Virginia notices this. Doesn't want to push.

VIRGINIA
Write down her full name and the
date they grabbed her. I'll
contact INS and see if they can
tell me something.

Elena does this and hand Virginia the slip of paper.
Virginia drinks. This is gonna be harder than she thought.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
(trying)
So you always get this much work?

ELENA
(not looking up)
Yeah.

VIRGINIA
What grade are you in?

ELENA
(annoyed by the distraction)
Fourth.

Virginia drinks.

VIRGINIA
Sorry about dinner. I should have
asked you what you liked. I just
figured... It's sushi. Everyone
like sushi. Plus, I don't really
cook.

ELENA

It's okay. I like cereal for dinner.

VIRGINIA

I bet your mom is a good cook.

ELENA

Not really.

VIRGINIA

I thought all your people could cook.

ELENA

No. We just went to In-n-Out a lot.

Virginia drinks again.

VIRGINIA

So. Is school the same time again tomorrow?

ELENA

(duh)

Yes.

Elena knows the questions won't stop unless she does something.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Can you help me with this problem?

Elena turns the book to Virginia. It's advanced math. Not what a normal fourth grader would be studying. Virginia is lost. Way over her head.

She shamefully turns the book back to Elena and shrugs "Sorry". Virginia rises with her empty wine glass and heads to the wine fridge. Elena grabs the book and buries her face in it again.

ELENA (CONT'D)

(almost to herself)

I thought all your people were good at math.

CUT TO:

84

INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - LATER

84

Virginia sits on the couch with a large glass of vodka in her hand. She is zoned out as she watches TV.

She flips through the channels. E!, Style, Bravo and all the other junk food stations. Then, ends up on **March Of The Penguins**.

Morgan Freeman's voice tells of how the Penguin Parents only goal is protecting the eggs. That it must be past from mother to father in order for the mother to feed. In the scene, an impulsive young couple act to quickly and the egg is cracked. They can do nothing but watch as the ice claims the egg. Freezing it solid.

Virginia's eyes quickly begin to fill with tears. She promptly shuts the TV off. And just as quickly stops the flow of tears.

Now in silence she hears the faint sound of a piano.

VIRGINIA
(to herself)
What the fuck?

She rises from the couch. She slowly heads toward the music.

CUT TO:

85 INT. GUEST ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

85

Virginia gently pushes open the door to Elena's room. Inside she finds her sitting on the bed under a blanket with a flashlight. She plays Chopin's Prelude Op.28 No.7 in A major, on her electric keyboard.

The tune is gentle and soothing. Part lullaby, part love story. It's the first time Virginia has heard her play.

VIRGINIA
That's really pretty.

This startles Elena. She pulls the covers off herself.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
I didn't mean to scare you.

ELENA
I'm sorry. Was I too loud? Did I wake you up?

Virginia shakes her heads.

VIRGINIA
I was just watching TV.

ELENA

I play at night to help me fall asleep.

VIRGINIA

You're really good.

ELENA

Thank you. It sounds better on a real piano. It's Chopin. He was Polish.

VIRGINIA

I've heard of him.

ELENA

He wrote it while he was on an island called (mispronouncing it) MAJORCA. It's in Spain.

VIRGINIA

(gently correcting her)
MA-YOUR-KA.

ELENA

(repeating)
MA-YOUR-KA. I want to go there.

VIRGINIA

It's very beautiful.

ELENA

Have you been there?

Virginia nods.

ELENA (CONT'D)

With your husband?

VIRGINIA

Yes. John.

ELENA

You traveled a lot together huh?

Virginia nods.

ELENA (CONT'D)

I've never been on a plane. Or a limo. I bet you rode in limos together. Like rich people in the movies.

Virginia doesn't want to talk about this. She immediately shuts down. Takes a swig from her glass.

VIRGINIA

Okay... It's late. I have to take you to school in morning. You know I hate to wake up early.

Elena picks up on Virginia's discomfort.

ELENA

Okay. Good night.

Elena puts her keyboard on the floor. Turns off her flashlight. Virginia goes, leaving the door open slightly.

CUT TO:

86

EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - MORNING

86

An excavator digs out a hole for what will be a permanent resident. Fernando is at the controls while Oliver pulls out the chairs for today's service.

A car pulls up near the men. It's Virginia. She steps out of her car and looks pissed. She makes a bee line toward the men. Fernando sees her and shuts down the machine. Oliver sees her approach.

OLIVER

Can I help you Miss?

VIRGINIA

(re: Fernando)

I'm here for him.

OLIVER

Well, I'm the head grounds keeper so if there's a problem...

VIRGINIA

No problem. I just need to talk to him.

OLIVER

This area is off limits while we are working.

FERNANDO

It's okay.

Oliver backs off.

VIRGINIA

Hey. Remember me? The woman you dropped an abandoned kid with and never came back to check on?!

FERNANDO

Sorry.

VIRGINIA

Fuck man! What the fuck is wrong with you? I could be a fucking psycho bitch for all you know!

FERNANDO

Sorry.

VIRGINIA

You don't do that. You don't just leave like that. Without coming back to help. Without so much as a phone call. I told you I would help you but... Fuck, man this isn't cool.

FERNANDO

I was going to call today.

VIRGINIA

(not buying that)

Oh sure. You were gonna call today.

Quiet. Then:

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

(sincere)

I don't know what to do with her. I don't know how to help. She's like this strange little person. It's weird. I don't know what she's thinking. I don't think she likes me very much. I'm not really a kid person. Christ. I haven't been up this early since I don't know when. I don't think I can do this. I'm sorry I just... I need you to take her.

FERNANDO

(reluctantly)

Okay. I can take her somewhere else maybe.

VIRGINIA

Yeah? Somewhere else? Where?

FERNANDO

An friend maybe.

VIRGINIA

Maybe? You keep saying maybe.
Will she be cool or not? Don't
take her to where it's not cool.
That's not gonna fly.

FERNANDO

It's cool. I'll ask today.

VIRGINIA

Is there a room for her? She
should have her own room. Is she
gonna have to share it with like 15
people? I know that's how you all
live but I think she's kinda over
it.

FERNANDO

She'll have to share. But not so
many people.

VIRGINIA

And school? She's big on school,
man. She can't be late or she
freaks out. Someone has to make
sure she gets to school. And picks
her up.

FERNANDO

I will ask. Maybe tomorrow I'll
know.

VIRGINIA

Tomorrow?

FERNANDO

Yes. Maybe tomorrow. I have to
ask first.

Satisfied with this she slowly backs off.

VIRGINIA

(calm)

Okay. Tomorrow. Awesome. I'll
talk to you tomorrow.

FERNANDO

Tomorrow. Maybe.

VIRGINIA

(stops)

You keeps saying maybe. You're
freaking me out.

FERNANDO

I am sure.

She walks away.

VIRGINIA

(turning back)

I'm gonna try and find her Mom
today. Wanna come? A big, cold
government building. Should be
fun.

Fernando shakes his head.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Didn't think so.

Virginia stops and looks around at the cemetery. Then she
freezes. Lost in thought. Fernando notices this. Virginia
continues to look around quietly.

FERNANDO

(to Virginia)

Are you okay?

This snaps her out of her daze.

VIRGINIA

Tomorrow. Don't forget.

She turns and walks toward her car. Fernando watches her go.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I wondered why she stop like that.
Later, I remembered, exactly a year
had past since the accident. She
had forgotten.

CUT TO:

87

INT. LA IMMIGRATION CENTER - LATER

87

Virginia stands in a tremendous line at the main INS offices
in Downtown LA. Every shade of skin found across the world
is present. But, there is a clear majority of Latinos
filling the waiting room.

A large plexi-glass partition, similar to a bank, separates the office workers from the immigrants looking for help.

Virginia looks around the room trying to find someone who will answer a question. None. The room is filled with people holding forms also desperate to get answers.

An OLD ASIAN WOMAN, in line ahead of her, turns and begins speaking in Mandarin. Virginia is like a deer in headlights. The woman hands her a form. She is clearly asking for help.

VIRGINIA

(re: Old Asian woman)

Oh No. No. No. No. I'm sorry.
I can't. I don't understand you.
I'm American. I don't know what
you're saying. Sorry. I don't
speak... what ever it is you are
speaking.

(handing back the form)

Sorry. Really.

The Old Asian Woman turns back around. Virginia looks around the room, a slight embarrassment on her face. She should know how to help. How to communicate. But doesn't.

