



JINXY & MR. B

Written by

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Based on the life of  
Gina Eckstine and her father, Billy Eckstine

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EXT. BLUE SKIES - DAY

We hear the roar of a jet engine and then see an African-American BRIDE, wearing a white wedding gown, hair blowing in the wind, without a parachute, falling out of the sky with an airplane flying away in the b.g.

GINA (V.O.)

No, I'm not running away from my first husband, but I did eventually divorce him. I do realize that this is a bit dramatic, but it'll all make sense by the end, or I hope it does...

We move in on the Bride screaming as we...

CUT TO:

CHYRON: NEW YORK 1969

INT. POSH HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

BILLY ECKSTINE (56), historic good looks fading, furrowed brow and forehead, 60's fashion, plaid pants, partially open white pressed shirt, takes a drag from a cigarette.

He looks around his well-appointed hotel room, eyeing the exposed leg of a sleeping WOMAN in a bed across the room.

On the nightstand are empty shot glasses along with an empty bottle of whiskey, and the remnants of cocaine and a rolled one-dollar bill.

Billy takes another drag from his rolled cigarette before turning his attention to the three large plate-glass windows, overlooking the New York skyline in the distance.

GINA (V.O.)

My father was, Billy Eckstine. Most of you probably don't know who he is because he began his career in the early 40's.

From Billy's POV we see the 1949 Life Magazine photo of him in the center window, smiling, 35, gazing down at three young WHITE WOMEN (ADORING FANS), in poodle skirts. One of the women places her head and hand on his chest...

GINA (V.O.)

He nicknamed me, Jinxy, but my birth name is, Gina Eckstine, one of his seven children. We're not going to discuss the other six much, because this is the story about my time with my father, not theirs.

Billy rubs his eyes, blinks, then gazes up at the window to see the New York skyline. His smiling image has faded.

GINA (V.O.)

My mother was Carole Drake, a model and an actress, but back then there wasn't much acting work for black women, outside of being a maid.

CAROLE DRAKE'S glamour headshot replaces the image of Billy smiling.

Billy takes a long drag on his cigarette, smoke billows from his lips as the image of Carole Drake fades away.

GINA (V.O.)

Some people called him the Sepia Sinatra, which he hated. Some folks even thought he was better than Sinatra, black or white. To me, he was an incredible vocalist that taught me everything I know today.

(beat)

Oh, and yes, like all of us, he had his flaws, but some of them weren't of his own making...

The Life Magazine photo of Billy and the three white women reappears in the center window.

BILLY (V.O.)

...but we had a 3-picture deal!

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

CHYRON: LOS ANGELES, CA 1950

Two suited WHITE MEN sit behind a desk in a sparse 50's office. One man slides the Life Magazine issue with the image of Billy and the three women across the desk to Billy (35).

STUDIO MAN #2

That was before this happened.

BILLY

I was walking out of the studio! What was I supposed to do, push them away?

MANAGER (O.S.)

They were just fans. Mr. Eckstine's married with a family, you know that.

We pull back to see another suited white man, Billy's MANAGER, sitting in the corner.

STUDIO MAN #1  
I'm sorry, Billy, but there's  
nothing we can do.

Billy eyes the two men before his Manager crosses to him and hands Billy his hat.

MANAGER  
We're done here, Mr. Eckstine.

GINA (V.O.)  
In every life, there are markers...

Billy, visibly upset, stands, tosses the magazine across the desk, takes his hat and eyes the two men.

BILLY  
You're gonna regret this.

They exit the office.

GINA (V.O.)  
...like proverbial forks in the  
road. Sometimes we can control the  
markers, but most times, especially  
for black people back in the day,  
the markers were chosen for us...  
(beat)  
...but that wasn't my excuse.

END FLASHBACK:

EXT. ESTABLISH - THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - NIGHT

A beautiful 1970's style home, surrounded by grass and shrubbery, encircled by an iron gate.

A Chrysler station wagon, complete with wood paneling sits outside the front door.

Sitting near the garage is a 70's beige Rolls Royce.

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - CONTINUOUS

(Actual address: 17010 Rancho St. Encino, CA 91316)

The home is well appointed, cherry wood furniture, plush carpets, colorful 70's paint colors.

Five AFRICAN-AMERICAN YOUNG BOYS, (8-12 yrs.) wearing their Sunday best, smiling and laughing, cross to the front door.

Followed by one AFRICAN-AMERICAN YOUNG GIRL (7), wearing a cute skirt and sweater.

CAROLE DRAKE, the matriarch, impeccably dressed, clutching her purse, hair neatly coifed, flawless makeup, crosses into frame.

CAROLE  
Where's Gina?

The kids, chatting loudly, ignore her as they exit through the front door.

INT. GINA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carole opens the door and enters this 1970's young girl's room, white furniture, two four-post beds, and several posters of the Jackson-5, and Michael on the walls.

CAROLE  
Gina?

Carole glances around the room before her gaze lands on GINA, (5), unhappy, wears a frilly dress, sits on the floor.

GINA  
I don't wanna go.

CAROLE  
You don't wanna watch your daddy sing?

GINA  
I wanna watch the Jackson-5 sing.

Carole smiles at her adoringly for a beat, before...

CAROLE  
Girl, you better get up and stop all of that pouting before I give you something to pout about.

Carole takes her arm and ushers her out of the room.

INT. HONG KONG BAR - NIGHT

The bar is crowded with GUESTS, predominantly white, and a few blacks, sitting at tables, at the bar, milling about.

We move past a sign that reads: Performing Tonight - Billy Eckstine

ANGLE ON:

BILLY ECKSTINE (51), suited, handsome as ever, hazel eyes, slicked black wavy hair, sings the last note of "I Apologize."

Standing behind him is his suited 5-piece BAND.

The applause is loud and enthusiastic, complete with a few catcalls and whistles.

BILLY  
Thank you. Thank you.

Billy gazes out at the audience until he spots his family just left of the stage.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
We're going to kick it up a bit...

ANGLE ON: Carole and her seven kids, sitting near the front of the stage, watching Billy. Gina, sits next to her mother, still pouting, arms crossed, looks away.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
(to band)  
Sweet Georgia...

The band snaps to attention, fingering their instruments.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
(to audience)  
For this number, I'm going to bring  
up my beautiful wife and my  
favorite Eckstine entertainers to  
join me on stage.

The audience applauds as the spotlight hits their table.

ANGLE ON: Carole, excited, ushering the kids to the stage. Gina, not happy, but Carole leads her to the stage.

The band starts to play, "Sweet Georgia Brown" as the kids encircle their father and begin to dance.

Carole, with Gina in tow, crosses the stage and leans in for a kiss from her husband.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Carole Eckstine, ladies and  
gentlemen.

Carole releases Gina's hand. She stands motionless on stage, watching the band, then her brothers and sisters dancing around her, then the audience clapping in rhythm, some dancing, and then her mother enjoying the spotlight, and lastly her father as he begins to sing, "Sweet Georgia Brown."

After a few beats, Gina's mood begins to soften and her foot begins to tap as her older sister takes her hands and they begin to dance.

Billy locks eyes with his youngest daughter, Gina, and gives her a loving wink.

Gina smiles as we close on her eyes, glistening with excitement.

GINA (V.O.)  
That's when I knew I wanted to be a  
singer just like my dad...

FLASH FORWARD  
TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - RESEDA, CA - DAY

A set of brown haggard eyes stare back at us with out-of-focus cars, buildings and people in the b.g.

GINA (V.O.)  
...but life tends to kick you in  
the ass just when you think you've  
got it figured out.

We pull back to see a young woman, mid 20's, hair blowing in the wind, riding a bicycle, wears business attire.

She rides past a few cars, then onto the sidewalk, and then down an alley, coasting towards a group of YOUNG MEN, gambling, and tossing quarters at a wall.

WOMAN ON BIKE  
Ezzie!

EZZIE, black male, (26), afro comb in hair, attempts to toss his quarter, turns.

DWIGHT  
(exasperated)  
Gina? You're fuckin' up my  
concentration! What'd I tell you  
would happen the next time you came  
here?

Gina drops her bike and crosses to him.

INT. EZZIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

The apartment is a mess. The t.v. drones on in the b.g.

On the sofa lies, Gina, pants removed, blouse pulled up to partially expose her breasts, legs in the air. Ezzie, shirt off, pants down around his ankles, pumps feverishly above her.

From Gina's POV we see a crack vile and crack cocaine resting on the coffee table, just out of reach.

GINA (V.O.)  
 This is Ezzie, my dealer, who  
 eventually became my boyfriend  
 after I divorced my first  
 husband...

Ezzie reaches climax, shakes, thrusts, and moans, before  
 rolling next to her, breathing heavily.

Gina immediately sits up, pulls down her blouse and reaches  
 for the crack pipe.

GINA (V.O.)  
 ...wait, I'm getting way ahead of  
 myself. Bring it back, Gina...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - NIGHT

All seven Eckstine kids sit quietly in the immaculate living  
 room, except Gina (6), peers out of the front window, her  
 back to her siblings.

Carole, sips on a glass of wine while entering the room. She  
 stops and eyes their dower faces.

CAROLE  
 (to Gina)  
 Girl, get out of that window. He  
 ain't comin' home tonight.

GINA  
 (turns)  
 It's Christmas. He always comes  
 home for Christmas, just like Santa  
 Claus.

GUY, (12), looks up at Gina.

GUY  
 Santa Clause ain't real.

GINA  
 (defiant)  
 Yes he is! Daddy says he's real!

We hear the sound of a car and see headlights shine through  
 the curtains.

GINA (CONT'D)  
 He's here!



EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - CONTINUOUS

A TAXI-CAB DRIVER cuts the binds of a large Christmas tree, tied to the roof of the car.

Billy, suited, looking every bit of a celebrity, removes his suitcase from the trunk.

ALL KIDS  
Daddy! Dad!

He looks up to see all of the kids running in his direction.

Carole, in the doorway, sips her wine, watches.

GINA  
Daddy, Guy said that Santa Claus  
isn't real!

Billy eyes his third eldest son.

BILLY  
Is that what he said?

GUY  
I was only telling the truth.

BILLY  
C'mon, let's get this tree inside  
and get it decorated.

CEE-CEE (8), Billy's second youngest daughter, chimes in.

CEE-CEE  
It's not too late?

BILLY  
It's never too late for Santa  
Claus. As a matter of fact, he's  
probably on a plane right now.

GINA  
A plane? Santa Claus uses a sleigh.

BILLY  
That was before we got airplanes,  
Jinx.

CAROLE  
You kids let your daddy breathe and  
come on inside!

The kids turn and follow the Taxi Cab Driver as he enters with the tree.

Billy, toting his suitcase, crosses to Carole at the door.

CAROLE (CONT'D)  
You almost missed it.

BILLY  
Almost doesn't count.  
(beat)  
Turn around and let me see that  
fine ass.

CAROLE  
I'm not your property.

BILLY  
No, but you are my wife, and that  
backside is partially responsible  
for getting me to the chapel.  
(beat)  
Come on inside so we can decorate  
this tree and put these kids to  
bed.

After a brief pause, Carole turns and enters the house.

Billy eyes her curvaceous backside.

ANGLE ON: Gina, standing near the tree leaning against a  
wall, watches her father eye her mom's backside.

CAROLE  
Let's hurry up and get this tree up  
before Santa Claus comes.

Billy hands the Taxi Cab Driver a tip before turning to  
Carole.

BILLY  
(re: Carole)  
Hopefully not before I do.

Carole, standing a few feet away, blushes against her will.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
(devilish grin)  
You boys go and get the  
decorations.

BOYS  
Yeah!

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - LATER THAT NIGHT

Billy, shirt undone, smoking a cig, sits on the sofa in front  
of the decorated Christmas tree.

Carole, stuffing the last toy in a stocking, hanging over the  
fireplace, eyes an empty stocking.

CAROLE  
I could've sworn I filled Guy's  
stocking.

BILLY  
You did. C'mon over here and sit  
next to me.

CAROLE  
But--

BILLY  
Sit next to me.

Carole eyes Guy's empty stocking before crossing to the sofa  
and sitting next to Billy.

CAROLE  
Why is his stocking empty?

BILLY  
I'll take care of it.  
(beat)  
How've you been?

CAROLE  
These kids are driving me crazy,  
while you're out on the road having  
a good'ole time.

He softly caresses her hair and face.

BILLY  
It ain't that good. I miss you.

CAROLE  
You don't act like it.

BILLY  
Of course I miss you. Maybe you  
should start comin' with me again?

CAROLE  
I want to, Billy, but the kids got  
school and--

GINA (O.S.)  
Daddy?

Billy and Carole turn to see Gina approaching in her pink  
nightgown.

BILLY  
Hey, Jinxy-Pinks, you okay?

Gina climbs into his lap.

GINA  
Is it really true?  
(beat)  
Santa?

BILLY  
Of course he's real, sweetheart. I  
promise. We're friends. Good  
friends.

GINA  
You know Santa Claus?

BILLY  
Of course I do.  
(kisses her forehead)  
Now go on back to bed.

She turns and walks off and disappears behind a wall.

CAROLE  
Why do you keep lying to them  
girls?

BILLY  
I'll tell 'um when it's time.

CAROLE  
(pause)  
I'm thinking about auditioning  
again.

BILLY  
Are you? You just said you didn't  
have much time.

CAROLE  
I don't have time to fly all around  
the world, but I do miss acting.  
(pause)  
Say something.

BILLY  
What do you want me to say? You're  
going to do what you want to do  
anyway.

CAROLE  
You're not the only one that can  
have a career, Billy Eckstine.

GINA (O.S.)  
I can't sleep.

Slightly annoyed, they turn to see Gina a few feet away.

CAROLE  
(stands)  
C'mon, you can sleep in our bed.

Carole crosses to Gina and ushers her away.

BILLY  
(stands)  
Our bed?

Carole winks at him, then sashes away, accentuating her backside.

Off Billy's disappointed look...

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - MORNING

The Christmas tree is being raided by happy kids ripping through packages, screaming and shouting with glee.

Guy, the Santa denier, head hung low, eyes the packages, searching for his name...nothing.

ANGLE ON: Billy, smoking a cig, and watching his son search for his gifts.

Carole, picking up strewn wrapping paper, notices her son's confusion and then Billy watching his search for a gift.

CAROLE  
(to Billy)  
What did you do?

Billy motions for her to watch Guy as he approaches his stocking.

Carole turns and watches Guy reach for his stocking.

ANGLE ON: Guy as he reaches into the stocking and pulls out a handful of dirt.

ANGLE ON: Billy laughing on the sofa as his son begins to tear up.

CAROLE (CONT'D)  
Goddamn you, Billy Eckstine.

Carole consoles her son as the other children watch.

BILLY  
(stands)  
If the boy's gonna cry, let him cry  
in the pool room. We don't need all  
those tears on Christmas day.

CAROLE  
What is your problem?

BILLY  
The boy doesn't believe in Santa.  
(to Guy)

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)  
 Go on. Go to the pool room and cry,  
 and when you're done, you can come  
 back.

CAROLE  
 He will not--

BILLY  
 Carole. Let the boy go.

There's a brief standoff before she releases Guy and he  
 crosses to the back door and exits.

Gina, always observant, watches.

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Guy, now in full cry mode, passes the pool, headed for the  
 pool room.

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - CONTINUOUS

Carole, seething, confronts Billy.

BILLY  
 (re: anger)  
 Uh uh uh...it's Christmas.

CAROLE  
 (utters)  
 You son-of-a-bitch...

GINA  
 Why didn't Santa bring him gifts?

BILLY  
 Maybe it's because he doesn't  
 believe, Jinxy.

INT. POOL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Guy, dejected, opens the door to reveal a new bike with  
 ribbons and bows, along with several wrapped packages. His  
 eyes light up!

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - CONTINUOUS

Carole, fed-up, sighs heavily.

BILLY  
 Tell me that wasn't amusing.

The cracks materialize in Carole's anger as a smile emerges.

CAROLE  
 It was kinda' funny, but don't you  
 ever do that again--

We hear the screams of a joyful child and then the backdoor  
 is flung open and Guy enters with his new bike and several  
 wrapped packages, balancing in his other hand.

