

# **MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE**

By Carl Burcham

BLACK SCREEN:

SUPER: AUSTIN, TEXAS 2007

A young woman's frightened, breathless PANTING.

The POUNDING of her feet racing through heavy woods.

Further back, the insistent THUDDING from a man's boots.

Suddenly, the POUNDING stops. The THUDDING does not.

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. HEAVY WOODS - CONTINUOUS

MONICA MICHAELS, 17, catches her breath and closes her eyes. She's in tattered jeans and a sequined t-shirt. Trembling but determined and focused in this unpredictable situation.

She sports the hint of a growing baby bump.

WADE ELLIS, 28, serial loser and violent drunk--which he happens to be at this moment--creeps forward. His dark, vacuous eyes scan the woods for any sign of Monica.

WADE

Baby, come on. Stop!

Wade's in a mechanic's grease-stained jumpsuit and dirty work boots. He labors to keep his eyes open, BELCHES, and runs filthy fingers through oily black hair.

WADE (CONT'D)

I MEAN IT MONICA!

Monica BOLTS down the path in front of Wade. She's PANTING once again, running as fast as she can, careful not to trip.

It doesn't work.

She STUMBLES over a tree root and falls. She massages her belly, sees Wade gaining on her and explodes to her feet. She RACES down the path.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Monica stops, turns, sees Wade scrambling toward her. Waving a revolver, yelling at her in that drunken slur.

WADE (CONT'D)

WHAT THE FUCK? I just wanna talk!

Monica wraps her arms around herself defensively.

Wade stashes the revolver in his pocket, extends his palm.

WADE (CONT'D)

Just get rid of it so we can get married with a fresh start.

MONICA

It? I'm having the baby, Wade!

WADE

You *dumb fuck*. How you gonna raise a kid by yourself?

MONICA

I'll find a way.

He creeps closer.

Monica picks up a broken branch and waves it at him.

WADE

Really?

MONICA

Get back! And get over it! I'm not going to marry you! And I sure as hell don't want to raise a child with a nutcase like you!

Wade pulls the revolver out of his pocket and aims it at Monica. In his drunken state, her face is fuzzy, distorted. He can't see her shake her head or hear her SIGH.

MONICA (CONT'D)

You'll have to shoot me in the back.

Monica spins around and STOMPS OFF. Wade starts to squeeze the trigger. But Monica has disappeared into the woods.

Wade lowers the gun and drops to his knees.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK:

A coffee pod machine BLARES like a bullhorn at a hockey game.

SUPER OVER BLACK: AUSTIN, TEXAS 2022

FADE IN:

A woman's hand appears. Nails chipped like paint on an old barn. Her hand snatches a full cup from the machine. Coffee SPLATTERS the counter.

A girl's hand darts in. Her gleaming pink nails shine under the harsh kitchen lights. The girl's hand pushes away the woman's hand and begins to wipe up the spill.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The coffee spiller, Monica, now 32, is in wrinkled medical scrubs. She's become a harried single mom trying her best to raise a spirited teen daughter--the pink nailed girl--KADY, 15 going on 25.

Today, Kady's style choices are a tribute to the color pink--pink mini, jewelry, lipstick, nails, and a tee shirt emblazoned with the word PINK in glitter.

Monica drips a coffee trail to the kitchen table.

Kady finishes cleanup on aisle one, sits down, and devours her magically delicious cereal.

Monica downs her coffee, shoves the cup into the washer, and ignores another spill that splatters the counter.

She motions to Kady.

MONICA

Finish up.

Kady eyerolls a response and devours the remaining milk, sodium, and sugar. She wipes off the counter--again--drops the cereal bowl into the dishwasher and rushes out.

The coffee splattered oven clock reads 5:55 AM.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A school grounds sign reads "WELCOME TO AUSTIN WATERLOO HIGH: HOME OF THE BRONCOS."

STUDENTS of all shapes, sizes, races, and ages CHAT, LAUGH, and share tokes from assorted contraband.

The first period bell CLANGS as Monica wheels her seven-year-old Fiat into the parking lot.

INT. MONICA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

In the passenger seat, Kady fills her arms with books. She frowns when she sees Monica's face.

KADY  
Mother! Again?

Kady tilts the rearview mirror toward Monica. She's forgotten to apply makeup on *both* eyes.

Kady pulls out makeup, applies it to Monica's barren eye, and points to the rearview.

KADY (CONT'D)  
Good?

MONICA  
Yes, thanks. I'm just a bit  
distracted this morning.

KADY  
You mean *every* morning?

Kady jumps from the car, and trots to a cackling gaggle of GIRLFRIENDS.

Monica SHOUTS out the window.

MONICA  
Carshare gig tonight. Don't forget!

EXT. SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Kady shouts to Monica without looking back.

KADY  
Okay, mother!

Monica's waving hand emerges from the driver's seat. Gears GRIND as the tiny car speeds off and disappears.

EXT. AUSTIN PLANNED PARENTHOOD - DAY

Monica rushes from her car into the building.

INT. PLANNED PARENTHOOD - CONTINUOUS

A clock reads 7:42 AM. The lobby is already jam-packed with anxious patients.

Receptionist LEVEON COLE, 26, an animated, gay Black man with an Afro dyed green, greets Monica.

LEVEON  
Late again, girl! You got too much  
goin' on. Slow down and smell the  
rosebuds.

Monica races down the hall and SHOUTS back.

MONICA (O.C.)  
ROSES. It's smell the ROSES.

LeVeon drops into his chair, returns to his magazine.

LEVEON  
(mumbles to himself)  
Roses. Rosebuds. Whatev. Still need  
to slow down, fool.

INT. WAITING AREA - CONTINUOUS

A FEMALE PATIENT turns up the TV volume. A headline scrolls beneath the NEWS ANCHOR: SCOTUS EXPECTED TO OVERTURN ROE.

PATIENTS swarm the TV set. LeVeon joins. Monica hears the commotion and returns to watch along with the crowd.

NEWS ANCHOR  
At any moment, we're expecting the  
Supreme Court's decision which  
could effectively end abortion  
rights for American women.

PATIENTS MOAN and tear up. Monica turns to LeVeon.

MONICA  
What'll happen to these poor women?

LEVEON  
Gonna be Gilead and The Handmaid's  
Tale in real life.

EXT. AUSTIN WATERLOO HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Kady sits alone on a brick wall at the empty campus. The late afternoon sun sets behind the school.

Monica rolls up in the Fiat. Kady peers over her YA novel.

KADY  
(mumbles)  
Just like clockwork. Late as usual.

INT. MONICA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Kady hops in, tosses her backpack into the back seat, and withdraws her cell. Monica shoots an evil eye.

KADY  
What?

MONICA  
You need to do your homework in the car. I don't have time to drop you off before I start this Uber gig.

Monica's cellphone CHIMES from the dash mount. A female voice coos: "A new rider has been added to your cue."

Kady ignores her mother and continues to flip thru her cell. Monica snatches it. Tosses it out of Kady's reach.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
You know the deal. No phone--

KADY  
(sarcastically)  
Until I finish my homework. I know. What I don't know is why I have to be your ride-along.

MONICA  
Think of it as a way to have more girl time.

Kady stares at Monica with a trademark teen smirk.

KADY  
Girl time? WTF?

MONICA  
Language!

KADY  
Your BS language rule counts for initials now too?

MONICA  
Look, I know it's tough, but I'm trying. I really am.

Monica touches Kady's hair.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Once I get my art degree, I can get a teaching job. Maybe at your high school!

Kady glances out the window.

KADY

Thank God I already took art.

MONICA

(mocking humiliation)

Well! I never!

They break into LAUGHTER. Monica hands Kady a schoolbook.

INT. MONICA'S CAR - NIGHT

Monica and Kady chomp on burgers and fries in a fast-food parking lot. The clock above the car radio reads 7:22 PM.

MONICA

How about a fry?

Kady reaches into a red cardboard box, withdraws a fry, and places it in Monica's outstretched hand. Monica stares at the single fry then at Kady.

KADY

What?

(beat)

You said A fry.

MONICA

Who are you anyway?

KADY

Complain, complain, complain.

LAUGHTER as Kady grudgingly hands over a handful of fries.

EXT. MONICA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Monica's Fiat glides into the driveway.

INT. MONICA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Kady gathers her books, extends her palm to Monica.

KADY

Gimme.

Monica returns Kady's cell. They exchange their traditional goodbye on nights when Monica must leave Kady home alone.

MONICA  
Lock the doors.

KADY  
Shut the drapes.

MONICA  
No visi-tors.

KADY  
And no escapes.

Kady jumps out of the car. Monica yells out the window.

MONICA  
LOVE YOU!

Kady unlocks the front door and yells back.

KADY  
I KNOW!

Once Kady ducks inside, Monica gets on her way. A big smile blankets her face.

EXT. DULLARD HOUSE - NIGHT

Behind curtains, Monica's snoop neighbor RAYLENE DULLARD, 60's, spies on Kady as she unlocks the front door.

Raylene's a holier-than-thou, Bible-thumping right-to-lifer, who confuses gossip with actual, proven facts.

INT. DULLARD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She yells to her henpecked husband PERCY, late 60's, hiding somewhere in the house.

RAYLENE  
Percy, can you hear me?

A hushed VOICE from the hinterlands--

PERCY (O.C.)  
Yes, mother.

It's true, despite having no children, Percy prefers to address his wife as "Mother."

Raylene falls into her favorite rocker and continues where she left off crocheting her latest arm rest cover.

RAYLENE

That hussy left that sweet child alone again *tonight!* I should report her for child abandonment. What is she? Ten? Twelve? PERCY?

PERCY (O.C.)

Yes, mother.

RAYLENE

Senior Sunday School class thinks she's hooking on the side.

PERCY (O.C.)

Huh.

RAYLENE

Yep, it's my Born-Again Christian duty! I'm gonna call the sheriff tomorrow morning.

PERCY (O.C.)

Yes, mother.

INT. COLLEGE ART CLASSROOM - NIGHT

The wall clock reads 8:10 PM. Monica and other much younger STUDENTS paint still-life's. Art Professor HOLDEN BROCKWORTH, 54, a dapper, swaggering Brit with a flair for drama, examines Monica's effort.

BROCKWORTH

Ms. Michaels what're you afraid of?

Monica puts down her brush.

MONICA

I'm not sure what you mean.

BROCKWORTH

Look at the fruit up there.

Monica gazes at the fruit arranged in the front of the room.

BROCKWORTH (CONT'D)

What color's that apple?

MONICA

Red.

BROCKWORTH

And the pear?

MONICA

Yellow.

BROCKWORTH

So, you aren't color blind! Then why are your fruits all a dark brown? More the color of *shite* than fruit, don't you agree?

Monica stares at her painting.

MONICA

I...guess...I could brighten up the colors.

BROCKWORTH

(mimics Monica)

I...guess...you...could.

(beat))

You're working on a degree, right?

MONICA

Yes.

BROCKWORTH

*If* you earn it, what will you do?

MONICA

Get a teaching job, I hope. But my dream is to paint murals.

BROCKWORTH

And who would pay you for these murals, or are you going to be a starving artist?

MONICA

Oh no, I have a daughter to support. I'd love to do them for Planned Parenthood centers.

BROCKWORTH

Why would you want to do that?

MONICA

Because I believe in a woman's right to choose.

BROCKWORTH

You do know Roe is about to be overturned, correct?

MONICA

Yes, but--

BROCKWORTH

But...there will be no Planned Parenthood when, not if, that occurs. So your dream of painting murals won't become a reality.

MONICA

Then I'll...

Brockworth sighs as Monica searches for words.

BROCKWORTH

Ms. Michaels, your technical skills are strong. It's your intensity I question. You say you're passionate about a woman's body rights?

MONICA

Very much so.

BROCKWORTH

Then show me. Bring me something that SINGS! *Show me* that passion.

Brockworth moves on to the next student.

Monica hunts for brighter paints.

INT. KADY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Monica hears Kady SOBBING and flips on the light. She sits on the bed, cradles Kady in her arms, and strokes her sweaty, matted hair.

KADY

It just started gushing while I was in the shower! I was scared, Mom.

MONICA

(whispers to Kady)

It's okay KayKay. You're officially a young woman now.

Kady momentarily stops crying as Monica wipes away her tears and escorts her from the room.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Come on, you can sleep with me tonight.

INT. MONICA'S BEDROOM - LATER

In the dark, Monica hears Kady's heavy breathing. She has cried herself to sleep. Monica slides beneath the sheets and flips on her laptop. The screen clock reads 12:30 AM.

At the NEW YORK TIMES website, an ominous, all-caps headline: "ROE OVERTURNED: ABORTION EFFECTIVELY BANNED IN MOST STATES."

Monica covers her mouth with her palm. Holds it there.

MONICA  
(to herself)  
What have they done?!

Monica flips off the laptop and kisses Kady on the forehead. But her eyes remain open as she digests the news.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Monica's Fiat pulls up to a row of townhouses.

INT. MONICA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Kady grabs her backpack and prepares to exit the passenger seat. Monica squeezes her by the shoulder.

MONICA  
Try to have fun, sweetie. Pick you  
up tomorrow at noon.

Kady nods and climbs from the car.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Kady's best friend Tiffany, the same age as Kady and known as TIFF, runs to meet her. She's a bubbly blonde with a mouthful of braces. Tiff can see Kady's not her usual, cheerful self.

TIFF  
Hey, it's okay. I remember my first  
visit from Aunt Flo. And now look,  
I just went past second base.

Kady flinches, peers over at Tiff.

KADY  
With Zeke?

TIFF  
Of course, with Zeke!

Kady finally smiles. Tiff motions her into the townhouse and SLAMS the front door behind them.

INT. MONICA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

In a teal bathrobe with "MOM" on the front, Monica pours a glass of cheap wine. As she takes a sip, there's POUNDING at the back door. With wine glass in hand, she trods over.

As she peeks out, the door BURSTS open. The wine glass CRASHES to the kitchen floor. Wine forms a bloodlike puddle.

A man's hand grabs Monica by the throat. She can't see his face but as he speaks, it's clear she knows his voice.

WADE  
YOU FUCKING BITCH! You think you  
can poison her against me?