CUT TO:

88

INT. LA IMMIGRATION CENTER - LATER

88

Virginia sits passed out on one of the many chairs in the crowded waiting room. She clutches her purse as she sleeps.

Bored children try to entertain themselves. Parents scan there paperwork to make sure everything is in order. Security guards walk through the rows of chairs keeping things safe. And Janitors pass by keeping things neat.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Virginia was born on February 19
1979 in Beverly Hills, California.
Her Mother Doris was born in San
Francisco in 1946. Her Father,
Charles, was born in Los Angeles in
1940. Charles' Father, Henry, was
born in Shanghai in 1915 and
immigrated to the United States at
the age of 10. He met Noriko
Hashimoto on the first day of fifth
grade. The teacher sat them
together because they were the only
Asians in the class. One Chinese.
One Japanese.

(MORE)

FERNANDO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They fell in love and, against their parents wishes, married on the day they both graduated from college. They had three children. Charles was the youngest. President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19 1942. Every person of Japanese descent on the west coast was to be moved into internment camps. Charles was 2 years old. His first memory, was cutting his hand on barbed wire in Poston, Arizona. He studied french in high school and later became an attorney. So did Virginia.

Virginia's number is called over a speaker. She snaps out of her slumber at walks over to the plexi-glass. She sits at the window and passes her paperwork through the slip to an INS OFFICIAL.

VIRGINIA

I'm looking for a woman who was picked up almost two weeks ago.

INS OFFICIAL

Name?

VIRGINIA

It's clipped to the paper.

INS OFFICIAL

Are you a family member or Counsel?

Virginia is silent. The Official looks up at her.

VIRGINIA

Counsel.

INS OFFICIAL

(not buying it)

Really?

Virginia rolls her eyes and digs through her wallet and produces her State Bar of California license. It's stamped ACTIVE.

VIRGINIA

Satisfied?

The Official rolls her eyes. Types in the name.

INS OFFICIAL

You know we have a separate
entrance for lawyers?

VIRGINIA

I didn't. I'm new to immigration
law.

INS OFFICIAL

Mmmm hmmm.

(after a moment)

Well, she's in the system.

Virginia smiles. Relieved.

INS OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

You wanna see her?

VIRGINIA

(not prepared for this)

What? She's still here?

INS OFFICIAL

Yup. She's upstairs in detention.
She was supposed to be moved to
Calexico a week ago. Says here,
her paperwork got lost. Happens
all the time. Do you want to see
her? I'll print you a pass and put
you on the list.

Virginia is thrown.

CUT TO:

89

INT. LA IMMIGRATION CENTER/DETENTION CENTER - LATER

89

Virginia is buzzed into a reception area with metal tables
and chairs that are bolted to the floor. Family members and
Lawyers meet with detainees. They all wear navy blue scrubs.
DETAINEE is printed on the back. The visitors wear badges
around their necks.

Virginia scans the room looking for someone she has never
seen. She holds a folder with the charging documents.

She finally lands on Elena's Mother. They exchange a
confused look. Virginia approaches the metal table not sure
if this is who she is looking for.

VIRGINIA

Hi.

ELENA'S MOTHER

Hi.

VIRGINIA

I'm a friend of Elena.

With that Elena's Mother can hardly hold back the tears. She covers her face to hide her crying. This complete stranger has just made her the happiest woman on earth. She tries to compose herself. It takes a moment.

ELENA'S MOTHER

(through the tears)

Is she okay?

VIRGINIA

Yes. Yes, she's great. She's in school right now. I got her Lunchables.

Elena's Mother tries her best to not fall apart.

ELENA'S MOTHER

Thank God! Thank God she's okay! I've been worried sick! Stuck here. Did she call my parents?

VIRGINIA

No. I don't think so.

ELENA'S MOTHER

We had a plan. In case this happened. She was supposed to call my parents. I left her money and calling cards.

VIRGINIA

She didn't tell me.

ELENA

My father would buy her a ticket to Mexico. We would meet back there. I drilled it into her head.

VIRGINIA

Maybe she didn't want to miss school. She really likes school.

ELENA'S MOTHER

I know. And her piano? Is she keeping up.

VIRGINIA

She practices everyday.

ELENA'S MOTHER

How do you... I mean... I'm
sorry... Who are you?

VIRGINIA

My name is Virginia. A friend of
mine found her alone and asked if I
could watch her. Help find you.
She's been with me for a couple of
days now.

ELENA'S MOTHER

Thank you for... Wait. How long
was she hiding?

VIRGINIA

(doesn't want to say)
That's not important now.

ELENA'S MOTHER

How long was she alone?

VIRGINIA

(reluctantly)
Nine days.

This hits Elena's Mother like a tone of bricks.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

Hey, it's okay. She's okay. She
followed most your plans. She's
very smart. Like her mom. My
Father lost me at Disneyland once.
I was a fucking basket case. She
didn't even miss school.

Elena's Mother reaches out for her hand. Virginia, not sure
about this, reaches back and grips tightly.

ELENA'S MOTHER

Thank you.

VIRGINIA

It's not a big deal.

ELENA'S MOTHER

Do you have children?

VIRGINIA

No.

ELENA'S MOTHER

(nodding)
It's a big deal.

She kisses Virginia's hand. Virginia is not quite sure what to do. She slowly pulls her hand away.

VIRGINIA

She's been staying with me in Pasadena. Is there anyone local that you want me to get her to? Maybe her father?

ELENA'S MOTHER

No. No one. Her father... I don't know where he is.

Virginia gives an understanding nod. Then opens the folder.

VIRGINIA

They gave me a copy of your detention order. They're moving you soon.

ELENA'S MOTHER

To Calexico in two days. I know. Then hopefully they will release me quickly. I can start my paperwork.

VIRGINIA

I can call a friend who handles immigration law. He may be able to help. Put a case together so they won't move you. Especially since Elena was born here. But reading through this, you petitioned for voluntary departure... You're choosing to leave. Why?

ELENA'S MOTHER

They can hold me or move me around the country to other places like this, for as long as they feel. Did you know that? Like jail. I can't live like that. Have Elena wondering where I am.

VIRGINIA

I can try and bond you out.

ELENA'S MOTHER

What is BOND?

VIRGINIA

I pay money to get you out while your paperwork is processed. I take responsibility.

(MORE)

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

If you don't show up for court dates or disappear, they keep my money.

ELENA'S MOTHER

I can't do that. I don't even know you. And how long is court? How long will that be? In that time, I can't work. Support Elena. Myself. I can't do anything.

(shaking her head)

Bond. That's how criminals are treated. I have a daughter. I don't want her to see me that way.

(Thought through)

If they deport me I can't come back legally. Maybe for many, many years. And it will always be on my record. Right?

Virginia nods.

ELENA'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

If I leave, I have a chance to get back. Especially because Elena is here. I can be with my parents while I apply for another visa.

VIRGINIA

It isn't a sure thing. You know that, right?

ELENA'S MOTHER

Everything I ever did was for her. This is the best way.

They fall silent. Then:

VIRGINIA

Do you want to see her?

Elena's Mother looks up. She smiles and nods emphatically.

CUT TO:

90

EXT. ELENA'S SCHOOL - LATER

90

Elena sits alone outside of her school. Virginia's car pulls in front and Elena gets in.

CUT TO:

91 INT. VIRGINIA'S CAR - SAME

91

As Elena gets in the back seat.

ELENA

You're late.

VIRGINIA

I'm sorry. I was a little busy finding your mother. Which I did. You're welcome.

ELENA

(surprised)

You found her?

VIRGINIA

Yeah! Isn't that good news?

ELENA

(quietly)

Yeah. Sure.

VIRGINIA

What the hell's the matter with you?! I found your mom. She's in Downtown L.A. Like five miles from here.

ELENA

Is she okay?

VIRGINIA

Besides being locked up? Yeah. She's fine. They're moving her to another facility soon. She wants to see you tomorrow.

ELENA

What? I can't. I can't miss school or practice.

VIRGINIA

This again?!

ELENA

It's important!

VIRGINIA

Are you serious with your perfect attendance bullshit?!

ELENA

You don't understand!

VIRGINIA

I understand perfectly! I understand that your mother is sitting in a fucking cell right now and her brat of a kid can't adjust her precious schedule to go see her!

ELENA

That's not it!

VIRGINIA

Then please explain! And while your at it, explain why you didn't call your family in Mexico?! You have their phone numbers. Your mother told me about your plan!

ELENA

I don't know...