GUY  
 Santa came!

Billy winks at Carole and then leans down to Gina.

BILLY  
 (utters)  
 You see. He is real.

We stay with Billy's satisfying broad smile as we...

FADE TO BLACK:

CHYRON: SIX YEARS LATER

FADE IN:

GINA (V.O.)  
 Remember what I said about markers,  
 and how they're like forks in the  
 road? Well, this one was more like  
 a cliff.

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - DAY

Two tow-trucks and a non-descript black sedan pull up and  
 park in front of the house.

Two suited WHITE MEN exit the sedan, one clutching a folder.

Man #1 gestures to the TOW-TRUCK DRIVERS...

MAN #1  
 Wait here!

The two men turn and enter the open gate, passing the Rolls  
 Royce and the Chrysler station wagon parked in the driveway.

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - CONTINUOUS

Carole, scrutinizing glare, stands next to the glass coffee  
 table watching Cee-Cee (14) and Gina (12) wipe it with glass  
 cleaner.

CAROLE  
 I still see fingerprints.

CEE-CEE  
I don't see anything.

CAROLE  
(points)  
Right there on the side.

Gina follows her finger and wipes vigorously.

GINA  
They're not coming off.

Ding-dong! The doorbell chimes.

CAROLE  
Maybe they're underneath?  
(turns)  
Those fingerprints better be gone  
when I get back.

Carole crosses to the front door and flings it open to find the two suited men staring back at her.

CAROLE (CONT'D)  
Yes?

INT. A POSH HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

A phone rings several times in the gaudy 70's living area.

ANGLE ON: A LIGHT SKINNED BLACK WOMAN, groggy, wearing a black negligee, crosses to the phone. She composes herself before picking up the receiver.

WOMAN IN NEGLIGEE  
Billy Eckstine's room.

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - CONTINUOUS

Carole, on the phone, is taken aback by a woman's voice.

CAROLE  
Who's this?

WOMAN IN NEGLIGEE (O.S.)  
(beat)  
House-keeping.

CAROLE  
This is, Carole Eckstine. Put my  
husband on the phone.

INT. A POSH HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Woman, nervous, glances around the room.



## WOMAN IN NEGLIGEE

I...I believe he's playing golf. He  
left when I arrived--  
(click)  
Hello? Hello?

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - CONTINUOUS

Carole, angry, picks up the receiver, flips through an  
address book, and then begins to dial the rotary phone.

## CAROLE

(to suited men)  
Don't you touch those cars!

The Men stand near the open front door.

## MAN #1

Ma'am, we have a court order--

## CAROLE

I don't care what you have! Don't  
touch those--  
(into phone)  
Hello, yes, this is Mrs.  
Eckstine...

EXT. LAS VEGAS GOLF COURSE - CONTINUOUS

Many GOLFERS mingle about, putting, driving carts, etc.

ANGLE ON: A YOUNG MAN in a green polo shirt sprints out of  
the clubhouse, crossing to a set of four golfers, Billy and  
three WHITE MEN about to tee off.

Billy, driver in hand, crosses to the tee.

## BILLY

You know, there was a time when you  
boys wouldn't let me on your  
course, fearing that I may take  
your money...which I most  
definitely plan to do.

Billy smiles and the Men laugh.

## YOUNG MAN

Mr. Eckstine!

Billy turns in his direction.

## YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Your wife's on the phone.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Billy picks up the receiver.

BILLY  
This better be important.

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - CONTINUOUS

Gina and Cee-Cee, concerned, eye their mother on the phone and then the suited men.

CAROLE  
(into phone)  
Goddamn you, Billy! They're taking  
our cars! I told you to pay the  
taxes! I told you!

Gina watches as the Rolls Royce is hooked to the tow-truck.

Cee-Cee comforts her mother.

BILLY (O.S.)  
Who's there? What're you talking  
about Carole?

CAROLE  
The IRS! They're taking the cars!

The second man, clutching the folder, produces a piece of paper that reads: PROPERTY OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, followed by small print below.

MAN #2  
And the property, Ma'am.

Carole, eyeing the seizure notice, is in disbelief.

ANGLE ON NOTICE: 48 hours to vacate premises

CAROLE  
Our house?  
(beat)  
We've got kids.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Billy, anxious, puffs on a cig, clutching the receiver.

BILLY  
What'd he say, Carole?  
(beat)  
Carole? What'd the man say?

CAROLE (O.S.)  
Billy...

BILLY

I'm here.

CAROLE (O.S.)

They're taking our house.

(beat)

Come home.

Pregnant pause as Billy gazes at the gleeful WHITE GOLFERS and EMPLOYEES milling about.

BILLY

I can't.

(beat)

I've got three shows this week.

What would it look like if I just--

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - CONTINUOUS

Gina watches as the Chrysler is hooked to the 2nd tow truck.

CAROLE

I need you here, Billy. We need you.

(pause)

Billy?

BILLY (O.S.)

(somber)

I'll be home next Tuesday.

Click. He hangs up.

CAROLE

Billy? Hello? You son-of-a-bitch!

Carole, irate and out of control, slams the receiver down over and over again before ripping the cord from the wall and throwing the entire phone at the glass coffee table. It shatters.

MAN #1

Mrs. Eckstine?

(beat)

Ma'am?

CAROLE

What?!

MAN #1

You'll need to sign.

CAROLE

I ain't signin' shit.

Carole pushes them out and slams the front door in their faces.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We stay with Billy's gaze in the midst of white golfers as he walks away from the phone and crosses to the EXIT.

EXT. GOLF COURSE IN VEGAS - CONTINUOUS

Billy crosses to his buddies, waiting for him at the 1st tee.

His demeanor is dower, until he reaches them. He then smiles and acts as though all is well on the western front.

BILLY  
Thank you for waiting, gentleman.  
However, I will not be as patient  
when it's time to collect my  
winnings.

Billy grabs his driver as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - DAY

The cars are gone, but a moving truck is parked in the driveway with several black MOVERS removing boxes from the home and loading them into the truck.

GINA (V.O.)  
...we moved out two days later. I  
was too young to fully understand  
what was happening, but I knew it  
wasn't good.

ANGLE ON: Carole, sullen, but dressed immaculately, sits in one of the two lawn chairs, watching from about twenty-five feet away. After a couple beats, a tear streams down her cheek.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - MORNING

CHYRON - 10 Years Earlier

A cab pulls into the driveway and stops.

INT. TAXI-CAB - CONTINUOUS

Billy (35) and Carole (26) sit in the backseat, eyeing the house.

CAROLE  
 What'd you bring me here for,  
 Billy? Who lives here?

Billy exits the cab, pulling her out with him.

BILLY  
 A friend.  
 (to Driver)  
 Wait here.

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - CONTINUOUS

As they cross to the front door, Billy eyes two lawn chairs sitting on the lawn about twenty-five feet away.

BILLY  
 Let's go and wait over there.

CAROLE  
 We're not going to knock on the  
 door?

BILLY  
 The owners aren't home yet. We're  
 early.

They cross to the lawn chairs and Billy turns them in the direction of the front door.

CAROLE  
 Why're you moving these people's  
 chairs?

BILLY  
 (smile)  
 Woman stop bickering, sit down with  
 me and look over there at the front  
 door.

They sit. After a few beats.

CAROLE  
 What're we lookin' for?

BILLY  
 The owners kids.

CAROLE  
 What do they look like?

BILLY  
 They're black.

CAROLE  
 Black? Who you know is black that  
 lives around here?

BILLY  
Sidney Poitier.

CAROLE  
(excited)  
Sidney Poitier? This is Sidney  
Poitier's house?

BILLY  
I'm not sure I appreciate your  
enthusiasm.

Suddenly the front door opens and Gina (4) steps out of the front door.

CAROLE  
What're you kids doing in Sidney  
Poitier's house?

A beat later her siblings, from youngest to oldest, exit the house, smiling and wearing their Sunday best.

CAROLE (CONT'D)  
(to Billy)  
What's goin' on here?

BILLY  
I don't know, you tell me Mrs.  
Poitier?

It hits her.

CAROLE  
(stands)  
Is this our house, Billy?

BILLY  
(stands)  
Only if you like it.

CAROLE  
I love it!

Carole rushes towards her kids and they usher her inside.

Billy, smiling, lights a cigarette and watches them disappear into the house.

Gina stays behind and beckons for her father to come.

GINA (V.O.)  
I wasn't even born when we moved  
into this house, but I'd like to  
think it went somethin' like this.

Gina slowly disappears from the front porch.

One of the Boys rushes out of the house and beckons for his dad.

SON  
Come on, Dad!

BILLY  
I'll be right there.

After a beat, he eyes the BLACK CAB DRIVER, and they share a knowing glance and head nod before he crosses to the house.

END FLASHBACK:

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/ENCINO, CA - DAY

From Carole's POV we see Gina, somber, exit the house, wearing a t-shirt and jeans, cross to her mother.

GINA  
Are you okay?

CAROLE  
I've been better.

GINA  
When's he coming home?

CAROLE  
Everybody's got priorities, Gina.  
We just ain't one of'em.

Carole walks towards the house and the movers carrying boxes.

CAROLE (CONT'D)  
(to movers)  
You better not drop a single box!

We stay with Gina watching her mother.

GINA (V.O.)  
My dad and I didn't talk about that  
day for several years later.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WEST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL -DAY

Establishing shot of the building.

CHYRON - 4 Years Later

The bell rings.

INT. BAND ROOM AT A HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A middle-aged white male, casual attire, bespectacled, leans against a desk, clutching sheet music, stares directly at us. His name is IRA.

IRA  
Sing for me.

GINA (O.S.)  
I can't.

IRA  
Why not?

Gina, 16, wearing a school uniform, stands a few feet away, stares back at Ira.

GINA  
Because...I can't sing.

IRA  
That's not what your father told me.

GINA  
My father?

IRA  
You're Billy Eckstine's daughter, correct?  
(off her nod)  
I'm detecting a bit of confusion?

GINA  
No. I'm fine.

IRA  
He wants me to work with you.

GINA  
On what?

Ira, heavy sigh, shoots her a look.

IRA  
Why don't you go home and think about it. We can discuss it tomorrow at my studio.  
(proffers business card)  
Does four o'clock work for you?

GINA  
After school?

IRA  
I'm not a teacher, Gina. I just came here to meet you.



He turns and walks off. Gina remains, frozen.

IRA (CONT'D)  
(turns back)  
Four o'clock.

Gina, full of questions and teenage angst, turns and hustles out of the empty band room.

EXT. FOREST HILL, CA (UPPER SCALE NEIGHBORHOOD) - LATER

Gina, clutching her backpack, walks alongside a white female, brunette, a few inches shorter than Gina, toting a backpack. Her name is SPUTNIK (16), squeaky voice, fast-talker, cute as a button, also wears a school uniform.

GINA  
...and then he said my dad told him  
that I could sing, and that's when  
I knew he was lying--

Sputnik eyes Ira's business card.

SPUTNIK  
(excited)  
He asked you to sing at his studio?

GINA  
Yes, but my dad's never heard me  
sing so he's full-of-it. This guy's  
probably a pervert.

They walk along in silence for a couple beats.

SPUTNIK  
There's something I didn't tell  
you.

Gina, curious, eyes Sputnik's profile.

GINA  
What?

Sputnik stops walking. Gina stops.

SPUTNIK  
Remember that night we were singing  
in the garage? Well, you were  
singing, I was watching. And  
then...

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - NIGHT

Establishing shot of the new Eckstine home.

(Actual address: 4836 Queen Florence Lane Woodland Hills, CA 91316)

A taxi-cab pulls up in front and parks.

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS - 2-CAR GARAGE - NIGHT

Sputnik sits in a pink beanbag chair, next to a large boombox.

Parked in the garage is a new Chrysler Station Wagon.

Standing near the open garage door is Gina, clutching a monkey wrench.

SPUTNIK

Ready?

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - NIGHT

Billy, suited, toting a suitcase, crosses to the front door as the taxi pulls away in the b.g.

Softly we hear the intro of Donna Summer's "Last Dance," and then a female voice singing over the track.

Billy stops and turns to the two-car garage, eyeing the open garage door and the light coming from inside.

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Gina, clutching the wrench like a microphone, slays the "Last Dance" intro, while Sputnik looks on in envy.

GINA

...yes it's my last chance for  
romance tonight...

(beat)

I need you, by me, beside me, to  
guide me...

From Sputnik's POV we see Billy peer into the garage and watch his daughter sing with passion and energy as the song amps up.

Billy gestures to Sputnik to remain silent by placing his index finger on his lips.

Gina notices her distraction.

GINA (CONT'D)

What?

SPUTNIK

Nothing.

END FLASHBACK:

EXT. FOREST HILLS, CA (UPPER SCALE NEIGHBORHOOD) - CONTINUOUS

Gina stares down Sputnik.

GINA  
Why didn't you tell me?

They walk.

SPUTNIK  
(shrugs shoulders/walks)  
...don't know. But you should go  
and sing for him. You're good,  
Gina. You're real good.  
(beat/ponders)  
Why did your dad nickname me  
Sputnik? That's like some space  
ship or something, right? I don't  
look like a space ship, do I?

GINA  
Space ship, definitely not--

SPUTNIK  
(mouth agape/stops)  
Oh-mi-god, he thinks I'm spacey,  
doesn't he?!

Off Sputnik's shocked expression...

CAROLE (O.S.)  
Put all of his shit on the curb!

Gina and Sputnik turn to see Cee-Cee with her arms full of clothing, drop them on the curb. A moment later Carole steps into frame with a large suitcase and violently throws it down, spilling its contents.

SPUTNIK  
What's goin' on?

ANGLE ON: Carole spots Gina about twenty-five feet away.

CAROLE  
Gina! Get over here and help us!

GINA  
(to Sputnik/walks off)  
I'll see you tomorrow.

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - MOMENTS LATER

Carole, irate, leads Cee-Cee (18) and Gina into the master bedroom.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is an absolute mess. Billy's clothes, shoes, ties, suits, underwear is strewn about the room.

CAROLE

Pick it all up and put it outside!

GINA

What's going on?

Carole scans the room before finding an airline ticket sitting on the dresser. She picks it up and smacks it into Gina's hand.

CAROLE

(seething)

He took that bitch with him to Paris!

Cee-Cee begins to gather more things.

GINA

(eyes ticket)

Who's Athena?

CEE-CEE

That's who he took to Paris.

Carole aggressively loads a box with items.

CAROLE

Your father is a lying piece of shit! I'm here takin' care of all you kids while he's out there singin', actin' like a family man, talkin' about his kids while he shoves his dick into every bitch that spreads her legs!

(beat)

Your daddy ain't no saint, and it's about time you knew.

Carole shoves the box into Gina's arms.

CAROLE (CONT'D)

(re: box)

Go on. Take it outside.

After a brief pause, Gina, sullen, turns and crosses to the open front door.

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - LATER/DUSK

Gina drops a pile of shirts and pants on the large pile of items strewn about at the curb.

Cee-Cee also drops a pile of shoes on the ground before turning back to the house.

Gina, eyeing the items on the ground, looks up to see Sputnik, in the window of the house across the street, watching her.

Sputnik, look of concern, smiles. Gina return the gesture.

Carole exits the house with an armful of papers and crosses to the curb.

CAROLE  
We ain't done.

Carole throws the papers on the pile and it is now we see that it is handwritten sheet music.

GINA  
That's daddy's music!

Gina scrambles to retrieve the pages.

CAROLE  
Let it be, Gina.  
(beat)  
I said, let it be!

Gina slows, a few pages in her hand, turns to Carole.

CAROLE (CONT'D)  
How old are you?

GINA  
You know how old I am.  
(beat)  
Sixteen.

CAROLE  
There are things I can't tell you,  
because you're not old enough to  
understand.

GINA  
I understand more than you think.

CAROLE  
I've given you kids everything. I  
gave up my career to feed, clothe  
and raise all of you--

GINA  
Nobody asked you to--

CAROLE  
(crosses to Gina)  
He asked me...and I did it, for  
him, and for all of you.  
(beat)

(MORE)

CAROLE (CONT'D)  
I love you, Gina. I love all of my  
children with everything I got.