WADE, now 43, shoves her to the floor.

MONICA  
WADE! Get away from me!

Wade glowers at Monica's body sprawled out on the floor. She grabs a piece of the broken wine glass and jabs at him. He steps back, then grins like a crazed psychopath.

WADE  
You are going to stop turning my  
daughter against me.

MONICA  
I don't *need* to. She's figured out  
you're a piece of shit all by  
herself.

Wade fumes. The veins in his forehead actually throb.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
Besides, you didn't even want me to  
keep her.

WADE  
Yea, but you did. And she's my  
daughter too, for fuck's sake!

Still wielding the broken glass, Monica rises to her feet.

MONICA

That's some twisted logic. I am so  
glad I didn't marry you!

Monica stares at Wade and spits in his face.

Spittle drips down Wade's cheek as he bares his teeth.

WADE

(eerily)  
You useless bitch.

Wade pounces on Monica. The broken glass falls from her hand. He slings her over his shoulder and tromps into the living room. Monica kicks wildly and SCREAMS OBCENITIES at him.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monica struggles to break free. She squirms just enough to sink her teeth into Wade's shoulder. She SPITS out blood.

Wade drops her to the sofa and massages his bloody shoulder.

Monica has no time to flee. Wade backhands her. SLAP!

He PUNCHES her in the stomach. BAMM!

BATS her even harder in the head. WHACK!

Wade's sneering face hovers above her. He flips open Monica's bathrobe, straddles her, loosens his belt, and mounts her.

WADE

Mmm. This pussy's still good!

That's the last thing Monica hears before her eyelids close, and all goes dark and silent.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. MONICA'S HOUSE - DAY

An upbeat Kady bounds from a car and races to the front door. Her overnight with bestie Tiff has cheered her up. Tiff yells to Kady from the car.

TIFF  
Adieu, cockatoo!

Kady spins around at the door. Yells back while mimicking a kiss tossed from her palm.

KADY  
Blow a kiss, goldfish.

Kady glances at her cell. Two in the afternoon.

INT. ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Kady unlocks the front door and scrambles inside.

KADY  
Mom, why didn't you pick--

Her eyes widen at what she sees. She races into the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monica is face down on the floor, her bathrobe in tatters.

Ripped couch cushions blanket the floor.

A shattered coffee table rests on its side.

Kady covers her nose to avoid the stench from crushed beer cans littering the soiled, rancid carpet.

She shakes Monica, feels her wrist for a pulse.

KADY  
MOM! MOM, WAKE UP!

Monica MOANS. Her eyelids flutter. Kady rolls her over delicately. At the sight of caked blood on her mother's swollen face, she tears up.

MONICA  
Can you help me up?

INT. MONICA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kady assists her mother into bed. She leaves the room, returns with a washcloth, and begins wiping Monica's face.

KADY  
What happened?! Should I call an ambulance?

MONICA

NO! I'll survive. Just need some bed rest.

KADY

Mom, stop being so brave! What the hell happened?

Monica opens her eyes and shakes her head.

KADY (CONT'D)

God! Fine, *heck*. What the *heck* happened?

MONICA

It's not important.

KADY

Are you crazy? Was it--?

Kady stops wiping Monica's face.

MONICA

KayKay, I need to work. You need to do good at school. We can't afford sidetracks. So, let's forget this.

KADY

You know what Professor McGonagall said in Harry Potter?

MONICA

I guess you're going to tell me.

KADY

Bravery doesn't forgive stupidity.

Kady tosses the washcloth into a clothing hamper and turns to her mother in bed.

KADY (CONT'D)

I'll go make some bravery broth.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

SUPER: TEN DAYS LATER

In her medical scrubs, Monica ducks into a bathroom stall at Planned Parenthood.

She removes a pregnancy test kit, drops her pants, and pees on the testing stick.

She FLUSHES, exits the stall, places the stick on the sink. She impatiently taps her foot. Checks her watch.

Another WOMAN comes in. Monica washes her hands and conceals the testing stick as the woman enters a stall.

Monica's eyes dart between the testing stick and her watch.

The toilet FLUSHES and the woman exits the stall.

Monica snatches the testing stick and darts into a stall.

The woman washes and dries her hands and prepares to leave. From inside the stall, Monica BAYS.

MONICA  
FUCK! FUCK! FUCK!

The woman turns back.

WOMAN  
Everything okay in there?

MONICA  
(from the stall)  
Fantabulous.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kady drops her schoolbooks on the kitchen table and notices a note taped to the refrigerator: *KayKay, At PP till 11. Heat up leftovers. Love, Mom.*

She opens the fridge, scans the racks--two boiled eggs, a carton of Oat Milk, and a jar of gherkins.

Kady's Siamese, CATRICK SWAYZEE, PURRS for sustenance and weaves in and out of her legs. Kady picks him up.

KADY  
You hungry too, Catrick?

She pulls a bag of KITTIE CHOW from the cupboard and tips it over Catrick's bowl. Two hard nuggets and a cloud of dust.

KADY (CONT'D)  
Guess neither of us is having  
dinner tonight.

She drops Catrick to the floor and notices a glass jar filled with coins. CALIFORNIA VACAY FUND. She glances at Catrick.

KADY (CONT'D)

Unless--

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The doorbell RINGS. Kady swings open the front door to find a cute teen in a stained red uniform shirt and cap. His nametag says RYAN. He extends a large pizza box toward Kady.

Catrick circles Ryan's legs mesmerized by the aroma of hot pizza.

RYAN

Kady Michaels?

Kady flashes a coquettish grin.

KADY

You know me from high school?

He glances at the pizza box.

RYAN

Uh...no. It's on the order ticket.

KADY

Oh God! Right.

As she takes the pizza box from Ryan, their hands touch. She steps back. He does too and tumbles off the steps.

Kady breaks into nervous laughter. As Ryan rockets up from the shrubs and brushes himself off, she stops laughing.

KADY (CONT'D)

I am so sorry. Sometimes I laugh at inappropriate times.

RYAN

It's okay. I fall off steps at inappropriate times.

Ryan steps out of the shrubbery and walks back to his car.

KADY

Wait!

Ryan spins around.

RYAN

Yea?

Kady places the pizza box on a table inside the door.

KADY

I need to pay you, Ryan!

He walks back up the steps and stands in front of her.

RYAN

You know *my* name? From high school?

Their eyes meet. Kady blushes and rocks nervously on her feet. She points to his shirt pocket.

KADY

On your nametag.

Now it's Ryan's turn to blush.

KADY (CONT'D)

But yes, I know who you are. Ryan Brooks. A senior. We're in fourth period Civics together.

RYAN

That's where I've seen you!

Kady withdraws a roll of nickels and another of dimes.

KADY

Hope you don't mind coins. Mom won't give me a credit card.

As Ryan takes the money, Kady notices his hand lingering in her palm for a beat. They exchange soulful smiles. As Ryan backs off the stairs, she reaches toward him.

KADY (CONT'D)

Careful. One fall per delivery.

He chuckles, gets into his car, and pulls from the driveway. She waves slightly. He acknowledges by flashing the lights.

CRASH! The sound of metal trash cans hitting blacktop.

Ryan exits the car and scrambles to set the trash cans back.

RYAN

SHIT. SHIT. SHIT.

He waves again, slowly backs out, and rolls down the street.

Kady watches until Ryan's car disappears from sight. Kady grabs the pizza box. Catrick PURRS excitedly and follows her inside, hungrily MEOWING beside her.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY - DAY

Wade rolls a wobbly cart down a sterile, dark hallway. He's in a white orderly uniform, his shirt rolled up to reveal self-applied black ink tattoos.

When he arrives at a door with the nameplate RUIZ, he stops, removes the food platter cover, and yells inside.

WADE  
MRS. RUIZ. LUNCH TIME. YUMMY YUM.

No response. He yells again.

WADE (CONT'D)  
HEY, YOU WANNA EAT OR WHAT?

A senile WOMAN in a hair net and terry cloth robe peeks from across the hall. Wade lunges at her and SNARLS.

The old woman SLAMS and DEAD BOLTS the door.

INT. MRS. RUIZ'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wade strolls in carrying a prepared meal on a tray. Salisbury steak, tots, applesauce.

Mrs. Ruiz's efficiency is tiny--kitchen, living area, bedroom with an attached bathroom.

Wade tosses the platter on the kitchen table and looks around. Framed photos of Mrs. Ruiz and her family cover the wall, tables, even the kitchen counter.

WADE  
Mrs. Ruiz. You know I gotta be sure  
you're here to accept the food.  
Management will have my ass if I--

Wade glimpses something in the bathroom.

BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sprawled on the floor in her housecoat is MRS. RUIZ (previously 87).

Wade kneels beside the body but doesn't bother to check for a pulse. He rifles through her housecoat, finds a pill bottle, stashes it in his pants pocket.

WADE (CONT'D)  
(whispers)  
Be a shame if those went to waste.

He checks the medicine cabinet, grins, and clears every shelf of pill bottles. As he leaves, he stumbles on Mrs. Ruiz.

WADE (CONT'D)  
JESUS! Creepy ole' bitch.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Wade shuffles past the kitchen table, remembers the uneaten lunch, and helps himself to a hunk of Salisbury steak.

He stuffs tots into his jowls, opens the fridge, withdraws a ketchup bottle, and squirts a red rope into his mouth. After another bite of Salisbury steak, he shuffles out.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Wade musters a melodramatic SHRIEK.

WADE  
HELP! MY BELOVED MRS. RUIZ'S ROOM!

INT. PLANNED PARENTHOOD - DAY

In a hospital gown, Monica slouches on a paper-covered examination table. Her work scrubs are neatly folded on a metal chair.

With a sense of urgency, Planned Parenthood Director DR. RANVEER PATEL, 42, affectionately called DOC P., glides into the room. He's a self-assured, Bollywood-handsome man in a white physician's coat and cat eye Warby Parkers.

After a cursory smile, he refers to his clipboard.

DOC P.  
You only take the one home test?

MONICA  
No, three. Two *at home*, one here.

DOC P.  
All three positive?

MONICA  
Yes.

DOC P.  
Now you can make it four.

MONICA  
I thought so.

DOC P.  
The father know?

MONICA  
No! And I don't plan to tell him.

Doc P. places the clipboard on the counter. Crosses his arms.

DOC P.  
You know how I feel. It's solely  
your decision. Not his. And  
certainly not some politician or  
judge as some folks believe now.

MONICA  
Seems so surreal. I counsel women  
every day who go thru this.

DOC P.  
Now it's your turn.

MONICA  
How can I manage another child?  
Kady's a handful and I already do  
two jobs plus art school at night.

Monica SNIFFS, wipes her nose with a tissue.

DOC P.  
A few weeks ago, I could have  
counseled more options. Now, in  
Texas, since the end of Roe,  
everything's a mess.

Doc P. sits beside her on the examination table.

DOC P. (CONT'D)  
But, in a handful of other states,  
doctors' hands aren't as tied. Some  
places in America still believe a  
woman's body is her own.

Monica stands and faces Doc P.

MONICA  
I'm not saying I want one, but if I  
decide I do, could you go with me  
to perform *my* abortion in one of  
those states?

DOC P.

It's ironic. The state where I'm licensed to perform abortions has outlawed them. And in the states where it's still legal, I'm not.

A KNOCK. A NURSE peeks inside.

NURSE

Doc P., the Mayor wants to chat about Governor Tibbett's latest executive order on restrictions for birth control.

Doc P. nods to the nurse. He turns to Monica.

DOC P.

You have my word, I, and everyone here will do all we can if you decide to have an abortion elsewhere. Or...if you decide to carry to term in Texas.

Monica nods. Doc P. leaves. Quietly.

Monica grabs the tissues and begins to SOB. Loudly.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Monica and LeVeon sip iced coffees. Both are still in their Planned Parenthood scrubs.

LEVEON

Must be important if you're buying.

MONICA

I'm pregnant.

LeVeon nearly spits out his coffee.

LEVEON

Nice buildup to the punchline. Do I know the father?

MONICA

No. I dunno. That's not important.

LEVEON

Since when?

MONICA

I mean, I'd rather not say. I just wanted to ask you what you'd do if you were in my shoes.

LEVEON

You mean...have the baby or--

MONICA

Yes.

LEVEON

(anxious)

You know we can't talk about that. Somebody overhears, we could end up in jail. Shit, governor says he'll even arrest an Uber driver who drops a woman off at the clinic!

MONICA

I doubt the noble elected officials of Texas would send a *man* to jail. It's *women* they love to punish. God forbid we should have control over our own bodies.

LeVeon raises a finger to his lips.

LEVEON

(softly)

Shh!

MONICA

Probably doesn't matter anyway. Doc P. says he can't do...*it*. And I don't see how I can find time to leave the state to have it done.

LEVEON

I'm sorry, Monica. I need that lousy job to support my family. You just got one child. Me and Michael got *three* little rugrats.

Monica hugs LeVeon, whispers in his ear.

MONICA

Thanks for listening. Even if you are a gutless coward.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The charmless aesthetic of cold linoleum, flyer-packed corkboards, and blinding fluorescent lights that are a church basement. Monica passes the Senior Sunday School class.

She peeks in to see Raylene at a lectern, spouting her fire and brimstone version of the gospel to a like-minded group of blue-haired LADIES.

RAYLENE

Congregants, the good book says  
abortion is an abomination!

Monica hides outside the door to listen to Raylene's wisdom.

RAYLENE (CONT'D)

Exodus chapter twenty-one, verse  
twenty-two. When men and women  
strive to hurt a pregnant woman, so  
that her child comes out, they  
shall pay life for life, eye for  
eye, wound for wound.

Monica rolls her eyes and shakes her head. As she walks away, she hears loud AMENS from Raylene's captivated groupies.

When she turns the corner, Monica sees Kady in the hallway, on one knee, chatting with a group of cute elementary school-age KIDS. Kady hugs the kids and waves goodbye as they scamper off down the hallway.

MONICA

How was Sunday School class?

KADY

Awesome! Those kids are so fun to  
teach and talk to!

MONICA

You've always been good with kids.

KADY

I love them!