VIRGINIA

You don't know what?!

ELENA

If I go with...

VIRGINIA

Spit it out!

ELENA

(exploding)

I DON'T WANT TO GO! If I go, she'll take me with her! I don't want to go! I don't want to go to Mexico! I don't want to leave! That's not my home! No matter how many stories she tells! No matter how many pictures she shows me of family and places! It's not my home! I don't want to go with her!

And there it is. Virginia sits staring at her for a moment.

ELENA (CONT'D)

(with the scorn only a child can have)

I wish you hadn't found her. I wish she were dead.

This sends Virginia into a rage. She controls herself. Elena knows her words have gone too far.

VIRGINIA

Strap in. I want to show you something.

CUT TO:

92 INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE - LATER

92

Virginia and Elena bust through the front door.

VIRGINIA

(re: school bags)

Drop your shit. Come with me.

Virginia leads Elena through the house. They arrive at the door of the forbidden room. The room Virginia specifically told Elena not to enter.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

(softly)

Open the door.

ELENA

You said I wasn't allowed.

VIRGINIA

Just do it.

Elena does.

CUT TO:

93 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - SAME

93

Elena exposes what lays beyond the door. A cavernous room filled with every conceivable instrument. Guitars hang from the wall. Drums in the corner. Control boards and microphones and effects pedal and keyboards and all manner of equipment used to record and produce sound.

It was her husband's recording studio. John's room.

Elena walks into the room and is lost in a wonderland. Virginia slowly walks in behind her. It's the first time she has stepped back into John's world. She's avoided dealing with this place.

VIRGINIA

My husband was a composer. He wrote music for movies and television.

(MORE)

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

And an occasional song for a pop star. It didn't matter to him. He loved what he did.

The walls and shelves are filled with pictures of Virginia and John. As well as pictures of John with every manner of celebrity. Film Makers from Spielberg to Scorsese. Musicians from Billy Joel to BB king. Awards from Oscars to Grammy's also litter the shelves. The walls, covered with gold and platinum records.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

I used to get so angry at him for working so much. For constantly humming some tune stuck in his head. Snapping his fingers to some beat that only he could hear. Or moving his fingers at the dinner table. Just like you.

Virginia lovingly touches John's record collection in an entire wall of vinyl. She's sees some unfinished sheet music and picks it up. Touches her fingers to where his pencil marked the page.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

He would shut himself in here for hours. Writing and rewriting. Adjusting. Making it perfect. Until he got the music out of his head. I would get so mad.

On the far side of the studio is a grand piano. Elena instinctually moves toward it.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

But I miss it all. I miss everything. I wish I could take back every mean thing I ever said to him. But I can't. Memories and the things I have here are all that I have left of him. Do you understand?

Elena nods. Virginia crosses to the piano and pulls the dust cover off. She opens the lid and holds out the sheet music. Elena looks to her. Virginia nods her approval.

Elena takes the sheet music and quickly arranges it above the keys. She sits at the grand piano. Her eyes scan the scribbled notes. Then she extends her hands over the keys.

Her fingers float gentle over the keys, almost scared to touch the instrument. She closes her eyes for a moment.

Then begins to play a sweet and haunting melody. This is John's theme.

The rich clear sound created by the little girl traps Virginia.

She listens to Elena's playing and is frozen by it's beauty.

It blankets her in memory.

But more than anything... It reminds Virginia of him. John.

She begins to cry. Silently.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

The moment Elena began to play, Virginia thought about the fight she had with John. While on holiday they drank too much. And during a heated exchange Virginia admitted to having an abortion two years earlier and not telling him. He was devastated. She knew he had always wanted to be a father. Now, she only thought of how it would have been a living piece of him.

As the tune ends, Virginia wipes away the tears and smiles. She composes herself. Elena turns to her.

ELENA

That's all he wrote. It's beautiful.

VIRGINIA

(through the tears)
It is. I told you he was good.
(getting it together)
Okay. Now, let's order a pizza.
I'm hungry.

CUT TO:

94

EXT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

94

Fernando stands at the front door of Virginia's massive home. He rings the bell. A moment goes by and the door swings open. Elena stands in front of him and bows respectfully.

ELENA

(in Mandarin)
Ni Hao.

Fernando smiles and bows as well.

ELENA (CONT'D)
(whispered to him)
I'm skipping school today. Come
in.

Fernando does this. Virginia approaches the door and sees
Fernando.

VIRGINIA
Wow. You actually showed up.

FERNANDO
I promised you I would.

VIRGINIA
I thought for sure you were gonna
flake out on me.

FERNANDO
I promised.

VIRGINIA
Well things have kind of changed
since yesterday. I found Elena's
mom.

FERNANDO
You did?

ELENA
She's in jail.

VIRGINIA
(to Elena)
Detention. Not in jail. Stop
saying that, you weirdo.
(to Fernando)
INS has her downtown. They're
moving her to a facility near the
border in a couple of days.

FERNANDO
Okay.

VIRGINIA
I'm taking Elena to see her today.

FERNANDO
That's good.

VIRGINIA
I've offered to help her legally.

FERNANDO

Okay.

VIRGINIA

I'm going to head down with her when she's transferred. Make sure she's okay. Elena is an absolute freak about missing school. And she has some competition thing she has to get ready for...

ELENA

It's an audition.

VIRGINIA

An audition. Whatever. Anyway, I can't take her out of school right now. So... I need you to stay here. Watch her. Take her to school. Pick her up. Make sure she eats something other than Lucky Charms.

ELENA

(under her breath)

Aw. I love Lucky Charms.

FERNANDO

Stay here?

VIRGINIA

Yeah. Here. What's the problem?

FERNANDO

I don't think it's a good idea...

VIRGINIA

(like a lawyer)

So it was a good idea for you to bring her here and have me watch her, but you can't stay? Is that what you're saying?

Virginia and Elena stare at Fernando awaiting a response. He has none. Elena shakes her head.

ELENA

Boys are so dumb.

Virginia pulls a set of keys from her purse and holds them out to Fernando. Beaten. He reluctantly takes them.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

Abba's "ARRIVAL" plays.

95 INT. LA IMMIGRATION CENTER/DETENTION CENTER - DAY 95

Elena and Virginia enter the visitor facility together. Elena sees her Mother and rushes toward her. Virginia watches this. Elena and her mom fiercely embrace. Kisses and tears of joy.

CUT TO:

96 EXT. CEMETERY - SAME 96

Fernando, Oliver and two other laborers dig out holes for upcoming funerals.

CUT TO:

97 INT. LA IMMIGRATION CENTER/DETENTION CENTER - SAME 97

Virginia goes over some of the paperwork on the case. Elena sits closely next to her mother. She looks around at other detainees also meeting with family. Lots of hugs and tears.

CUT TO:

98 EXT. CEMETERY - SAME 98

Fernando, Oliver and the other men lay under a tree having lunch. The men chat, eat and joke. They laugh as Oliver acts out one of his stories.

CUT TO:

99 INT. LA IMMIGRATION CENTER/DETENTION CENTER - SAME 99

Elena hugs her Mom again before leaving. Her mom whispers something into her ear and nods. Elena walks off with Virginia and her mother blows her a kiss. She fights off tears.

CUT TO:

- 100 INT. BUS - LATER 100
- Fernando rides the bus home. He passes the storefront as the owner pulls down the gates. It is covered in gang graffiti.
- CUT TO:
- 101 INT. VIRGINIA'S CAR - SAME 101
- Virginia drives back to the house quietly. She looks in the rear view mirror and sees that Elena is asleep in the back seat. Her head hangs almost impossibly to the side. Virginia smiles.
- CUT TO:
- 102 EXT. PASADENA STREET - SAME 102
- Fernando gets off the bus on a quiet Pasadena block. He carries a duffle bag of his belongings. A group of women wait to get on and head home. They remind Fernando of his own mother heading home after a long day. He looks at them and walks off.
- CUT TO:
- 103 INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - LATER 103
- Virginia and Elena sit at the counter eating burgers and fries. Virginia drinks wine with it. Fernando enters the house. He shouts "Hello". Elena runs to the door and grabs him by the hand, leading him to the kitchen. Virginia lifts the bottle offering him a glass. He nods and she pours. He drops his bag on to the kitchen floor.
- CUT TO:
- 104 INT. GUEST ROOM - LATER 104
- Virginia carries in folded towels for Fernando. He unpacks some of his clothing and places it into an empty dresser. Elena jumps on the bed. Virginia hands him the towels and he takes it into the en suite. She also tells Elena to get off the bed. She does.
- As Fernando reemerges, they walk out of the room together, leaving him alone in his new temporary home. He sits at the edge of the bed and removes his shoes.