Gina, tears welling, eyes the sheet music blowing away.

GINA  
(re: love)  
Then why don't I feel it?

They lock eyes for a moment before Gina turns and walks away.

CAROLE  
Gina? Where're you going?  
(beat)  
Come back here right now! Gina!

Gina begins to jog and then sprints away as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. REDD FOXX'S HOUSE IN THE VALLEY - NIGHT

Gina, still running, slows in front of a single story house  
in a ritzy neighborhood. She turns and walks up the driveway,  
past a Bentley and a Cadillac.

Gina reaches the door and rings the doorbell. She waits a  
couple beats before ringing it again.

REDD FOXX (O.S.)  
Who the fuck is sittin' on my  
doorbell?

The door is flung open and REDD FOXX, in his leopard skin  
robe, drink in hand, gold glasses, eyes Gina.

GINA  
Is my daddy here?

REDD FOXX  
(scowls)  
Richard!  
(steps aside)  
Come on in. Your momma ain't with  
you, is she?

Gina enters the house.

GINA  
No.

REDD FOXX  
(closing the door)  
Richard!

Gina looks around the disheveled home, searching for her dad.

RICHARD PRYOR, shirtless, and obviously inebriated, approaches.

RICHARD PRYOR  
 Nigga' stop shoutin' my name like I  
 got my dick in your ass!  
 (beat)  
 Gina? What're you doing here?

REDD FOXX  
 What do you think she's doin' here  
 dimwit? Go get Billy.

Richard walks off. Redd eyes Gina.

REDD FOXX (CONT'D)  
 Are you sure your mother didn't  
 follow you here? I'd have to cut  
 her if she came through that door.  
 (drag on cig)  
 Don't get me wrong, she's a fine  
 ass woman, nice ass, big titties,  
 got them stallion legs...  
 (neighs like a horse)  
 ...but if you look at her too long  
 she'll get pregnant. Ask your daddy  
 if I'm lyin'.

BILLY (O.S.)  
 Gina. What're you doing here?

Gina turns to see Billy, hair disheveled, suit jacket on his  
 arm, shirt untucked and unbuttoned, pulling at his pants.  
 Under and around his nose we see bits of cocaine residue.

RICHARD PRYOR  
 She came to see you you stupid  
 motherfucka'.

BILLY  
 It was rhetorical question,  
 Richard.

RICHARD PRYOR  
 Who's Rhetorical and why the fuck  
 is he asking me questions?

Redd and Billy share a glance before staring down Richard.

RICHARD PRYOR (CONT'D)  
 What'd I say?

Redd gestures for Billy to wipe the cocaine from his nose.

GINA  
 I need to talk to you.

BILLY  
 (wipes nose)  
 Can it wait until tomorrow?  
 (off Gina's look)  
 We need a ride home.

RICHARD PRYOR  
 Who you talkin' to? I'm fucked up.  
 They ain't catchin' my black ass  
 drivin' you home.

REDD FOXX  
 I'll call you a cab.

Redd crosses to the phone on a wall.

INT. YELLOW CAB - LATER THAT NIGHT

The DRIVER eyes Billy and Gina via the rear-view mirror.

BILLY  
 You walked all the way here?

GINA  
 Jogged most of it.

BILLY  
 I didn't know we had a track star  
 in the family.

EXT. CITY STREET (VENTURA BLVD) - MOMENTS LATER

The yellow cab pulls off as the light turns green.

GINA (O.S.)  
 Who's Athena?

INT. YELLOW CAB - CONTINUOUS

Gina eyes Billy's profile as he looks away.

BILLY  
 Is that why you're here?

GINA  
 She found the airplane ticket.

BILLY  
 Snooping through my things.

GINA  
 Are you surprised?

Billy smiles and then chuckles.



DRIVER  
Make a right?

BILLY  
Yes, and then a left on Queen  
Florence Lane.  
(to Gina)  
Did she send you?

The Driver turns right.

GINA  
No. I wanted to ask you first.  
(beat)  
Is it true?

ANGLE ON: The Driver as he turns left and the headlights illuminate a mound of Billy's personal belongings at the curb along with sheet music littering the street.

DRIVER  
Whoa.

The cab stops in front of the house.

Billy and Gina eye the items strewn about.

DRIVER (CONT'D)  
Is this the address?

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - CONTINUOUS

Carole, robed, sits on the front stairs, puffing on a pipe, eyeing the taxi idling in front of the house.

INT. YELLOW CAB - CONTINUOUS

Billy locks eyes with Carole, before turning to Gina.

BILLY  
(smile)  
How about a scoop of ice cream,  
Jinxy-Pinks?

GINA  
I want you to answer my question.

BILLY  
I will. I promise. C'mon, have a  
scoop of ice cream with you father.  
(off Gina's nod/to Driver)  
Take us to Farrell's.

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - CONTINUOUS

Carole watches the taxi pull away. Angered, she stands and throws her pipe at the taxi.

CAROLE  
Come back here you cheatin'  
scoundrel!

EXT. FARRELL'S ICE CREAM PARLOR - LATER

Establishing shot.

INT. FARRELL'S ICE CREAM PARLOR - LATER

Billy and Gina sit in a booth, spooning two banana splits.

GINA  
Do you love her?

BILLY  
Of course I still love your mother.

GINA  
The woman you took to Paris.

BILLY  
No. I don't love her.

GINA  
Then why'd you do it?

Billy pauses for a moment, sipping on a glass of water.

BILLY  
You're too young to--

GINA  
I'm not too young!

Uncomfortable pause as Billy eyes his defiant young woman.

BILLY  
Honestly. I was lonely.

GINA  
Then come home.

BILLY  
I'm an entertainer, Jinxy. How do  
you think the bills get paid?

GINA  
Mom says you don't give her any  
money.

BILLY

(smile)

Is that what you believe?

Gina shakes her head in the negative.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Now, I have a question for you.

(off Gina's look)

Did you meet Ira today at school?

(off her nod)

He told me you refused to sing.

GINA

(looks down)

I was nervous and I don't know him.

BILLY

Are you telling me that my dream of us touring together is never going to happen due to you getting nervous?

Gina, intrigued, locks eyes with Billy.

GINA

Touring together? You and me?  
Singing?

BILLY

No, juggling.

They share a light/tender moment.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Do you believe in me, Gina?

GINA

Yes.

BILLY

Then believe me when I tell you that you're good enough, and I look forward to introducing you to my audience. How does that sound?

GINA

(blushing)

Good.

BILLY

But first things first, right?

GINA

Right. Wait, what am I agreeing to?

BILLY  
 Nothing until you work with Ira.  
 (smile/off Gina's nod)  
 ...eat your ice cream.

We pull back and away.

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - LATER THAT NIGHT

A taxi idles at the curb.

Billy and Gina stand near his scattered pile of belongings.

GINA  
 You're not coming in?

BILLY  
 She keeps a gun under her pillow.  
 Would you go in?

GINA  
 What about your stuff?

BILLY  
 I'll have someone pick it up in the  
 morning.

Uneasy pause as they share a somber moment.

GINA  
 Will you ever come back?

BILLY  
 That's not entirely up to me,  
 Jinxy.  
 (beat)  
 Let's just worry about tomorrow,  
 okay?

GINA  
 What's happening tomorrow?  
 (off his look)  
 I'll be there.

A sheet of music is blown against his shoe. He picks it up.

BILLY  
 Damn. All of it?  
 (off Gina's nod)  
 She's crazy, but I still love that  
 woman.

GINA  
 You ain't that sane yourself.

BILLY  
 (smile)  
 So you noticed?

They embrace before Gina crosses to the front door. Once there, she turns to see Billy picking up his sheet music.

ANGLE ON: Billy picking up the sheet music along with TAXI DRIVER #2, before Gina's hand comes into frame and she begins to pick up the sheet music alongside them.

A few beats later, the front door opens and Cee-Cee exits in her pj's, and also helps to pick up the sheet music.

The don't speak, but the admiration and love for their father is apparent.

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - MORNING

Gina, wearing a school uniform, toting her backpack, hustles into the kitchen and pours a glass of orange juice.

GINA  
C'mon, Cee-Cee, we're late!

A beat later, Cee-Cee, groggy, also in uniform, pulling on her jacket, enters the kitchen.

CEE-CEE  
We're always late.

CAROLE (O.S.)  
Take it all!

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - CONTINUOUS

Gina exits, followed by Cee-Cee.

At the curb we see two AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEN loading a U-Haul truck with Billy's items.

Carole, in her robe, hair in rollers, watches them.

CAROLE  
Get all of his shit out of my yard!  
All of it!

Carole turns to see Gina and Cee-Cee approaching.

CAROLE (CONT'D)  
There they are.

Gina and Cee-Cee stop a few feet away from her.

GINA  
We're going to school.

Carole, bitter, eyes them with a scrutinizing glare.

CAROLE

Don't think I didn't see you two  
out here helping him last night.

(beat)

For all I care, both of you can go  
live with him since you're all  
palsy-walsy!

CEE-CEE

We were only trying to help.

CAROLE

Who's helping me? Huh?

Uncomfortable pause before...

GINA

We have to go.

CAROLE

(snickers)

Ain't that the truth.

Carole steps aside and the girls walk past, glancing back at  
her and the U-Haul truck.

CAROLE (CONT'D)

(to movers)

Get it all! Hey, you, come here!

Carole reaches into her pocket and produces a \$20 bill as one  
of the movers crosses to her.

EXT. HIGHLAND HALL HIGH SCHOOL - LATER

Many HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS mill about in the front of the  
school.

ANGLE ON: Gina and Cee-Cee approaching.

CEE-CEE

I'll see you after school.

Gina trots off and enters the school.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Gina sits amongst many other STUDENTS, listening to the  
TEACHER drone on about an assignment due date.

She checks the analog clock on the wall: 3:14

SPUTNIK (O.S.)

(whispers)

Are you going?

Gina turns to Sputnik sitting next to her.

                          SPUTNIK (CONT'D)  
                           You should go.

The bell rings and the Students gather their things.

EXT. HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Students file out of the school along with Gina and Sputnik in tow.

                          CEE-CEE (O.S.)  
                           Gina!

Gina turns to see Cee-Cee closing.

                          CEE-CEE (CONT'D)  
                           Are you ready to go?

Pregnant pause as Gina eyes Cee-Cee and then Sputnik.

                          SPUTNIK  
                           She has afterschool detention, so  
                           I'll walk home with you.

                          CEE-CEE  
                           She does? What'd you do?

                          SPUTNIK  
                           I'll tell you about it on the way.

Sputnik ushers Cee-Cee away, turning only to wink at Gina and gestures for her to go.

After a couple beats, Gina turns in the opposite direction and hustles off.

EXT. IRA'S STUDIO ON VENTURA BLVD. - LATER

Gina, eyeing the business card, stops in front of a 70's two-story office building.

INT. IRA'S STUDIO ON VENTURA BLVD. - MOMENTS LATER

A door opens and Gina steps into the studio.

                          GINA  
                           I'm here.

Ira sits at his piano, looks up, stands.

                          IRA  
                           I see.

Gina reaches into her backpack as she crosses to him, producing several 45s: Donna Summer, Linda Ronstadt, Roberta Flack, and Joni Mitchell.

GINA  
I brought these.

IRA  
Gina, do you see a phonograph in this room?  
(off Gina's look)  
A record player?

GINA  
Oh.  
(looks around)  
No.

IRA  
However, we do have a piano.

GINA  
(re: 45s)  
I want to sing these songs.

IRA  
You will. I insist. But only after you've learned how to sing properly, and you can perform the standards at an acceptable level of competency.  
(beat)  
We will meet everyday afterschool for approximately 45 minutes. Will that be a problem?  
(re: 45s)  
Please, put those away.

Ira produces a tablet sized folded sheet of paper from his shirt pocket and hands it to her.

GINA  
What are the standards?

IRA  
(proffers paper)  
He wants you to stop by after rehearsal.

Gina stows the 45s and the sheet of paper in her backpack.

IRA (CONT'D)  
Shall we begin?

INT. BILLY'S OAK HILL APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Gina eyes the Life Magazine framed photo resting against the wall above the faux fireplace.



BILLY (O.S.)  
So how was your first day?

Billy sits on the sofa, lights a rolled cigarette.

GINA  
Good.  
(re: framed picture)  
Why do you keep it?

Billy takes a drag from his cig, gazes at the framed picture.

BILLY  
It's a marker...  
(off Gina's look)  
...in my life. A reminder of what  
could have been.

GINA  
Aren't you trying to forget it?

Billy pauses for a moment, reflective.

BILLY  
Does it look like I'm trying to  
forget it?  
(beat/smile)  
So, do you like him?

GINA  
He's cool.

BILLY  
Ira will help you get to where you  
need to be.

GINA  
(turns)  
Dad, I want to sing songs like  
Donna Summer, Linda Ronstadt or--

BILLY  
Are they asking you to go on tour  
with them? Donna Summer doesn't  
know who you are, I do.  
(beat)  
You should go home now. I don't  
want your mother showing up here.

GINA  
She doesn't know where you live.

BILLY  
(stands)  
Lesson #1 - Never-ever  
underestimate your mother.

Gina, sulky, picks up her backpack, crosses to the door.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
 (off her look)  
 Look, learn the standards first and  
 then we'll see about adding a few  
 of those disco tunes--

GINA  
 Thank you, Dad!

She rushes forward, almost knocking him over. They embrace.

BILLY  
 Get on home now and don't tell her  
 where I live...

Gina exits.

GINA  
 I won't!

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - LATER THAT NIGHT  
 Gina quietly enters the dimly lit living room.

CAROLE (O.S.)  
 Where were you?

Gina turns. Carole, wine glass in hand, sits in the shadows.

GINA  
 I...I had detention and then I  
 studied with a few friends. We have  
 a test tomorrow.

CAROLE  
 Really?

GINA  
 Yes, ma'am--

Gina relieved, walks off.

CAROLE  
 (beat)  
 If I ever hear about you being at  
 the Oak Hill apartments again, you  
 won't be welcomed in this house.

Gina stops, turns.

GINA  
 Who told you?

CAROLE  
 Did you hear what I said?  
 (off Gina's nod)  
 Good-night.

After a beat, Gina crosses to her bedroom door.

INT. GINA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gina opens the door. The light is on and SPUTNIK is sitting on her bed reading an Ebony Magazine.

SPUTNIK  
(stands)  
I didn't tell her about the singing lessons, I swear.

Gina closes the door.

GINA  
Shhh...

SPUTNIK  
I'm locked out. My parents are in San Diego until tomorrow. Can I stay here tonight?

Gina removes her backpack and jacket.

GINA  
(sullen)  
Sure.

SPUTNIK  
Are you okay?

GINA  
(utters)  
How does she know where he lives? She must've followed me.

SPUTNIK  
I don't think so, Gina. I've been here all afternoon and she hasn't left.  
(off Gina's smile)  
What're you smiling about?

GINA  
I just failed Lesson #1.

Off Sputnik's quizzical gaze.

INT. GINA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Gina and Sputnik lie in bed, gazing up at the ceiling.

SPUTNIK  
...but what about graduation?

GINA  
Of course I'll graduate, but once  
it's over I'm going on tour.

SPUTNIK  
She'll hate you.

From Gina's POV we see the shadow of two feet outside of her  
bedroom door.

GINA  
I don't care.

After a beat, the shadow under the door moves on.

GINA (CONT'D)  
Hey, you got anything?

SPUTNIK  
(sigh)  
Every time you and your mother get  
into it you wanna--

GINA  
Do you?

Sputnik smiles and then rolls out of bed and crosses to her  
backpack and produces a joint.

SPUTNIK  
I'm your best friend, right?

Gina, giddy, hops up and shoves clothing on the floor at the  
base of her bedroom door.

GINA  
Always.

Sputnik opens a window.

Gina grabs a small desk fan and turns it on, pointing it  
towards the open window.

Sputnik lights the joint and takes a hit before passing it.