MONICA

Looks like the feeling's mutual.

Animated and smiling, Kady recaps the morning with the kids as she and Monica walk down the hallway. They pass the Senior Sunday School class, still in session, with Raylene still spouting her everlasting hellfire religious views.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Monica punches a "Favorites" number on her cell.

MONICA

Dr. P. It's Monica. Sorry to bother you at home but I couldn't wait to tell you the news.

She pauses, takes a deep breath, and continues.

MONICA (CONT'D)

I've decided to keep the baby! I'll find a way to make ends meet.

DOC P. (O.C.)

I'm happy for you, Monica. May I have the honor of being your OB/GYN?

MONICA

(smiling)

Wouldn't have it any other way.

She ends the call and spots a brochure on the counter.

The brochure cover features the Planned Parenthood logo, a photo of a woman, and a clinic worker in scrubs. The title reads: ABORTION FAQ'S. She tosses it into the trash.

EXT. MONICA'S HOUSE - DAY

A dented pick-up CHUGS to a stop in the driveway. Kady and Ryan face each other in the front seat.

INT. RYAN'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The nervous tension between them is obvious. Kady fumbles for her books. Ryan taps on the wheel. She breaks the silence.

KADY

Thanks for the ride.

She UNCLICKS her seatbelt.

RYAN

I can pick you up tomorrow too.

Kady shyly flips her hair behind her ears.

KADY

That would be--

RYAN

Great!

(beat)

Can I ask you a personal question?

KADY

How personal?

RYAN

Would you mind if I kissed you?

Kady avoids eye contact.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to  
embarrass you. We *have* only known--

Kady looks up with a beaming smile.

KADY

Sure!

Ryan glances over, surprised.

RYAN

Sure, you would mind or sure--

KADY

Ryan. Just kiss me for God's sake!

She tilts her head toward him and kisses him on the mouth, relishing every second. She grabs her books and jumps from the truck. Ryan's eyes are riveted on her every move.

She shuts the passenger side door and pops her head back inside the truck. Ryan's eyes widen with fascination.

KADY (CONT'D)

One more for the road?

Ryan smiles, scoots over to her, but he's restrained by the seat belt. She chuckles as he unbuckles to kiss her again. She steps onto the sidewalk and flutters a wave goodbye.

Kady runs to the front door as Ryan drives away. She fumbles for the house key, but no need. The door flies open.

Monica stands behind the screen door, arms crossed.

MONICA

Something you need to tell me?

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monica motions for Kady to take a seat beside her. Kady sighs, tosses her books aside, and slumps onto the couch.

MONICA

How long have you had a boyfriend?

KADY

He's not my boyfriend. Just a friend. Who's a boy.

MONICA

Semantics. Since when do 'just a boys' French kiss their 'friend' who happens to be a girl?

Kady crosses her arms, looks away from Monica.

KADY

He delivered pizza here once and he gave me a lift from school. Two times with a guy does not make him my boyfriend.

MONICA

Do you want him to be?

Kady tries to stall.

KADY

Be my boyfriend?

MONICA

Simple question.

KADY

He's cute. And funny. And smart. So...it wouldn't be a bad thing.

Monica places her arms around Kady's shoulders.

MONICA

You're growing up so fast. I did too, and I didn't handle it well, so you can understand my concern.

Kady leans into Monica's chest. Her initial anger disappears.

KADY

Just trust me to do the right thing, mom. You've raised me right.

MONICA

I know. As long as we're honest  
with each other, we'll be fine.

KADY

Deal.

MONICA

Which brings me to something  
important I need to share with you.

After a beat--

MONICA (CONT'D)

I'm pregnant.

KADY

OH MY GOD! *I'm gonna be a sister!*  
Who's the father?

Monica stares out the living room window.

MONICA

Nobody special. It was just a one  
time...event.

KADY

Guy's sperm must be potent then!

MONICA

(laughs)

Which is why I was concerned about  
your new beau. Only takes one time.

KADY

Ironic. You counsel women for a  
living and yet you didn't practice  
birth control. Guy must be hot!

MONICA

Not so much. Plus, I really don't  
want him in *this* baby's life.

EXT. MONICA'S FRONT YARD - DAY

In a swimsuit, straw hat, and sunglasses, Monica relaxes on a  
beach chair reading a paperback and sipping a glass of wine.

A neighbor's door SLAMS followed by heavy footsteps.

Monica peers over her sunglasses to see Raylene's frowning,  
cherubic face. She cradles a tray of peanut butter cookies.

RAYLENE

I want to talk to you about your daughter, uh--

MONICA

Kady?

RAYLENE

Kady, yes. Percy and I've noticed she's left home alone a lot.

MONICA

I wouldn't say a lot. Just when I have night classes.

RAYLENE

I'm very concerned that leaving a child that young, home alone--

Raylene remembers the cookies.

RAYLENE (CONT'D)

Oh, forgive my manners! I brought these for you and your daughter. Straight from the oven.

Monica takes a cookie but not a bite.

MONICA

Thanks, but I'll only have one. I need to watch my weight.

RAYLENE

You're all skin and bones! Why would you need to worry about that?

MONICA

Because...I'm expecting. So, trying to eat healthier.

Raylene covers her mouth with a liver-spotted palm. In that moment, she transforms from judgmental to delighted.

RAYLENE

Praise Jesus!

MONICA

(chuckles uncomfortably)  
Maybe Jesus could explain how I'll be able to afford a second child.

RAYLENE

My dear, you can't afford not to.  
It's God's law. And now, it's the  
law of this great state too.

MONICA

So, I've heard.

Raylene hands Monica the cookie tray and kisses her on the cheek. Monica scrunches her nose at the creepiness of the moment and takes a sip of wine. Raylene shakes her head.

RAYLENE

Now that you are with child, do you  
think alcohol is advisable?

Monica slams down the glass. Raylene's getting on her nerves.

MONICA

I don't think one glass will hurt.

RAYLENE

One glass leads to two. Then to  
three. Then an entire bottle. The  
devil cares not about the life of a  
child. But its mother should!

Raylene spins on her heels to head for home.

RAYLENE (CONT'D)

I must share your blessed news with  
Percy.

MONICA

Wait! I thought you wanted to talk  
about Kady!

Raylene flutters to her house. She yells back.

RAYLENE

This revelation is much more  
consequential!

Monica rubs off Raylene's lipstick and stares at the cookies.

MONICA

(mumbles)

Peanut butter cookies for two  
people allergic to peanuts.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Doc P. performs an ultrasound on Monica while Kady holds her hand. He points to a fuzzy, gyrating image on the monitor.

DOC P.  
Fourteen weeks. All looks good.

He glides the transducer over Monica's belly and calls out observations which a SONOGRAPHER records on a tablet PC.

DOC P. (CONT'D)  
Fetal development normal. Spine  
looks perfect. Heartbeat one forty.

Monica and Kady both GASP. Doc P. smiles.

DOC P. (CONT'D)  
That's normal. Fetal heart rates  
run high.

Kady and Monica squeeze hands.

DOC P. (CONT'D)  
Looks like four inches, again  
normal. Four point five ounces,  
good. And see that?

Doc P. points to the screen. Monica and Kady lean close.

DOC P. (CONT'D)  
Five fingers each hand, five toes  
each foot, and a little mouth.  
Might even be smiling at you,  
Monica. And her sister.

KADY  
HER sister? You mean--

MONICA  
It's a girl?

The Sonographer looks up from the tablet.

SONOGRAPHER  
Yes, a normal, healthy girl.

Monica and Kady hug Doc P. He pushes a button on the monitor and a black and white photo emerges. He hands it to Monica.

DOC P.  
Your daughter's first photo.

INSERT: The ultrasound image. A balled-up fetus, its tiny hands and feet mere dots and what sure looks like a smile.

INT. BABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Monica and Kady paint the walls light pink. Kady's side is rolled with precision. Monica's wall is a Rorschach Inkblot Test, spotted, blotchy, with unevenly applied paint.

Kady holds back a smile at Monica's wall and just nods.

They stroll to the crib. Inside it, Monica has placed tiny infant clothes and the black and white ultrasound photo.

MONICA

You excited about having a sister?

KADY

Yes! You excited about having another daughter?

MONICA

It's starting to grow on me. While it grows in me.

Kady rolls her eyes at the Mom Joke. They both consider the pink walls. And simultaneously react.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Do you like that col--

KADY

Do you like that col--

CHUCKLES.

Monica retrieves a bucket of unopened paint from the closet.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Just in case, I bought a second color. Sienna Sunset.

She pops the top with a screwdriver, and they peer inside.

KADY

Much better! Cool name too.

Kady Googles the color on her cell.

KADY (CONT'D)

Sienna. Means Orange Red. Just like a sunset. Something beautiful you always remember.

(MORE)

KADY (CONT'D)

(beat)

We should name her that!

MONICA

Sienna. Kady's little sis. Mom's beautiful wonder.

KADY

Someone we'll always remember!

Monica nods, dumps the new paint into a pan, and they begin to paint over the pink walls.

INT. COLLEGE ART CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Monica waddles in hauling a large sheet-covered canvas. A baby bump is visible beneath her loose-fitting sweatshirt.

She struggles to put the canvas on an easel. A FEMALE STUDENT comes to assist.

FEMALE STUDENT

Lemme help.

They boost the draped canvas onto the easel.

FEMALE STUDENT (CONT'D)

How far along now?

MONICA

Seventeen weeks. Almost halfway there. Yay me!

The student notices Instructor Brockworth striding over. She smiles to Monica and returns to her own easel.

BROCKWORTH

Ms. Michaels.

MONICA

Professor Brockworth.

BROCKWORTH

Is what's hidden beneath that sheet your attempt at passion?

MONICA

It is!

BROCKWORTH (O.C.)

Let's see if that's true.

Brockworth crosses his arms in expectation.

Monica removes the sheet to expose the painting.

The other students creep over, eager to see Monica's mysterious work.

Brockworth remains poker-faced as he reviews the piece.

But the other students do not. They nod, smile, OOH and AHH.

A nerdish bohemian type named CODY (20's) claps before his girlfriend, JENNIFER (also 20's) frowns and shakes her head. He stops clapping before his two palms meet again.

The painting is an oil, with a deep texture of both cool and dark tones, evocative of a Van Gogh-Kahlo mashup.

The brush strokes are aggressive, intense, emotional.

But it's the central image that astonishes the crowd.

The depiction of a uterus. The two uterine tubes extend left and right like the arms of an oak.

The cervical canal is elongated vertically like a human body.

And at the bottom of the canvas, the sides of the vagina mimic two human feet.

But it's not an anatomical depiction of a female uterus copied from a medical textbook.

Because trapped inside is the dour face and slumping body of a woman, her arms extended as if hanging from a cross, her feet bound together.

She's helpless, captive, afraid.

And, flying from chains on each side of the ovaries that dangle from the woman's hands--two bright red cannon balls.

The cannon balls slam into the ovaries, and spatter bright red, bloody words--CHOICE, SAFETY, EQUALITY, RIGHTS, FREEDOM.

Brockworth breaks his silence, his face still neutral.

BROCKWORTH (CONT'D)

This work comes from your heart?

The students lean in. Monica meekly replies.

MONICA

It's my ninth--no, tenth--attempt.  
Each time, I felt stronger about  
what I was trying to say.

BROCKWORTH

And this attempt is your best?

MONICA

Yes, I believe in this piece.

BROCKWORTH

Hmm. Well.

(beat)

I would have to agree. Incredible work, Monica!

The students CHEER. Cody and Jennifer lead APPLAUSE.

Monica hugs Brockworth, who flashes a rare smile.

That's when a wave of water CRASHES onto the floor.

The sound is like a WATERFALL, with buckets of fluid BURSTING onto the carpet.

Its origin is between Monica's legs.

Students look on, eyes wide, palms over mouths.

Monica begins to SOB.

INT. TRUCK - A BIT LATER

Cody races down a bumpy road in his ancient Ford truck. Jennifer sits in the front seat between him and Monica. Monica MOANS in constant pain.

Jennifer's cellphone calls out in a female voice: TURN LEFT AT THE NEXT LIGHT ONTO MEDICAL DRIVE.

JENNIFER

(to Cody)

Left at Medical Drive!

CODY

JESUS Jen! I heard, okay! You don't need to repeat it every time!

JENNIFER

Go faster then! Monica's in FUCKING PAIN!

The speedometer zooms from fifty to sixty-five.

EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

A red-light flashes ahead. Cody doesn't slow down. The truck spins left onto Medical Drive, into oncoming traffic.

HORNS BLARE.

TIRES SCREECH.

DRIVERS SHOUT OBSCENITIES.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The three riders brace themselves. Jennifer extends her right arm in front of Monica like a mother protecting a child.

JENNIFER

JESUS CODY! You have a death wish?

CODY

You say go faster then when I do--

MONICA

Can you fight after? Maybe we get to the hospital fast *and* safely?

CODY

Sure Monica. Sorry.

JENNIFER

Yea Monica. He's sorry.

Cody rolls his eyes and pulls into the hospital entrance.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

In a white lab coat, Doc P. attends to Monica. Monitors HUM and BLINK tracking vital signs for mother and fetus.

DOC P.

You lost a lot of amniotic fluid.  
And you have a ruptured membrane.  
We'll keep you for observation.

MONICA

How much fluid?

DOC P.

It's not quite oligohydramnios--

Monica flashes Doc P. a furrowed brow.

DOC P. (CONT'D)  
 Sorry. Your levels are low, but I think we can manage the situation with bedrest, and we'll keep you on a fluid drip.

A COMMOTION in the hallway. Kady bursts into the room, trailed by a nurse with a nametag that reads: JOYCE SYMMS.

DOC P. (CONT'D)  
 Looks like you have a visitor.

NURSE SYMMS  
 I'm sorry doctor. She snuck past.

Kady runs to Monica's bedside.

DOC P.  
 It's okay. Kady's her daughter.

Nurse Symms nods and leaves the room.

DOC P. (CONT'D)  
 Get a good night's rest. I'll check back in the morning.

Monica smiles a goodbye and turns to Kady.

MONICA  
 I thought I told you to stay at home! How'd you get here anyway?

