

GOSSAMER/ELMWOOD PARK/SECOND PARENT  
UNTITLED

By

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FADE IN:

1

INT. DANE'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

1

In the corner, a furrow-browed precocious kid, ROY (15, Black) sinks in a sofa chair with his legs hanging over the armrest. A large immaculate flatscreen television illuminates hues of blue on his face.

He twists his body at an awkward angle and lays his head on a cushion.

DANE (15, Black) slouches on half of the living room couch and his mother CHERIE (40s, Black) occupies the other half with one arm extended, her hand squeezing the nape of Dane's neck.

The oven BANGS closed and FRED (40s, Black) enters with a decorated plate of steaming pizza bagels and a bowl of popcorn.

Fred hands the food to his wife and son and positions himself on the floor against Cherie's leg.

Dane sits up and shoves popcorn into his mouth. Crumbs fall on the spotless rug.

CHERIE

Dane, offer the guest first, nuh.  
Give him some.

FRED

Take some food, Roy.

Dane holds the bowl out.

DANE

You want popcorn?

ROY

I'm OK.

DANE

See, he doesn't want any.

CHERIE

You sure?

FRED

How you gonna watch a show and not  
eat anything?

Nervous chuckles.

ROY

I'm fine.

CHERIE

You see, Dane. One thing Roy has that you don't is manners.

DANE

Well, could've been him dealing with your bullshit. Too bad.

Roy lurches up from the sofa chair. He awaits a response from either Cherie or Fred. They remain unfazed.

FRED

Pass me the bowl.

The family munches hard on the snacks with eyes glued to the TV.

All three ERRUPT into laughter at one of the scenes. Roy loses his attention for the movie. His eyes fixate on the couch in front of him.

He gazes at them. At Dane's comfortability. At Cherie and Fred's subtle caress.

He watches Cherie switch from rubbing Fred's scalp to scratching it. Fred fills with anxiety and gyrates his ankles incessantly. Dane returns to his resting position and wavers on the verge of closing his eyes.

Roy's pocket suddenly VIBRATES. In a hushed projection, he answers the incoming phone call from his mother Patsy. Her stern and loud voice contrasts with his whispers.

ROY

Hello?...Do I have to? Can I stay one more hour? OK, OK.

He hangs up the phone.

DANE

You're leaving us?

ROY

Gotta head home.

DANE

Aight, see you tomorrow.

Roy and Dane give dap. He reaches over to Fred and they give dap as well.

ROY  
See you later, Fred.

FRED  
Hey, text Dane when you reach home.  
Let us know you're safe.

ROY  
OK.

Roy circles to the back of the couch and hugs Cherie from behind. She pats his back.

CHERIE  
Goodnight, sweetie.

2 EXT. DANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 2

Roy exits the house. He walks down the exceptionally quiet road, admiring all the moderately-sized homes with their own gates and lawns and driveways.

3 EXT. EAST NEW YORK - NIGHT 3

Roy walks down a busy avenue. The usual is happening. People doing errands. Pushing carts full of laundry and grocery bags. Walking dogs. Cashing out the bimonthly check. Smoking at the storefronts. Waiting for the bus. Rushing to the Subway. Ordering take out. Shooting the breeze.

A SMALL KID (13) carelessly walks her anxious Pit Bull. Her full attention's on the glowing phone screen.

A monstrous red and black "Beware of Dog" sign adorns one of the fences. Roy crosses the street. Habit.

The Pit Bull scampers in front the "Beware the Dog" sign. A Rottweiler charges up to the gate and BARKS. The Pit Bull presses on the gate and BARKS back. A cacophonous sound.

The Small Kid tugs on the leash, the dog's forelegs suspended in the air. She curses out the Pit Bull and crosses the street. The Rottweiler returns to the shadows.

Roy turns onto a block and sidesteps dog poop on the ground.

4 EXT. PATSY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT 4

A tall ugly building. Fire escapes. Trash bags. Lots of windows. Security cameras.

A NOISY CROWD loiters the entrance, their radio BLASTING Dominican trap music, portable chairs lined up on the curb and against the walls of the entrance, folks just kicking it back.

Roy slides between them and rings his apartment buzzer. No answer. He waits around patiently, head bent to the floor. Anything to avoid the stares.

A guy approaches and keys the door open for him.

ROY

Thank you.

5 INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT BUILDING/VESTIBULE - NIGHT 5

Roy jams the elevator button and waits for the elevator to arrive. Supermarket coupon leaflets and empty juice bottles are scattered on the floor. The smell of tobacco stains the wall.

The elevator finally arrives. An unrecognizable puddle of something is all over the floor. Most likely urine.

