INT. HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

WALTER VALE, sixty-two, is standing by the window of his modestly furnished Colonial house. He is holding a glass of wine and peering out through the drapes.

After a few moments an OLD CAR pulls up. A slightly overweight WOMAN gets out of the car. She starts to walk up to the house.

Walter steps back from the window and waits. The doorbell rings. Walter takes a last sip of wine and sets the glass down on the end table. And then he goes to the door and opens it.

WOMAN
Mr. Vale?

WALTER
Yes.

WOMAN
Hello. I'm Barbra Watson. Nice to meet you.

WALTER
Yes. Come in.

BARBARA
Thank you.

She steps into the house and Walter shuts the door. They both stand there awkwardly. Barbara is tightly wound and overcompensates with a forced pleasantness.

WALTER
Can I take your coat?

BARBARA
No, thank you.
WALTER
OK. Would you like anything to drink?

BARBARA
No.
(Beat)
Shall we get started?

WALTER
OK.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE, PIANO ROOM - LATER

Walter and Barbara sit side by side in a very close proximity.

BARBARA
Let's try it again.

WALTER
The same thing?

BARBARA
Yes. Remember, fingers curved. Like a tunnel.

WALTER
OK.

Walter starts to play the piano. It's a lesson in progress. They are sitting at a beautiful GRAND PIANO but Walter is only a beginner. And not a very good beginner.

BARBARA
Don't flatten.

Walter keeps playing.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Make room for the train.

Walter stops.

WALTER
What?
BARBARA
I said "make room for the train."
It's something that I tell my kids.
If you curve your fingers like
this...
(She demonstrates)
Then the train can pass through the
 tunnel.

She passes her pencil through her curved fingers. Walter looks at her for a long moment.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - DAY

Walter walks Barbara to the front door. He opens it and then hands Barbara some money.

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WALTER
Here.

BARBARA
Thank you. Next Tuesday at the same
time?

WALTER
No. I don't think I'm going to
continue with our lessons.

BARBARA
Oh, no. Are you giving up?

WALTER
No.

Barbara gets the point. He is stopping with her, not the
lessons.

BARBARA
Oh. OK. Goodbye.

WALTER
Goodbye.

Barbara walks out the door and then turns before Walter
shuts it.
BARBARA
Mr. Vale? If I may ask, how many teachers have you had before me?

WALTER
Four.

BARBARA
Well, for what it's worth, it's difficult to learn an instrument at your age. Especially if you don't possess a natural gift for it. I'm not saying this to be mean. But if you do decide to give up then I would really like to buy your piano. It's a beautiful instrument.

Walter nods, not quite sure how to receive the comment.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Goodbye.

Barbara turns and leaves. Walter shuts the door.

INT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, LECTURE HALL - DAY

Walter stands before a half-empty class. He is wrapping up a lecture on economic theory. There is nothing inspiring about it.

WALTER
East Asia's experience is really the exception to the rule, because the conditions there that made trade liberalization for the Middle East successful weren't present in the developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and in Central and South America.

EXT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, CAMPUS - DAY

Walter walks across the campus.
INT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Walter sits in a meeting with seven other COLLEAGUES.

INT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, WALTER'S OFFICE - LATER

Walter is staring out the window in his simple but very lived-in office. Classical music plays softly in the background. A knock at the door.

WALTER
Come in.

A STUDENT opens the door and enters.

STUDENT
Hi.

He sits down and sets a paper on the desk.

STUDENT (CONT'D)
Sorry it's late.

WALTER
Why is it late?

STUDENT
I had some personal things to deal with.

Walter hands back the paper.

WALTER
I'm sorry. I can't accept it now.

STUDENT
But...

WALTER
I'm sorry.

Walter goes back to work. The Student sits stunned for a moment and then gets up and picks up his paper. He opens the door and then stops.

STUDENT
You know you still haven't given us a syllabus.

WALTER
    (Lying)
I know.

The Student shakes his head and leaves without another word.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Walter pulls into the driveway of his house. He gets out, grabs his belongings out of the back seat and walks inside.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DUSK

Walter is making dinner. Classical music plays from the other room. He adjusts the flame and covers a sauce pot. He leans against the counter and picks up a half empty bottle of wine and pours some into his glass. He catches sight of A SMALL FRAMED PICTURE of him and HIS WIFE, smiling.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Walter sits at the piano and practices. It is still going badly. The wine glass sits on top of the piano. He lifts his hand and inspects his "tunnel".

INT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, WALTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Walter is at his computer. He pulls up his YEAR SYLLABUS on the computer and carefully changes 2005 to 2006. He saves it.

His work is done. There is a knock at the door.

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WALTER
    Yes.

The door opens and Walter's colleague, CHARLES VAN HORN steps in.

CHARLES
Hello Walter.