Smirking, Kady dangles the Fiat keys at Monica.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
 How'd you learn to drive a shift, let alone learn to drive at all?

KADY  
 You Tubes to learn the right way. Watching you to learn how *not* to.

Monica LAUGHS and rubs her belly.

KADY (CONT'D)  
 It's okay, mom. I'm here to guide you through life. Me and Sienna!

Monica pulls Kady to her. Monitors HUM. Fluid DRIPS.

A BIT LATER

Nurse Symms enters to check on Monica. A clearly bored Kady watches the muted TV with one eye and thumbs through texts.

NURSE SYMMS

One final shot before bedtime, hun.

Monica sits up in bed as the nurse prepares the shot.

MONICA

Do you know when I'll be released?

NURSE SYMMS

Not for me to say.

Monica flinches when the nurse jabs the syringe into her arm.

KADY

Why can't you tell us anything? My mom's worried. Me too!

NURSE SYMMS

I'm sorry, that's above my paygrade. It's for your mother's doctor to share the details.

The nurse scurries out.

Kady turns out the lights and climbs into bed with Monica.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - BATHROOM - LATER

Kady pees in the dark to avoid waking Monica. She hears WHISPERING VOICES in the hallway.

NURSE SYMMS (O.C.)

It's heartbreaking.

UNKNOWN NURSE (O.C.)

I've never seen a patient with such low fluid levels.

BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kady races to Monica and awakens her with a shake.

KADY

(whispers)

Mom! Listen! In the hallway.

NURSE SYMMS (O.C.)

A few weeks ago, we would've already declared an emergency and she would have a choice.

UNKNOWN NURSE (O.C.)

Now?

NURSE SYMMS (O.C.)

Now we're in unchartered territory.

In the darkness, Monica and Kady begin to SOB.

EXT. MONICA'S HOUSE - DAY

In hair rollers and a purple Mumu, Raylene carries a tray of cookies up the steps. She raps on the door and steps back.

No answer. She knocks again.

RAYLENE

YOO HOO! Monica! Kady! Got a surprise for you!

Still no answer. Impatiently she turns to leave.

Finally, the door opens. Raylene spins back around.

LeVeon hovers over her at the door.

Raylene's brows rise. Her mouth opens without words.

LEVEON

Monica and Kady aren't here. I'm watching the house for them.

RAYLENE

What a shame. I know how they love my baking. I made sugar cookies.

She proudly displays the tray and points to cookies shaped like a stork toting a swaddled baby. For the stork--white icing, orange beak, and a blue pilot's cap. The baby's wrapped in a bright red, white, and blue blanket.

LEVEON

What's with the bird?

RAYLENE

Cute, isn't it? It's a stork. Bringing Monica's newborn blessing. A baby is a gift from God, of course, not a stork. But I couldn't help myself.

LEVEON

Uh huh. You have a real gift.

RAYLENE

So I've been told. Do you know when they'll be back?

LEVEON

Can't say. They're at the hospital.

RAYLENE

Oh my! She didn't look like she was that far along.

LeVeon narrows his eyes. It's obvious to him she's a snoop, so he doubles down on the mystery just for the hell of it.

LEVEON

God does work in mysterious ways.  
I'll let them know you dropped by.  
Unannounced. With stork cookies.

LeVeon starts to close the door, but Raylene jabs her foot inside and extends the tray.

RAYLENE

Hate for these to go to waste. I'll come back for the tray in a few days. You can give me an update.

LeVeon flashes an uncomfortable smile. She's outwitted him.

LEVEON

Right. Be a sin to waste baked art.

Raylene scrambles down the steps and waves. LeVeon stares at the cookies, LAUGHS, and goes back inside.

INT. MONICA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The monitor BEEPS and DINGS as a businesslike Doc P. enters.

Kady tosses her book on the chair and climbs beside Monica.

DOC P.

Rest well?

MONICA

A few hours.

KADY

Not really. Look, we need you to be truthful. When is mom getting out?

DOC P.

Okay then, let's skip the small talk. Unfortunately, we're in a situation with no good choices.

Kady grabs Monica's hand and scoots closer.

DOC P. (CONT'D)

There's still a fetal heartbeat. And in Texas, I'm not permitted to extract unless the mother is in extreme medical duress. In other words, a life-or-death emergency.

Kady and Monica exchange worrisome looks.

KADY

So, my mom could slowly die as long as the fetus has a beating heart?

DOC P.

I'm saying we're in medical limbo. Until the situation changes.

Kady throws her arms in the air.

KADY

I CALL BULLSHIT!

MONICA

Calm down, Kady.

DOC P.

It's okay.

KADY

Then what are you doing about it?

DOC P.

The hospital board decides cases like this. Before Roe was overturned, the board would've had no problem approving extraction. Especially at seventeen weeks.

MONICA

I don't see how the Supreme Court ruling is relevant. This is dangerous for my baby *and* me.

KADY

It's about money and egos, mom.

Kady glares at Doc P.

KADY (CONT'D)

Tell her. I read the law. I'm nerdy like that. Chapter 170A of the Texas Health & Safety Code. Tell mom why it's so hard for you and this '*hospital board*' to make what should be an easy decision.

Doc P. nervously uncrosses and recrosses his arms.

DOC P.

You've got to understand, I could lose my medical license. And then I can't help anyone.

KADY

Why bother taking the Hippocratic Oath then? You doctors should start taking the *Hypocrite's Oath*.

MONICA

Kady.

KADY

No mom! They all preach 'Do No Harm' and yet they're willing to stand back and watch harm being done to their patients. Who just happen to be women!

DOC P.

Look, I'll talk to the hospital board as soon as possible. I assume you'd consider extraction, Monica?

KADY

HELL YES!

MONICA

Calm down!

Kady rolls her eyes, grits her teeth.

MONICA (CONT'D)

I really want this baby to live. For both of us to live. But if we just continue to wait and watch as conditions worsen for both of us--

Doc P. pats Monica on the hand.

DOC P.

I'll talk to the board.

Doc P. smiles at Monica, nods at Kady, and leaves.

Kady lays down beside Monica. The room's silent except for the BEATS, BLEEPs, and HUMS of the hospital monitors.

INT. MONICA'S CAR - NIGHT

Kady punches a 'Favorite' phone number--Tiff's--on her cell as she sits behind the wheel of the Fiat.

TIFF (O.C.)  
Hey, Boo! How's your mom?

KADY  
Same wait-and-see bullshit.

TIFF (O.C.)  
What's she gonna do?

KADY  
She wants to have the baby. But I'm afraid if she waits too long--

Kady holds back tears. SNIFFLES.

TIFF  
I'm so sorry. She's a strong woman, though. Keep the faith!

KADY  
Hard to do in this situation.

TIFF (O.C.)  
You got me to lean on.

KADY  
Thanks. Got Ryan too. I think.

TIFF (O.C.)  
Be careful. Don't mistake lust for love.

KADY  
I know. Relationships are so fucking confusing!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Monica's awakened by SHOUTS in the hallway.

After a KNOCK, her door swings open, and Doc P. strolls in. Not his usual easygoing, professional self.

DOC P.  
I'm sorry. I tried but--

MONICA  
What did they say?

Doc P. pretends to rub tired eyes, but he's clearly wiping away tears.

DOC P.  
Everyone's afraid. The board's afraid the hospital could lose its license and the staff could end up in state prison if we interpret the law incorrectly.

He sits next to Monica and grasps her hand.

DOC P. (CONT'D)  
They did agree to monitor the situation closely. If the fetal heartbeat dips or spikes or if you contract severe chorioamnionitis--

MONICA  
English, doctor.

DOC P.  
It's a serious infection resulting in a medical emergency.  
(beat)  
If either of those two things occur, then extraction seems like the only solution.

MONICA  
(sighs)  
So, we're still in medical limbo?

Doc P. SIGHS and nods.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Kady does homework, her schoolbooks spread on the couch. Monica drifts in and out of sleep as the monitors DRONE.

SUPER: TWO WEEKS LATER

A KNOCK. Doc P. ambles in.

KADY  
Any change?

DOC P.  
I wish I could say yes but--

Kady rolls her eyes. Doc P. sees it.

DOC P. (CONT'D)  
I'm not trying to be evasive.

MONICA  
It's nineteen weeks. I can't  
continue like this forever.

DOC P.  
I know. Look, you've got a yellow  
blood discharge, but the board says  
it's still not bad enough to  
qualify as a medical emergency.

MONICA  
This hospital board is--

KADY  
Full of shit?

MONICA  
I was going to say unreasonable but  
full of shit works. So, Doc P. I've  
decided to wait in limbo elsewhere.

DOC P.  
You want to change hospitals?

MONICA  
No. I want to go home. Today.

KADY  
At least one adult can make a  
decision around here.

DOC P.  
Any way I can talk you out of it?

Monica sits up in bed and throws back the covers to get out.

MONICA  
Not a chance.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

Kady rolls Monica in a wheelchair to the Fiat. Monica's cell rings. She glances at caller ID: AUSTIN COMMUNITY HOSPITAL.

MONICA  
(puzzled)  
Yes?

AUSTIN HOSPITAL CALLER (O.C.)  
Ms. Michaels. Tammy Johnson with  
the Austin Community Hospital  
Administrative Office.

MONICA  
Is something wrong?

TAMMY (O.C.)  
Just routine paperwork. You're at  
nineteen weeks, correct?

MONICA  
(confused)  
Yes.

TAMMY (O.C.)  
At this mark in your pregnancy, we  
generally have our moms register  
for delivery.

MONICA  
What?

TAMMY (O.C.)  
Just to ensure everything goes  
smoothly from a planning  
standpoint. So, I've scheduled you  
for November first.

MONICA  
(incredulous)  
Four and a half months from now?

TAMMY (O.C.)  
Correct. If I can get your  
insurance information, we can  
reserve you that spot.  
(beat)  
How're you doing, by the way? I bet  
you're excited about the delivery!

Monica looks at the phone. Kady senses something's wrong.

KADY

Mom?

Monica's lips quiver. She places her palm on her forehead.

MONICA

(shouts into the phone)

NO! I'M NOT EXCITED! I'M TERRIFIED!

Kady SNATCHES the phone.

KADY

WHO THE FUCK'S THIS?

Monica's crying too much to question Kady's language choice.

TAMMY (O.C.)

The Hospital Administrative Office.  
Did I lose Monica?

KADY

I'm her daughter.

TAMMY (O.C.)

Oh, okay, could you provide her  
insurance information, then?

KADY

No. I'm taking her home from your  
FUCKING HOSPITAL so she can wait  
for her DEAD BABY'S DELIVERY and  
hopefully not DIE HERSELF!

TAMMY (O.C.)

Oh, my God! There must have been a  
mix-up.

KADY

Do ya think?!

TAMMY (O.C.)

I'm very sorry!

KADY

(mumbles)

Too late for that, dumbass.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Wade strolls out the door, twelve-pack in hand. He flings the  
beer into his truck's front seat and climbs in.

INT. WADE'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Wade pops open a beer can, swigs half down, and starts the engine. Through the front window, he sees Kady and Monica zoom past in the Fiat, Kady at the wheel.

WADE  
(mumbles)  
What the fuck's she driving for?

He jams the truck in gear and peels out of the gravel parking lot in a cloud of dust.

EXT. MONICA'S HOUSE - DAY

Wade pulls his truck to a stop across the street, hidden behind a towering Live Oak. He lets the truck idle, pops open another beer, and sees the Fiat pull into the driveway.

From his concealed vantage point, Wade watches Kady rush around to the passenger door and help Monica inside.

INT. WADE'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Monica's pregnant belly catches Wade off guard.

He crushes his empty beer can and tosses it out the window along with the empty first can. They CLANG on the blacktop.

Wade SLAMS his palms on the steering wheel.

WADE  
Goddamned bitch is knocked up!

INT. MONICA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kady helps Monica into bed and kisses her forehead. She puts on her backpack and prepares to leave.

KADY  
I just need to pick up my homework  
and I'll be right back. Call me at  
school if you need me.

MONICA  
Stop being a mother hen.

KADY  
You taught me well.

As Kady leaves, Monica's cell CHIMES. The caller ID reads "WADE." She grimaces and declines the call.

A few seconds later, a text message JINGLES its arrival.

Monica reads it.

WADE: "I just saw you. you're pregnant. It's mine, idnit?"

MONICA: "well, since I haven't had sex since you raped me, yes. it's yours. but you're not getting near my baby!"

WADE: "you stupid cunt. you're gonna have it?!"

MONICA: "if I don't die first."

WADE: "I warn you. If you tell anyone about what happened that night, you're a dead bitch!"

MONICA: "Have a nice life, piece of shit."

Monica turns off the phone, tosses it on the nightstand, covers her head with a pillow, and SCREAMS.

INT. KADY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kady's eyes fly open as she awakens to strange SOUNDS coming from the master bathroom.

INT. MONICA'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kady races in to find Monica VOMITING nonstop into the toilet. She hands her a towel and checks her temperature.

KADY  
Mom, you're so hot!

MONICA  
One-o-one. And I'm cramping bad.

Monica wipes her mouth.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
I don't hear the baby's heartbeat.

KADY  
Do you think--

Monica nods and points to a massive amount of blood and mucus in the tub. Kady frowns and squeezes her mother's hand.

KADY (CONT'D)  
I'll tell Doc P. we're on our way!

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Doc P. performs an ultrasound. A SONOGRAPHER checks the data.

MONICA  
I'm almost sure I miscarried.

DOC P.  
Your own vitals remain the same.

MONICA  
And the fetus?

Doc P. glances at the sonographer and turns to Monica.

DOC P.  
The volume's on mute. Do you want  
me to turn it on?

Monica peers up at Kady, tilts her head. Kady nods.

MONICA  
Yes.

Doc P. gradually turns the volume up on the ultrasound.

Thump. THUMP. **THUMP!**

Monica closes her eyes. A single tear rolls down her cheek.

Kady shakes her head at Doc P. He quickly looks away.

KADY  
FUCK YOUR MEDICAL LIMBO! YOU'RE  
GOING TO KILL MY MOM!

She shoves Doc P. aside and storms out.

EXT. MONICA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kady wheels Monica in her wheelchair down the driveway.