He winces and heads to the stairs, endless and steep. He charges up the steps, two-by-two.

6 INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT BUILDING/CORRIDOR - NIGHT 6

Roy gasps for air. He trudges down the narrow hallway and KNOCKS on the apartment door. We hear shouting from inside, but no one answers.

He BANGS loudly on the apartment door.

ROY

C'mon! Hurry up!

His voice echoes in the narrow hallway. Footsteps get louder and a weight shifts closer to the door.

The knob turns, the door flies open, and a hand whooshes in front his face with a garbage bag.

PATSY (O.S.)

Hi, Roy. Take this out for me please.

Roy grips the garbage bag.

ROY

It's halfway full.

PATSY (O.S.)  
It stinks and it's leaking.

Roy accepts the garbage bag.

PATSY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Wait a sec. There's one more.

She shuffles away for a short moment and returns to the door with another small bag.

ROY  
Couldn't you do it? You've been here.

PATSY (O.S.)  
I don't have my wig on.

Roy carries the two garbage bags to the end of the hallway and shoves them inside the chute. A cockroach scatters around his foot.

7 INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

7

Roy enters. We can hear and smell something being whipped up in the kitchen-- the frying pan SCRATCHES and CLANGS against the stove burners.

Worn out furniture, dirty hardwood tiles, and stained walls with paint chipping away due to the excessive heat. The heater PANGS and GROWLS as steam rises and condenses on the wall. The bare pipes extend through a hole in the ceiling - a perfect set up for water bugs and roaches to invade.

There're bits of mess on the floor, nothing major: socks, receipts, coins, hair ties, shedded hair, and crumbs.

The room is lived-in, but lacking in the homey touches typical of a family. There's no decoration, no paintings no photographs on the walls. Rather, a small analog clock TICKS away in their place.

The floorboards creak. The ceiling thuds from time to time simply because the upstairs neighbors couldn't give a shit.

Roy's brother MALIK (8) and his sisters ALYSSA (9) and TAMMY (12) do homework around the table. The trap music BLASTS from outside.

ROYS  
Hey guys.

Roy ruffles Malik's head.

ALYSSA  
Roy, can you help me please?

ROY  
With what?

ALYSSA  
History homework.

Roy peers over her shoulder.

ROY  
Maybe later. Gimme some time.

TAMMY  
Did you tell Dane about me yet?

Tammy plays with her hair.

ROY  
No, I did not actually.

TAMMY  
Tell him I'm gonna be thirteen soon.

Roy hops on the janky couch. The springs inside the couch no longer bounce, but a dust cloud swirls around him. He powers on the television box with the remote.

TAMMY (CONT'D)  
Roy - c'mon!

ROY  
No!

PATSY (O.S.)  
Roy, I know you're not puttin' on that TV.

Roy lowers the volume.

PATSY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(calls)  
Roy?

Roy lowers the volume even further.

PATSY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(calls)  
Roy! Get in here.

Roy lets out a long sigh and sucks his teeth. He leaps out the couch.

IN THE TINY KITCHEN, Patsy stirs chopped tomatoes and onions in a frying pan. She's in her NURSING SCRUBS, her head tied in a bandana.

This is the first time we see her face. A genuine and confident woman, pretty too.

ROY

What?

PATSY

Turn the TV off and finish your homework.

ROY

I finished it already.

PATSY

Roy, I better not hear that TV on.

ROY

Can't I chill for a second?

PATSY

You decided to go to Dane's house. That was all you.

Patsy opens two packs of ramen and places them in the pot of boiling water.

PATSY (CONT'D)

Roy, sit down. We need to talk.

Roy approaches the kitchen table.

A stapled paper is folded on top the keyboard of a janky laptop. The screen displays house listings in New Jersey.

Roy opens the paper revealing a hand-written list of neighborhood rankings, marginal notes on real estate options, and arrows pointing to price calculations. The top of the paper reads "1. Elmwood Park."

ROY

When did you start looking at houses again?

Patsy snatches the list out his hand and shoves it back in the book.

PATSY

Don't touch my things.

ROY  
I thought you put that on hold 'til  
you got the money.

PATSY  
Yeah, and then decided that was a  
stupid decision.

ROY  
How you gonna buy the house without  
the money?

PATSY  
Sit down, OK?

Roy sits down at the table.

PATSY (CONT'D)  
Starting tomorrow, I'll be working  
double shifts, which means you'll  
have to pick up Malik and Alyssa  
from school.

ROY  
What?

The pan SPUTTERS. Patsy adds a few cans of sardines to the  
pan, waggles the handle. The CRACKLING intensifies.

PATSY  
Don't cause any trouble. I don't  
wanna hear it.