Then finally, exhausted from the day, he lays back on the mattress and closes his eyes.

BLACK:

END MONTAGE

105 EXT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE - MORNING 105

Fernando loads a suitcase into the trunk of Virginia's car. She is already seated in drivers seat.

VIRGINIA

Okay. I'm off. I left some money for food on the kitchen counter. It's the weekend so if you wanna just let her sleep, that's cool.

FERNANDO

Okay.

VIRGINIA

Just call me if you guys need anything. I should be back in a few days. Please don't burn down my house. And try to get her to play outside.

FERNANDO

I'll try. Bye.

With that, Virginia drives off. Leaving Fernando in the driveway. He walks back toward the house.

CUT TO:

106 INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER 106

Fernando enters and shuts the door behind him. Locking it. He walks through the house into the kitchen and finds Elena is awake and pouring herself a bowl of Lucky Charms. He speaks to her in Spanish and she responds to him in English.

FERNANDO

Buenos dias.

ELENA

Morning. Did she leave?

Fernando nods.

FERNANDO

Are you supposed to be eating that?
Would you rather have some eggs and
beans? I can make some.

Elena shrugs and scoops a big spoonful into her mouth.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

So, what do you want to do today?

She continues to chomp on her cereal. Smiles at him.

CUT TO:

107 EXT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/POOL - LATER

107

Fernando holds Elena as she lays on her back in the pool.
He's teaching her how to float.

FERNANDO

Just relax and take deep breathes.
When you breathe in you rise, and
when you exhale you sink. Do you
feel that?

She does and smiles.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

(slowly and rhythmically)
You have to just relax and breathe.
Relax and breathe.

Elena does this. Then:

ELENA

Do you like her? Virginia?

FERNANDO

(nodding)
She's nice. A good person. Just
alone.

ELENA

She told my mom I could stay here
to finished the school year if I
wanted.

FERNANDO

That's generous.

ELENA

Do you think my mom would get mad
if I stayed?

FERNANDO

Maybe not mad. Maybe she would just miss you.

ELENA

Will you ever go back?

FERNANDO

Maybe one day.

With this Elena stands in the pool. She pokes her pinky out for a pinky swear. Fernando doesn't know what this is.

ELENA

If you go, and I'm there at the same time, I promise to hang out with you. That way you're not lonely either. We'll both know someone there.

She grabs his hand and wraps her pinky around his. He gets it now. Smiles.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Pinky swear.

He nods.

CUT TO:

108 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - LATER

108

Elena and Fernando go through John's record collection. Fernando pulls albums out and looks them over. Then hands them to Elena who carries a big stack of them.

ELENA

So this is how you listened to music?

FERNANDO

Yeah. And most of them have the lyrics too. And pictures.

ELENA

Cool. And heavy

CUT TO:

109 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - LATER

109

Fernando and Elena sit on the floor of John's studio. Between them sits a portable record player. Fernando picks up a record. He shows it to Elena. She touches the cover.

ELENA

Looks dangerous.

FERNANDO

This was my mother's favorite band. She saw them in concert before I was born. She played it all the time.

He carefully pulls it from its sleeve. Elena looks at the vinyl like it's from another planet.

ELENA

(smiling)

Weird.

He puts the record on the turntable and lifts the needle. The record spins. She watches this in wonder. He places the needle down. Guitars play. Mean guitars. Mean guitars with reverb. The album is APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION. The band is Guns n' Roses. The song... "Welcome to the jungle".

Fernando rises and plays air guitar. Elena gets into it. She rises and joins him.

ELENA (CONT'D)

(screaming over the song)

I like it. Are all records this loud?!

CUT TO:

110 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - LATER

110

Fernando is on the floor looking at The Ramones debut album. Elena dances like a maniac. "Blitzkrieg Bop" plays.

ELENA

This is definitely louder!

CUT TO:

111 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - LATER 111

Fernando is looking for more records on the shelf. Elena holds up Nirvana's NEVERMIND album. "Smells Like Teen Spirit" plays.

ELENA
(laughing re: album cover)
Look at this baby's penis!

CUT TO:

112 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - LATER 112

Fernando head bangs to Metallica's KILL 'EM ALL. "Hit the lights" plays. Elena has her fingers plugging her ears.

ELENA
I don't think I'm supposed to be
listening to this!

CUT TO:

113 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - LATER 113

Elena and Fernando sit on the floor again quietly. This time they both stare at the record as it plays. They listen carefully. Especially Elena. It's Billy Joel's first album COLD SPRING HARBOR. "She's Got A Way" plays.

ELENA
I like this. It makes me want to
cry. I don't know why.

FERNANDO
(nodding)
Billy Joel.
(then)
Are you hungry?

She nods.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)
(standing up)
Let's go.

CUT TO:

THE SONG PLAYS UNDER THE FOLLOWING SCENES

114 INT. METRO CAR - LATER 114

Fernando and Elena ride the L.A. Metro gold line. They talk as the train glides through the Eastside neighborhoods. The afternoon light glows through the train car.

CUT TO:

115 EXT. OLIVERA STREET MARKET - LATER 115

Fernando and Elena pass through the narrow walkway of what is the oldest part of Los Angeles. Bright festive kiosks sell all manner of souvenir and trinket. Elena delights in the Mexican wrestler masks and oversized sombreros.

Fernando dances with her as a full Mariachi band plays outside a restaurant for the passing tourists.

Fernando and Elena order some taquitos at a tiny stand that's been there since the 1930's.

They sit and eat. Still talking and laughing as they do this.

Elena finishes her last bite. Fernando tosses out the trash. They leave.

CUT TO:

116 INT. METRO CAR - LATER 116

Darkness is setting in. Fernando and Elena ride back home. He struggles to stay awake. She is already asleep. Her head leans against him.

CUT TO:

117 EXT. METRO CAR - LATER 117

Fernando carries Elena off the train on his back. They walk down the platform.

CUT TO:

118 EXT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE - LATER 118

Fernando punches in the code for Virginia's giant gate. The electric doors open for him. Elena still on his back.

CUT TO:

119 INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 119

They walk through the door. He slowly lowers Elena to the ground. He tells her to get ready for bed. She goes.

CUT TO:

120 INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER 120

Fernando and Elena brush their teeth together. They turn it onto a race to see who can finish first. They spit at the same time and laugh.

CUT TO:

121 INT. GUEST ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 121

Elena tucked into the bed, looks up at Fernando as he turns the lamp off next to her.

FERNANDO

Buenas Noches.

ELENA

Goodnight.

He crosses to the door.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Today was fun. Can we practice swimming again tomorrow?

FERNANDO

Of course.

Elena turns on her side and closes her eyes. Fernando goes.

CUT TO:

122 INT. FERNANDO'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 122

Fernando lays in bed. His arms crossed behind his head. A smile spreads across his face. It's been a long time since he's truly felt important. Necessary to someone.

He reaches over to the lamp and turns it off.

THE SONG ENDS.

BLACK:

123 INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

123

In the darkness a cellphone buzzes loudly. The screen illuminates the night stand where it lays. A hand reaches for it.

VIRGINIA
(groggily)
Hello. Hey. Everything okay?

Virginia turns on the lamp. She's in an impossibly bland hotel room.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
What? What do you mean? Now?
It's 5am.

She gets up and begins to dress.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
I'll be right there. You tell them
your lawyer is five minutes away.

CUT TO:

124 EXT. CALEXICO/DETENTION FACILITY - LATER

124

The morning sun is beginning to show its face. Virginia's car screeches to a halt in the parking lot of a detention facility in the desert. The entire place is surrounded by layers of chain length fence adorned with barb wire.

She gets out of her car and heads toward the main gate, when she sees that outside the fence, are ten large commuter buses with no distinguishing marks. They sit and idle in the lot.

The main gate opens and out walks Elena's Mother. She wears her street clothes with a metallic blanket covering herself. She carries a plastic bag that holds her belongings as well as her release paperwork.

Virginia and she walk toward each other and embrace.

Suddenly the gate alarm rings and the larger fence begins to open. This startles the women. Then: The buses begin to unload passengers. They are children. They are escorted into the facility by adults in blue windbreaker jackets with ICE POLICE printed on them.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
The judge approved the Voluntary
Departure order. It was signed
late the night before.
(MORE)

FERNANDO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Virginia was confused why it was signed so quickly. But when she saw the children, she knew why.