LeVeon pulls up and gets out of his car. He leans down, hugs Monica then Kady. The full moon and starry sky shine on them like a scene on a Broadway stage.

MONICA  
Thanks for coming.

LEVEON

Of course. You said you need a favor?

MONICA

It's a big one. I'll understand if you don't want to get involved.

LEVEON

Try me.

MONICA

I'd like for you and Kady to check on abortion clinics in Albuquerque and Denver. Schedule me in either city at the earliest available. And be prepared to buy airline tickets. I'll give you my credit card.

LEVEON

After how these fools have fucked everything up, you can count me in.

LeVeon bends over, looks directly into Monica's eyes.

LEVEON (CONT'D)

You okay making such a long trip?

MONICA

I no longer have a choice.

INT. DULLARD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Raylene eavesdrops on the discussion from behind the living room curtains. The window's raised, just enough that she was able to hear Monica and LeVeon's entire conversation.

She watches as LeVeon drives away. On Raylene's face, a smirk evolves into a sinister grin.

RAYLENE

Percy!!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Kady rushes toward Monica's bedroom waving her cellphone.

KADY

LeVeon and I have you scheduled for next Monday in Albuquerque!

INT. MONICA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She enters expecting to find Monica in bed.

KADY

I need your card for the flight.

She races into the bathroom.

KADY (CONT'D)

MOM?

INT. MONICA'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kady sees Monica passed out in the bathtub; her pajamas soaked with dark red blood.

KADY

MOM!

Kady checks Monica's pulse. Faint but there. She dials 9-1-1.

KADY (CONT'D)

SEND AN AMBULANCE FUCKING NOW!

After she hangs up, Kady places a pillow beneath her mom's head. She mops up some of the bloody mess with a towel and tosses it in a trash bag. She squeezes into the tub with Monica and waits for the ambulance to arrive.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

An ORDERLY wheels Monica's gurney past wheelchairs, other gurneys, and MEDICAL STAFF running down the hall.

In scrubs, Doc P. and Kady scramble beside.

Hospital Board Chairman FRANK COLLINS (60's), a short, bald man in an expensive blue suit glares at them and raises his palm for them to stop.

FRANK COLLINS

PATEL! Is this the patient who--

DOC P.

Yes, Frank.

FRANK COLLINS

What do you think you're doing?

DOC P.

I'm operating.

Collins crosses his arms and widens his stance.

FRANK COLLINS  
The Board hasn't approved that.

DOC P.  
Please move, Frank.

FRANK COLLINS  
Is there still a fetal heartbeat?

DOC P.  
Barely.

FRANK COLLINS  
But there *is* a fetal heartbeat! So,  
what's changed?

Kady withdraws the trash bag, opens it, and hurls the bloody towel at Collins. The contents ooze down his tailored suit.

KADY  
THAT!

Collins touches the dark bloody mucus. He turns his head away from the stench. His eyes water.

FRANK COLLINS  
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS SMELLY MESS?

Doc P. steps to Collins. Peers down at the shorter man.

DOC P.  
That's the FUCKING MEDICAL  
EMERGENCY you, the board, and the  
State of Texas have demanded.

Poor Collins is still confused. Doc P. shakes his head.

DOC P. (CONT'D)  
Monica's got no amniotic fluid, a  
blazing fever, severe cramps,  
chills. And, that bloody discharge  
dripping down your suit that smells  
so bad you'll retch soon.

FRANK COLLINS  
Still--

DOC P.  
Still nothing, Frank! It's  
chorioamnionitis. There's a growing  
infection in her uterus. The  
mother's life is in danger.

(MORE)

DOC P. (CONT'D)

And the fetus will be stillborn or have life-threatening problems and die soon after. NOW GET THE FUCK AWAY!

KADY

YEAH! GET THE FUCK WAY!

Monica hears Kady. She smiles proudly, and whispers softly to the ORDERLY wielding her down the hallway.

MONICA

That's my daughter!

Reluctantly, Collins steps away. He takes off his suit jacket and watches helplessly as Doc P. and his entourage hurry into the operating room.

And then he PUKES on the hallway floor.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

BLEEP. BLEEP. BLEEP.

Steady, rhythmic monitor beats fill the room. Monica's in bed, dazed, exhausted. Kady holds her mother's hand.

In bloody scrubs, Doc P. enters cradling a bundled blanket. He carefully hands it to Monica. She nods.

Monica peeks inside at her stillborn DAUGHTER, swaddled, safe, no longer in pain. She SOBS as she takes in the sight.

MONICA

(to Kady)

Her hands and feet are so tiny!

Doc P. leaves Monica and Kady to their privacy.

MONICA (CONT'D)

(whispers)

I'm so sorry I wasn't able to give you life, little Sienna.

Monica's lips move silently as she counts fingers and toes.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Five fingers each hand, five toes each foot, and how about that--

She looks over at Kady.

MONICA (CONT'D)

A wide smile for her big sis.

Kady squeezes her mother's hand as they both say hello and goodbye to tiny Sienna.

EXT. MONICA'S HOUSE - DAY

Kady pulls the Fiat into the driveway and helps Monica inside. After a beat, Kady returns to retrieve the luggage.

Raylene's sudden appearance startles her. Raylene hands Kady a tray of oatmeal cookies. Kady accepts them with a grimace.

RAYLENE

I see your mom's back! You must be excited about becoming a big sis?

KADY

Not anymore.

RAYLENE

Why not for heaven's sake?

KADY

She lost it.

RAYLENE

How?

KADY

Complications. They had to take it so Mom wouldn't die.

RAYLENE

(alarmed)

Who's *they*?

KADY

Dr. Patel at Austin Community.

Raylene frowns and steps back. Her divine happiness fades away, replaced by 'fear of God' anger.

RAYLENE

So, this Dr. Patel recklessly murdered a blessed child of God!

KADY

Hell, no. Mom's alive thanks to--

RAYLENE

Thanks to the *abortion* of a  
precious human being?

Kady tosses the cookie tray at Raylene. The tray and the  
cookies CRASH to the ground.

KADY

Get the hell away, you crazy bitch!

She turns to go in, stops, and spins back to face Raylene.

KADY (CONT'D)

And quit bringing us your crappy  
cookies! You just do it to have an  
excuse to snoop, anyway!

INT. DULLARD'S KITCHEN - A BIT LATER

Raylene chomps an oatmeal cookie as she types on her laptop.

INSERT: LAPTOP SCREEN

A website homepage appears with a banner headline: STATE OF  
TEXAS ABORTION WHISTLEBLOWER SITE.

She reads aloud questions from an online form.

RAYLENE

How was the Texas Right to Life Law  
broken?

Raylene types as she speaks.

RAYLENE (CONT'D)

Monica Michaels had her doctor  
perform an abortion.

She moves to question two.

RAYLENE (CONT'D)

How did you obtain this info?

Raylene smiles.

RAYLENE (CONT'D)

From a source close to the guilty  
woman who saw the travesty occur.

Raylene rubs her hands, rolls her dentures with her tongue.

RAYLENE (CONT'D)  
 What clinic or doctor are you  
 accusing? In what city?

She pauses to remember what Kady told her, then types.

RAYLENE (CONT'D)  
 A foreign doctor named Patel--  
*sounds Muslim!* -- at Community  
 Hospital in Austin.

A big smile forms on her face. She's proud to be one of God's  
 chosen whistleblowers to call out and punish evil doers.

RAYLENE (CONT'D)  
 May we contact you or do you wish  
 to remain anonymous?

Raylene pounces on this one. She pounds on the keyboard.

RAYLENE (CONT'D)  
 PLEASE CONTACT ME! Raylene Dullard,  
 five one two, three five one, four  
 six, six zero.

She closes the lid of the laptop, grabs another cookie, and  
 waddles out of the kitchen to brag to her hiding husband.

EXT. CHURCH - A FEW DAYS LATER

A dark, gloomy Texas morning. Grey sky, the color of grief. A  
 light rain spits on mourners' umbrellas as they climb the  
 steps to attend Sierra's funeral.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Loud SOBS, tears, handkerchiefs. Monica and Kady hold each  
 other tightly in the front row as the crowd filters in.  
 LeVeon and Doc P. sit beside them. On the alter, surrounded  
 by flowers, a tiny, closed coffin.

In a pew near the back, Raylene gossips with her Senior  
 Sunday School CLASSMATES. Rolling eyes, sharing smirks.

DOC P.  
 (to Monica and Kady)  
 I hope you'll forgive me for  
 waiting too long.

MONICA  
 Would've been the same result.

DOC P.

But both of you could have suffered  
so much less.

KADY

I never thought I'd say it, but  
all's forgiven Doc P. You came  
around there at the end.

LEVEON

I'm sorry too. For not wanting to  
get involved.

MONICA

But you did! Strange times make us  
do strange things.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Sirens BLARE. A line of Texas Department of Public Safety  
(DPS) cruisers, their red, white and blue lights strobing,  
SLAM to a stop in the front of the church.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The double-wooden doors SWING open. Mourners turn their heads  
and watch DPS OFFICERS explode into the nave.

LEVEON

(to Monica)

Looks like they're about to get  
even stranger.

A brooding, barrel-chested, forty-something Latino with a  
perpetual frown hands a document to Monica and another to Doc  
P. The nametag on his uniform reads: CAPT. RUBEN PEREZ.

CAPT. PEREZ

Monica Michaels and Ranveer Patel,  
by authority of the Texas Attorney  
General, you are under arrest for  
violating the Texas Heartbeat Bill.

Two other OFFICERS slap handcuffs onto Monica and Doc P. Kady  
and LeVeon watch in stunned silence along with the rest of  
the mourners.

CAPT. PEREZ (CONT'D)

You have the right to remain  
silent. Anything you say can and  
will be used against you in a court  
of law.

(MORE)

CAPT. PEREZ (CONT'D)  
 You have the right to have an attorney present. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed to you.

The officers swarm Monica and Doc P. and escort them out of church. MURMERS get louder and louder.

Kady leaps from her seat. Runs after Monica.

KADY  
 MOM! MOM!

She grabs Captain Perez and twirls him around to face her.

KADY (CONT'D)  
 You chose today for this? The day we bury my sister?!

Another OFFICER restrains Kady as her mother and Doc P. disappear out the front door. Kady kicks and SCREAMS.

KADY (CONT'D)  
 (to the officer)  
 GET YOUR NASTY HANDS OFF OF ME!!

LeVeon yanks Kady away from the officer.

LEVEON  
 (to the cop)  
 Thank God and the Great State of Texas for DPS. I feel so much safer now that you've gotten those two dangerous criminals off the street!

He puts an arm around Kady and escorts her away from the scene. Still kicking and SCREAMING.

Hidden in her pew, Raylene cracks a smile, wide and evil. She turns to her Senior Sunday School CRONIES.

RAYLENE  
 The Almighty shall have retribution for that heretic's sinful deed!

The cronies nod their heads and share a simultaneous "AMEN!"

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. TEXAS STATE CAPITOL - DAY

The Texas Attorney General KYLE PIKESTONE (55) a self-righteous buffoon swaggers to a heavily-miked podium. He displays his well-practiced politician's grin to the CROWD.

PIKESTONE

Today, in accordance with the laws of the Great State of Texas, law enforcement agents arrested two individuals for wanton violation of Senate Bill Eight. You will recall the bill, referred to as the Texas Heartbeat act, criminalizes abortion providers and those complicit, and encourages members of the public to report those individuals.

Pro-lifers CHEER. Pro-choicers BOO. MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA scribble notes, FLASH photos, and scramble for a better view.

PIKESTONE (CONT'D)

Dr. Ranveer Patel and Monica Michaels, both of Austin, were reported through our state website, the first of its kind in the nation. We want to thank a conscientious citizen, Mrs. Raylene Dullard, for reporting this heinous crime. In this state, we believe in human life and will protect it at all costs. Thank you.

Pikestone grabs races off the stage. Reporters SHOUT questions which he has no intention of answering.

The PROTESTORS turn into a mob and begin shoving and punching each other while Texas DPS officers try to quell the chaos.

INT. ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY - DAY

Wade mops the floor as he watches the Attorney General's announcement on a television in the game room. RESIDENTS in wheelchairs are parked in front of the TV in various stages of attentiveness.

Wade yanks a pen from an OLD WOMAN doing a crossword puzzle in a paperback full of them. He tears a page from the book and scribbles a name on the back: Raylene Dullard.

OLD WOMAN  
 Hey! That's this month's Senior  
 Moments Puzzle!

Wade rolls his eyes and pockets the paper. He tosses the pen back to the old woman and returns to mopping. The old woman puckers her lips and returns to puzzle solving.

INT. DULLARD KITCHEN - DAY

Raylene slides her latest batch of cookies--ginger snaps--from the oven. The landline on the wall RINGS. Without removing her mitts, she answers.

RAYLENE  
 Yes.

WADE (O.C.)  
 Is this the courageous citizen who reported that wicked woman for the murder of her child?

RAYLENE  
 This is Raylene Dullard, yes. To whom am I speaking?

WADE (O.C.)  
 Name's Wade Ellis. I know Monica Michaels very well and what she's capable of.

RAYLENE  
 Too bad for you. How may I help?

WADE  
 I have information about her that will make your case bulletproof.

Raylene pulls off her oven mitts and commandeers a chair.

RAYLENE  
 I'm listening.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

An enormous THRONG blankets the courthouse lawn. Angry PRO-LIFERS shout at angry PRO-CHOICERS. Curious SPECTATORS observe from behind a rope line. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS in riot gear form a protective wall.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

An unmarked white van pulls in front of the courthouse. TEXAS DPS OFFICERS escort the handcuffed Monica and Doc P. for their perp walk.

They navigate the unruly MOB and disappear into the courthouse backdoor as quickly as they appeared.

Animated MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA report the action.

TALL FEMALE REPORTER  
Defendants Monica Michaels and Dr.  
Ranveer Patel--

YOUNG MALE REPORTER  
--have just entered the courthouse  
where day one of their trial--

WHITE HAired MALE REPORTER  
--for violating the Texas Heartbeat  
Act is about to begin.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A gallery full of squirming, eager SPECTATORS.