ROY  
I'm busy. They're gonna have to  
walk.

PATSY  
Busy doing what? Playing games at  
Dane's house?

ROY  
Doesn't matter. I was two years  
younger than Tammy when I started  
washing dishes. What's she doing?

Patsy waves him off.

ROY (CONT'D)  
It's not fair. Why do I have to do  
everything for them?

PATSY

Roy, you're picking them up from school tomorrow. End of discussion.

Roy rushes out of the kitchen.

ROY

No, I'm not!

The bedroom door SLAMS SHUT. Patsy mixes the sardines with a spoon. She remains composed.

8 INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL/MRS. HARPER'S OFFICE - DAY 8

Roy, Malik, and Alyssa wait patiently as the assistant principal MRS. HARPER (30s, Black) speaks on the phone.

MRS. HARPER

...Malik Davis and Tammy Davis...Okay, no worries. Just have to make sure he's not a stranger...Right...You're welcome. OK, you take care now. Bye.

Mrs. Harper hangs up the phone.

MRS. HARPER (CONT'D)

OK, Mr. Davis. You're all set.

9 EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY 9

Roy holds Malik and Alyssa's hands as they descend the steps of the school entrance.

10 INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY 10

Malik climbs in the shopping trolley and Alyssa hauls it down the aisle. She catches up to it and pulls all her weight to stop it from crashing into the refrigerated aisle.

ROY

Ay...Ay!

Tammy hangs around and reads from Roy's list of groceries.

TAMMY

(reading under her breath)  
Sardines ... ramen.  
(Re:Roy)  
Again?

Roy shrugs.

TAMMY (CONT'D)  
I'll get the rolls.

Tammy disappears around the corner.

Malik races back with Alyssa inside the shopping trolley.

ROY  
Ay. Slow down. You're going to  
crash into someone.

Roy drops a heap of sardines next to Alyssa.

11 INT. NURSING HOME/HALLWAY - DAY 11

Patsy pushes a humongous medication cart down the wide hallway. She's doing the medicine pass.

She opens a binder, traces her finger over a chart, pulls a tray out and pops a pill from a blister pack into a medicine cup.

PATSY  
How you feeling today, Helen?

Patsy enters HELEN'S room.

Back in the hallway, Patsy scratches Helen's information in the binder. She knocks on an open door. She pulls opens a tray. She mixes them into apple sauce.

12 INT. NURSING HOME/FERN'S ROOM - DAY 12

Patsy passes a medication cup to FERN (80s), a frail man sitting at the edge of his bed.

FERN  
I can't take it.

PATSY  
Why?

FERN  
I get too much diarrhea!

13 INT. NURSING HOME/HALLWAY - DAY 13

Patsy rolls the cart to the next door. She crushes pills. She knocks on the door.

14 INT. NURSING HOME/SUSAN'S ROOM - DAY 14

SUSAN (70s) slowly counts the pills in the cup.

SUSAN

Do I have 6 pills? I always take 6 pills in the morning!

15 INT. NURSING HOME/HALLWAY - DAY 15

DOUG (55), hobbles over to the cart.

DOUG (O.S.)

Patricia, do you have any more of that Percocet?

PATSY

I'll be finished with Jackson in a second.

Patsy pops more pills. She writes some more.

Three patients gather by the cart, requesting extra medication.

DOUG

Patricia, why so slow? C'mon. You see me waiting here.

PATSY

You see, what you're not gonna do is speak to me like that.

Doug freezes.

DOUG

I just want the Percocet for the pain.

PATSY

And I don't have to give it to you, Sir. You need to show more respect for the nurses here. We're not your maids. You're not gonna tell me how to run things here. You understand.

DOUG

I wasn't.

PATSY

We're done, all of you.

Patsy rolls the cart away.

16

INT. NURSING HOME/STAFF LOUNGE - NIGHT

16

Patsy opens her lunch bag and pulls out a homemade sandwich. JULIE (early 30s), talkative and bubbly, sits across from her.

JULIE

I have to cover the 8pm. My feet hurt. My back hurts.

PATSY

Girl, I hear you.

JULIE

You know what it is? They actin' like they ain't been takin' the same medicine for the past 25 years. Then I gotta smile and explain to them yet again.

Julie and Patsy laugh at the veracity of the statement.

PATSY

It's true, though!

Patsy's phone BUZZES. The screen reads "Unknown User." She hesitates.

PATSY (CONT'D)

Hold on, babe.

She accepts the call.

PATSY (CONT'D)

Hello?

GRANDMA (V.O)

It's Patsy who dis?

PATSY

Donna? Hey?!