Virginia and Elena's Mother watch as the children are led single file into the detention. The children range from 2 to 12. The older kids help care for the young. All the buses unload what looks like a sea of humanity. The women's heartbreak is hard to mask.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

He signed the order not because he saw that Elena's Mother wasn't a threat, but because the jail needed the room. For children.

Virginia takes Elena's Mother's hand. They slowly walk away.

CUT TO:

125 INT. VIRGINIA'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

125

Virginia and Elena's Mother drive along the quiet desert road away from the prison.

ELENA'S MOTHER

Would I be a bad mother if I let Elena stay with you? Not permanently. Just, until I get back to her.

VIRGINIA

No. Of course not. She would understand.

The car is silent.

ELENA'S MOTHER

Those kids. They would give anything to be like Elena. I could never see her like that.

(hard to say)

I want her to stay with you. Is that okay?

VIRGINIA

Yes. It is.

CUT TO:

126 INT. DINER - LATER

126

The women sit at a booth of a diner. They eat breakfast. Drink coffee and juice. Talk and share stories. We watch this through the glass. Like a Edward Hopper painting.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

They talked for hours. Elena's Mother asked Virginia every conceivable question about her life. And why Elena mattered so much to her. Virginia held nothing back. Answered every question. Told her every detail. Every secret thing that showed her true self. And confided that Elena reminded her of John. She had found a piece of him. Elena's Mother decided to make Virginia her daughter's guardian. It all happened while eating pancakes in a diner that neither one could remember the name of.

CUT TO:

127 INT. VIRGINIA'S CAR - MORNING

127

Virginia and Elena's Mother pull up to the entrance of the pedestrian border crossing. Outside people are buzzing about. Running their morning errands.

ELENA'S MOTHER

I'll text you as soon as I'm on the other side.

VIRGINIA

Okay. You have all your paperwork?

Elena's Mother nods.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)

I have all your family information. Address in Mexico City. I'll bring Elena down for Thanksgiving break and again for Christmas. You going straight to the airport?

ELENA'S MOTHER

(nodding)

Thank you.

VIRGINIA

We'll talk soon I'll have Elena call tonight.

ELENA'S MOTHER

I'll be waiting. Okay, goodbye.

With that Elena's Mother gets out of the car. Gently closes the door and walks toward the metal turnstiles. As she is about to enter she turns and waves at Virginia. She waves back.

Elena's Mother goes through and disappears inside.

Virginia grabs her purse and digs through it. She recovers her cell phone from it.

She stares at the screen. Nothing.

VIRGINIA

Come on.

Another moment. Then: A text. "HOLA FROM MEXICO" It is followed by a thumbs up and OK emoji.

Virginia responds with "YAY!" And the fireworks and prayer hands emoji's.

Virginia takes a deep breath and drives off.

CUT TO:

128

I/E. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE - TIME PASSES

128

Pasadena in the fall. The trees outside of Virginia's house tell the story of change.

Virginia sits at the kitchen counter sipping on a glass of wine as Elena walks through the room video chatting with her mom. She holds up the phone to Virginia's face. She waves to Elena's Mother.

Virginia holds the phone on Elena playing the piano for her family to see on video chat.

Fernando blows a whistle and Elena dives into the pool and swims like a pro. He follows along the side of the with a stopwatch.

Elena and Virginia lay on her enormous bed with her laptop open to a girls dress website. They scroll through the dresses and Elena screams out when she finds the perfect dress.

ELENA

That one!! That one!!

Virginia, dressed as Ziggy Stardust takes a picture of Elena and Fernando in their costumes. Elena is of course dressed like Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. And Fernando, as a mummy. They head out the door with empty bags.

We follow the three of them around as they go trick or treating in fancy neighborhood.

Later. They reenter the house with Elena carrying two giant bags filled with candy that break and spill treats all over the foyer.

Rights pending: The three watch the scene of the exorcist When Linda Blair is floating above the bed. Elena eats candy watches with a smile on her face. Her mom would never allow this.

CUT TO:

129 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY 129

Elena sits on Fernando's lap while he shows her how to work the excavator.

CUT TO:

130 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - DAY 130

Elena plays on John's piano. Listens to records with headphones on.

CUT TO:

131 INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - EVENING 131

Virginia holds chopsticks up with sushi in front of Elena's face.

Elena shakes her heads with disgust.

VIRGINIA

I'll give you twenty bucks.

Elena's eyes widen. She opens her mouth and eats the piece of sushi. She hold out her hand for the money as she chews.

CUT TO:

132 INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT 132

Virginia sits next to a VERY HANDSOME MAN at the dining room table. In front of them are files and immigration paperwork. Also a laptop is open and they are video conferencing with Elena's Mother.

Virginia sees Elena making kissy faces at her and pretending to make out. The handsome man is too busy speaking to Elena's Mother to notice. Virginia hides the laughter. Then shakes her head and mouths "Stop" to Elena.

CUT TO:

133 EXT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE/POOL - DAY 133

The three lay out in the sun on pool chairs. They are still like lizards absorbing the rays. Quiet.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I remember these moments fondly. I felt at peace. I didn't have to run. But it couldn't last.

CUT TO:

134 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY 134

Fernando is digging a grave with the mini excavator. Oliver races toward him on the maintenance golf cart.

OLIVER

(waving his hands)

Stop! Yo! Stop!!!

Fernando does this.

FERNANDO

What happened?

OLIVER

I just got off the phone with my boss. He's retiring. Guess who's taking his job?

FERNANDO

No?

OLIVER

Yes motherfucka. Me!

Fernando gets down off the rig and hugs Oliver.

FERNANDO
Congratulations!

OLIVER
Congratulations to you too! Cause
you're taking my place.

FERNANDO
What?

OLIVER
Job is yours if you want it.

FERNANDO
I don't know if I can take it.

OLIVER
Look. I know you're all paranoid
about your papers and shit. But
don't worry about it. We'll figure
something out. Okay?

Fernando is stunned and elated.

FERNANDO
(hugging again)
Thank you. So much.

OLIVER
You deserve it. And I'ma tell you
right now that we are going out to
celebrate tonight! We are gonna
get turnt out. And I don't want to
hear "no". Okay?

FERNANDO
(nodding)
Yes. Yes. Let's celebrate

Oliver starts back to the cart.

OLIVER
That's why you my number two! Big
things baby! Big things!

Fernando, pleased with the news gets back to work.

CUT TO:

135 EXT. EAST L.A. BAR/CLUB - LATER

135

Fernando stands alone in line outside an Eastside club. He
is dressed appropriately trendy for the night.

He looks around for Oliver, who is nowhere to be found. Fernando looks at his watch as the line moves up.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
Places like this reminded me of how
dark the shadows really are.

The Doorman stands at the front checking ID's. This is making Fernando nervous.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
The simple act of going out for a
drink or dancing, for people like
me, means stepping out into the
light.

He pulls out his phone and texts Oliver.

"At the club." "Hey U here?"

Fernando anxiously watches the Doorman scrutinize the ID's.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
Answering uncomfortable questions.
Like, "is this ID fake?" "Yes."
"Is it good enough to fool the
doorman?" "No." "Is he an off
duty cop making some extra bucks?"
"I hope not."

Fernando reaches the Doorman. He produces his ID from his wallet and slowly hands it over. As the exchange is about to happen, Oliver Barrels in.

OLIVER
(to Doorman)
What up Billy?!

The Doorman turns away from Fernando and his fake ID. Oliver extends his hand to the Doorman, who takes it and greets Oliver with a bear hug.

DOORMAN
(opening the velvet ropes)
Yo! What's good?!

OLIVER
Just chillin'.
(re: Fernando)
This is my boy. His girl left him
and I think he needs a new one.

The Doorman turns back to Fernando who stills holds his ID. He lifts the rope and lets Fernando in.

DOORMAN
Happy Hunting.

Fernando and Oliver enter.

CUT TO:

136 INT. EAST L.A. BAR/CLUB - LATER

136

Fernando stands at a crowded bar. Latin music pumps through the DJ's speakers at eardrum shattering levels. The air is filled with laughter and lust and possibilities. The dim red lights hide the ugliness of the place. The crowd dances in a mass of swaying bodies.

Oliver dances in the center of the dance floor with two women. He is getting down. In one hand he carries a towel to wipe the sweat off himself as he grinds up on the women. In the other, a beer.