The sun pours in through tall windows above the jury box. The twelve jury members--nine WHITE MEN, one BLACK WOMAN, one WHITE WOMAN, and one ASIAN WOMAN fidget nervously.

Just inside the rail, the vainglorious, Brioni-suited PROSECUTOR MAXWELL GOLD, 63, and his equally pompous TEAM confer at the Prosecution's table nearest the jury box.

At the Defendant's table, Monica and Doc P. listen to whispered guidance from their weary, Jos Bank-suited lawyer AVERY JENKINS, 44.

On the bench, beneath the Great Seal of Texas, sits JUDGE ALPHONSO ("AL") MACCIANO, late 70's, peering over bifocals at his subjects like an indifferent predator.

The judge grows impatient and directs his wrath at Gold.

JUDGE MACCIANO  
Mr. Gold, clock's ticking.

Gold spins around from the conversation with his minions. He speaks as he walks to the witness stand.

GOLD  
My apologies, your honor.

He addresses the witness, Raylene Dullard.

GOLD (CONT'D)

Ms. Dullard, why did you decide to report the defendants?

RAYLENE

Heathens and blasphemers such as them must no longer be allowed to kill the innocent unborn.

Jenkins, indignant, rises from the Defendant's table.

JENKINS

Objection, your honor.

JUDGE MACCIANO

Sustained. Ms. Dullard, please refrain from unnecessary comments.

RAYLENE

(smugly)

I saw it as my Christian duty.

GOLD

And what made you believe Doctor Patel performed the now outlawed procedure on Ms. Michaels?

RAYLENE

Her daughter told me.

GOLD

The defendant's *daughter* told you Dr. Patel performed the procedure?

RAYLENE

Yes. She told me, then she threw oatmeal cookies at me--the ones I'd baked myself and brought to celebrate what I thought was the birth of her sibling.

CHUCKLES break out in the gallery. In the front row, Kady smirks and shakes her head.

A BIT LATER

Prosecutor Gold questions Texas DPS Capt. Ruben Perez. Perez is in full regalia, with White Stetson and mirror sunglasses which he thankfully removes before testifying.

GOLD

Captain Perez, what steps did you take to verify Ms. Dullard's report on the Whistleblower Website?

CAPT. PEREZ

Several. We questioned medical staff at Austin Community Hospital, reviewed Ms. Michaels' credit card and cellphone records, and analyzed her and her daughter's online activities prior to the abortion.

Defense Attorney Jenkins rockets to his feet once again.

JENKINS

Need I say this, your honor? Objection. In the context of his answer, the word Captain Perez used is inflammatory. In fact, this entire case is meant to prove Ms. Michaels did NOT have the procedure which is now illegal in Texas.

The judge shoots a frown at Capt. Perez.

JUDGE MACCIANO

Captain, please refrain from using that word in a medical capacity as there is considerable disagreement about the term legally.

Perez lowers his head. The judge turns to address the jury.

JUDGE MACCIANO (CONT'D)

The jury will disregard the last word used by Captain Perez. The one that starts with "A." The court stenographer will strike the word from the official record.

Gold smirks, knowing full well the jury cannot *unhear* what Captain Perez has just stated.

GOLD

In a few words, what evidence did you find to corroborate Ms. Dullard's accusation.

CAPT. PEREZ

It all checked out. The, uh, *event* occurred in the hospital. Dr. Ranveer Patel performed it on Ms. Michaels.

(MORE)

CAPT. PEREZ (CONT'D)  
And all online, cellphone, and  
credit card activity confirmed it.  
(beat)  
There was one strange thing.

GOLD  
Yes?

CAPT. PEREZ  
Ms. Michaels' cellphone and credit  
card records showed she had also  
bought airline tickets and made a  
down payment to a clinic in  
Albuquerque that performs, uh--

Captain Perez looks with pleading eyes at the judge before  
continuing. The judge just glares at him.

CAPT. PEREZ (CONT'D)  
It performs the type of operation I  
just got in trouble for saying.

SUBDUED LAUGHS from the gallery. Smiles in the jury box.

GOLD  
From a law enforcement perspective,  
what could that mean?

Before he stands this time, Jenkins SIGHS LOUDLY.

JENKINS  
Objection, your honor. Calls for  
speculation about my client's  
intentions which Captain Perez  
cannot possibly know.

JUDGE MACCIANO  
Overruled. This one time, I'll  
allow it. Please answer Captain  
Perez--but only in your role as a  
law enforcement officer.

Jenkins shakes his head and sits down, defeated. Captain  
Perez sits erect, squares his shoulders.

CAPT. PEREZ  
It shows intent. That Ms. Michaels  
was planning to fly out of state to  
obtain the...procedure.

MOANS and WHISPERED exchanges in the animated gallery.

GOLD  
No more questions, your honor.

A BIT LATER

Wade's on the Witness stand. He floats a creepy eye flirt at the WHITE FEMALE JUROR. She crinkles her nose and looks off.

GOLD (CONT'D)

Mr. Ellis, how do you know the defendant, Ms. Michaels?

WADE

We was sweethearts. I asked her to marry me, but she turned me down. But she had my kid, Kady. My pride and joy.

Wade flashes a fake smile at Kady, who returns his gesture with a middle finger.

GOLD

So, you are Kady's father? Out of wedlock?

WADE

Yea. But I still try to be a good dad even though her mother decided not to marry me.

Monica closes her eyes and shakes her head. Kady stares at Wade. Makes a vomit gesture with a finger down her throat.

GOLD

Very admirable, Mr. Ellis. So, would you say you have an amicable relationship with Ms. Michaels and your daughter, Kady?

WADE

I guess so. Mostly because I work so hard at it.

GOLD

But something happened a few months ago to change that, did it not?

WADE

Sure did. One night, I went to see Monica, just to see how she was doing. Kady was staying overnight at a friend's house.

GOLD

And what occurred?

WADE

Well, Monica started out in a good mood. We had some drinks, watched some TV, then one thing led to another and pretty soon we was naked on the couch doing the nasty.

FEMALE JURORS squirm in their seat. Some of the MEN CHUCKLE. Jenkins rises from his seat.

JENKINS

Your honor, what has this got to do with the case?

JUDGE MACCIANO

The witness will get to the point. And please keep the lurid details to a minimum.

WADE

Sure Judge. So, I talked to Monica a few weeks later and she said she was pregnant. Said I was the daddy. I was really happy. I thought she'd want to have the baby and get back together. Me, her, Kady, and the baby. A real family!

GOLD

What was her reaction?

WADE

She was a real bitch. Oh, sorry!  
(beat)  
She was pissed. Said it was her body, her decision, and she wasn't going to have the baby.

In the gallery, Raylene SIGHS loud enough that heads turn.

GOLD

How did that make you feel?

WADE

Like a piece of...well, awful. Then, a few months later, on TV, I saw her and that doctor being charged with what the cop said.

GOLD

What was your reaction?

WADE

I was heartbroken. I cried so much  
I puked.

Wade generates elephant tears, removes a handkerchief, and trumpets an Oscar-worthy nose blow.

GOLD

I'm sorry for your pain, Mr. Ellis.  
Was that telephone call your last  
contact with the defendant?

WADE

No. A few weeks before she and the  
doctor had the *procedure* done, she  
called me. Angry. Told me if I said  
anything about what she was going  
to do, she'd have me taken out. And  
I'd never see my little Kady again.

GOLD

What did she mean by *taken out*?

WADE

Whadya think she meant?

JUDGE MACCIANO

Answer the question, Mr. Michaels.

WADE

She meant she'd have me killed.

WHISPERS in the gallery. Monica SIGHS.

GOLD

No further questions, Your Honor.

Jenkins strolls to the witness stand.

JENKINS

Mr. Ellis. Are you sure what you  
just testified under oath is true?

WADE

Well, yeah. Hard to forget a death  
threat like that.

JENKINS

Hmm. I would have to agree.

Jenkins retrieves a document from the Defendant's table.  
Flashes it toward the Judge before addressing Wade.

JENKINS (CONT'D)

Defense would like to admit this text exchange as Defense Exhibit one two two. From the cell phones of Mr. Ellis and the defendant nineteen weeks after the date Mr. Ellis claims the defendant and he had consensual sex.

Wade squirms in his seat, shifts his weight, eyes darting.

JENKINS (CONT'D)

This is the exchange. WADE: I just saw you. You're pregnant. It's mine, isn't it? MONICA: Well, since I haven't had sex since you raped me, yes. It's yours. But you're not getting near my baby! WADE: You stupid--

Jenkins pauses and veers just slightly from the transcript.

JENKINS (CONT'D)

Mr. Ellis calls the defendant the C-word and then he states, you're gonna have it? MONICA: If I don't die first. WADE: I warn you. If you tell anyone about what happened that night, you're a dead bitch!

Jenkins glares at Wade, whose eyes are suddenly focused on his feet.

JENKINS (CONT'D)

That's not quite how you testified is it, Mr. Ellis?

WADE

Uh, well--

JENKINS

No more questions, Your Honor.

A BIT LATER

Jenkins questions Doc P. at the Witness stand.

JENKINS (CONT'D)

Doctor Patel, can you explain to the Court why the procedure you performed on Monica Michaels was a necessary medical treatment.

DOC P.  
It's a complicated question.

JENKINS  
Could you try your best to simplify  
it then?

DOC P.  
In Texas, you may have heard that  
abortion is now illegal with no  
exceptions for rape or incest.

JENKINS  
I may have heard that, yes.

A few CHUCKLES from the gallery.

JUDGE MACCIANO  
Mr. Jenkins, please perform your  
standup routine elsewhere.

JENKINS  
My apologies, your honor.

Doc P. smiles before continuing.

DOC P.  
Termination of a pregnancy is  
permitted in cases of a medical  
emergency. In Monica's case, she  
had severe cramps. She was passing  
large blood clots and had a yellow,  
putrid discharge. Her temperature  
was well above one hundred degrees.  
She had no amniotic fluids, and her  
membranes were ruptured.

JENKINS  
How long had that been going on?

DOC P.  
Since her water broke prematurely  
at seventeen weeks. So, for nearly  
a month. I diagnosed a dangerous  
bacterial infection known as  
chorioamnionitis.

JENKINS  
And is chorioam--

DOC P.  
Chorioamnionitis.

JENKINS

Yes, that. Do you consider it a medical emergency?

DOC P.

From a medical perspective, absolutely.

JENKINS

So, what did you do after making that diagnosis?

DOC P.

I terminated the pregnancy.

JENKINS

And that saved the life of your patient, Monica Michaels, correct?

DOC P.

Yes, there is no doubt she would have died if the termination did not occur at that moment.

JENKINS

And the fetus?

DOC P.

It did not survive.

Jenkins turns to the jury, glancing from member to member.

JENKINS

Doctor, you've just laid out a rational, evidence-based analysis for terminating Monica Michaels' pregnancy.

He spins around to face Doc P. again.

JENKINS (CONT'D)

But why did you wait so long, if her condition was deteriorating so rapidly?

DOC P.

Because in the State of Texas as in many other states since the Dobbs decision--

Gold jumps to his feet.

GOLD

Objection! The witness is engaging in superfluous political comments beyond his scope as a medical professional.

JUDGE MACCIANO

Sustained. Doctor, please stick to answering the questions from your perspective as a physician.

DOC P.

My apologies, your honor. Because medical professionals like me are uncertain what the State of Texas defines as a medical emergency.

JENKINS

Why would that discourage you from making what should be a decision based on your Hippocratic Oath and medical science?

DOC P.

Medical science is not at issue. It's the penalties laid down by the Texas law when elected officials and the medical profession disagree on the definition of a medical emergency.

JENKINS

And what are those penalties?

DOC P.

A one hundred thousand dollar fine, the loss of a medical license, and fifteen years in prison.

GASPS from the gallery.

JENKINS

No further questions, your honor.

Jenkins takes a seat at the Defendant's table as Gold rises and approaches the witness stand.

GOLD

Doctor Patel, I know it's been a long day, so I'll be brief. I must say I have been riveted by your medical explanations regarding the termination of a pregnancy.

Gold turns from Doc P. and slides his hand along the jury box railing as he peers into the eyes of the jury members.

GOLD (CONT'D)

But, you seemed to gloss over the one question Counselor Jenkins asked--what about the fetus?

Gold turns back to Doc P. awaiting his response.

DOC P.

I'm sorry, what's your question?

GOLD

Do you believe a fetus has rights as well as the mother?

Jenkins leaps from his seat.

DOC P.

Objection. The witness is a doctor, not a judge, attorney, politician, or preacher, your honor.

JUDGE MACCIANO

Sustained. Mr. Gold, refrain from the melodrama please.

GOLD

I'll rephrase, your honor.

(beat)

Doctor Patel, you took the Hippocratic Oath, correct?

DOC P.

Yes.

GOLD

Could you please recite it for members of the jury.

DOC P.

(sighs)

The actual oath is quite long but--

GOLD

Then summarize it, please.

DOC P.

In a sentence. Practice two things in dealing with disease--either help or do not harm the patient.

GOLD

Then, did you not break that oath  
when you terminated Monica  
Michaels' pregnancy?

DOC P.

She would have died had I not.

GOLD

But one of your patients did die,  
what you refer to as a fetus. What  
others refer to as a human life.

Raylene and several OTHERS in the gallery stand up and  
APPLAUD. The judge gives them the evil eye and they abruptly  
retake their seats.

DOC P.

If I had not terminated the  
pregnancy, *both* of them--mother and  
fetus--would have died.

GOLD

Are you sure?

Doc P. leans back in his seat, exasperated.

DOC P.

Nothing is sure in medicine. But  
given the conditions, almost  
certainly, yes.

GOLD

Almost. Certainly. Hmm.

Gold again approaches the jury box. Smiles. Turns to Doc P.

GOLD (CONT'D)

When you terminated the pregnancy  
based on your diagnosis that both  
mother and baby would not survive,  
was there a fetal heartbeat?

Doc P. twists in his seat, before leaning to the mike.

DOC P.

Yes.

MURMURS from the gallery. Raylene shakes her head, disgusted.