SPUTNIK  
My mom says your dad was an  
absolute heart throb.

Gina takes a drag and returns the joint.

SPUTNIK (CONT'D)  
I mean, he's still handsome now,  
but I saw a picture of him when he  
was really young and--  
(drag on joint)  
--oh mi-god, he was so sexy, and  
those eyes...I got a little heated.  
Am I grossing you out?

GINA  
 (pause/smile)  
 I love you, Sputs.

SPUTNIK  
 (proffers joint)  
 You're grossed out, aren't you?

Gina takes a deep drag on the joint and blows the smoke out of the window.

GINA  
 You wanna know what I see when I look at him?  
 (off Sputnik's nod)  
 I see a man who was born thirty years too soon.

Gina takes another drag on the joint.

SPUTNIK  
 That's silly.  
 (beat)  
 If he was born thirty years later you wouldn't be here and we wouldn't be having this conversation. So, there you have it.

GINA  
 I have what?

SPUTNIK  
 Contrary to what Mr. Eckstine believes, I'm not spacey.

Gina smiles and then begins to laugh, smoke billowing from her lips.

SPUTNIK (CONT'D)  
 What's so funny?

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - GINA'S BDRM - CONTINUOUS

Gina and Sputnik play wrestle through the open window.

SPUTNIK  
 What'd I say? Tell me...

We slowly move up to the stars and the moon above as we...

GINA (V.O.)  
 I'll spare you the boring rehearsal  
 scenes and just tell you that I  
 finished my private lessons,  
 graduated from high school...

FADE TO BLACK:

WE HEAR TWO SOFT CLICKS OF A TONGUE.

FADE IN:

INT. UNKNOWN CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

Many PATRONS sit at the tables and bar, watching Gina (19), wearing an evening gown, front and center, with Billy, suited, standing a few behind her. Behind Billy is his band, playing Michael Legrand's "Pieces of Dreams".

GINA (V.O.)  
 ...and my father made good on his  
 promise...we went on tour.

ANGLE ON: Billy, eyeing the back of Gina's head as she hits the first few notes of the song.

GINA  
 (sings)  
 ...when will you find, what's on  
 the tip of your mind...

Gina goes a bit flat on a note and Billy softly clicks his tongue, bringing her up a note or two.

ANGLE ON: Gina, hearing the tongue clicks, uncomfortably adjusts her vocals.

INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

Applause is heard as Gina, perturbed, walks backstage, followed by Billy and then the band.

GINA  
 I'm trying my best.

BILLY  
 Well it's not good enough.

GINA  
 I get nervous with you standing  
 behind me like that...  
 (mocks tongue clicks)  
 I can't concentrate.

BOBBY, middle-aged black man, stoic, the pianist, chimes in.

BOBBY  
Give her some time, B.

BILLY  
Give her some time? She's  
embarrassing me out there.

CHARLIE, middle aged cool looking black man, slick hair, the drummer, crosses to Gina, who is getting emotional.

CHARLIE  
The girl's only nineteen and you  
got her singing these standards  
that are well beyond her years, B.

BILLY  
Are you on her side too?

Bobby and Charlie, standing on each side of an emotional Gina, stare down Billy.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
I should fire all of you.

BOBBY  
And then where would you be?

Charlie offers Gina his handkerchief.

GINA  
Thank you, Charlie.

BILLY  
(leans in/to Bobby)  
You need to work with her.

Billy, frustrated, walks off.

CHARLIE  
You're doing fine, Gina. B's a hard-  
ass when it comes to his music, but  
he means well.

GINA  
I feel like quitting.

CHARLIE  
Hey...quittin's not an option.  
We're in this together. Okay?

GINA  
Okay.

Charlie walks off, toting his drum sticks.

BOBBY  
Let me know when you're ready to  
put some work in.

GINA  
 (wiping away tears)  
 I'm ready now.

BOBBY  
 No you're not. I've been doin' this  
 a long time, Ms. Gina, and I know  
 that tryin' to sing when you're  
 upset is a god-awful waste of time.  
 (beat)  
 Now go on back to your room and get  
 some rest.  
 (walks off)  
 I'll see you in the morning.

We stay with Gina.

INT. A DIFFERENT CONCERT HALL - A DIFFERENT NIGHT

Gina sings as Billy stands a couple feet behind her while she  
 once again sings, "Pieces of Dreams," eyes darting as if  
 trying to see Billy and listen for the tongue clicks that  
 soon follow: Click click click

Her shoulders slightly droop in disappointment, as Bobby and  
 Charlie watch.

INT. A SMALLER HALL - A DIFFERENT NIGHT

Gina, once again, defiantly sings, "Pieces of Dreams," with  
 Billy behind her, tongue clicks are heard as a tear streams  
 down her cheek.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT SAME NIGHT

Gina aggressively knocks on a hotel room door.

BILLY (O.S.)  
 Who is it?

GINA  
 It's me.

Gina, visibly annoyed, listens as we hear someone cross to  
 the door and open it.

BILLY  
 Come in.

Billy, shirt open, belt loosened, turns and crosses to the  
 sofa. Gina follows after him.



BILLY (CONT'D)  
It's over on the counter.

Gina eyes the lines of cocaine on the coffee table along with a playing card and rolled dollar bill.

GINA  
(distracted)  
What's on the counter?

BILLY  
Your last check and a bus ticket  
back to California.  
(beat)  
That's what you came here for,  
right?  
(re: cocaine)  
Just so you know, I control it, it  
doesn't control me.

Uncomfortable pause as Gina turns and eyes the envelope on the counter with her name on it.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
That's why you're here, right?

GINA  
I'm not quitting.  
(beat)  
When are you going to stop standing  
behind me?

BILLY  
When are you going to start taking  
this more seriously?

GINA  
I am.

Billy cuts another line of cocaine.

BILLY  
Are you? That's not what Bobby  
says.  
(beat)  
Make me go away, Jinxy.

Billy snorts a line, distracting her.

GINA  
How?

Billy smiles, cocaine residue on his upper lip.

BILLY  
(snorts another line)  
That's Lesson #2.

INT. THE FAIRFIELD HOTEL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Gina, visibly frustrated, walks with purpose as she turns and enters a small lounge.

INT. SMALL EMPTY LOUNGE #1 - CONTINUOUS

Gina enters to find another JAZZ BAND rehearsing.

ANGLE ON: The handsome drummer, eyeing Gina. They make eye contact for a few beats before she turns and exits.

INT. SMALL EMPTY LOUNGE #2 - LATER

Bobby sits at his piano, scribbling notes on sheet music before he closes the book.

We hear heels clicking, drawing near. Bobby looks up to see Gina, defiant, walk through the door and cross to him.

GINA

I'm ready.

Bobby looks around the empty lounge before re-opening his music book.

BOBBY

Very well. So am I, Ms. Gina.

Gina scurries onstage and stands next to the piano.

Bobby begins to play "Pieces of Dreams" as we...

GINA (V.O.)

Lesson #2. You can't improve your situation unless you're willing to put in the extra work.

EXT. THE FAIRMONT HOTEL - DALLAS - NIGHT

Establishing shot of the Fairmont (1970's).

"Pieces of a Dream" continues, sung by Gina.

INT. THE FAIRMONT HOTEL - DALLAS - NIGHT

Billy, suited, followed by Gina in a flowing gown, and the other Band members, cross the casino floor and through double doors...

INT. THE FAIRMONT HOTEL - DALLAS - NIGHT

"Pieces of a Dream" continues, sung by Gina.

The back stage is crowded with PATRONS, GROUPIES, HOTEL PERSONNEL, who usher them towards the stage. An attractive BLACK FEMALE EMPLOYEE steps into frame.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE  
(to Billy)  
Right this way, Mr. B.

Gina eyes the flirty employee before looking past her to see a recognizable handsome and dashing white man, brown hair, 70's moustache, standing near the bar, drink in hand, watching her. His name is ZAR, the drummer of the jazz band she walked in on during their rehearsal.

Gina, still following after Billy, can't help but look back and smile at this handsome unknown stranger.

CHARLIE  
(leans in)  
Concentrate on the music, Gina.

"Pieces of a Dream" continues, sung by Gina.

INT. THE FAIRFIELD HOTEL - DALLAS - LATER

Gina sings a full throated and confident rendition of "Pieces of a Dream", striking each note with ownership. Billy, standing behind her, listens intently just before a slight smile creases his lips.

After a beat, Billy turns and walks off the stage, which doesn't go unnoticed by Bobby and Charlie, who share a knowing glance.

Gina finishes the song and the AUDIENCE enthusiastically applauds her efforts.

Gina, pleased, blushing, and excited, catches the eye of Zar as she glances around the club. She curtsies before...

BOBBY  
Gina!

Gina turns to Bobby, who gestures to the spot where Billy stood.

Gina smiles, then turns to see Billy standing off-stage, smoking a cigarette. He winks. She glows.

INT. THE FAIRFIELD HOTEL - PENTHOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Billy stands next to a piano as Bobby plays "I Apologize", and Billy swoons the PARTY-GOERS (especially the women) with his smooth baritone.

Drinks are aplenty as Gina and the other band members mingle amongst the crowd.

From Billy's POV, he watches as Gina and Zar make a beeline to each other and begin to chat.

ANGLE ON: Gina and Zar.

ZAR  
(extends hand)  
Hi, I'm Zar.

GINA  
Gina.

He kisses her hand.

ZAR  
Why were you in such a rush  
yesterday? I saw you walk in.

GINA  
Wrong door.

ZAR  
(suggestive)  
Was it?

Billy hits the final notes on the song and the Party-goers enthusiastically applaud.

BILLY  
Thank you.

Billy immediately crosses to Gina and Zar at the bar.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
(to Zar)  
Who is this talking to my daughter?

ZAR  
I'm--

GINA  
His name is, Zar.

BILLY  
Zar? Are you a musician, Zar?  
(to Bartender)  
Give me a seltzer water.

ZAR  
Drummer. By the way, I'm a big fan  
of your--

BILLY  
What are your intentions with my  
daughter?

GINA

Dad?!

(to Zar)

You don't have to answer that.

The BARTENDER slides the seltzer water across the bar.

BARTENDER

Here you are, Mr. B.

BILLY

(to Bartender)

Thank you.

(to Zar)

Yes, you do, if you plan on seeing my daughter again.

ZAR

(utters)

We...we just met.

Gina, embarrassed, walks off.

BILLY

(smile/to Zar)

Thanks for coming.

Billy turns and follows after Gina.

INT. THE FAIRFIELD - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Gina steps into an empty elevator and presses the button for the 9th floor.

The doors begin to close as Billy slips inside. They stand in silence as the doors close and the elevator ascends.

BILLY

You need to stay focused on the music.

GINA

I am focused.

Uncomfortable pause.

BILLY

(smiles)

I couldn't do this twenty-years ago, ride in the main elevator, stay in a fancy hotel, let alone the Fairfield.

(beat)

You've got it so good and you don't even know it.

The elevator stops and a beautiful black WOMAN in a yellow dress enters and stands between them.

## WOMAN IN ELEVATOR

Good-evening.

It is now that Gina recognizes the woman in the yellow dress as the woman who led them to the stage earlier that night.

BILLY

Evening.

GINA

Hi.

(re: buttons)

Floor?

The woman doesn't respond as the elevator doors close.

Gina discreetly eyes the woman between them.

BILLY

Have you spoken to your mother lately?

GINA

No.

BILLY

You should call her.

GINA

I will.

The elevator stops and the doors open.

BILLY

(to woman)

After you.

The woman in the yellow dress exits first and turns left.

Gina exits next, followed by Billy.

INT. 9TH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

They stand outside of the elevator.

GINA

(nervous)

Can we add a Donna Summer song to the set?

BILLY

(smile)

These folks don't come to my show to hear a Donna Summer cover.

Over Billy's shoulder, Gina watches the woman in the yellow dress stop in front of a door at the end of the hallway, turn, and gaze back at Billy.

GINA  
Why did she stop in front of your room?

Billy glances over his shoulder.

BILLY  
When you speak to your mother, only tell her what she needs to know.

GINA  
What's that supposed to mean?

BILLY  
(kisses her on the cheek)  
It means we need to be on the same sheet of music when we're on the road, Jinxy.

Gina eyes the woman in the yellow dress. After a beat, Billy gently touches her face and directs her eyes back to him.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
I'll talk to the band. Maybe we could put something together.

GINA  
Are you trying to bribe me?

BILLY  
Of course not, Jinxy-Pinks. I'm just making sure that you understand the gravity of your actions.  
(wink/walks off)  
I'll see you in the morning. Don't be late for rehearsal.

Billy turns and crosses to the Woman in the yellow dress, opens his room door and they enter.

Gina watches them enter the room, waits for their door to close before pressing the down button on the elevator.

INT. THE FAIRFIELD HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Zar, finishing his drink, throws cash on the bar and crosses towards the EXIT.

ANGLE ON: Gina exits the elevator and eyes Zar walking off.

GINA  
Zar! Zar!

Gina watches as Zar slows and then turns. They share a warm smile.

INT. THE FAIRFIELD HOTEL - ELEVATOR - THE NEXT MORNING

The Woman in the yellow dress, fussing with her hair and clutching her purse and pumps in the other hand, enters the elevator to find Billy, suited and dressed for the day, holding the door.

BILLY  
C'mon, you're making me late.

Billy pushes the button for the lobby and the elevator doors begin to close, but they are parted by a male hand.

The doors reopen, and Zar, disheveled, steps inside.

Billy and Zar lock eyes just as Gina, wearing a dress and hopping as she puts on a shoe, bounds into the elevator.

The elevator doors close behind her.

Gina and Billy lock eyes.

The elevator thumps loudly before descending. The woman in the yellow dress is frightened by the abrupt motion.

WOMAN IN YELLOW DRESS  
That was scary...

GINA  
(to Billy)  
It must be the gravity.

Gina smiles and gives Billy her rendition of the Mr. B wink.

EXT. FAIRFIELD HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Billy and Gina cross to an awaiting cab.

Billy kisses the woman in the yellow dress and she walks off.

INT. YELLOW CAB - CONTINUOUS

Billy slides into the cab and watches the bodies of Gina and Zar come together for a few beats, obviously kissing.

BILLY  
(annoyed)  
We ain't got all day.

Their bodies separate and Gina slides into the cab, touching up her lipstick.



The cab pulls away from the curb. They sit in silence.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
...a white boy?

GINA  
Is he? I didn't notice.

They ride along in silence for a few more beats.

BILLY  
Zar the drummer...

GINA  
At least I know his name.

Gina shoots him a look...

BILLY  
(smile)  
I didn't ask.

They share a chuckle.

INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

CHYRON: One month later / Los Angeles, CA

The mature AUDIENCE is rapt as Billy and Gina dance about the stage and the band swings to, "I got a date with rhythm." Billy steps up to the mic and the WOMEN in the audience swoon. Gina watches with admiration as his stage presence takes command.

Gina, singing backup, gazes out at the audience before spotting a recognizable stoic face in the shadows. It's Carole.

Gina smiles just as Carole turns and walks off.

EXT. FAIRFIELD HOTEL / POOLSIDE - MIAMI, FLORIDA - DAY

CHYRON: Miami, FL

MUSIC CONTINUES.

Billy, Bobby and Charlie sit poolside, still suited, ties undone, shirts unbuttoned, sip on well drinks.

They laugh and smile before Billy spots Zar, wearing swim trunks and toting a towel, crossing to the other side of the pool where Gina sits in a lounge.

Billy, alerted, begins to stand just as Bobby grabs his arm and stops him.

BOBBY  
 She can't be your little girl  
 forever. You know that, right?

BILLY  
 He followed us to Miami?

Billy, eyeing Gina and Zar across the pool, slowly returns to his chair.

CHARLIE  
 (re: drinks/to Billy)  
 It looks like you need something  
 stronger than a seltzer water.

BOBBY  
 (to Charlie)  
 You know B stopped drinking years  
 ago. Don't encourage him.  
 (to Billy)  
 I'll ask around.

Billy, brooding, watches as Zar leans in and kisses Gina.

GINA (V.O.)  
 I didn't know it at the time, but  
 my past and my future were about to  
 collide...