GRANDMA

How you doing, sweetheart?

A man LAUGHS in the background.

PATSY

I'm good...What's all that noise in the background?

GRANDMA

Oh, right. I'll put him on.

PATSY

Who?

There's static on the other end of the line as Grandma passes the phone. And then the static stops.

CHARLES (V.O.)

Patsy? Hey.

PATSY

Charles?

CHARLES (V.O.)

How are you?

Patsy hangs up and with a heavy hand slams the phone onto the table, more out of instinct than rage.

17

INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

17

There are stacks of plastic bins and cardboard boxes pushed against the walls and windows like a storage unit, like a nomad designed it.

A physical fight ensues between Alyssa and Malik.

MALIK

Get off me!

ALYSSA

Get out my spot!

Roy pulls Malik and Alyssa apart.

ROY

Guys. Guys! Stop fighting! Just check the damn calendar! It's not that hard!

Roy flings a calendar hanging off a nail.

TAMMY

Roy, relax.

ROY

Alyssa's on the bed tonight. Malik, go on the floor.

MALIK

What?

ALYSSA

Told you so, stupid.

ROY  
Next time follow directions. It  
says "A" on Tuesday, "M" tomorrow.

MALIK  
I'm sleeping on the other side.

Malik mounts the bed. Roy grips his brother's arm.

ROY  
Stop!

18 INT. DAVIS APARTMENT/BEDROOM - LATER

18

Roy rolls on his side, eyes closed.

Keys JINGLE and the front door opens and closes.

Roy opens his eyes. He looks over at the alarm clock, which  
reads 1:35 am.

We hear Patsy undress outside the bedroom door. She opens the  
door. We hear the springs working in the mattress as the  
extra weight settles on the right side of the bed.

Patsy peers over the bed and whispers to Roy.

PATSY  
Roy? Roy, you up?

Roy rolls over to his side.

ROY  
Hey.

PATSY  
Everyone behave themselves?

ROY  
No, not really.

PATSY  
Guess who called me today...Your  
grandma. And guess who was with  
her? Your father.

ROY  
What?

Roy sits up.

PATSY

Can you believe it? First time she called me in years to put that pig on the phone.

ROY

He's back in Brooklyn?

PATSY

Looks like it?

ROY

For how long?

PATSY

I'm not sure. I didn't ask. Could be a day, could be a year.

ROY

Are we gonna go see him?

PATSY

No. Oh God no. He'd only make things worse. I just thought it was a bit bizarre that they called. It was probably your grandma that forced him to speak to me.

Patsy chuckles to herself and shuffles in the bed.

PATSY (CONT'D)

What a loser.

Patsy swings a sheet over her body. Roy lies his head back down on the pillow, overwhelmed by the big news.

19 INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - DAY

19

The radio plays the morning podcast. Roy hastily opens a cupboard and considers the snack options. He reaches in and pulls out a box of crackers and zipper storage bags.

He divvies the crackers among four bags.

INTERCUT:

20 INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM - SAME TIME

20

Patsy pencils her brows in front the bathroom mirror. She reaches for the wig hanging on the door and fits it on her head.

PATSY  
Roy, they should be leaving now.

Patsy comes into the kitchen.

PATSY (CONT'D)  
Can you make sure they have all  
their things?

ROY  
Yes, I know, Mom.

PATSY  
You just gotta enforce it otherwise  
they won't take you seriously.

Annoyed, Roy leaves the kitchen with the snacks.

21 INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY 21

The room is a complete mess. His siblings overturn the plastic storage bins and retrieve their belongings all while singing a song greatly out of tune.

Roy enters with snack bags in his hands. He gives the crackers a shake.

ROY  
Hurry up y'all! I have to go to  
school too.

The kids run and snatch the crackers out of his hands.

22 EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY 22

Parents and guardians are leaving the building. The latecomers file inside with their children.

Tammy keeps walking. She needs to get to her own middle school.

TAMMY  
Bye, guys.

ROY  
Bye, Tammy. See you later.

Roy notices all the parents and guardians hugging and kissing their children goodbye. They're all out of his age group.

ROY (CONT'D)  
Alright, go on now.

Roy watches from afar, his siblings mingle with the other children. Malik keeps to himself while Alyssa makes conversation with a group of girls.

His attention shifts to one of the parents, a BROAD-SHOULDERED MAN (Black, 40s) standing on the opposite side of the crowd. Roy watches him intently. He can't make out the man's face, only his profile.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. JAMAICA/GARDEN - ROY'S MEMORY - DAY 23

A hummingbird shoots over a garden full of different-colored hibiscus bushes and hovers over the rich pollen stem of a red hibiscus. Its wings beat rapidly.