WALTER

Charles.

CHARLES

I'm sorry to interrupt.

WALTER

That's OK.

CHARLES

Walter, Shelley can't make it down to the NYU conference to present your paper. I'm going to need you to cover for her.

WALTER

Why can't she go?

CHARLES

She's been put on bed rest until she has the baby.

Walter is caught off guard.

WALTER

When?

CHARLES

Next week. We'll cover your class and make the arrangements.

WALTER

I wish I could, but now is not a very good time, Charles.

CHARLES

I understand but you co-authored the paper and the Dean wants it presented. He wants to keep Shelley on track for tenure.

WALTER

I just don't think I can with the start of classes and my book.
You're only teaching one class, Walter.

WALTER
So I can stay focused on my writing. I'd really rather not go right now.

CHARLES
I'm sorry but there really isn't another option at this point.

Walter is trapped. He comes clean.

WALTER
Charles, the truth is this is really Shelley's paper. I just agreed to co-author it because she asked me to. I'm not really prepared to present it.

CHARLES
That may be the case but you are the co-author and she can't go. Look Walter, you can take it up with the Dean if you want, but, as your friend, I wouldn't advise it. Not with that argument.

Walter just stares him.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Good bye.

And Charles is gone, shutting the door behind him.

INT. NEW LONDON, THE BLIND TIGER BAR - NIGHT

Walter sits at the end of a bar at a local pub. He is reading the newspaper. KAREN, a 44-year-old bartender, is talking to a BLONDE HAIR ED WOMAN at other end of the bar.

The wall is covered with HAND DRAWN CARICATURES OF REGULAR PATRONS. A WAITER hands a plate of food to Karen. She walks down the bar and sets it in front of Walter.

KAREN
Here you go, cutey.

WALTER
Thanks.

Karen

So I thought you forgot about me. Where've you been hiding?

Karen automatically refills his wine glass.

Walter

Just busy with work.

Karen

Well you're never gonna make it on the wall with that excuse. I'm glad your back. Give a holler if you need anything. I'm just gabbing with one of my girlfriends.

Walter

OK.

She walks back down the bar. Walter starts to eat.

Ext. Walter's House - Morning

Two cars are parked in Walter's driveway.

Int. Walter's House, Bedroom - Same

Walter is packing, laying out his shirts on the bed. After a moment, Karen walks in, drying her hair with a towel.

Karen

When are you going?

Walter

Today after class.

She takes her earrings of the night stand and puts them in.

Karen

Sounds like fun. I'm gonna go have a cigarette. You want some coffee?

Walter

Yeah. Thanks.
Karen leaves. Walter keeps packing.

EXT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, CAFETERIA - DAY
Walter sits at a table and eats lunch alone.

EXT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, PARKING LOT - LATER
Walter walks across the parking lot and gets into his car.

INT. WALTER'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON
Walter drives along the highway. He notices a SIGN which reads "Support Our Troops!"

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, F.D.R. DRIVE - SUNSET
Walter's car drives down the F.D.R Highway.

INT. WALTER'S CAR - DUSK.
Walter drives through the small busy streets of the East Village.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, EAST VILLAGE, PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT
Walter pulls into a parking garage. He gets out and takes a ticket from the attendant. He grabs his bag and briefcase from the back seat.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET, EAST VILLAGE - NIGHT
He walks down the street, taking in the sights and sounds of the city.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - LATER
Walter walks out of a liquor store with a SMALL BROWN BAG.
EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME

Walter arrives at a classic tenement building. He looks up at the building as if inspecting it. He takes out his keys. He opens the door and walks in.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME

Walter walks into the well-lit but dingy foyer. A YOUNG MAN brushes by him.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING, FOURTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

He arrives at the second floor and stops in front of a door. He unlocks the door and walks in.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Walter steps into the apartment and drops his bags. He immediately notices that the kitchen light is on. Something is not right.

WALTER

Hello?

He turns on the living room light and crosses to the kitchen table and sets the brown bag down. It's then that he notices some fresh flowers on the kitchen table. He looks slightly confused. He looks around the apartment. There is an UPRIGHT PIANO along one wall.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Hello?

There is no answer. He walks down a LONG HALLWAY and looks in the kitchen. Nothing. He walks over to the FIRST BEDROOM and looks inside. There are signs of someone living there. He looks in the SECOND BEDROOM. He sees nothing.

Suddenly he hears the sound of running water from the
bathroom. He notices a light under the door. He walks to the bathroom and listens. A faucet is turned and the water stops running. He opens the door and looks in.

**INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - SAME**

A YOUNG BLACK WOMAN is soaking in the bath tub. She see's Walter and screams.

**INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY - SAME**

Walter screams too and then slams the door, stepping back into the hallway.

YOUNG BLACK WOMAN

Stay away from me!