Gina, in Zar's arms, eyes Billy watching her across the pool.

GINA (V.O.)  
 In retrospect, I have a feeling he  
 knew.

Music fades.

EXT. DETROIT CONCERT HALL - DUSK

CHYRON: DETROIT, MI

Snow falls as cars park and PEOPLE, dressed for a concert,  
 enter the hall.

INT. DETROIT CONCERT HALL, DETROIT, MI - NIGHT

Gina and Billy onstage with the band, sing a duet, "Watch  
 What Happens," by Michele Legrand.

The mature audience applauds as they finish the song and hug  
 on stage.

They then turn and bow to the audience along with the band.

From Gina's POV we see Zar standing in the rear of the club.  
 She smiles and he returns the pleasantries.

Billy, standing next to her, eyes Zar.

INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - THE NEXT DAY

Bobby fingers the piano as Billy hums along. The rest of the band, including Charlie, prepare for rehearsal.

BILLY  
So what'd you find out?

BOBBY  
They say he's not much of a drummer  
or a musician. He's more of a  
programmer--

BILLY  
What's a programmer?

BOBBY  
It's that new thing where you  
program the music into one of those  
recorder things and it plays it  
back. Most of the new artists use  
it.

BILLY  
I see...

We hear heels clicking as they look up to see Gina approach with a broad smile, clutching something in her arms.

GINA  
Sorry I'm late...

BILLY  
You know I don't need you to go on  
tour, right?

GINA  
I'm sorry.  
(beat/re: Bobby)  
Have you spoken to him?

BILLY  
About what?

Gina opens her arms to reveal a Donna Summer album.

GINA  
I was thinking, since we're going  
to San Francisco in a few months,  
and everyone loves Donna Summer  
there, we could do--

BILLY  
I was thinking, out of respect for  
your bandmates, you could be on  
time.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)  
 (walks off/to band)  
 Let's take it from the top.

Gina, dejected, glances over at Bobby, then back to Billy.

GINA  
 You're not going to help me, are  
 you?

Billy locks eyes with Gina before crossing back to her.

BILLY  
 Of course I'm going to help you,  
 but you need to be patient.

GINA  
 (utters)  
 I'm ready now.  
 (beat)  
 Zar thinks that you're holding me  
 back.

Gina looks away. Billy stares her down.

BILLY  
 (pause)  
 Is that what he thinks?  
 (beat)  
 And who exactly is this ZAR to you?

GINA  
 He's a friend who thinks I can get  
 a record deal.

They lock eyes.

BILLY  
 A record deal? I have a record  
 deal, Jinxy. I've had several  
 record deals, and for the most  
 part, I've been very fortunate and  
 successful. However, my record  
 deals aren't transferable based on  
 my bloodline. So, if that  
 opportunity ever arises for you, it  
 would behoove you to be well  
 prepared and at the top of your  
 game...which takes time...and quite  
 frankly, Ms. Eckstine, you could  
 use a little more seasoning.  
 (to band)  
 Take it from the top.  
 (to Gina)  
 Are you rehearsing today?

Uncomfortable pause as the band awaits her response.

GINA  
 How much more seasoning?

BILLY  
I'll let you know.

EXT. THE FONTAINE LOUNGE - SAN FRANCISCO, CA - NIGHT

The club is lively. Parking lot full. VALETS trying to keep up with the traffic. On the marquee: Tonight - Billy Eckstine / (smaller font below) with special guest, Gina Eckstine

INT. THE FONTAINE HOTEL - SAN FRANCISCO, CA - NIGHT

CHYRON: Six months later

The club is crowded, standing room only, as Billy's band performs, "All of Me."

Billy and Gina perform it as a duet, touching the hearts of the PATRONS.

After a few more bars the song closes and they take their bow as the audience stands and applauds in appreciation.

Billy then turns to the band to show appreciation. They take their bow.

Bobby, smiles, gazes out at the audience before his smile sours. He turns and locks eyes with Billy.

Billy, sensing this change, follows Bobby's eyes to the front of the stage where Zar hands Gina a bouquet of flowers.

BILLY (O.S.)  
He's not just a friend, Jinxy.

INT. THE FONTAINE HOTEL / BACK STAGE - LATER

Gina sits alone in a chair. Billy, visibly agitated, paces. Bobby and Charlie stand in the b.g., changing their clothes and packing up.

BILLY  
Friends don't follow friends all over the goddamn--

GINA  
He's my boyfriend.

BILLY  
Boyfriend? When did this happen?  
(to Bobby and Charlie)  
Are you listening to this?

Bobby and Charlie, on cue, grab their bags and leave, wanting no part of this conversation.

GINA  
A couple months ago.

BILLY  
I hope he's not still filling your  
head with this record deal  
nonsense.

GINA  
It's not nonsense.

Uncomfortable pause as Billy gazes upon his little girl.

BILLY  
(smile)  
You can't wait, can you?  
(off Gina's smile)  
Same'ole Jinxy...

GINA  
I'm not a little girl anymore.

BILLY  
You're right. You're not, and I  
need to accept it.  
(beat)  
Do you love him?  
(off Gina's nod)  
Okay. Well, at least you're not  
talkin' about marriage.  
(pause/off Gina's look)  
Jinxy?

GINA  
We've discussed it.

BILLY  
You've discussed it? Does he know  
you just turned twenty-one years  
old?

Pregnant pause as Billy eyes Gina's profile.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Are you pregnant?

GINA  
No.

Billy paces.

BILLY  
You just met Zar-ibus a few months  
ago!

GINA  
It's Zar. He's not a dinosaur--

BILLY  
He's promising you a record deal,  
isn't he? I told you--

GINA  
Seasoning. I heard you the first  
time.

Billy gives her a scrutinizing glare.

GINA (CONT'D)  
No offense, Daddy, but I don't want  
to be a jazz singer for the rest of  
my life.

BILLY  
This jazz singer put all of you  
through private school.

GINA  
I didn't mean it like that--

BILLY  
Ain't no other way to mean it.  
(beat)  
How's he gonna help you get a deal?

GINA  
He says he knows people.

Billy pours himself a glass of water.

GINA (CONT'D)  
Nothing's gonna change, Daddy.

BILLY  
He better not get in my way. This  
is my tour and I set the rules.  
(beat)  
Does he love you?  
(off Gina's nod)  
When're you gonna tell your mother?

Pregnant pause before Billy lights a hand-rolled cigarette.

GINA  
Do I have to?

They share a smile.

INT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - DINING ROOM -NIGHT

Carole, scrutinizing glare directly into the camera.

CAROLE  
Is he still seeing that dirty black  
bitch?

Gina, sits across from her, forking the salad on her plate.

GINA  
Mom, we've got company.

Gina glances at Zar, who feigns listening, wears a tie & sweater, sitting next to her.

CAROLE  
I thought you two were getting married, so that makes him family.  
(beat)  
Do I need to repeat myself?

GINA  
No, I haven't seen her.

CAROLE  
(to Zar)  
Did she tell you that he took that stank dirty black bitch with him to Paris?

GINA  
Mom!

CAROLE  
What? Have I lied about somethin'?

ZAR  
No, she never mentioned it.

CAROLE  
I gave up my career in acting to raise all of his kids. I could've been famous by now, but no, I had to be the perfect wife and mother--

Gina scoffs.

CAROLE (CONT'D)  
Is there something you want to say, Jinxy? That's what he calls you, right?

GINA  
(to Zar)  
We should go.

CAROLE  
Has he made you a star yet?

GINA  
(stands)  
Tell everyone I said hello.



CAROLE

He ain't never cared about anybody  
but himself. You ain't gonna be a  
star standing in his shadow.

GINA

(to Zar)  
Let's go.

ZAR

(wiping his mouth/stands)  
Thank you for having us, Mrs.  
Eckstine.

CAROLE

(stern/to Zar)  
Sit down and finish your dinner.

Zar sits.

GINA

No, Zar, we're leaving!

CAROLE

(stands)  
Don't you raise your voice in my  
house!

The two women, glaring, are at a standoff.

GINA

You know what? I came here to  
introduce you to, Zar, tell you  
about my wedding...and then for  
some insane reason I thought you'd  
be happy for me. But all you care  
about, all you've ever cared about  
is yourself--

CAROLE

(scoffs)  
I guess me and your daddy were cut  
from the same cloth then.

Uncomfortable pause before...

GINA

I love you, but you weren't a good,  
and certainly not a perfect mother.

CAROLE

That's right...he was perfect--  
never home, pop by for Christmas,  
bring a few gifts and a tree--

GINA

Will you please stop talking about  
him and listen to what I'm saying  
to you?

CAROLE

I was here for you. I was here for  
all of you.

Gina eyes her mother as she looks away.

CAROLE (CONT'D)

Say what you gotta say and then get  
the hell out of my house. Zar can  
stay right here if he wants to.

Zar, uncomfortable, sips on his glass of wine.

GINA

Zar.

Zar abruptly pushes back from the table and stands.

ZAR

The food was delicious, Mrs.  
Eckstine.

Zar turns and crosses to the door, passing Gina.

GINA

(to Zar)

I'll be right out.

Zar opens the door and exits.

CAROLE

So, are you pregnant?

GINA

No! Why does everyone keep asking  
me that?

CAROLE

Then what you gettin' married for?

GINA

Because I love him.

Carole rolls her eyes.

GINA (CONT'D)

(beat)

If I sent you an invite, would you  
come?

Carole locks eyes with her daughter.

CAROLE

Is Mr. Be-bop gonna be there?

GINA

Why does that matter?

After a few beats, Gina, dejected, turns and exits in a huff.

EXT. THE ECKSTINE HOME/FOREST HILLS, CA - MOMENTS LATER

Gina exits, slamming the door behind her, crosses to Zar waiting next to an orange OPEL MANTA.

ZAR  
I like her.  
(off Gina's look)  
What?

Zar opens her car door.

SPUTNIK (O.S.)  
Gina!

Gina looks up to see SPUTNIK, 21, crossing the street in her early 80's attire, complete with big teased hair and colorful makeup.

GINA  
Sputnik!

ZAR  
(utters)  
Sputnik?

They hustle to share a huge hug.

SPUTNIK  
It's so good to see you.

GINA  
Likewise.  
(beat)  
Sputnik, this is Zar, my fiancé.

SPUTNIK  
Fiancé? Wow.

ZAR  
Nice to meet you...Sputnik?

SPUTNIK  
Mr. B nicknamed me Sputnik and it stuck.  
(to Gina)  
He's cute. Are you leaving?

GINA  
Uh, yes, we only stopped by to tell her about the wedding.

SPUTNIK  
Let me guess, it didn't go well.  
(beat)

(MORE)

SPUTNIK (CONT'D)  
 Why don't you two come over to my place? My parents are out of town and I've got the house to myself.

Gina locks eyes with her childhood friend.

GINA  
 (to Zar)  
 Do you mind?

ZAR  
 (checks watch)  
 No, we've got a little time before--

GINA  
 Do you mind picking me up in the morning? I'd love to spend a little girl time with Sputnik before we go back on the road.

ZAR  
 (beat)  
 Sure. Ten o'clock?

GINA  
 I'll be ready.

They share a kiss before Zar hops in the car and pulls off.

Once he's out of sight, Sputnik takes Gina's hand and they hustle across the street like teenage girls.

CUE: Donna Summer's "Bad Girls"

INT. SPUTNIK'S HOME - HER BEDROOM - LATER

The music continues as Sputnik and Gina dance and hop around as Gina belts out the song, hitting every note as Sputnik urges her on.

SPUTNIK  
 Beep beep, hey, toot toot...

EXT. SPUTNIK'S HOME - BACKYARD - LATER

The two friends sit in chairs next to a beautiful pool.

SPUTNIK  
 ...so, are you sure he's the one?

GINA  
 I think so.

Sputnik eyes Gina's profile.

SPUTNIK

If that's your answer, Ms. Gina,  
you're making a huge mistake.

GINA

He's my best friend...  
(off Sputnik's look)  
...best male friend.

SPUTNIK

Good catch.

GINA

That woman just drives me crazy.  
Why can't she just be happy for me?

We hear the doorbell ring from inside the house.

GINA (CONT'D)

(re: doorbell)

Are you expecting someone?

SPUTNIK

(smile)

I made a call.

(stands)

Come with me.

EXT. SPUTNIK'S HOME - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Ezzie, the good looking black male we saw earlier, afro comb  
in hair, Member's only jacket and jeans, toting a small paper  
bag, chewing on a toothpick, leans in to ring the doorbell  
again just as it is flung open.

SPUTNIK

Ezzie!

EZZIE

What's up, white girl.

Gina steps into frame. Ezzie definitely notices.

EZZIE (CONT'D)

Who this?

Ezzie hands the bag to Sputnik in return for a \$50 bill.

SPUTNIK

This is, Gina, my best friend.

EZZIE

What up, girl.

GINA

It's Gina, thank you.

EZZIE  
 Okay, Ms. Gina.  
 (produces small baggy from  
 pocket)  
 I got a special gift for you.

Ezzie proffers the small baggy containing a white substance.

SPUTNIK  
 We're not interested...

Gina takes the baggy. Sputnik curiously eyes Gina.

GINA  
 Thank you, Ezzie.

EZZIE  
 They call me Black Jesus.

GINA  
 (scoffs)  
 I don't.  
 (to Sputnik)  
 Let's go back inside.

Gina enters first, followed by Sputnik.

EZZIE  
 Yo, Gina...call me!

INT. SPUTNIK'S HOME - DINING ROOM - LATER

They sit at the dining room table as Gina separates four lines of cocaine on a mirror.

SPUTNIK  
 (concerned)  
 Are you serious?

GINA  
 I only tried it once in New York,  
 but I really didn't feel anything  
 besides getting a nose bleed.

SPUTNIK  
 So why are you doing it now? We  
 could just roll a few joints like  
 we used to after your mother got  
 under your skin--

GINA  
 C'mon, Sputs, try it with me.

SPUTNIK  
 No thanks. I've seen what it does  
 to people. Do you remember Jessica  
 Selvik? Well, I've heard that she's  
 selling herself on the strip.

GINA

That's because she lost control.  
 (picks up straw)  
 Besides, I've heard that Donna  
 Summer and all of the divas do it,  
 and they're not out there selling  
 their bodies.

Gina proffers the straw to Sputnik. She shakes her head.

GINA (CONT'D)

It's really not a big deal. Like I  
 said, I only got a nose bleed the  
 first time.

Gina leans in and snorts the first line, feeling the sting.

SPUTNIK

Are you okay?

Gina leans in again and snorts the second line before  
 dropping the straw and sitting upright.

We move in on Gina's eyes and facial expression as the  
 sensation fully engulfs her.

GINA (V.O.)

Well...it only burned a little the  
 second time before I understood why  
 they call him Black Jesus.

A silly school girl smile parts her ruby-red lips.

SPUTNIK

(concerned)  
 Gina?

GINA (V.O.)

I actually felt like going to  
 church.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. BLUE SKY - DAY

A 747 passenger plane roars past.

INT. 747 AIRPLANE - DAY

A BLACK CHOIR (10) is in the rear of the plane, robed, and  
 following Gina's lead as she sings a very spirited rendition  
 of Amen.

GINA (V.O.)  
Lesson #3 - stay away from Ezzie's  
shit.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SPUTNIK'S HOME - DINING ROOM -NIGHT

GOSPEL MUSIC CONTINUES: AMEN

Close on Gina, a silly smile on her face, feeling the effects of the cocaine.

SPUTNIK  
Gina?

INT. 747 AIRPLANE - DAY

The choir is in full swing as Gina claps her hands, stomps her feet and sings her heart out.

GINA (V.O.)  
Is it beginning to make sense now?

CUT TO:

INT. UNKNOWN CONCERT HALL - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

GOSPEL MUSIC CONTINUES: AMEN

Many FANS linger about, congratulating Billy and the band members. Gina, following behind Billy, shakes hands, receives hugs, and then...she eyes a young black standing in the rear.

GINA  
(to Billy)  
I have to use the bathroom.

BILLY  
Hurry back...they love you, Jinxy.