YOUNGER ROY (5) watches as CHARLES blows air at the creature. He joins in and the hummingbird soon spirals into the wind.

He pulls his son towards him and tickles him in the stomach. Younger Roy giggles and tumbles to the ground. They begin a game of Monster.

CUT BACK TO:

24 EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY 24

Roy takes a deep breath and snaps out of it. The Broad-Shouldered Man is no longer in the same spot he was standing in a second ago.

Searching for him, Roy sees that he's exited the courtyard and is moving farther down the street. Roy goes after him.

ROY

Excuse me?

The man walks at a quick pace. This time Roy calls louder, even jogs after him.

ROY (CONT'D)

Excuse me, sir?...Charles?

The Broad-Shouldered Man turns around and stops. He has a different face than what Roy was expecting.

ROY (CONT'D)

Oh. Sorry -- thought you were someone else.

The man smiles and goes on his way.

25 EXT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

25

Roy pushes a cart of laundry on the wet pavement. His siblings lag behind him.

They turn the corner onto a main street..

DANE (O.S.)

Roy?

Roy spins around.

Dane crosses the street. Cherie and Fred are behind him.

DANE (CONT'D)

Is that you?

Roy sees Dane and picks up his pace with the cart.

DANE (CONT'D)

Where you goin'?

TAMMY

Roy, that's Dane.

ROY

Look at the bummy clothes you're wearing. You're not gonna impress him in that.

Dane latches onto Roy's shoulder.

ROY (CONT'D)

Oh, hey.

DANE

You didn't hear me? I was calling you so much.

ROY

What are you doing here?

DANE

We were just seeing a cousin of mine. They're apartment is disgusting not gonna lie. It's just dirty.

Roy nods his head. Cherie and Fred approach, all smiley. Roy smiles.

26 INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT 26

A crate is open by the wall. Half of Roy's body is inside, fishing for something. He maneuvers quietly as to not wake up his siblings.

He stops when he sees a shoebox tucked between books and miscellaneous items. He pulls it out. Dusts off the cover.

27 INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 27

Roy flips through the various photo albums sprawled along the floor.

A photograph is lifted from an open shoebox and held to the light-- A SEPIA PHOTOGRAPH of Roy as a toddler, Patsy holding Tammy as an infant, and a man standing next to them with a faint closed smile-- CHARLES-- all posing for the camera on the sandy shore of a beach.

ROY  
(under his breath)  
There you are.

Roy brushes a finger over his father's face.

CROSSFADE:

28 EXT. JAMAICA/BEACH - ROY'S MEMORY - DAY 28

Smooth tide. Hot sun. Younger Roy backstrokes through the pristine water and ends with a short glide.

He tilts his head, revealing his parents on the white sand shore with a crawling infant. Suddenly, the loud CRASHING sound of a wave.

CUT TO:

29 INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 29

Roy's hands are planted firmly on the ground. He returns to his senses as if he had experienced a spiritual awakening.

30 INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT 30

Everyone is SNORING.

We hear the underscore of African drums while we track over Malik laying in a sleeping bag on the floor, Tammy also laying in a sleeping bag on the floor, Patsy on the left side--always the left side, and Alyssa sleeping on the right side.

We follow through to Roy sleeping next to the crates.

At the sudden loud THUD of drums, Roy opens his eyes. Not making anything of it, he closes them.

His father, Charles, calmly whispers his name as if he were right by his side. He has a Jamaican accent.

CHARLES (V.O.)

Leroy.

Roy sits up frantically. He looks around for the source of the noise. An alarm clock reads 3:18. Roy can hear a low, but constant tapping of drums directing him outside the bedroom.

Roy stands up and walks over the limp bodies.

31 INT. PATSY'S APARTMENT BUILDING/CORRIDOR - NIGHT 31

Roy opens the apartment door and peers down the dimly-lit hallway. The drums stop beating.

32 EXT. EAST NEW YORK/STREET - NIGHT 32

Roy walks to the curb. It's extremely quiet. Not even the sound of a dog barking or a car passing.

A GUST OF WIND rushes past him. He stands and takes in the last of the warm seasonal breeze.

CHARLES (early 40s), handsome and sinewy, in an undershirt, runs out of the darkness, all cheerful, and gently clutches Roy's arm.

CHARLES

Tag, you're it.

Charles runs some more, but stops a few feet away. Giggling, he looks back at a surprised boy. A beat. Charles RUNS away; Roy is on the same page.

Roy breaks into a full sprint after his father. The African drums go TAP TAP TAP, this time UP-TEMPO and PROMINENT.