Fernando watches this as a WOMAN WITH TOO MUCH MAKEUP and a tight dress leans in close to him and talks into his ear. She runs her fingers over his newly acquired Rolex. He takes sips from his beer half listening to the woman and the music.

He nods at what she says but is definitely not all there. He smiles at her compliments. He shrugs at her propositions. He is a million miles away. Alone in a sea of people.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Maybe it was the beer. Maybe the music. Or the woman next to me from Panama that desperately needed to pay her rent. But watching all these people here showed me how big the shadow really was.

He drinks again. The music feels even louder. The dancers sway harder. The Woman leans in closer.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

We were all in it. In some way. Hiding from something.

Oliver dancing.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

The past.

The Woman next to Fernando.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

The present.

Drink. Louder. Harder. Closer. Drink. Louder. Harder. Closer. It all repeats to the beat of the music until it reaches a dizzying and deafening pace.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Or from who we are supposed to be.

Then:

CUT TO:

137 EXT. L.A. STREETS - LATER

137

Fernando with a spray can in hand works on the blank storefront gate. He works quickly through can after can. His pace deliberate and steady. A definite sense of purpose has taken over. We see streaks of blue and white but not enough to make out exactly what is being created.

He is once again lost in his work.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I was tired to hiding. Of pretending. Hiding. I wanted to be who I was born to be. I wanted to cover up all that was ugly and grey and unused. I wanted to fill the spaces that people ignored. I wanted to be real. I wanted to leave my mark. The way my Mother never left hers. I wanted to exist again. The way she would never let me. The way others existed. Without fear. Without running.

Finally, his last touches. Fernando smiles then backs away to see his work. He pulls out his cellphone and snaps a few pictures. Just then, police lights flash. Fernando doesn't run. He smiles at his work and continues to take pictures from different angles. Two UNIFORMED OFFICERS approach him.

CUT TO:

138 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM/PRECINCT - NIGHT

138

Virginia enters the windowless room. She carries her purse. A visitors badge is stuck to her shirt. Fernando is slumped over in his chair. Exhausted. He still wears the clothes from club.

VIRGINIA

Jesus Christ. Are you okay?

Fernando nods.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
(as she sits)
What the fuck were you thinking?
And you were drunk.

Fernando shrugs.

VIRGINIA (CONT'D)
So, what... you're not going to say
anything?

FERNANDO
I'm sorry.

VIRGINIA
Did you keep your mouth shut at
least?

FERNANDO
Yes. Like you told me.

VIRGINIA
Good. These fuckers will get you
cop to anything if you let them.
They're waiting to hear back from
the shop owner. See if he'll press
charges. If he doesn't, you can
go. You understand?

FERNANDO
Yes.

VIRGINIA
So, when he comes in I'm going to
talk to him first and see if I can
convince him to let you work off
the damage. Paint over the gate.
Something like that.

FERNANDO
(not liking that)
What? No.

VIRGINIA
Yes. You'll do whatever he tells
you to. This is fucking vandalism.
This could be a felony.

FERNANDO
I'll work for free. But I won't
paint over my art.

VIRGINIA

Fuck that. You'll get deported once you're in the system.

FERNANDO

I don't care.

VIRGINIA

You'll do it!

FERNANDO

(raising his voice)

No! I won't. Anything else. But not that. It is the only thing of me here. The only piece of me that exist here. You don't know how that feels. To have nothing. To be nothing. To not have a name. A land. To be invisible. Only when something needs to be done, do you look at me. Talk to me. Ask me questions. What I *did* on that gate is the only record of my life here. I won't erase it. I am tired. Tired of hiding. And running. And pretending that it doesn't hurt me. I want to go home Virginia. I want to go home, but I don't know where that is. Do you know? Please tell me. Please.

This reduces them both to tears. They embrace. A knock on the door. A SERGEANT walks in. They dry their tears.

SERGEANT

Didn't mean to interrupt. Store owner is here. He's not going to press charges.

VIRGINIA

Thank God.

SERGEANT

Says he wants to pay you for the work you did.

VIRGINIA

What?

FERNANDO

What?

CUT TO:

139 INT. VIRGINIA'S CAR - LATER 139

Virginia drives through the empty LA streets as Fernando sits shotgun. The sun begins its jail break through the darkness.

People begin their daily work rituals. David Bowie's "Quicksand" plays in the background.

Fernando asks Virginia if she can hang a right. She does.

CUT TO:

140 EXT. L.A. STREETS - MOMENTS LATER 140

Virginia's car pulls up to the storefront. The painted gate is there. We now see it completely in the glowing morning light. Fernando jumps out, as does Virginia. She is amazed by the work.

VIRGINIA
It's beautiful.

The gate is painted in a stylized rainforest with the Mayan ruins towering out of the canopy and a regal Quetzal (national bird of Guatemala) soars through the sky. It is glorious and bright and larger than life. It is signed NATIVE.

FERNANDO
This is who I am.

Virginia extends her hand like she's meeting Fernando for the first time.

VIRGINIA
It's really nice to meet you.

Fernando shakes it. Then hands Virginia his cellphone. He poses in front of his art as she clicks a picture. A few pedestrians notice it as they pass.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
This is the first time I was in
America. Me. Fernando Padilla.
And now, I was going to leave.

CUT TO:

141 EXT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE - MORNING 141

Fernando carries the few things he has in a duffle bag. He walks out of Virginia's house and toward Oliver's car. Oliver waits by the open trunk.

Virginia and Elena stand by the door watching him go. He hands his bag to Oliver who puts it in the trunk.

OLIVER
(re: Virginia's house)
You sure you wanna leave all this?

FERNANDO
I'm sure.

Fernando crosses to his door. Elena walks out toward him.

ELENA
Fernando!

He turns to her.

ELENA (CONT'D)
(in perfect Spanish)
I hope I see you again. I'll play
for you.

This is the only time she's ever spoken in Spanish. Fernando smiles and nods. He gets in the car and they drive off.

CUT TO:

142 I/E. 405 SOUTH BOUND - DAY 142

Fernando and Oliver drive south toward the border along the glistening Pacific Ocean. They joke and laugh as the sun reflects off the sea.

Fernando also draws in his sketch pad.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
I remember how warm the sun felt on
my arm as we drove down. And how
it looked reflecting off the ocean.
How beautiful this country was and
how little of it I got to see. And
I thought of Elena's audition.

CUT TO:

143 INT. THE COLBURN SCHOOL - SAME

143

Virginia and Elena enter the modern glass and steel building in downtown LA. The open lobby is filled with kids and their parents.

Elena is dressed in a bright pink dress while most of the other children wear more muted attire.

They walk toward a registration table manned by volunteers and check in.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

How nervous she must have felt.
Wondering if she practiced enough.
Or if she picked the right songs.
Wore the right dress. Or simply if
she was good enough.

Virginia and Elena sit in the waiting area. Parents pace nervously, as children try and remain calm.

A young boy, about Elena's age, walks out of the audition hall in tears. Everyone turns and watches as his mom quickly whisks him away.

VIRGINIA

(shaking her head)
What a pussy.

A VOLUNTEER appears from behind a large wooden door.

VOLUNTEER

(from a clipboard)
Elena Mendoza. Piano.

Elena looks to Virginia, anxiously. Virginia looks at her and smiles. Elena stands and Virginia adjusts her dress and hair.

VIRGINIA

(calmly)
You got this kid. Go fucking kill
em'.

Elena smiles and enters the room. The door closes behind her.

CUT TO:

144 INT. COLBURN/ZIPPER HALL - SAME 144

Elena is escorted into a huge recital hall. It's ceiling is vaulted and the lights shine on the stage. At first it is difficult for her to see. But eyes adjust. And her unsure steps, steady.

She crosses to the grand piano. She is dwarfed by it. A JUDGE'S voice rings out from the darkened hall.

JUDGE

Whenever you're ready.

Elena sits and positions herself. She gently lays her tiny fingers on the keys. Closes her eyes. Lifts her hand to start. When:

CUT TO:

145 EXT. SAN YSIDRO/TIJUANA BORDER CROSSING - SAME 145

Oliver and Fernando drive through the packed Tijuana border crossing. They move slowly through traffic. The automated gates photograph the license plate of each passing car. Then open and the cars drive through.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I wish I had a memory of her performance. Of her impressive skill. Of her tiny hands dancing across the keys. Of how she closes her eyes right before she plays.