DOC P. (CONT'D)

Barely though. As was Monica's.  
They were both in distress.

GOLD

So, here we sit today. You and your co-defendant are accused of violating the Fetal Heartbeat Law in the State of Texas. And you just admitted that the fetus had a heartbeat and yet you were determined to terminate the pregnancy and end that baby's life.

Jenkins rises from his seat and takes steps toward Gold.

JENKINS

Come on, your honor. The prosecutor knows what he said is a distortion.

Gold smirks as the judge admonishes Jenkins.

JUDGE MACCIANO

Do you have a motion, counselor?

JENKINS

Yes, objection! Speculation on the part of the witness.

JUDGE MACCIANO

Overruled. The defendant just stated under oath he terminated the pregnancy knowing both mother and fetus had heartbeats.

JENKINS

But--

JUDGE MACCIANO

Sit down, counselor.

Jenkins sighs and sits back down. Monica hangs her head.

GOLD

No further questions, your honor.

INT. ATTORNEY-CLIENT CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Monica and Doc P. confer with Jenkins as they await the verdict. Monica sits, arms wrapped around her knees, rocking in the chair. Doc P. cradles his head in his palm, downcast.

DOC P.

How long, Avery?

Jenkins looks up from his notes spread out on the table.

AVERY

Longer is better. Two hours or less  
is usually bad news for us.

Monica glances at the clock. 4:15 PM.

DOC P.

Do you think I screwed up at the  
end? About the fetal heartbeat?

JENKINS

You just told the truth.

MONICA

Pretty sad when Wade can rape me,  
get caught in a web of lies, and  
get away with it, but Doc P. tells  
the truth, and we could land in  
prison for life.

JENKINS

Juries are unpredictable.  
Hopefully, they'll discern the  
difference between a planned  
abortion and the termination of a  
dangerous pregnancy to save both  
fetus and mother.

Tears stream down Doc P.'s face. Monica stops rocking and  
rubs his shoulders.

DOC P.

I don't care about the fine or  
losing my license. I just can't  
stand the thought of not being with  
Samira and the kids anymore.

MONICA

I think I'd die without Kady. I  
need her as much as she needs me.

Jenkins walks over and crouches between his two clients.

JENKINS

It's not too late to plea out.

Doc P. wipes away his tears and looks at Jenkins. Monica sits  
upright and does the same.

MONICA

You mean plead guilty?

JENKINS

These are the facts. For a guilty plea, you're probably looking at twenty years, but with good behavior, you might get off in ten.

DOC P.

Both of us?

JENKINS

Yes. I'm almost sure this judge will treat you both the same when it comes to sentencing.

Monica and Doc P. shake their heads.

JENKINS (CONT'D)

But if the jury finds you guilty, this judge will no doubt give you life. No chance you ever get out.

MONICA

What if we're found not guilty? What's the percentage for that?

JENKINS

Like I said, juries are unpredictable. Vegas can't even come up with odds for that outcome.

DOC P.

Where's that leave us?

JENKINS

Same place we started. You can plea out or the jury can come back with whatever the hell verdict they come back with.

MONICA

You forgot one thing.

JENKINS

Which is?

MONICA

Doc P. and I did the right thing. It's my body and my choice. Not some politician or judge or jury member I've never met before.

JENKINS

Meaning?

MONICA

Meaning...there's no way I'm going to make a guilty plea when I'm not guilty. The fools--sorry, mostly men--who put us in this position are the ones who should be on trial. Not Doc P. and me!

JENKINS

Doctor Patel, you good with that? You *can* enter a different plea.

A KNOCK on the door. A BAILIFF pokes his head inside.

BAILIFF

Jurys reached a verdict. Judge says trial resumes in five.

The Bailiff closes the door. All three of them glance at the clock. 5:15 PM. Only one hour has passed.

DOC P.

Guess we better get back in there.

JENKINS

You didn't answer my question.

DOC P.

No need. Monica just did for me.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The eyes of the courtroom are on the JURY as it filters in.

Monica and Doc P. hold hands to show solidarity.

His honor clears his throat and addresses the JURY FOREMAN.

JUDGE MACCIANO

Has the jury reached a verdict?

JURY FOREMAN

We have your honor.

JUDGE MACCIANO

Please pass it to the bench.

The Foreman passes a piece of paper containing the verdict to the Bailiff who hands it to the Judge. The Judge reviews it and hands it back, Bailiff to Foreman.

JUDGE MACCIANO (CONT'D)

Please read the verdict.

## JURY FOREMAN

On the count of violating the Texas Heartbeat Bill by providing an illegal abortion, we find the defendant Dr. Ranveer Patel, not guilty.

A mixed reaction in the gallery, some CHEERS, some SIGHS.

Doc P. sighs and smiles at Monica.

Raylene shakes her head.

## JURY FOREMAN (CONT'D)

On the count of endangering the fetus during an emergency termination of pregnancy, we find the defendant Dr. Ranveer Patel, not guilty.

Another mixed reaction. Raylene places her head in her hands.

Monica hugs Doc P. He turns to see his wife SAMIRA (late 30's), son KADIN (15) and daughter AYZA (13) smiling back.

The Foreman turns over the piece of paper, takes a deep breath, and finishes reading the verdict.

## JURY FOREMAN (CONT'D)

On the count of seeking an abortion out of state in defiance of the Texas Illegal Interstate Abortion Act, the jury finds the defendant Monica Michaels...guilty.

WHOOPS and CHEERS from a large contingent in the gallery, led by Raylene.

Complete silence by a stunned minority.

Kady stares incredulously at her mother.

BANG! BANG! The Judge whacks his gavel.

## JUDGE MACCIANO

Order in my court! NOW!

MEMBERS OF THE GALLERY drop to their seats simultaneously.

Satisfied, the Judge nods to the Foreman to finish.

## JURY FOREMAN

And on the final count of endangering the life of the fetus during an emergency termination of a pregnancy, the jury finds the defendant Monica Michaels...guilty as charged.

TOTAL CHAOS BREAKS OUT.

Amidst the pandemonium, Wade inches his way to the Defendant's table. He corners Monica, leers, and gets close enough for her to hear his words.

## WADE

You deserved it, bitch. And, by the way, I'll be filing to get full custody of my little girl.

Monica lunges toward Wade and pounds her fists on his chest.

## MONICA

YOU FUCKING BASTARD!

Jenkins and Doc P. restrain Monica. But she's still able to spit in Wade's face as the Bailiff arrives to take her away.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. PRISON - DAY

TEXAS DPS OFFICERS hand off an orange-suited Monica to a burly FEMALE PRISON GUARD.

They walk past the prison yard where FEMALE PRISONERS smoke cigarettes, play basketball, and chit chat.

When they see Monica, the prisoners line the fence MAKING CATCALLS and WHISTLING at the *new meat*.

EXT. DOCTOR PATEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Samira Patel pulls her Mercedes into the circular driveway of a stately mansion shaded by tall trees. Doc P. hops out of the passenger side, grabs his wife's hand, and strolls toward the house.

Kadin and Ayza bound out the front door and run into his arms. The four Patels form a big group hug.

After a beat, more people fly out the door. RELATIVES, NEIGHBORS, COWORKERS. Within seconds, the plush green lawn is filled with happy folk clamoring to welcome Doc P. back home.

EXT. WADE'S TRAILER - DAY

In his pickup, Wade pulls up to his trailer and hops out. He opens the passenger side door to let Kady out. She avoids looking at him as she drags her suitcase behind.

Wade's all smiles, animated, excited to show Kady her new home. He hurries up the wooden stairs, unlocks the dented metal door, and makes a flourishing wave inside.

Kady leaves the suitcase at the bottom of the stairs for him to bring in. Wade can't help himself; he slaps her butt. To him, it's a playful gesture. To Kady, it's a creepy act of perversion. She turns back and lasers him a spiteful stare.

Wade grabs the suitcase and follows her into the trailer. He's still all smiles.

INT. PRISON DINING ROOM - DAY

A disinterested KITCHEN WORKER doles out mushy prison food to Monica at lunch. As she walks to an empty dining table, someone trips her. Monica and her plate sprawl to the floor.

A ROTUND INMATE with a shaved head and facial hair jumps to her feet and peers down at Monica. She points to a tiny clump of mashed potatoes on her shoe.

ROTUND INMATE

Lick it off, bitch.

Monica ignores her and begins to get up. The woman pushes her back down. Other INMATES swarm over hoping for a bet-worthy girl fight. GUARDS turn away and let the scene play out.

ROTUND INMATE (CONT'D)

I said--

MONICA

I heard what you said.

Monica climbs to her feet. The woman clinches her fist and floats a roundhouse punch at Monica. But the blow is never delivered. A petite, curly-haired REDHEAD, late 40's, bends the woman's arm behind her back and whispers into her ear.

The Rotund Inmate shakes off the redhead, and yells at the other curious inmates.

ROTUND INMATE

The fuck you all lookin' at?

The inmates return to their tables.

The redhead smiles at Monica and extends a handshake.

REDHEAD

My name's Annie. Easy to remember.  
Like Little Orphan Annie. Without  
the red dress.

MONICA

(chuckles)

Monica. Like in Friends but without  
the looks. Thanks for your help.

ANNIE

In here, the first few days are the  
toughest. Everybody's trying to  
find your weak spot. That bitch who  
fucked with you, Nadine, her weak  
spot is bats.

MONICA

I'm not following.

ANNIE

Bats. Cigarettes. I know cuz I'm  
her supplier. In here, I'm known as  
Smuggles. You want anything, I'll  
get it. For a price, of course.

MONICA

Can you get me out of here?

ANNIE

I ain't that good, sister.

EXT. RYAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Holding two tennis rackets, Kady knocks on the front door.  
She flips her hair behind her ear and steps back. Ryan opens  
the door and flinches at the sight of Kady.

RYAN

Kady!

She holds up the two rackets in front of her.

KADY

Wanna get a few whacks in?

Ryan nervously scratches his neck, steps onto the porch, and closes the door behind him.

RYAN

I...I wasn't sure I'd see you again since you moved in with your dad.

KADY

Weren't sure or don't want to?

Another nervous neck scratch. Ryan stares at his feet.

KADY (CONT'D)

Why haven't you called?

RYAN

Just been busy. SATs are coming up, and I need at least a fourteen seventy to get into an Ivy, so--

KADY

I'm sure you'll do great. But, I have something I want to tell you.

Silence for a beat, before a well-dressed middle-aged woman, Ryan's mother MADOLYN BROOKS, abruptly appears at the door.

MRS. BROOKS

Ryan, I'm going to bridge now. Oh, I didn't know you had company.

Ryan scrambles to introduce his guest.

RYAN

Mom, this is Kady.

Puzzled, Mrs. Brooks scrutinizes Kady over her readers.

MRS. BROOKS

You look familiar. Have we met?

KADY

No ma'am.

Mrs. Brooks squints, a sense of awareness in her eyes.

MRS. BROOKS

What's your last name?

KADY

Michaels.

MRS. BROOKS

I knew I'd seen you before. You're that woman's daughter. The one who killed her baby!

Kady grits her teeth, frowns at Mrs. Brooks.

KADY

She didn't kill her baby.

RYAN

Mom. Let's not--

MRS. BROOKS

Go inside. I don't want you anywhere near this white trash.

RYAN

Mom! Please, it's--

MRS. BROOKS

Go!

RYAN

I'm sorry Kady.

Ryan shuffles inside. His mother follows and slams the door in Kady's face.

Kady SNIFFLES and steps off the porch.

Inside, through the window, Ryan watches as Kady makes her way down the sidewalk.

INT. PRISON - NIGHT

Monica and three other INMATES shower. She lathers a washcloth and scrubs her face. The others see her eyes close and pounce.

Two restrain her while the third punches her hard in the chest, face, and arms. Blood pours from her face and spirals into a red whirlpool down the drain.

The laughing inmates shove Monica to the floor and slip from the shower, towels in hand.

Monica staggers to her feet before falling back to the floor. The showers continue to POUND her bloody flesh like a hard, pouring rain in a thunderstorm.

EXT. MONICA'S PRISON CELL - A FEW DAYS LATER

Annie pushes a wobbly wooden bookcart down the hallway and stops at Monica's cell. She grasps the bars and whispers.

ANNIE

I heard you was down here in the safety cells.

Monica appears at the bars, grasps them to stand up. Her face is battered with dark red bruises and two black eyes. A head bandage covers her skull.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Woah! Those bitches messed you up bad, huh? How long you down here?

MONICA

Could be awhile. Guards said the general population doesn't much care for *baby killers*.

ANNIE

You're not no baby killer. Hell, they should love you for fighting for women's rights.

Monica caresses Annie's hand. Annie smiles and caresses hers.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

You want a book to pass the time?

MONICA

Not sure I can read fine print quite yet with these swollen eyes.

ANNIE

Something else then? Cards. Yoga mat. Sketch pad? Name it.

MONICA

Do you think you could get me some paint and brushes?

Annie beams proudly. She lives for challenges like this.

ANNIE

Does the tin man have a sheet metal cock?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Kady and Tiff navigate the busy sidewalk in front of Austin Waterloo at the end of the school day.

TIFF

(upset)

You just decided to quit Debate?  
What's that about?

KADY

Just not into it anymore. Who cares anyway. Mom's in prison, I live with Wade the Wonder Creep, and the guy I really like doesn't give a shit about me anymore.

TIFF

Who's this body snatcher who took over my BFF?

KADY

You're lucky. You got a boyfriend who adores you, parents who love you, a great future--

Tiff stops walking, shoves Kady's shoulder to stop too.

TIFF

What's going on? This isn't like you.

Kady shakes her head and wipes away a tear.

KADY

I'm pregnant.

TIFF

(beat)

Ryan?

Kady nods. Tiff embraces her, rubs her back, and whispers.

TIFF (CONT'D)

You tell him yet?

KADY

I tried. But he was more concerned about his SAT score. Plus, his mom kicked me out. Said she doesn't want him hanging with white trash.

TIFF

Jesus! What condescending fucks.  
What're you going to do?

KADY

I don't know. God, I miss Mom so  
much!

Kady begins to SOB in Tiff's arms.