Charles is fast, but Roy is only a fair distance behind him. Charles' laugh ECHOES in the empty streets.

A full moon lights up the sky. The lampposts look like hypnotizing poles as the two figures sprint through the moonlit streets, passing one after the other.

Roy breathes heavily, but his adrenaline is out of this world. He's having fun.

Charles turns a corner. Roy turns a corner. A German Shepherd bound by a leash jumps up at him, BARKS and THRASHES.

Roy flinches, but his commitment to reaching the man makes him go faster. His shirt rustles in the wind.

Roy gains on him. The drumming gets FASTER. He almost has him in his grasp. Charles careens around a corner. Roy follows in pursuit, ready to pounce. He turns--

BOOM. Nothing. Quiet. Charles has disappeared.

A couple of people sit at the nearby bus stop. A few cars drive by on the main avenue. Roy catches his breath and STOMPS his foot on the ground out of frustration.

33 INT. SUBWAY CAR (MOVING) - DAY 33

Steel wheels SCRATCH on the track. Roy holds onto a pole. The jam-packed Subway car jerks back and forth.

34 EXT. GRANDMA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY 34

Tall, big apartment buildings stretch all the way to the other side of the extremely long street.

Roy arrives in the courtyard and presses a button alongside the entrance. The waiting makes Roy anxious.

A moment later, through the speaker:

GRANDMA  
Who's this?

ROY  
It's Roy, your grandson.

GRANDMA  
Ah, yes. Come up!

The door BUZZES and Roy slips inside.

35 INT. GRANDMA'S APARTMENT BUILDING/CORRIDOR - DAY 35

GRANDMA (Black, 75) leans against the door. She lets out a delightful scream as Roy scurries into her outstretched arms. Grandma has a Jamaican accent.

GRANDMA

Ahh! My handsome grandson. My baby Charles.

Grandma closes the door behind him.

36 INT. GRANDMA'S APARTMENT - DAY 36

There are Jesus paintings, pictures, and ornaments everywhere on the walls. Multiple crosses. A Jesus calendar. A Jesus snowball. A Jesus journal. Flyers of Jesus.

GRANDMA

I was thinking of you today.

ROY

Really?

GRANDMA

I prayed to the almighty father Jesus Christ that he may bring blessings upon you and ya family. That he may kick out the Devil and let you prosper.

ROY

...Thanks.

Roy steps on his heels and kicks his shoes off.

GRANDMA

Aww, my grandson still knows the rules.

She caresses his wrist.

ROY

Yup.

Grandma guides Roy to the living room.

GRANDMA

(calls)

Trisha, Roy's here!

TRISHA (Black, early 20s) calls from the bedroom.

TRISHA (O.S.)

Who?

GRANDMA

Roy, ya cousin. Patsy's kid.

They sit on the couch. Grandma takes it all in.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

My gosh, mi grandson came. You hungry?

ROY

No, I'm OK.

Grandma leans in.

GRANDMA

(light voice)

You sure? I can fix you a lickle sumtin. It's oxtail ya want?

ROY

No, I'm actually OK. Thanks, Grandma.

Trisha walks in the room. She's dressed nicely, looks like she's ready to go out.

TRISHA

Hi, Roy!

ROY

Hi, Trisha.

Roy stands up and hugs Trisha. He sits back down. Trisha sits on the other couch. The two of them, Trisha and Grandma, are fully appreciating Roy's grown appearance.

TRISHA

How come you don't come here so often? We been waiting.

GRANDMA

You don' call us, Roy. You don't love us no more?

Roy chuckles shyly.

ROY

No, no. Our Mom's just very busy. She makes me help her around the house and stuff, otherwise I'd be here more often.

TRISHA

Eh, eh. How's Aunty Patsy doin'?

ROY

She's good. She's still working.

GRANDMA

Oh, goodie, I'm glad for her. She's a hardworking woman, that one.

Everyone nods their heads in agreement.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

I don't know why she don't let ya father talk to you guys.

TRISHA

Grandma!

GRANDMA

He was just here, you know? Did she tell you he was back?

TRISHA

Don't listen to her.

GRANDMA

How she gon' hold a grudge for that long? The poor guy. She mustn't shut him out like that.

TRISHA

Grandma, you can't tell him this every time he visits. That's why he don't come here no more.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

...Oh, I pray for her.

ROY

My Mom has a bad history with him, so I can understand.

Grandma leans in again.

GRANDMA

Ya father's back in Brooklyn. I can call him up if you'd like.

TRISHA

Grandma, stop. I'm sorry, Roy.

Grandma dials a number in the home phone.

ROY

It's OK. I didn't know he left.

TRISHA

He went back to Jamaica for 'bout  
five years-- Grandma!