Gina crosses to the unknown black male, hands him a roll of \$20's, and receives a package.

GINA  
Hi, Ezzie.

EZZIE  
What's up, Gina...

INT. UNKNOWN CONCERT HALL - WOMEN'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GOSPEL MUSIC CONTINUES: AMEN



Gina, in a stall, dips her pinky into a white substance and snorts.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. 747 AIRPLANE - DAY

Gina, full gospel mode, sweat on her brow, belts.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

GOSPEL MUSIC CONTINUES: AMEN

Gina and Zar, wearing only their undergarments, sit upright in bed, snorting lines of cocaine from a handheld mirror.

They stare at the ceiling for a few beats before turning to each other and kiss passionately.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. 747 AIRPLANE - DAY

Gina and the Choir finish the song in a harmonizing flurry, stirring emotions and, of course, the Holy Ghost. ;)

GINA (V.O.)  
Ezzie wasn't Black Jesus, but damn  
his blow was good.

Gina, arms spread, looks directly at us.

DRIVER (O.S.)  
Have a good show, Ms. Eckstine.

We hear the sounds of traffic.

INT. TAXI-CAB - NIGHT

Gina sits in the backseat, dressed for a show, sniffs a finger nail worth of cocaine.

GINA  
Thanks.

Gina drops a \$20 bill over the seat and exits the cab.

INT. THE FAIRMONT HOTEL - LOS ANGELES - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Billy checks his watch. The band prepares to take the stage.

BOBBY  
I hope she went to the right hotel.

BILLY  
She'll be here.

In the b.g. we see Gina enter in a huff, removing her jacket, fussing with her hair, as she crosses to Billy.

GINA  
Sorry.

Billy eyes the residue of cocaine beneath her nose.

BILLY  
When did you start?

GINA  
Start what?

Billy taps his nose.

BILLY  
You remember what I said, right?  
You control it. Don't let it  
control you.

Charlie steps in and hands Gina his handkerchief.

GINA  
Thanks, Charlie.

Gina wipes away the residue.

BILLY  
Should I be worried?

GINA  
Not at all.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
...and now, please welcome to the  
stage, the Be-Bop King himself,  
Billy Eckstine, his daughter Gina  
Eckstine, and the Billy Eckstine  
band!

The PATRONS applaud as Billy leads them onto the stage.

The bright lights blind us as we...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A knife cuts through a dense piece of steak.

BILLY (O.S.)  
So what's your plan?

We move up to see Billy chomp down on the piece of steak.

On his left is Gina, and directly across from him, Zar. Half-eaten plates of food in front of them.

ZAR  
Well, after we get married, I've got a place in Los Angeles--

BILLY  
I meant with my daughter and her career.

Gina, curious, eyes Zar.

ZAR  
I have a few friends over at RCA, Epic, and Capitol.

Billy takes another bite of his steak.

BILLY  
I see. We've got three months left on this current tour, so--

ZAR  
Yeah...about that...we need to make a few adjustments to that schedule.

Billy, hearing this, drops his knife and fork, wipes mouth with his napkin.

BILLY  
Adjustments? I'm listening.

Billy shoots Gina a look.

ZAR  
I'm trying to get Gina a few headline gigs over the next three months. I'm updating her song list, finding some new material to take her to the next level.

BILLY  
(utters)  
The next level.  
(to Gina)  
Is this what you want?

GINA  
(beat/to Zar)  
Maybe we should wait until after the tour--

ZAR

Gina, we've already discussed this, sweetheart. You agreed, remember?

(beat/to Billy)

Oh, I almost forgot to thank you. Gina tells me you've offered to hold the wedding at your townhome? That's awfully generous of you.

Billy eyes Zar and then Gina, awaiting her response.

BILLY

You agreed to this?

(off Gina's silence)

After the wedding, we go our separate ways. No hard feelings.

GINA

(concerned)

What're you saying, Daddy?

BILLY

You're not hard of hearing, Jinxy.

ZAR

(pause)

This is probably the best for all of us, Gina. Without a hectic schedule between gigs, we may be able to record a few new tracks before the end of the year.

(to Billy)

When were you thinking, Mr. Eckstine? Gina and I were discussing a fall wedding--

BILLY

Tomorrow works for me.

GINA

Tomorrow?

Gina and Billy lock eyes.

ZAR

Mr. Eckstine, if I offended you--

BILLY

I don't like you, Zar, but apparently my daughter feels otherwise. So I'll tolerate you, but if I ever hear about you putting your hands on her or getting in the way of her success I'll put my foot so deep in your ass you'll cough up goddamn shoe polish.

(to waiter)

Check please.

Billy stands.

ZAR  
(stands)  
I resent that you think I would--

Gina places her hand on Zar's hand, silencing him.

GINA  
(stands)  
Daddy, we can't possibly organize a  
wedding that fast.

Billy pauses, turns to Gina, and then back to Zar before reaching into his jacket pocket, producing his wallet and dropping two-hundred dollars on the table.

BILLY  
(stands)  
I'm sure you and Mr. Next Level can  
make a few adjustments.

Billy walks off, leaving them alone at the table.

ZAR  
Where's he going?

GINA  
(calling after)  
It's his tee-time!

The chatter in the restaurant stops as Billy stops and turns back to Gina, locking eyes with his defiant daughter.

ZAR  
(to Gina)  
Golf? It's 9:30 at night.

GINA  
(eyeing Billy)  
He knows what I'm talking about.

After a few beats, Billy composes himself, turns and walks off as Gina watches.

The chatter in the restaurant resumes.

ZAR  
We don't need him. You're going to  
be bigger than he ever was. I'll  
make sure of it.  
(beat)  
Should we wait and get married on  
our own in the fall?

GINA  
No. We'll do it tomorrow.

Off Gina's defiant gaze...

EXT. BILLY'S TOWNHOME - THE COURTYARD - DAY

The MINISTER stands in the middle of the courtyard with Billy's suited band members subbing in for the Groomsmen and the Bridesmaids.

Zar, the groom, black tux, readjusts his shirt collar.

MINISTER  
No music?

BOBBY  
We've got it covered.

ANGLE ON:

Billy and Gina, standing behind a staircase. Gina's oversized dress is an 80's big white gown and veil.

BILLY  
Your dress is too big for you.

GINA  
I didn't have time to get it fitted.

Pregnant pause, before...

BILLY  
I'm sorry.

GINA  
Sorry about what?

BILLY  
I should've come home...

GINA  
...but...

BILLY  
I had three shows, Jinxy. How was I supposed to tell them that a black man hadn't paid his taxes and now his house was being taken from him and his family was gettin' thrown out into the street?

(beat)  
The world doesn't work that way for us, Jinxy. I would of just been another typical broke ass nigga' tryin' to run from the tax-man.

GINA  
Ain't that what they do?

BILLY  
(smile)  
You're too smart for your own good.  
(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

(beat)  
It's times like this when I really miss your mother.

GINA

You should call her.

BILLY

I just might do that.

GINA

(beat)  
I'm sorry for bringing it up.

BILLY

No...I should've brought it up years ago.

(beat)

You're gonna be a much better parent than I was, Jinxy.

GINA

So you'll get to be a better grandpa?

BILLY

I hope so. I really hope so.

(beat)

Ready?

Off Gina's nod we close on Billy as he puckers his lips and begins to whistle, "Here comes the Bride." On cue, the other band members join in and whistle Gina down the aisle.

Once they reach the altar, the whistling ends as Billy lifts her veil and then leans in.

BILLY (CONT'D)

(whispers)

You look gorgeous.

GINA

Thank you.

MINISTER

Who brings this woman to be married to this man?

BILLY

I do.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. 747 AIRPLANE - DAY

WE HEAR ONLY THE HUM OF THE JET ENGINE

It's a party scene in the air. Gina in her wedding dress, snorting lines of cocaine with Zar, still in his tux.

GINA (V.O.)  
Everything after that day was a blur...

Billy and the band perform, but no sound is heard.

Walking down the aisle is Redd Foxx and Richard Pryor, arguing and freebasing cocaine in complete silence.

Gina turns to her right to see her mother, Carole, dressed in her best Sunday outfit, arms crossed, watching Billy.

GINA (V.O.)  
...Zar and I got married and we moved to his place in the valley...

Suddenly a caramel colored hand comes into frame in front of Gina. She turns to see MUHAMMED ALI, smiling down at her with his hand extended.

Zar, excited to see the Champ, smiles broadly and attempts to shake his hand while calling out his name...again in silence.

GINA (V.O.)  
...my life was about to change and I had no idea what to expect.  
(beat)  
In this world I knew all of the players or at least I'd been introduced.

Ali brushes Zar's hand away and takes Gina's hand. She blushes.

THE SOUNDS OF THE PARTY ERUPTS, DROWNING OUT THE JET ENGINES.

ALI  
B, who's this beautiful lady?

Billy abruptly steps in and separates their hands.

BILLY  
That's my daughter. Now, you may be a prize fighter, but I'm a surprise fighter.

ALI  
I was just bein' cordial.

GINA (V.O.)  
I really thought I had it under control, but as you can see, Ezzie's blow had me trippin'.

Athena, the woman Billy took to Paris steps into frame and strokes Billy's hair.



Carole springs into action and pulls Athena away and they scrap in the aisle.

CAROLE  
Get away from my husband you dirty  
stank bitch!

SAMMY (O.S.)  
Billy, over here!

Billy turns to see SAMMY DAVIS JR, crossing to him from the rear of the plane.

BILLY  
Sammy! What're you doing here?

Gina watches as Billy and Sammy embrace.

SAMMY  
I want you to open for me up in  
Ohio!

FRANK (O.S.)  
Mr. B!

Billy, Sammy, Zar and Gina turn to see FRANK SINATRA, a few rows back, smoking a cigarette, stand.

ZAR  
(utters)  
That's Frank Sinatra...

BILLY  
Frank! When'd you get here?!

We hear the screams of three young WHITE TEENAGE GIRLS, hustling from the rear of the plane in poodle skirts and sweaters trying to push their way past Foxx and Pryor.

WHITE TEENAGE GIRLS  
Billy!

Behind the WTG's we see Gina's robed choir clapping and singing.

BILLY  
(re: WTG's)  
Keep them away from me!

Knock knock knock...

Gina, looks past the EMPTY seat next to her to see Sputnik, outside of her window, hair blowing, with clouds passing in the b.g.

YOUNG BILLY (O.S.)  
He's waiting for you.

The empty seat has now been occupied by YOUNG BILLY, 30, suited, as handsome as ever, staring back at her.

COMPLETE SILENCE AGAIN except for the roar of the jet engine.

GINA  
Who's waiting for me?  
(beat)  
Daddy? You're...you're so young.

YOUNG BILLY  
Why're you here, Jinxy?

Outside of the window, Sputnik smiles and beckons for Gina.

GINA  
I wanna be a star like you, Daddy.

YOUNG BILLY  
I'm not that special, but I know  
someone who is.  
(beat/smile)  
He's right outside that door.

GINA  
Who is? I only see, Sputnik.

Sputnik gestures again.

ZAR (O.S.)  
Look, it's Santa Claus!

They all turn to see a jolly BLACK SANTA CLAUS in the front of the plane, toting a large sack, rushing towards the melee.

SANTA CLAUS  
Who said I'm not real!

Angle on Young Billy standing in front of the EXIT door.

YOUNG BILLY  
He's waiting.

Gina stands and peers through the window at Sputnik and...

GINA  
Who's waiting?

Whoosh!!!

Young Billy opens the door and Gina's white dress and shoes are seen as she is whooshed away.

ZAR  
Gina!

EXT. BLUE SKIES - CONTINUOUS

Gina and Sputnik, holding hands and smiling, hair flowing in the wind, free-fall to the ground below.

SPUTNIK

Pull the rip-cord in ten seconds!

GINA

What?!

From Spud's POV we now see a parachute strapped to Gina's back.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Gina.

(beat)

Gina.

CUT TO:

INT. SAVINGS AND LOAN BANK - THE BATHROOM - DAY

Gina, wearing business attire, sits on the toilet, head resting against a wall, eyes closed.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Gina, are you okay?

GINA

(wakes up, rubs eyes)

I'll be right there.

Gina exits the stall, crosses to the mirror, straightens her clothes, hair, and checks for cocaine residue under her nose.

INT. SAVINGS AND LOAN BANK - DAY

Gina exits the bathroom and crosses the busy lobby of the bank to her teller window and sits.

CHYRON: Two Years Later

GAIL, (38), the bank Operations Manager, approaches.

GAIL

Are you okay?

GINA

I'm fine. Thanks.

Gina gazes through a window at an airplane flying overhead in the distance.

GAIL  
(re: customers)  
I'll need you to open your window.

GINA  
(opens teller window)  
Sorry.  
(beat)  
Next.

Several CUSTOMERS stand in line. EMILY, a white woman in her 50's approaches the window and slides her check deposit across the counter.

EMILY  
Hi. Deposit please.

GINA  
Sure.

Emily curiously eyes Gina as she completes the transaction, reading Gina's nameplate.

EMILY  
Are you Gina Eckstine? Your name is Gina, right?

GINA  
(taken aback, embarrassed)  
First name, Gina. Last name, Miller. No relation.

EMILY  
You look just like her.

Gina abruptly hands Emily a receipt.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
I saw your father at the Fairmont two years ago...

GINA  
I don't know who you're talking about. Next.

Emily, visibly confused, walks off.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT IN THE SFV - LATER

The apartment is disheveled. Clothes scattered about. Window blinds askew. Beer cans strewn about. Drug paraphernalia on the coffee table, glass pipe, mirror, an opened dime bag of marijuana, and a razor blade.

The door opens and Gina enters, removing her jacket and kicking off her shoes.

GINA  
Zar!

Gina looks around the room before crossing to the bedroom door. She opens it...

INT. THEIR BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Also disheveled, unmade bed, clothes on the floor, and dirty dishes on the nightstand.

GINA  
Zar?

ZAR (O.S.)  
In the bathroom.

Gina turns and crosses to the bathroom door.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gina opens the door to find Zar, long hair, moustache and beard, wears shorts, tending to his marijuana plants under grow-lights in their bathtub.

ZAR  
How was your day?

GINA  
I fuckin' hate that job.

ZAR  
Don't forget we've got that gig at Dante's tomorrow night.

GINA  
Again?

ZAR  
What? They love us there.

Zar puts down his watering bottle and leans in for a kiss.

ZAR (CONT'D)  
You look good.

GINA  
Anybody call today?

ZAR  
No. The phone hasn't rung. Why?

GINA  
I thought you knew people.

ZAR  
I do, but they're all pretty busy  
right now.  
(beat)  
Hell, we don't need them. We're  
still booking gigs.

GINA  
Dante's?

ZAR  
They pay--

GINA  
It's a fuckin' dive, Zar.  
(walks off)  
Do we have anything?

ZAR  
In the drawer.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gina crosses to the sofa, pushes aside dirty laundry before opening the drawer under the coffee table to reveal a small baggie of cocaine rocks.

She picks up the pipe and begins to prepare a hit before...

ANGLE ON: A home phone sitting next to an answering machine with a blinking red light that is partially hidden by an undergarment.

Gina drops the pipe and hustles over to the machine and presses the PLAY button.

EXT. CAPITOL RECORDS IN HOLLYWOOD - LATER

Zar's orange Opel Manta, now weathered and riddled with dents, swerves into a no-parking space in front of the entrance.

INT. ZAR'S OPEL MANTA - CONTINUOUS

Zar reaches over and opens the door for Gina.

GINA  
How do I look?

Gina has pulled herself together and looks great in her jeans, sweater, 80's jacket complete with shoulder pads.

ZAR  
 You look great. I'll park the car  
 and meet you inside.

GINA  
 Here goes.

Quick kiss before Gina hops out of the car.

INT. CAPITOL RECORDS IN HOLLYWOOD - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Gina is escorted into the office by the ASSISTANT.

ASSISTANT  
 Glass of water?

GINA  
 Sure.

PAUL, (35), white male, the Exec., finishes a phone call.