CUT TO:

146 INT. OLIVER'S CAR - SAME 146

Oliver drives Fernando through the modern border. The bright green, red and white sign passes above them. Fernando looks back at the country he leaves behind. The one he has called home for over a decade. Oliver sees this. Says nothing.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

But I wasn't there. I was three hours away. Crossing from the country that raised me, back into the country of my birth. Where I never had to run again.

147 EXT. BUS DEPOT - LATER 147

A large commuter bus is filling with passengers. The driver and a porter load the bags into the belly of the vehicle.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

When I told Elena I was going back,
she told me that I would only be
thirty four hours away.

Oliver and Fernando stand near the gate. They talk, say their goodbyes and hug one last time. Fernando walks on to the bus. He waves at Oliver then disappears inside.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

She had calculated the three hour
drive from Los Angeles to Tijuana
and the thirty one hour bus ride to
Mexico City.

CUT TO:

148 INT. BUS - LATER 148

Fernando stares out the window as the bus moves through the various landscapes of Mexico. The dense cities. Sprawling gated communities. And vast countryside.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I told her we were much closer than
that. That I was just a thought
away. Only a memory apart. And
that I would see her again. She
made me pinky swear it.

CUT TO:

149 EXT. MEXICO CITY BUS DEPOT - MORNING 149

Fernando disembarks. He picks up his duffle from the concrete. And walks into the terminal.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

She told me when she came to see
her mother, she would call. It was
a date I was going to keep.

CUT TO:

150 EXT. ZÓCALO - MORNING 150

Fernando walks through the bustling historic and cultural center of the city. He looks around as he cuts through the largest plaza in Latin America. The giant Mexican flag waves to him and the colonial Spanish cathedral in the distance.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
I called the family I had left
here. They welcomed me back.

CUT TO:

151 INT. FERNANDO'S APT. - LATER 151

FERNANDO'S AUNT opens the door to his childhood apartment. The place is a wreck. Not what he remembers at all. The kitchen cabinets are falling apart. The appliances are rusted and filthy. There is garbage everywhere.

Fernando enters.

FERNANDO
Perfect.

He nods to his Aunt. He has no other options. She hands him the keys.

FADE TO:

152 INT. FERNANDO'S APT. - DAY 152

Time passes as Fernando cleans and fixes the apartment. He renovates and paints and decorates. He completes a mural of his own across a large wall. Cousins and other family pop in to help where they can. The work ends with a simple and tastefully curated home.

IN THIS SECTION IT WILL APPEAR AS IF FERNANDO IS FADING FROM JOB TO JOB IN THE APARTMENT. DUPLICATING THE SHOT OF HIS MOTHER WORKING AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FILM. FINALLY RETURNING TO THE COMPLETED APARTMENT.

FERNANDO (V.O.)
My Aunt let the place sit empty for
years. She thought that someday my
mother and I would return. It took
three weeks of painting and
scrubbing and sanitizing before it
felt like a home. And when I was
done, she gave it to me.
(MORE)

FERNANDO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I had never owned anything. My
hands shook when I signed the deed.
Five days later she died.

CUT TO:

THE MARIACHI VERSION OF "PESCADOR DE HOMBRES" PLAYS OVER THE NEXT SERIES OF INTERCUT SCENES. IT'S A MEXICAN CATHOLIC SONG. USUALLY PLAYED AT FUNERALS. IT IS MORE HOPEFUL THAN MELANCHOLY. ABOUT BEING WELCOMED INTO HEAVEN. IT IS NOT A SONG OF LOSS.

153 INT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE - DAY 153

Virginia carefully fills a suitcase with Elena's clothing. She teaches Elena how to properly fold clothes for the trip. They smile and talk.

CUT TO:

154 EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - SAME 154

A procession of cars pull up in front of the Catholic church where Fernando served as an altar boy. A large white hearse carrying Fernando's aunt lands in front. Waiting ushers, including Fernando, open the back and begin sliding the coffin out.

CUT TO:

155 EXT. VIRGINIA'S HOUSE - SAME 155

A chauffeur loads Virginia and Elena's bags into the trunk. He opens the door for Elena, who immediately jumps in. Virginia, before stepping in, leans in close to his face and smells his breath. He looks at her like a freak. Satisfied he's not drunk, she nods and hops in.

CUT TO:

156 INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - SAME 156

Parishioners fill the church pews. Fernando and five other men carry the coffin toward the altar. They all wear black suits. People genuflect as the coffin passes.

CUT TO:

157 INT. LAX - SAME 157

Elena and Virginia pass through airport security. Elena looks around in wonder. This is clearly her first time traveling.

CUT TO:

158 INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - SAME 158

Fernando sits and watches as the priest consecrates the coffin with incense. He looks up toward the altar and sees two altar boys sitting off to the side. One is picking his nose furiously. The other altar boy elbows him to stop. This makes Fernando chuckle.

CUT TO:

159 INT. FIRST CLASS CABIN - SAME 159

Elena enters the plane and walks through the first class cabin. Virginia points out her seat, and begins to stow her bags overhead. A steward approaches with two glasses of champagne. Virginia takes them both and mouths "thank you".

CUT TO:

160 EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - SAME 160

Fernando and the other ushers carry the coffin down the front steps toward the hearse and load it in. They shut the rear hatch and off it drives.

CUT TO:

161 INT. FIRST CLASS CABIN - SAME 161

Cruising at 36,000 feet, Virginia places a sleeping mask over her eyes and reclines her chair. Elena sits up gleefully looking at the ground below.

CUT TO:

162 EXT. CEMETERY - SAME 162

Fernando and the other attendees watch as the casket is lowered in the ground. The priest sprinkling it holy water as it descends. Fernando looks off to the side and sees two grounds keepers waiting with shovels.

They smoke cigarettes and check their iPhones. He looks even further past them, and sees a man. He is familiar to us. The man from the church all those years ago. Except now he is older. The man is Fernando's father.

CUT TO:

163 INT. MEXICO CITY AIRPORT - SAME 163

Elena and Virginia appear through the customs gate and enter the reception area of the airport. There waiting for them is Elena's Mother and a crowd of family members. They hold balloons and a sign that says "Bienvenido". "Welcome".

Elena runs to her mother who swallows her up in bear hug.

CUT TO:

164 EXT. CEMETERY - SAME 164

The last of Fernando's family walk away from the grave site. He remains there alone. He lowers his head and says a final goodbye. He genuflects and turns to leave.

As he does, he finds his FATHER standing before him. His clothes are slightly tattered. Life has been hard for him. He carries a bouquet of flowers.

END MUSIC.

The men stand there in silence. Then:

FERNANDO'S FATHER

Hello.

FERNANDO

Hello.

FERNANDO'S FATHER

I came to pay my respect. I don't want any trouble.

Fernando steps out of his father's way. He walks with a slight limp toward the grave, and tosses the flowers onto the casket below. He bows his head and says a quick prayer.

FERNANDO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

Your aunt was the only one in the family to still talk to me. She was a good person.

FERNANDO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

Your mother and I were young when she got pregnant. I was mixed up in bad things. Stupid things. Things that pushed her away from me.

FERNANDO

You don't have to say these things.

FERNANDO'S FATHER

I missed your birth because I was in jail for stealing a crib.
(turning to Fernando)
Did you know that?

Fernando shakes his head.

FERNANDO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

I loved your mother. But that day, when I didn't show up... she stopped loving me.

Fernando's Father walks away from the grave. Toward the parked cars.

FERNANDO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

(as he passes Fernando)
I've never stopped thinking of you.
Sorry you didn't know me.

Fernando stews for a moment. Then:

FERNANDO

How about a drink?

His father stops. Turns. Pulls out his car keys.

FERNANDO'S FATHER

You drink. I'm driving.

CUT TO:

165

EXT. FERNANDO'S FATHER'S HOUSE - LATER

165

Fernando and his father pull up to a run down cinderblock house in a not so nice part of town. The exterior is jam packed with overgrown plants, broken pots and lots of random junk. The men climb out of the beat up sedan and enter the well worn home.

CUT TO:

166 INT. FERNANDO'S FATHER'S HOUSE - SAME

166

They enter the crowded house. It is filled with tons of electronic parts and tools and old radios and televisions. You can smell the oil and metal in the air.

FERNANDO'S FATHER

Sorry about the mess. I work from home and wasn't expecting anyone.

He leads Fernando into the living room. He removes a stack of magazines from a chair and invites Fernando to sit.