Trisha grabs the phone from Grandma and places it back on the  
stand.

GRANDMA

He's thinkin' he might stay in  
America this time.

ROY

Why isn't he here with you?

GRANDMA

'Em nah stay here. 'Em work at the  
restaurant. Den he go back to him  
place in Flatbush.

ROY

Which restaurant?

GRANDMA

Mm, I forget the name. What's it  
called? Mm, sahv flahv, mm Trisha  
wus a name of dat place Charles  
work at. Mm, save the flave--

TRISHA

Savor Da Flavor.

GRANDMA

Savor Da Flavor. Das it. Em work at  
Savor da Flavor. My Lord, they make  
mi waist big ya know.

ROY

Where's that at?

Grandma looks at Trisha for an answer.

TRISHA

We take the two to get there.

37

EXT. FLATBUSH - DAY

37

Roy hops up the stairs of the number two train station exit  
and moves along a wide street.

38 EXT. FLATBUSH/CLOTHING STORES STRIP - DAY 38

The pedestrian zone overfills with weekend shoppers. A STREET PERFORMER plays drums on a white pail and blows on his harmonica simultaneously. Roy spectates the sweating man as he saunters around the circle of audience members.

A HEAVY HAND clutches Roy's shoulder. Roy spins around. Nothing.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. FLATBUSH/CLOTHING STORES STRIP - LATER 39

Roy maneuvers rapidly through the multitudes.

He dodges onto a quieter street away from the bustle. The THUD of African Drums grow in sound. They are guiding him through the back streets of the Clothing Store Strip. He goes left, right, darts around a corner. The whole ordeal is a DANCE. The space grows TIGHTER. We can't help but feel CLAUSTROPHOBIC.

We are in some sort of labyrinth-- a new neighborhood all together and BAM!-- Roy stops in his tracks in front of an alleyway.

The sound of African drums becomes faint.

Reluctantly, Roy sidesteps through the narrow passageway. Halfway through, he reaches an open backdoor, checks his surroundings and enters.

40 INT. "SAVOR DA FLAVOR" RESTAURANT - DAY 40

Multiple trash carts align the wall. Roy walks through the PLASTIC STRIP DOOR.

The dim lights reveal a cluttered space full of kitchen trays, pots and pans, and utensils piled up on various racks.

Someone down the hallway is cooking. Steam DRIFTS through the air.

In the kitchen, a pot BUBBLES with rich curry. The powerful aroma entices Roy. He leans forward and fans his hand over the pot. Quick footsteps.

He dodges the corner and hides behind a rack.

Charles HUMS a familiar tune as he dumps a handful of finely chopped onions into the curry. Yep, that's him-- it's the man from the sepia photograph.

Roy steps forward to get a better look, but a serving spoon falls onto the ground in front of him. He crouches down besides the rack.

CHARLES

Boy, why you hidin' like that?

The intonation of Charles voice fluctuates like a song-- his Jamaican accent shakes Roy to the core, as if his ancestors were directly speaking to him, all at once.

Silence. Roy does not move. Charles chuckles.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I know you're back there. I can see you.

Roy peers through the rack and makes quick eye contact with Charles. Shoot! He lowers his head back down.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Suit yourself.

Roy hesitates. A moment later, he moves timidly to the cooking area.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Hello, son.

Silence. Shyness overcomes Roy.

ROY

Hi.

Charles walks around the counter. He cups his hands around Roy's face. His features are striking.

CHARLES

My little King.

Roy is entranced by his father's strikingly brown eyes.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. JAMAICA/GARDEN - ROY'S MEMORY - DUSK

41

A variety of vegetable crops and fruit trees grow in the field. The sunset casts silhouettes among a group of running CHILDREN.

Younger Roy sprints past a stampede of them as he makes his way to the hollering ADULTS. Patsy and Charles are among them. They're waving PAPAYA HALVES in the air. They look happy.

Younger Roy grabs one of the papaya halves and chomps on the fruit. The adults laugh.

CHARLES  
Leroy! Spit out the seeds, silly.

Younger Roy's cheeks are full. He smirks at his Dad.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Come 'ere, Leroy. Let me show you sumtin.

CUT BACK TO:

42 INT. "SAVOR DA FLAVOR" RESTAURANT - DAY 42

Roy returns to his senses. He bats his eyelashes and releases a surge of air through his mouth, both body and soul engaged.

CHARLES (O.S.)  
(insistent)  
Come 'ere!

Charles is by the front hallway, waving Roy over.

Roy gathers himself and follows the man down a short dark hallway...

Behind the counter, DAVID (30s) fills a brown paper bag with someone's order.