PAUL  
 Sound good. I'll see you next  
 Monday. Bye.  
 (hangs up)  
 Gina Eckstine, good to see you.  
 (stands)  
 I'm Paul Rosenberg.

GINA  
 Hi, Paul.

They shake hands and then sit.

PAUL  
 I've left you messages for the past  
 two weeks. I'm off to Spain next  
 week to see a new artist, you're  
 lucky I'm still in town.

GINA  
 Two weeks?

The office door opens and the Assistant walks in with a glass  
 of water and Zar a few steps behind her.

ZAR  
 (extends hand)  
 Zar Miller.

They shake.

PAUL  
 Paul Rosenberg. And you are?

ZAR  
 Gina's husband and manager.  
 (to Assistant/re: water)  
 One more, please.

GINA  
 Paul said he's left messages for  
 two weeks.

Uncomfortable pause as she awaits his answer.

ZAR  
 Really? Are you sure you dialed the  
 right number?

PAUL  
 Absolutely.  
 (beat)  
 Anyway, what's important is that  
 you're here now, right?

The Assistant returns with another glass of water.

ZAR  
 Right.  
 (to Assistant)  
 Thank you.

PAUL  
 Listen, Gina...and Zar, I've got a  
 couple of new producers I just  
 signed and I thought about you as  
 someone they might want to work  
 with...

ZAR  
 "New" producers? This is Gina  
 Eckstine we're talking about.

PAUL  
 I know.  
 (to Gina)  
 I saw you at the Fairmont about two  
 years ago. You were incredible.

GINA  
 Thank you.

ZAR  
 Are you offering a record deal?

PAUL  
 It's under consideration...but I'll  
 make the final decision--

ZAR  
 After she works with these  
 producers. I got it. And if it goes  
 well, she's signed?



PAUL

Slow down, Zar. First we'll need to find Gina's voice. Sure, she can sing the standards and makes some of the covers sound better than the originals, but we need to find Gina's distinct voice.

(to Gina)

Are you interested?

GINA

Absolutely. When do I meet the producers?

ZAR

Slow down, sweetheart. I need to meet them first, review their credentials. And, most importantly, if approved, they can produce two of the songs and I'll produce the third.

GINA

Zar--

PAUL

You're a producer?

ZAR

I know my wife and I've heard her voice. Give me one song to prove it.

Gina, annoyed, eyes Zar before turning back to Paul.

PAUL

Ok. I can do that.

(stands)

I return in three weeks. I'll have my assistant contact you on...

(checks calendar)

Tuesday, the 21st.

Gina and Zar stand, shake Paul's hand before turning to exit.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Gina?

(Gina turns)

How's you dad doing?

GINA

He's great. Still on the road.

PAUL

Why aren't you out there with him?

GINA  
(pause/smile)  
Because I wanted to work with your  
producers...to find my voice.

PAUL  
I'm looking forward to it.

ZAR  
(beat)  
Let's go.

Zar ushers her out of the office.

INT. ZAR'S OPEL MANTA - MOMENTS LATER

Gina, upset, eyes Zar sitting behind the wheel.

GINA  
What was that?

ZAR  
I can do this, Gina.

GINA  
You can barely play the fuckin'  
drums! You don't read music, Zar...

ZAR  
I can program.

GINA  
(mocking)  
"I can program." I wish you  
would've told me that before we got  
married.

ZAR  
What's that supposed to mean?  
(beat)  
I got you this meeting, didn't I?

GINA  
Did you?

ZAR  
I talked to a guy a few weeks ago,  
but I don't remember his name.  
(pause)  
Maybe we should've kept touring  
with your father?

GINA  
What? You're the one who wanted to  
make adjustments because you had  
these big plans!

ZAR

(beat)  
This is harder than I thought it  
would be.

GINA

No shit, Sherlock.

Gina looks away as a tear streams down her cheek.

ZAR

...but it all changes right now,  
Gina. All of it.

GINA

I wanna believe you, Zar, but we've  
been here before--

ZAR

We've never been here with a record  
deal on the line.

(beat)

You're gonna be a star, Gina, and  
I'll be right there supporting you.

He leans in for a kiss. She gently pushes him away.

GINA

We've got a lot of work to do in  
three weeks.

ZAR

Not a problem...I'm all in.

He starts the car and pulls away.

EXT. DANTE'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Establishing shot of Dante's. We hear Gina's voice belting  
out the intro of "Last Dance" by Donna Summer.

INT. DANTE'S RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

On stage, Zar stands behind an electric keyboard, sound board  
and drum machine. He operates dials and buttons, occasionally  
striking a key on the piano.

Front and center is Gina, wearing an 80's dress, full makeup  
and hair, standing in front of a packed house.

The music rises after the intro and the PATRONS take to the  
dance floor.

GINA  
 (sings)  
 ...cause it's the last chance for  
 romance and love...

The music hits a crescendo, the pace is hot, and the dance floor is steaming as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DANTE'S RESTAURANT - LATER

The lights are up as Gina is congratulated by her many fans as Zar stows the equipment.

FEMALE FAN #1  
 Oh-my-god, you sound just like her.  
 I love your voice.

She embraces Gina and then walks off.

MALE FANS #1&2, (30's), flamboyant disco gear, approach.

MALE FAN #1  
 Can we take a picture?

GINA  
 Sure.

He wraps his arm around Gina as MALE FAN #2 uses a Polaroid camera to take the pic.

MALE FAN #1  
 Will you be here next month? I have  
 a friend coming in from out of  
 town.

GINA  
 I hope not.  
 (off Male#1's look)  
 I have an opportunity. A huge  
 opportunity.

ZAR (O.S.)  
 She might have a record deal.

GINA  
 Zar, don't jinx it.

BILLY (O.S.)  
 Yeah, Zar, don't jinx it.

They all turn to see Billy, suited, cross from the rear of the restaurant.

MALE FAN #2  
 Is that Billy Eckstine?

Billy leans in and gives Gina a loving embrace, peck on the cheek and Zar a firm handshake.

GINA  
(to MF 1&2)  
This is my father, Billy Eckstine.

MALE FAN #1  
We know exactly who he is.

The two men affectionately shake his hand and walk off.

MALE FAN #2  
(walks off/uttering)  
He's still fine...

Gina, Billy and Zar share a chuckle.

BILLY  
You sound great.

GINA  
Thanks. Did you see the whole show?

BILLY  
I got here just before the last number.  
(beat)  
Tell me about the good news.  
(beat)  
Wait, before you answer...  
(to Zar)  
Zar, would you mind if I borrowed my Jinxy for a bit?

ZAR  
No problem, Mr. B. I'll just pack up by myself.  
(off Gina's look)  
I'm joking. Go.

INT. FARRELL'S ICE CREAM PARLOR - LATER

Billy and Gina enjoy two banana splits.

BILLY  
...who are the producers?

GINA  
I don't know. I'm assuming I'll find out when he returns.

BILLY  
I'm happy for you, Jinxy.

GINA  
Thanks.

BILLY

(beat/re: drugs)

You need to do whatever it takes to make sure you're ready.

(beat)

This is probably the most important phone call of your life. Don't let anything or anyone keep you from it. You hear me?

GINA

Of course. This is what I've always dreamed of--

BILLY

Dreams don't come true if you don't answer the phone.

GINA

I'll answer it...geez.

BILLY

Good.

(beat)

So, how are things with you and what's his face?

They lock eyes before Gina looks away.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I'm the very last person who should ever give anyone marital advice, so if you're interested, I'll give you my opinion.

GINA

I'm listening.

BILLY

Don't let him get in your way.

Gina lets it air out a little before...

GINA

Did she get in your way?

Billy pushes aside the banana split, and wipes his mouth and hands with a napkin.

BILLY

This isn't about your mother, but if I were to be honest...

GINA

Please.

BILLY

I could've been better, to her, and you kids.

GINA  
Why weren't you?

They lock eyes, uncomfortable silence.

BILLY  
Same reason you're lookin' for a  
record deal. Fame and fortune.

GINA  
That's not fair.

BILLY  
Then tell me why you're doing it?

Pregnant pause as Gina searches for the right answer.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Like I said, marital advice or  
career advice for that matter,  
isn't my strong suit.  
(pause)  
Listen, we have a few dates coming  
up in Vegas, Florida and Chicago.  
Are you interested? I mean, if  
things don't work out with the  
record deal.

Gina finishes her last bite of banana split.

GINA  
It'll work out. I can feel it.

EXT. CITY STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT

A YELLOW CAB pulls up in front of an 80's modest apartment  
building near Van Nuys Blvd.

INT. YELLOW CAB - CONTINUOUS

Billy eyes the HOMELESS PERSON sleeping on the curb across  
the street.

BILLY  
This is where you live?

GINA  
Currently. Is there a problem?

BILLY  
Not at all. It's good to see you,  
Jinxy. If you change your mind  
about those dates--

GINA  
Good-night, Daddy.

She gives him a peck on the cheek and exits the cab.

BILLY  
(calling after)  
Make sure you answer that phone.

GINA  
(walks off)  
I will...

Billy watches as she ascends the exterior staircase.

DRIVER  
Where to?

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT IN THE SFV - CONTINUOUS

Gina enters the disheveled apartment to find Zar, free-basing rock cocaine on the sofa.

ZAR  
Welcome home. You want some?

GINA  
Aren't you supposed to be producing?

ZAR  
What? We've got time.

Gina enters the bedroom and slams the door behind her.

INT. SAVINGS AND LOAN BANK - THE NEXT DAY

Gina, clothes and hair somewhat disheveled, skin damp, counts money back to a CUSTOMER.

GINA  
...sixty, eighty, one-hundred.  
Wait, sixty, eighty...one hundred.

Gail, the operations manager, watches.

CUSTOMER  
Thank you.

The Customer walks off. Gail approaches and closes Gina's teller window.

GAIL  
Are you okay?

GINA  
I think I'm catching a cold.



GAIL  
 Count out and go home. Get some  
 rest.

EXT. CITY STREET - LATER

Gina, wearing her work clothes, rides a bike on a busy street  
 in the San Fernando Valley.

It's not that hot, but she's sweating profusely, wiping her  
 brow with her sleeve.

The light turns green and she pulls off.

ANGLE ON: Ezzie, standing on a corner, watches Gina ride  
 towards him.

She pulls up, hops off the bike and approaches.

EZZIE  
 You look sick. Need somethin'?

GINA  
 I didn't come here for that.

EZZIE  
 So keep ridin' then.

GINA  
 You can't sell to me, Ezzie. No  
 matter how many times I show up  
 here you can't sell to me.

EZZIE  
 I don't know what you're talkin'  
 about. I don't sell shit.

Ezzie looks around as if searching for an undercover cop.

GINA  
 I can't fuck this up.

EZZIE  
 I don't know what you're talkin'  
 about, but if you come see me again  
 you better be prepared to give  
 somethin' up.

GINA  
 I'm married.

EZZIE  
 Ask me if I care.

GINA  
 (rides off)  
 You can't sell to me!

EZZIE  
(calling after)  
I don't sell shit!

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT IN THE SFV - LATER

Gina enters in a huff, leaning her bike against a wall before crossing to the coffee table and retrieving the drug paraphernalia from the drawer.

She then crosses to the bathroom and dumps the cocaine and cocaine rocks in the toilet, and breaks the glass pipe, tossing it into the trash can.

Watching the drugs circling the toilet, she notices a drop of blood land on the porcelain. She cut her finger on the glass pipe. Gina removes the shard from her finger before eyeing the marijuana plants in the tub.

EXT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT IN THE SFV - MOMENTS LATER

Gina, bandaged finger, totes a large box, opens the lid on a large trash bin and dumps the marijuana plants.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - THE BEDROOM - LATER

Gina lies on the bed, sweating profusely and shivering.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - THE BATHROOM - LATER

Gina heaves into the toilet.

After a few beats, she lies down next to the toilet, shivering.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The front door opens and Zar enters wearing an untied orange retail apron with a nametag.

ZAR  
I'm home.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gina pulls herself up and hustles out of the bathroom.

ZAR (O.S.)  
Gina?

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Zar, removing his shoes on the sofa, watches as Gina enters the bedroom and closes the door.

ZAR  
You're not gonna say hello?

After a beat, Zar reaches for the drug drawer, opens it...

ZAR (CONT'D)  
(re: empty drawer)  
Gina!

Zar hops up and crosses to the bedroom door. Turns the knob...it's locked.

ZAR (CONT'D)  
Gina! Open the door! Gina!

After a brief pause, he turns to the bathroom and...

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - THE BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Zar enters to find the tub empty with remnants of soil.

ZAR  
Gina!

Zar exits the bathroom in a huff.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Zar raises his fist to pound on the door just as it opens.

Gina, haggard, stands in the opening.

GINA  
Three weeks. I need three weeks,  
Zar. Can you do that for me?

Pregnant pause before Zar turns and walks off.

GINA (CONT'D)  
Zar?

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Zar pulls on his shoes and crosses to the front door.

GINA  
Where're you going?

Zar, his back to Gina, stops at the door.

ZAR  
I didn't agree to this.

GINA  
You agreed to help me.  
(pregnant pause)  
If you walk out that door, don't  
come back.

After a beat, Zar turns back to Gina as he opens the door.

ZAR  
You don't mean that.

Gina, angered, rushes forward and grabs Zar by his arm and shoves him out of the door.

GINA  
I don't need you.

ZAR  
The hell you don't, I made you--

Gina violently slams the door in his face.

GINA (V.O.)  
I had a little less than three  
weeks to fix all of this, and Zar  
was the least of my concerns.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - THE BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

The sun rises and shines through a window, revealing Gina, haggard and sitting up in the bed, wearing only her undergarments, rocking back and forth.

After a few beats, Gina heaves and quickly leans over the side of the bed to retrieve a trash can and relieve herself.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - THE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Gina, asleep, sits in the bathtub, wearing a t-shirt and underwear. The water from the showerhead rains down on her, rinsing away the chunks of vomit on her t-shirt and neck.

EXT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT IN THE SFV - MORNING

The sun rises above the apartment building as PEOPLE mill about in the parking lot and on the street.

CHYRON: Two weeks later

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - THE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The alarm sounds.

Gina, wearing a clean t-shirt and underwear, rolls over to turn off the alarm, and we can see that her skin color has returned and there is a sparkle in her eyes.

She turns off the alarm and sits up in bed, looking around at the disheveled room before she climbs out of bed and picks up clothes and dirty dishes.

EXT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT IN THE SFV - LATER

A Chrysler station wagon with wood paneling pulls into the lot and parks.

INT. CHRYSLER STATION WAGON - CONTINUOUS

Carole, immaculately dressed, checks the address on a sheet of paper and then the building. They match.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gina, wears a sweatsuit, hair pinned up, aggressively cleans the glass on the coffee table.

EXT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT IN THE SFV - CONTINUOUS

Carole, obviously disgusted with the area, climbs the staircase, stepping over a used syringe.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gina vacuums the carpet while listening to her Sony Walkman and singing along with Roberta Flack's, "Killing me Softly."

EXT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT IN THE SFV - CONTINUOUS

Carole checks the sheet of paper again to verify: Apt. 24

Tacked to the door is a "PAY OR QUIT" notice.

She stows the address and knocks on the door. No response.

She knocks again. Nothing.

After another beat, she reaches for the doorknob and turns.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gina, still singing, is startled by the streak of light from the open door.

GINA  
(covering her eyes)  
Zar?

Carole steps into the room and closes the door.

GINA (CONT'D)  
Mom?

They stand in silence, eyes locked.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Gina and Carole sit on the sofa, enjoying Chinese takeout. The mood is light and jovial.

CAROLE  
...those white boys were hittin' on me every chance they got--

GINA  
On the movie set?

CAROLE  
They didn't care.

GINA  
Did dad know?

CAROLE  
Are you crazy? Your father would've gotten me fired. Of course this was when we first started seeing each other.

GINA  
Did you ever sleep with one of them, I mean, before you and dad got together?

CAROLE  
(devilish grin)  
Of course not.

Carole, coy, pauses for a moment, then shoves a fork-full of chow-mein in her mouth.

GINA  
(laughs)  
You nasty tramp!  
(beat)  
I'm gonna tell.