She has a West African accent.

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WALTER

It's OK. I'm not going...

AFRICAN WOMAN

Leave me alone! My boyfriend is coming home!

WALTER

I'm not going to hurt you.

AFRICAN WOMAN

Who are you? What are you doing in here!?

WALTER

This is my apartment.

AFRICAN WOMAN

What do you mean? This apartment does not belong to you. How did you get in?

WALTER

My name is Walter Vale. I have keys. It's my...

Suddenly Walter is pushed up against the wall. Hard.
MAN'S VOICE
What the fuck?!

A very angry, YOUNG MIDDLE EASTERN MAN is in Walter's face. He grabs Walter violently by the collar and shakes him.

YOUNG MIDDLE EASTERN MAN
Who are you?! Zainab?!

ZAINAB
I'm in here! He is crazy!

WALTER
Stop it! I am not...

The Young Middle Eastern Man slams him against the wall. It's more of a warning shot then a violent act. Walter is terrified.

YOUNG MIDDLE EASTERN MAN
Shut up!

WALTER
OK. OK.

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ZAINAB (O.S.)
(In French)
Tarek. What is happening?

TAREK
(In French)
Are you OK?

ZAINAB
(In French)
I'm fine.

TAREK
(In French)
Who is this?

ZAINAB
(In French)
I have no idea! I was in the bath and he was just standing there.
TAREK
(Shaking Walter)
Did you touch her?! Did you touch her?!

WALTER
No! No!

Zainab opens the door.

ZAINAB
(In French)
He didn't touch me! But how did he get in? He said he has keys.

TAREK
Do you have keys?

WALTER
Yes! Yes! I have keys. It's my apartment.

Tarek stares at Walter, trying to make sense of it.

ZAINAB
(in French)
What does he mean it's his apartment?

TAREK
I don't know! Show me your keys!

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Walter reaches into his pocket and holds up his keys.

WALTER
This is my apartment. I've owned it for twenty-five years.

TAREK
So why haven't you been here!?

WALTER
I live in Connecticut. I haven't used it in a long time.

Walter is starting to get through.

TAREK
Are you friends with Ivan?

WALTER

Ivan? Who is Ivan?

Tarek is getting nervous.

ZAINAB

(In French)
I knew this would happen! He probably called the police.

This catches Tarek's attention.

TAREK

(to Walter)
Did you call the police?

Walter hesitates.

WALTER

No.

TAREK

You didn't call the police?

WALTER

No.

Tarek looks like he might belt Walter. Instead, he lets him go and quickly backs up. He paces while trying to gather his thoughts. Walter doesn't move. Zainab runs into the bedroom.

TAREK

And you don't know Ivan?

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WALTER

I don't know Ivan. Who is he?

TAREK

He rented us this place. He said it belonged to his friend who was out of town.

WALTER

I don't know who he is but this is my apartment. I assure you.
Tarek looks at Walter for a long moment. It's clear that he's telling the truth.

**TAREK**

Shit!

**ZAINAB (O.S.)**

(In French)
I told you not to trust anyone. You never saw a contract.

**TAREK**

Enough! OK. Look. We don't want any trouble. We will get out of your apartment. This is all a mistake. I'm sorry.

**WALTER**

OK.

**TAREK**

We will leave, OK?

**WALTER**

Yes. OK.

Zainab emerges from the bedroom. She is dressed.

**ZAINAB**

(In French)
Where are we going to go?

**TAREK**

(In French)
I don't know but we have to go.

**ZAINAB**

(In French)
I know we have to go. I am not stupid!

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**TAREK**

Are you OK?

**WALTER**

Yes. I'm just going to sit down.
TAREK
Of course. Please.

Walter nods and then slowly walks down the hallway and sits down. He is clearly shaken. Tarek shuts the front door.

TAREK (CONT'D)
I'm sorry if I hurt you. Are you sure that you're OK?

WALTER
Yeah. I'm OK.

TAREK
OK. Well, we'll pack up and get out.

Tarek walks back toward the bedroom. Walter tries to catch his breath.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY - LATER

Walter is sitting on the couch with a glass of wine. Tarek enters and sets down a bag. He picks up TWO AFRICAN DRUMS next to the piano and places them by the front door.

Zainab enters from the bedroom mumbling something in an African dialect. She drops a bag and crosses back to the bedroom.

TAREK
I know I'm in trouble when she starts speaking Wolof.

WALTER
How long have you lived here?

TAREK
Two months. We will pay you if you want.

Walter doesn't respond. Zainab emerges from the bedroom again with the last bag.

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TAREK (CONT'D)
(To Zainab)
Is that everything?

ZAINAB
I think so. Do you want to check!?

He hands her a SMALL PLASTIC BAG from a local grocery.

TAREK
Here is the coffee you wanted.