Work colleague CHRISSY (30s) sits at the front of the house at one of the tables with her hair net on. She eats a meal and checks her phone notifications. A few CUSTOMERS await their order.

CHRISSY  
Charles, I'm finishing up dear.

CHARLES  
Take your time. David's got it.

Charles grabs a Ting from the fridge, pops it open with his fingernail. He chugs half the bottle and hands it to Roy.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Is Johnny out?

CHRISSEY  
Yeah, he's down the block at  
Sammy's. You need something?

CHARLES  
Nah, I was just wondering, that's  
all.

DAVID  
Ya son who dis?

CHARLES  
Mhm, in di flesh.

DAVID  
How are you, boss?

Roy nods awkwardly.

ROY  
I'm good.

CHARLES  
Don't make him nervous. He's shy--

ROY  
I'm not shy.

Charles and Fred laugh.

DAVID  
(announces)  
Thirteen! Two doubles, curry goat,  
one pholourie.

CHARLES  
(Re: Roy)  
Let's go.

They go back down the hallway, passing another cook, STASHA  
(30s).

STASHA  
Wah gwan?

CHARLES  
Everytin' good.

In the back of the house, Roy finishes the Ting.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
You like it, huh?

Charles grabs the bottle and chucks it in the bin. He points to a sink.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Wash your hands.

At the sink, Roy looks back at his father, a spitting physical image of himself. He grabs materials: a plate of carefully kneaded dough balls and a bucket of flour and CROONS a lullaby.

Roy stares at him, enthralled by his presence. Wow, he definitely isn't dreaming. His own father is right in front of his eyes.

Charles smiles at his son and sprinkles flour over the counter. Roy joins him.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
You know what we call this?

He rolls one of the dough balls with the pin into a wide circular shape.

ROY  
Is it roti?

CHARLES  
Yeah, we say Buss-up Shot.

ROY  
Buss-up shot.

CHARLES  
Yes.

Charles oils the tawa with a paintbrush and sets it to a medium- fire. He rolls the dough some more and places it on the tawa. He brushes the dough with oil, step after step, like he's been doing it for a lifetime.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Leroy, come 'round.

He pulls Roy's arm and positions him in front of the counter. He PLOPS another dough ball on the powdery surface.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Roll it out round like so.

ROY  
Like that one?

On Roy's first stroke, the dough loses its form.

ROY (CONT'D)  
I don't know how.

CHARLES  
Don't press so hard into it.  
Gentle. Here.

Charles takes over. Effortlessly, he manages to transform the oddly shaped ball into a smooth round circle.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
It's all in the heel of the hand.

Long eye contact-- Charles' eyes are intensely brown. He breaks the gaze.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
It's ready.

He hurries to the tawa, flops the buss-up shot onto a plate, bites off a piece and gives the rest to Roy. Steam rises from the food.

ROY  
It's hot.

CHARLES  
Yeah?!

Roy fans the steam vigorously, nibbles on the edges.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
It's good?

The food is too hot, but Roy manages an aggressive nod and chomps on the steam.

Charles leans back on the sideboard. Beat. He organizes the kitchen clutter.

His shoulder blades protrude from his fitted shirt as he rinses a couple plates in the sink. He glides across the room, putting clean dishes where they belong, and wipes the powdered counter with a gentle stroke.

He turns the stove knob off, dips a spoon in the curry, sips.

Enabled by instinct, Roy's mouth speaks freely.

ROY  
Dad...

Charles pauses, meets Roy's eyes.

ROY (CONT'D)

Dad, did you think of us when you were gone?

CHARLES

Of course. All the time.

ROY

How come you didn't call or visit us?

Charles not wanting to say the wrong thing, thinks about his response.

CHARLES

Leroy, we don't have to talk about those things.

ROY

I want to. I had to hear you were back through Mom. She's very mad at you.

CHARLES

That woman will hold the past against me for the rest of her life if you let her.

ROY

So somehow it's our fault how negligent you've been?

CHARLES

Why are you here?

Roy still trying to make sense of his father's reactions...

ROY

I thought you'd be happy to see me.

CHARLES

Leroy. It's been awhile. I'm still processing everything.

Chrissy carries empty metal containers into the kitchen. She drops them loudly in the sink and turns on the faucet. No care in the world. She turns it off and scuffs to the front of the house.

ROY

Give me a pen.

CHARLES

What for?

ROY

Pen.

Charles reaches in his pocket for a pen. Roy rips off a sheet of paper towel and jots down his address.

He slides the note across the counter.

ROY (CONT'D)

Here's our address. We're all  
waiting for you.

Roy gives a half-smile and walks out. His father inspects the piece of paper.