FERNANDO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

I repair things. TV's, radios washing machines. Anything really. I'll get that drink. Whiskey?

FERNANDO

Yes, please.

Fernando's Father races off to find it in the kitchen. Fernando looks around the room.

FERNANDO'S FATHER (O.C.)

Ice with that?

FERNANDO

Yes. If you have.

FERNANDO'S FATHER (O.C.)

I have. I fixed this freezer myself.

Fernando rises and walks to a bookshelf. On it are pictures of Fernando as a child and teenager. Except they are photocopies of pictures. Fernando touches them. Then he sees on another shelf is a framed 8x10 pictures of Fernando's art. He grabs it from the shelf. His father reenters holding a whiskey for Fernando and a glass coca cola bottle for himself.

FERNANDO'S FATHER (CONT'D)

(re: the drink)

Here you are.

He sets the drink on the coffee table.

FERNANDO

(re: the frame)

Where did you get this?

FERNANDO'S FATHER

Oh. You saw my collection. Your pictures.

FERNANDO

Where did you get this picture?

FERNANDO'S FATHER

I took it. With my camera. I have all your art. Native. That's you.

FERNANDO

How did you know that?

FERNANDO'S FATHER

Your Mother had complained to your aunt about you painting on walls. Thought you would get in trouble. So, your aunt told me. I took pictures of them with an old camera someone traded me. Then I would paint over them.

FERNANDO

What?

FERNANDO'S FATHER

So you wouldn't get in trouble.

FERNANDO

You covered them?!

FERNANDO'S FATHER

Yes. So you wouldn't get in trouble like me. But I took pictures first.

(crossing to more framed shots)
Look. I have them all

FERNANDO

Why would you do that?!

FERNANDO'S FATHER

(softly)
I told you...

FERNANDO

They were all I had. You were the one covering them?

FERNANDO'S FATHER

You still have them. Here. I took pictures. I have them all.

FERNANDO

Why didn't you leave them?

FERNANDO'S FATHER

I thought I was helping.

FERNANDO

What would have helped me was if you talked to me.

FERNANDO'S FATHER

(ashamed)

I wasn't allowed. Your mother. She was always the strong one. The one in charge. So I kept my distance. I was scared she would take you away again.

FERNANDO

You didn't even try.

FERNANDO'S FATHER

She said I would be a bad influence on you. That I had nothing to teach you.

FERNANDO

I was alone. For years. You could have tried harder.

Fernando puts the frame back.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)

(shaking his head)

She was right. You are weak. It would have made me weak too.

FERNANDO'S FATHER

I see a lot of your mother in you. She was mean to those that loved her.

FERNANDO

You don't love me.
(on his way out)
You don't even know me.

Fernando heads for the door.

FERNANDO'S FATHER

And you?

FERNANDO
(confused by the question)
What about me?

FERNANDO'S FATHER
You stand here and lecture me for
keeping my distance. When you've
done the same to your child.

This stops Fernando dead in his tracks. He turns back to his
father. WTF?!

FERNANDO'S FATHER (CONT'D)
At least I didn't run. You leave
with your mother in the dead of
night. You two, always running.
Maybe I was weak. But I stayed.
You left that poor girl.

Can this be true? All of it is dawning on Fernando now.

CUT TO:

167 INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - **FLASHBACK** 167

A young Fernando and Camilla have sex on the floor of the
sacristy.

CUT TO:

168 EXT. MEXICO CITY STREET - **FLASHBACK** 168

Fernando and Camilla hold hands. Kiss.

CUT TO:

169 INT. FERNANDO'S APT - **FLASHBACK** 169

Fernando shrugs as he tries to walk past her.

MOTHER
That girl, Camilla kept calling
here tonight. I don't like that
either. She should have some self
respect and stop chasing after you
like that. Don't fill her head
with things. Make her promises. I
know how boys are. Saying things
to get...

CUT TO:

170 INT. FERNANDO'S ROOM - **FLASHBACK** 170

FERNANDO
Stop! That's mine! My work!!!

MOTHER
We have to take it down now!

FERNANDO
You're tearing them! That's all I
have left of them! Why are you
doing this?!

The phone rings. His Mother finally stops. Frozen by the ringing.

FERNANDO (CONT'D)
What is it?

MOTHER
(fear in her voice)
They found you. The police. They
know who you are. They found you.
They'll take you away. They'll
take you away from me.
(grabs his face)
They know where we live. They
know. I told you this would
happen.

CUT TO:

171 INT. FERNANDO'S FATHER'S HOUSE - PRESENT 171

Fernando still at the door. His father looks at him quietly.

FERNANDO'S FATHER
(dawning on him)
You didn't know. She never told
you.
(taking command)
Go! Now!

With that, Fernando nods and runs out the door.

CUT TO:

172 EXT. MEXICO CITY STREET - DAY 172

Fernando, runs at top speed through a rough part of town on the outskirts of Mexico City. He runs flat out, desperate to get to his destination.

THIS IS THE FIRST SHOT OF THE FILM. WE'VE CAUGHT UP.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

It's strange, the memories that stick in our heads. The ones that stand out the most. Especially the first memory. I remember my first memory clearly. I was running.

Fernando runs through city. Through plazas and parks. Squares and down alleys.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Some remember the first time they saw their Grandmother's face. Some the first time at the beach or their Mother singing to them. For me it was running. Always running.

He runs past his church. And past storefronts he once adorned with paint.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I remember the first time I spoke to my father. It was today. The first time I knew I had a child. It was today. The day I found out my mother lied about everything. It was today.

He runs past cafés and book stores and trendy clothing shops.

FERNANDO (V.O.)

I remember how angry I was. How even from beyond the grave I could hear her yell "RUN". "GET FREE". And I would. Just not alone.

Fernando finally reaches the outside of Camilla's building. He stops and catches his breath. He looks at the buzzer and finds the family's name. He buzzes, waits a second and the door buzzes open. He pushes the large wooden doors open and enters.

CUT TO:

173 INT. CAMILLA'S BUILDING - SAME

173

Fernando slowly climbs the spiral stairs leading up to Camilla's parent's apartment. He straightens up his clothing, fixes this tie and tucks his shirt.

Loud voices can be heard coming from an apartment above. Sounds of a birthday party or perhaps an anniversary.

Fernando continues up the stairs. And finally arrives at Camilla's floor. There is a party and it's on this floor. Some people spill out of the apartment. It's Camilla's apartment.

Fernando takes a deep breath and is about to approach when music begins. The music freezes Fernando. It's played on a piano. He's heard it before. Chopin's Impromptu in F-sharp OP.36.

He slowly walks toward the door. The place is full inside. Everyone is now silently listening to the tune. He moves through the crowd. Past a rapt audience. Inside where he can get a clear view of the performer. But he already knows who it is. She becomes clear to him. His daughter. Elena.

He smiles. His eyes fill with tears. She plays beautifully. His greatest work of art fills his heart with love.

He sees Virginia sitting near Elena. Then Elena's Mother, or rather Camila, enters carrying a tray of glasses. Some guests grab a few drinks off the tray when she looks up and sees Fernando. She drops the tray to the ground and the shattering glass stops the music. Camila stares at this ghost. Not sure if he's real. Then:

CAMILA

Fernando?

Title card: **Camilla & Elena & Fernando & Virginia**

BLACK:

THE END

FERNANDO (V.O.)

Wait. I have one more memory to share. Elena told me about her audition.

*
*
*

CUT TO:

174 INT. COLBURN/ZIPPER HALL - SAME

174

Elena is escorted into a huge recital hall. The ceiling is vaulted and the lights shine on the stage. At first it is difficult for her to see. But eyes adjust. And her unsure steps, steady.

She crosses to the grand piano. She is dwarfed by it. A voice from the darkened hall calls out.

JUDGE

Whenever you're ready.

Elena sits and positions herself. She gently lays her tiny fingers on the keys. Closes her eyes. Lifts her hand to start. When: Chopin's Prelude Op:28 No.16

Her powerful fingers hit the keys with intensity. Her right hands flittering over the ivory's as the left bangs away. Driving the tempo like a locomotive.

She is dazzling. She treats the Steinway like a plaything. In this moment she is no child. She is pure genius. Effortless. Born to play. She turns to the final stanza. Fingers a blur. Lightning fast. And with that it is over.

The judges are stunned. They have rarely seen such talent. They know that this is special. Silence. Elena gets up and turns to the judges. Waves.

ELENA

Bye.

And skips out.

FIN