CAROLE

You've got some nerve. At least I  
didn't married one!

They laugh together for a few more beats before Carole reaches into her purse and produces a small roll of bills and sits it on the coffee table.

CAROLE (CONT'D)

This should cover your rent.

GINA

You don't have to--

CAROLE

I know what I don't have to do,  
Gina.

Carole begins to clean up.

GINA

No...I'll take care of that.

CAROLE

(stands)

Okay. I should be going.

Carole picks up her purse.

GINA

Why didn't you say hello?

(beat)

You came to one of our shows.

CAROLE

I did?

GINA

I saw you sneaking out the back.

CAROLE

I don't know who you saw, but it  
wasn't me.

(pause/smile)

You were the best one up on that  
stage, by the way.

Carole crosses to the door, then turns.

CAROLE (CONT'D)

Zar stopped by the house.

GINA

He did? Is he coming back?

CAROLE

(pause)

Sometimes what we want isn't  
necessarily what we need, Gina.

(MORE)

CAROLE (CONT'D)  
 Your daddy taught me that.  
 (beat)  
 Are you still working at the bank?

GINA  
 I don't know.

CAROLE  
 Make sure you try and keep that job  
 until you know what's next.

Carole opens the door.

GINA  
 Okay.  
 (beat)  
 I'll walk you out.

CAROLE  
 I'll do fine all by myself. You get  
 some rest.

Carole takes one step and then stops.

GINA  
 Mom?

CAROLE  
 I did the best I could, Gina. I  
 wasn't perfect, but I did the best  
 I could.  
 (turns to Gina)  
 Be better than me.

Carole exits and softly closes the door behind her.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAVINGS AND LOAN BANK - DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. GAIL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Gail glares at Gina, sitting across from her desk.

GAIL  
 (checks calendar)  
 ...you've been gone almost three  
 weeks.

GINA  
 I know, but I really need this job.  
 I promise. I'm not sick anymore.  
 I'll be here everyday...early!



GAIL

(pause)

Okay. I'll give you one more chance, not because I think it will work out, but because someone once gave me another chance and they never regretted it. Am I going to regret this, Gina?

GINA

(beat)

No. I'll be here...

GAIL

Okay. Go open up.

GINA

...but I need tomorrow off.

GAIL

Excuse me? Gina, we just had a conversation and--

GINA

I know, but just tomorrow--

GAIL

You need to get your priorities straight.

GINA

(smile/walks off)

They are. Tomorrow and that's it. Promise.

An alarm clock sounds...

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - THE BEDROOM - MORNING

Gina, already awake, anticipating the alarm as it ticks to 8:00, turns it off and sits upright in bed.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - THE KITCHEN - LATER

Gina, fully dressed, moves the corded telephone to the kitchen counter as she prepares a piece of toast and a cup of lemon tea. She checks for a dial tone...it's good.

INT. GINA AND ZAR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Gina paces in the living room. The cup and remnants of toast on a saucer rest on the coffee table next to the telephone. She checks the clock on the wall. It reads: 11:30

LATER:

Gina, listening to her Walkman, one headphone on her ear, the other behind her ear, hums along to a Donna Summer tune while eyeing the phone sitting on the coffee table.

She checks the clock: 3:40

LATER:

Gina, doing a few vocal exercises in front of a mirror, checks the clock: 4:15

The phone rings!

Gina rushes over, settling herself before reaching for the handset.

GINA  
(into phone)  
This is Gina.

SPUTNIK (O.S.)  
Gina, it's Sputnik! I'm in town--

Gina abruptly hangs up the receiver.

She checks the clock: 4:25

After a couple beats, the phone rings again.

GINA  
This is Gina.

SPUTNIK (O.S.)  
Why'd you hang up on me?

GINA  
Sputnik, I'm expecting a call, and if I'm on the line with you it won't come through.

SPUTNIK (O.S.)  
Is it more important than your best friend?

Gina abruptly hangs up again. Checks clock: 4:48

Frustrated, she sits on the sofa and gazes at her bike resting against the wall.

EXT. CAPITOL RECORDS IN HOLLYWOOD - LATER

Gina, on her bike, hair flowing in the wind, sweater and jeans, rides up to the front of the building and quickly hops off the bike, drops it, and hustles into the building.

INT. CAPITOL RECORDS IN HOLLYWOOD - WAITING AREA - DAY

Gina paces.

The Assistant, sitting behind her desk, hangs up the receiver.

ASSISTANT  
Paul will see you now.

Gina hustles to the door and enters.

INT. CAPITOL RECORDS IN HOLLYWOOD - OFFICE - DAY

Paul stands and greets Gina with a smile and a Hollywood hug.

PAUL  
Where's your husband?

GINA  
He couldn't make it.  
(beat)  
I thought you were gonna call me,  
Paul.

PAUL  
I was.

GINA  
When? The day's almost over. You  
told me Tuesday.

Gina locks eyes with Paul, making him uncomfortable.

GINA (CONT'D)  
You were supposed to call when you  
got back from your trip.

PAUL  
Gina...I...

GINA  
Why didn't you call?

Paul is in full frame.

PAUL  
I'm sorry, Gina, but we've decided  
to go in a different direction.

The tears well in Gina's eyes.

GINA  
What direction might that be?

PAUL  
 (beat)  
 Younger.

GINA  
 I'm twenty-three. Twenty-three.

Uncomfortable pause as a tear streams down her cheek.

PAUL  
 It's out of my hands, Gina.

GINA  
 You said you were the decision  
 maker.

After a couple beats, Paul stands.

PAUL  
 I told you I saw you and your dad  
 about two years ago, right? You  
 were incredible. Incredible.

Gina doesn't respond, but wipes away the tears.

The Assistant opens the door behind her, which doesn't go  
 unnoticed by Gina.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. MOVIE STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

Studio Man #1 crosses to the desk.

STUDIO MAN #1  
 I'm sorry, Billy, but there's  
 nothing we can do.

Billy eyes the two men before his Manager crosses to him and  
 hands him his hat.

MANAGER  
 Let's go, Mr. Eckstine.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. CAPITOL RECORDS IN HOLLYWOOD - DAY

The Assistant turns to Gina, who stares blankly at the door.

ASSISTANT  
 Ms. Eckstine?

EXT. CITY STREET - RESEDA, CA - DAY

Gina rides her bike past a few cars, then onto the sidewalk, and then down an alley, coasting towards a group of YOUNG MEN, gambling, and tossing quarters at a wall.

GINA

Ezzie!

Ezzie attempts to toss his quarter, turns.

EZZIE

(exasperated)

What the fuck, Gina? What'd I tell you would happen the next time you came here?

Gina drops her bike and aggressively crosses to him.

INT. EZZIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

The apartment is a mess. The t.v. drones on in the b.g.

On the sofa lies, Gina, pants removed, blouse pulled up to partially expose her breasts, legs in the air. Ezzie, shirt off, pants down around his ankles, pumps feverishly above her.

From Gina's POV we see a crack vile and crack cocaine resting on the coffee table, just out of reach.

Ezzie reaches climax, shakes, thrusts, and moans, before rolling next to her, breathing heavily.

Gina immediately sits up, pulls down her blouse and reaches for the crack pipe.

GINA (V.O.)

...yes, I'm quite embarrassed about this portion of my life, but confronting your demons is a lesson best served in the light of day.

Gina places the pipe between her lips and flicks the lighter, taking a deep and long hit before she collapses on the sofa, staring up at the popcorn ceiling with water spots as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BLUE SKIES - DAY

The water spots in the popcorn ceiling transforms into billowing clouds as Gina, in her wedding dress with a parachute strapped on her back, free falls towards earth.

SPUTNIK (O.S.)  
Pull the rip-cord!

Gina flips over in the air and eyes Sputnik above her, parachute deployed.

SPUTNIK (CONT'D)  
(frantic)  
Pull it!

Gina, visibly panicked, searches for the rip cord.

GINA  
I can't find it!

The ground draws closer...

GINA (V.O.)  
What do you wanna sing, Dad?

CUT TO:

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

Gina (30) and Billy (75) take their seats in front of studio lighting. Actual footage:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTGHX-bUNbY&list=RDVTGHX-bUNbY&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTGHX-bUNbY&list=RDVTGHX-bUNbY&start_radio=1)

BILLY  
I ain't gotta sing nothin'.

MUSIC CUE: "ALL OF ME"

EXT. BLUE SKIES - DAY

MUSIC CONTINUES

Gina, looking up at Sputnik, flips again to see the ground closing. Horrified. She screams.

INT. UNKNOWN BATHROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES

Gina, disheveled and unconscious, sits in a dirty bathtub, with a crack pipe resting on the edge of the tub.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

MUSIC CONTINUES

Gina, disheveled and out-of-it, re-folds sweaters and stacks them on a table.

Dropping a sweater to the floor, she stumbles and falls while picking it up, much to the dismay of her BOSS standing a few feet away.

EXT. CLOTHING STORE - MOMENTS LATER

MUSIC CONTINUES

Gina is escorted out of the store, but not before removing her nametag and throwing it at her Boss.

INT. EZZIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES

CHYRON: Two years later

Ezzie rolls off of Gina and she immediately reaches for the crack pipe on the nightstand.

RING...RING...

GINA  
Ezzie, get the phone.

RING...

GINA (CONT'D)  
Ezzie!

EXT. BLUE SKIES - DAY

MUSIC CONTINUES

RING...RING...

The ground is closing as Gina turns as if looking for the ringing phone.

GINA  
(looking up to SPUTNIK)  
The phone's ringing!

SPUTNIK  
I don't hear anything!

GINA (O.S.)  
Ezzie, answer the phone!

INT. EZZIE'S APARTMENT - THE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ezzie enters the room toting a corded telephone.

EZZIE  
 (into phone)  
 She's right here.

Ezzie hands the phone to Gina, who is still feeling the effects of the crack pipe.

GINA  
 Hello?

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES: "ALL OF ME"

Billy and Gina close the final bars of the song, scatting and harmonizing like two old pros.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Billy lies peacefully on a hospital bed with a heart monitor and several other medical contraptions to help him breathe.

Gina, sullen, but somewhat pulled together, eyes his profile while clutching his hand.

GINA (V.O.)  
 The phone finally rang...

Gina leans over and kisses him on the cheek.

GINA  
 I love you, Daddy.

Billy slowly opens his eyes, turns to her and smiles.

BILLY  
 Hey.

GINA  
 Hi, Dad.

Billy eyes his thin/emaciated daughter.

BILLY  
 I saw him, Jinxy. He's beautiful.

GINA  
 Who'd you see?

BILLY  
 I saw you, too.

GINA  
 You saw me where?



Billy gives her a broad smile and a wink before closing his eyes.

GINA (CONT'D)  
 (alarmed)  
 Daddy? Daddy?

Gina looks up to check the heart monitor and all is fine.

GINA (V.O.)  
 My father would die with me by his  
 side a few hours later...but he  
 never answered my question.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHEAP WASH LAUNDRY - DAY

CHYRON: Eight Years Later

A husky long haired Latino male named, JAMES, exits his car toting a basket full of clothes, enters the empty laundromat while chatting into his flip phone.

Gina, (32), sits atop the hood of her mid-80's weathered Honda Civic hatchback, bundled in a jacket and jeans. She's cute, but an emaciated crack addict. She curiously watches James as he passes.

INT. CHEAP WASH LAUNDRY - CONTINUOUS

James drops the basket on a washer and begins to load his clothes.

GINA (V.O.)  
 It was years before I figured out  
 who it was my dad saw in his  
 vision.

JAMES  
 (into phone)  
 I was thinking we should plan a  
 getaway for the group, get'um  
 outside, away from the city...

James turns and eyes Gina sitting on the hood of her car.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
 (into phone)  
 Let me call you back.

GINA (V.O.)  
 I had finally reached that last  
 marker, that final fork in the  
 road...

EXT. CHEAP WASH LAUNDRY - MOMENTS LATER

James exits the laundry and crosses to Gina.

JAMES  
Hi.

GINA  
Hi.

JAMES  
You know, I was once where you are.

GINA  
Waiting for your laundry to dry?

JAMES  
(smile)  
It takes one-to-know-one, right?

Uncomfortable pause as Gina crosses her arms in defiance.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Listen, I've got a meeting to go to  
in about an hour and I want you to  
be my guest.

GINA  
What type of meeting?

JAMES  
(beat)  
Some people call it rehab, but I  
see it as my rip-cord. You just  
gotta pull that bitch!

GINA  
What'd you say?

Gina curiously eyes James.

GINA (V.O.)  
...was this really the guy my dad  
was talking about? He's not  
beautiful.

JAMES  
Rehab?

GINA  
No, that other part--

JAMES  
Oh, you mean the rip--

SPUTNIK (O.S.)  
Rip-cord!

EXT. BLUE SKIES - DAY

Gina, now even closer to impact, locates the rip-cord on her parachute and pulls.

SPUTNIK

Pull it!

Suddenly she is jerked upwards and saved from certain death.

GINA (V.O.)

James eventually replaced Ezzie as my boyfriend for awhile, but two addicts in a relationship was doomed from day one.

(beat)

I know now that James was definitely not the person my dad saw in his vision...

Gina, floating above a grass field, eyes CHILDREN playing on a jungle-gym in the distance.

GINA (V.O.)

...but he did help me get clean.  
And for that I'm grateful.

Gina lands on the grass field and walks to the jungle gym while removing the parachute.

GINA (V.O.)

A few years later I remarried.

We move behind her, the camera out-of-focus, but we can make out kids playing in the distance.

GINA (V.O.)

A few years after that I divorced my second husband.

Gina, now wearing jeans and a sweater, sits on the park bench and watches a two-year old African-American boy play in the sand.

GINA (V.O.)

I started singing again. I earned a college degree. I got cancer. I beat cancer. I continue to beat cancer. I keep singing.

The little boy turns and waves to her.

GINA (V.O.)

I'm a recovering addict, and I'm still here...singing the standards as well as a few pop tunes...

WOMAN IN PARK (O.S.)

Is that your son?

Gina, now 41, turns to the Woman in the Park (36) with a LITTLE GIRL (2).

GINA  
Yes...he's mine.

GINA (V.O.)  
...and I finally met him, and  
daddy, he is beautiful.

WOMAN IN PARK  
Do you think he would like to play  
with my daughter?

GINA  
Of course.

The little girl crosses to Gina's son.

WOMAN IN PARK  
I'm Susanne.

GINA  
Gina.

WOMAN IN PARK  
Do you come to this park often?

GINA  
First time.

RING... RING...

Susanne eyes the flip phone ringing on the bench between them.

Gina adoringly watches the two kids play, ignoring her phone.

SUSANNE  
Your phone's ringing.

Gina answers.

GINA  
(into phone)  
Hello?

PAUL (O.S.)  
Gina, this is Paul Rosenberg with  
Capitol Records...do you remember  
me?

Gina, distracted, watches her son and the young girl cross to the swings.

GINA  
Yes, Paul, I remember you.

The two kids turn to their parents as they each grab a swing and beckon for them to help.

PAUL (O.S.)  
Listen, a few things have changed  
here at the office and I  
immediately thought of you...

Susanne stands and crosses to the swings.

SUSANNE  
(to Gina/re: swings)  
I'll get it. Finish your call.

Gina watches as Susanne crosses to the kids and then her son watching Susanne place her daughter in the swing before turning back to Gina.

PAUL (O.S.)  
...and I was hoping that maybe you  
would be available for--

GINA  
Paul, I need to call you back.

PAUL (O.S.)  
What? Gina--

Gina closes the flip phone and crosses to her son who welcomes her with a big smile and hug as she places him in the swing.

GINA (V.O.)  
Life is so much better now, Dad...  
(beat)  
...but I wish you could've met your  
grandson. He's got your smile.

FADE OUT:

MUSIC CUE: "I APOLOGIZE" BY BILLY ECKSTINE, ACCOMPANIED BY GINA ECKSTINE (DUET).

INSERT PICS OF THE ECKSTINE FAMILY, HOMES AND TELEVISION APPEARANCES

ROLL CREDITS:

THE END