INT. PRISON - DAY

With the bookcart beside her, Annie peers into Monica's cell.  
She's clearly amazed at what she sees.

MONICA (O.C.)

You like?

Annie's eyes widen.

ANNIE

Like? This is genius. It's some  
Diego Rivera shit. Even better!

On the wall behind Monica--a floor to ceiling mural. Vibrant  
colors, large figures, and words in white and red paint.

Monica appears at the cell bars. Her bruises have healed. She  
seems confident and happy. She grasps Annie's hand.

MONICA

Wouldn't have been possible without  
your help.

Annie palms Monica's hand, smiles.

ANNIE

You supply the talent. I'll supply  
the materials.

Annie leans her face toward Monica. They kiss through the  
bars, long and with passion. When they stop, Monica squeezes  
Annie's hand tightly.

MONICA

Can you do one more thing for me?

Annie rubs Monica's shoulders through the bars.

ANNIE

I'm always here for you.

Monica kisses Annie's fingers and squeezes them tight.

MONICA

They won't let me have phone calls.  
But I need to talk to my daughter.  
I'm really worried now that Wade  
has custody.

ANNIE

One burner on its way. Give me a  
few days.

Monica kisses Annie on the forehead. Annie frowns.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Oh, we can do way better than that.

Once again, they kiss passionately through the cell bars.

EXT. BLEACHERS - DAY

In jeans and a wrinkled T-shirt, Kady reads a YA novel at lunchtime. She's not her effervescent self, no makeup, greasy hair, Eeyore disguised as a teenage girl.

The bleachers are scattered with other KIDS exchanging the latest gossip, laughing, smoking, texting.

Kady's cellphone buzzes. She glances at caller ID: Unknown. She hits DECLINE. It chimes again. She hits ACCEPT.

KADY

Look, I WILL report you to the  
cops--

INT. JAIL - DAY

In her cell, Monica holds the burner phone to her ear.

MONICA

Too late for that.

SPLIT SCREEN - PHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN KADY AND MONICA

Kady looks at the phone then presses it tightly to her ear.

KADY

MOM?

MONICA

How's my KayKay?

Kady stands up. Tosses her book onto the bleachers and begins to pace back and forth with a wide smile.

KADY

MOM! Are you okay? I've been wanting to talk to you for weeks--

MONICA

I know honey. They're not letting me have visitors or calls.

KADY

So, how'd you--

MONICA

Apparently, if you know the right people, you can get anything you want inside.

KADY

(chuckles)

I miss you so much.

MONICA

I miss you more.

KADY

Mom, I need to tell you something.

MONICA

Anything KayKay.

KADY

I got knocked up.

MONICA

Oh honey! I wish I were there to hold you.

KADY

I do too. I'll be okay. But, Mom. Do you think I should have the baby?

MONICA

Is it that boy, Ryan's?

KADY

Yes.

MONICA

Does he want you to have it? Is he supportive?

KADY

No. I dunno. I didn't tell him. All he wants to think about is getting into college.

MONICA

Selfish punk.

(beat)

It doesn't matter. It's what you think. It's your decision and only your decision.

KADY

Thanks mom. I thought you'd say that.

MONICA

Whatever you decide, I'll be there for you. At least in my heart. Until I get out of here!

Silence for a beat as they take this all in.

MONICA (CONT'D)

How is it with Wade? Are you safe?

KADY

I hate him. I wish he were dead.

MONICA

Don't we all.

KADY

He's creepy as shit. He leers at me. Smacks me on the ass. Grinds me from behind when I do the dishes.

MONICA

I'm so sorry sweetie. Look, I think we can do something about that. Remember the texts from the trial?

KADY

Yea. They proved he's a liar!

MONICA

True. But the exchange where I accused him of raping me is true.

Kady covers her mouth.

KADY

HOLY SHIT! I just thought you were-

MONICA

No, but what's done is done. Now though, you're in a dangerous situation. So, we're going to make sure he never ever harms you...or anyone else ever again.

KADY

We're going to kill him? Great! I'm all in. Just tell me how.

MONICA

(chuckles)

NO! Though the world would be much better without him. There's another way. So you won't end up behind bars like me.

Monica wipes away a tear. She pauses, then begins.

MONICA (CONT'D)

First, I need you to go back to our house--

INT. MONICA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kady flips through wardrobe hanging in Monica's closet. She hears her mother's directions in her head as she searches.

MONICA (O.C.)

In my closet is the teal bathrobe that you gave me for Mother's Day.

Kady finds the robe, hidden in the back, encased in a plastic bag. She pulls it out and examines it.

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

I wore it the night Wade raped me.

Kady carefully lays the garment on the bed; removes plastic gloves she's brought and pulls them on.

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

I guess I saved it to remind me what a despicable man he is.

Kady removes the tattered bathrobe and sees a large spot.

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

You'll see a big stain on it. Wade's semen. Take the robe to the police. Have them test for DNA. It's proof he raped me that night.

Kady smiles and places the robe back into the plastic bag.

MONICA (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
 We'll get a good attorney. I think  
 Doc P. can help with that. And  
 we'll build a bulletproof case  
 that'll send Wade to prison.

She takes off her plastic gloves, stuffs them in her pocket,  
 and remembers what she asked her mother.

KADY (O.C.)  
 Where he can no longer hurt me or  
 you or anybody else?

MONICA (O.C.)  
 Ever again.

EXT. WADE'S TRAILER - DAY

Wade sits on the front steps swigging beer and toking on a  
 joint. At the BLARE of sirens nearby, he quickly tosses the  
 joint into a metal wash tub overflowing with trash.

Three Austin police cruisers glide to a stop in front of the  
 trailer. Armed OFFICERS leap from the cars, weapons drawn.  
 The LEAD OFFICER yells at Wade.

LEAD OFFICER  
 PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEAD. NOW!

Wade tosses the beer can away. Slaps his palms on his head.

LEAD OFFICER (CONT'D)  
 Wade Ellis?

WADE  
 What the fuck?

One of the OTHER OFFICERS cuffs Wade while the Lead Officer  
 reads him his rights.

LEAD OFFICER  
 You're charged with First Degree  
 Rape. You have the right to remain  
 silent. Anything you say can and  
 will be used against you--

The trailer door swings open and Kady steps down towing her  
 suitcase. She watches with a smile as Wade is hauled away.

LEAD OFFICER (CONT'D)

You have the right to have an attorney present. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed to you.

Just then, a dented, used foreign car pulls up. From the driver's side, LeVeon steps out and motions Kady over.

Wade watches, mouth open, as POLICE stuff him in a cruiser.

WADE

(to Kady)

You little bitch! You and your mother did this, didn't you?!

Kady races to LeVeon's car, hops inside, and SHOUTS back.

KADY

BYE DADDY! Just wanted to show you how much we love you!

INT. DULLLARD LIVING ROOM - DAY

In her favorite rocker, Raylene crochets a new armrest cover that looks unsurprisingly like all the others in the room. A KNOCK at the door. As she rises from the rocker to answer, a blur whizzes past her.

It's PERCY in the flesh! He's appeared from his secret hiding spot deep inside the house where he can avoid any face-to-face encounters with Raylene.

He's not the type we'd expect to be married to Raylene. Tall, fit, silver-haired, dignified. Today, he beams.

Percy flings open the front door and smiles at the visitors--two WOMEN, about the same age as Raylene and himself. Clearly church ladies from the way they're dressed in gingham Alice dresses, sensible shoes, and enamel butterfly broaches.

PERCY

Come in, ladies!

Raylene strolls over to greet the two women.

RAYLENE

(confused)

Was it my turn for cookies and bible study?

SARAH, the tallest of the two women, steps forward.

SARAH  
 No Sister Raylene, we're here  
 about--

The other visitor, DELILAH, steps in front of Sarah.

DELILAH  
 About the Evangelicals for Life  
 committee.

RAYLENE  
 Oh, shall I get the minutes from  
 the last meeting?

DELILAH  
 No. It's the financial records  
 we're here about.

RAYLENE  
 (chuckles)  
 Okay, I can retrieve those then. I  
 keep them in a special, locked box.  
 I take my job as Treasurer very  
 seriously, you know.

Delilah and Sarah look at each other and frown.

SARAH  
 You don't need to pretend anymore,  
 Sister Raylene.

Raylene glances at Percy in the corner. He looks away.

RAYLENE  
 Pretend?

DELILAH  
 We know you've been syphoning off  
 committee funds for personal use.

Raylene places a palm on her chest and feigns surprise.

RAYLENE  
 I would never! It would be against  
 God's plan to save his children.

DELILAH  
 We've got solid evidence. Bank  
 deposits, credit card records. The  
 purchase of that pink Cadillac  
 parked out front.

RAYLENE

Poppycock! I earned that as saleswoman of the year for Mindy Sue Cosmetics. You know that!

SARAH

We know that's what you *told* us.

DELILAH

We also have an eyewitness.

RAYLENE

There can be no eyewitness to something that never occurred!

Percy steps from the corner he's been hiding in.

PERCY

I gave them the records, Raylene. Found them when you had me scan invoices into your laptop.

RAYLENE

My husband of thirty years betrays me like Judas Iscariot!

SARAH

I've already informed the Sheriff. We told him we'd bring you in. It's best if you confess and maybe you'll get a lighter sentence.

Sarah places her arm around Raylene and walks her outside.

Raylene turns to look back into the house, hoping to catch a last glimpse of Percy waving goodbye.

Instead, he and Delilah are engaged in a full embrace with a protracted kiss that Lady and the Tramp would envy.

INT. PRISON - DAY

In her cell, Monica works on her mural. At the SHUFFLING of feet and the steady PING, PING, PING of handcuffs and leg irons, she puts down her brush and peers through the bars.

ANNIE

Thought you could use some company.

With a GUARD on both sides, Annie raises her eyebrows and shoots Monica a big smile. One of the guards removes the cuffs and leg irons and motions for Annie to enter the cell.

Monica stands back, crosses her arms, and ponders the situation. Annie waves to the guards as they stroll off.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
Thanks gentlemen.

Monica runs into Annie's awaiting arms, hugs her tight, then steps back still grasping her by the shoulders.

MONICA  
Thanks?

Annie stretches out her arms with palms extended.

ANNIE  
Like I told you when we met. I can get just about anything in here.

Monica shakes her head in disbelief.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
Even a transfer to the safety zone and my baby's cell. Hope you don't mind a roommate.

MONICA  
I was just starting to get used to the solitude.

ANNIE  
(hurt)  
Well, I can--

MONICA  
I'm kidding! This is wonderful!

ANNIE  
It is, isn't it?

Annie grabs a paintbrush.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
How can I help here?

Monica takes the paint brush from Annie's hand, tosses it aside, and pushes her onto the bottom bunk bed. She unzips her orange jumpsuit and kicks it off. Completely naked now, Monica bends over Annie and climbs on top.

MONICA  
There'll be plenty of time to paint. Right now, I just want to make love to my new roomie.

Playful GIGGLES are quickly replaced by the distinctive SOUNDS of passionate lovemaking.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

LeVeon's car rolls down the six-lane interstate. The car passes a sign: ENTERING ALBUQUERQUE.

INT. LEVEON'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

At the wheel, Kady sees the sign. She jabs LeVeon, who's asleep on the passenger side, his mouth wide open, SNORING like a cartoon moonshiner.

LeVeon stops snoring, opens his eyes, and bolts up, startled.

LEVEON

What the hell? Did you have an accident? I knew I shouldn't have let you drive without a license!

KADY

NO! Knock it off. We're here.

LEVEON

Oh! Okay.

He taps the cellphone screen on the dash mount.

LEVEON (CONT'D)

Says turn right next exit, Hawthorne Street.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

A green exit sign appears for HAWTHORNE STREET. Kady takes it and pulls up in front of a single story non-descript building. Above the double front doors, it reads: WELCOME TO ALBUQUERQUE PLANNED PARENTHOOD.

They jump out and Kady grabs LeVeon's hand as they head for the building entrance.

KADY

I wish mom could be here.

LEVEON

She is. In your heart.

Kady turns to him, shakes her head.

KADY  
That is so corny.

LEVEON  
Doesn't mean it's not true.

Kady smiles. LeVeon notices a tear has appeared in the corner of Kady's eye. He gives her hand a firm squeeze as they enter the front door and go inside.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Monica and Annie finish painting the mural and step back to admire their work.

ANNIE  
It's like nothing I've ever seen.  
You must be so proud.

MONICA  
We must be so proud!

ANNIE  
Nah. I just tagged along.

MONICA  
I had wanted to do this on Planned  
Parenthood buildings where  
thousands, maybe millions, of women  
could see them.

Annie grasps Monica's hand and SIGHS.

ANNIE  
Might still happen. Start with a  
wall in a prison cell. Then the  
wall in the cafeteria. Next, the  
wall in the prison yard. Word gets  
out, maybe they give you work  
release and pretty soon, you're  
painting Planned Parenthood  
buildings on the outside. And  
thousands of women are looking!

MONICA  
How'd I get so lucky to meet you?

ANNIE  
You got wrongfully accused of  
murder and I actually did shoot my  
husband.

Monica LAUGHS and pulls Annie onto the bunk bed as their clothes fall off around them.

INT. MURAL IN MONICA AND ANNIE'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

WE SEE the mural as a news report plays in the background. The entire ten by twelve wall is covered with females--young, old, different races, colors, nationalities.

FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)  
Groundbreaking news today.

Women marching with PRO-CHOICE signs.

Women on witness stands in court.

School girls reading books about women's health.

FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The U.S. Senate has just codified  
abortion rights on a national  
level--

Women in college classes, sports fields, parties, arguing with male colleagues.

Women giving birth.

Women in line at Planned Parenthood clinics.

FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR  
--thus, guaranteeing that women  
across the country will once again  
have access to safe abortions. The  
President has said she will sign  
the bill into law later today.

And one final image.

Monica, in her orange prison jumpsuit holding hands with Annie, staring directly at the viewer. Smiling, self-confident, resolute, determined.

Beside them, in block letters, a simple quote: "NO WOMAN CAN CALL HERSELF FREE WHO DOES NOT CONTROL HER OWN BODY."

- MARGARET SANGER

FADE OUT.

THE END