She snatches it without a word.

TAREK (CONT'D)
(To Walter)
OK. So we'll go. I am sorry again.
Thank you for your understanding.
Good bye.

WALTER
Good bye.

They turn and exit. Walter gets up and walks over to the front door and locks it.

He stands by the front door trying to process the events. Then something catches his attention.

WALTER'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Walter walks to the window and picks up a handcrafted, decorative FRAME off of the sill. It is a PHOTOGRAPH of Tarek and Zainab. They are hugging each other and smiling. Walter looks down onto the street.

He sees Zainab and Tarek exit the building and cross the street. Zainab's cart tips on the curb and the contents spill out onto the sidewalk. Tarek quickly moves to help her. Zainab yells at him.

Walter watches as they finally collect their belongings and move down the street.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - LATER

Tarek has set his bags down in front of a closed store. He is talking in a very agitated tone on his cell phone. Zainab stands by silently.
TAREK
(In Arabic)
Look I know. Come on man, it'll just be for a night or two until we figure something out. OK.

ZAINAB
Tarek?

TAREK
(In Arabic)
Can you check and call me back? OK. Thanks.

ZAINAB
Tarek?

TAREK
What!?

Zainab points. Walter is standing there holding the framed photograph.

WALTER
You left this at the apartment.

Tarek walks over and takes it.

TAREK
Thanks.

Walter nods.

WALTER
Do you know where you're going to stay tonight?

TAREK
Yeah.

The lie is obvious. They are stuck. Walter just nods again.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Walter takes some books out of his briefcase. He crosses to
the bookshelf and sets them down. He notices a small stack of CD's sitting on a shelf. He picks one of them up and stares at the CD for a long moment.

TAREK
You like classical music, huh?

WALTER
Yes.

Walter sets down the CD.

TAREK
Me too. Do you play piano?

WALTER
No.
(Beat)
Do you?

TAREK
Me? No. I play the djembe. Well, thanks again for letting us stay. You saved me a lot of trouble.

Walter nods.

TAREK (CONT'D)
See you in the morning.

WALTER
OK. Good night.

Tarek goes to bed. Walter resumes his work.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walter is lying in bed, unable to sleep. He can hear Tarek and Zainab whispering and laughing.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, TAREK AND ZAINAB'S ROOM - SAME

Tarek and Zainab are lying in bed together.

ZAINAB
Stop it, Tarek. He'll hear us.

TAREK
Trust me. He's asleep.

ZAINAB
You don't know that.

TAREK
So let him hear. The guy probably needs some excitement.

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ZAINAB
I think he's probably had enough for one night.

Tarek nuzzles her. Zainab laughs but pushes him away.

ZAINAB (CONT'D)
Tarek. No!

Zainab sits up in the bed. Tarek relents and rolls onto his back.

ZAINAB (CONT'D)
What are we going to do, Tarek?

TAREK
I don't know. We'll figure it out tomorrow. Who knows? Maybe he'll let us stay. He's not really using the place.

ZAINAB
I don't want to be his roommate!

TAREK
OK. OK. So we'll figure it out in the morning. I promise, habibti.

Zainab shakes her head.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Do you still love me?

Zainab looks at him.

ZAINAB
No.

TAREK
Really?

Zainab rolls over and straddles Tarek.

ZAINAB
No. I don't love you.

She kisses Tarek.

TAREK
Not even a little?

ZAINAB
No.

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She kisses him again.

TAREK
So what is this?

She gets very close to his face.

ZAINAB
It's your punishment.

TAREK
But what about our roommate?

ZAINAB
Shhh.

She kisses him long and hard. They start to make love.

EXT. WALTER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING
Jacob walks outside with Sprinkles.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - MORNING
Walter is tying his tie in the mirror.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY - LATER
Walter walks out of his bedroom and runs into Zainab who is leaving her bedroom at the same time. It's obvious that she was trying to avoid Walter.

**WALTER**
Good morning.

**ZAINAB**
Morning.

**WALTER**
I made some coffee.

**ZAINAB**
Thank you.

**WALTER**
Have a good day.

**ZAINAB**
Goodbye.

Walter leaves.

**EXT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY – DAY**

The Kimmel Center towers over Washington Square Park.

**INT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY – DAY**

Walter is listening to the speaker.

**SPEAKER**
That will be on the last day of conference. I hope you can all attend. And now I'd like to welcome my distinguished colleague and the winner of John Bates Clark Award, Stephen Kriegman.

STEPHEN KRIEGMAN strides to the podium. He is a good deal younger then Walter.

**STEPHEN KRIEGMAN**
Thank you, Shiva. Good morning.
It's a pleasure to be here.

INT. NYU BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

Walter mingle at a reception. He is listening to another COLLEAGUE tell a story.

COLLEAGUE #1
And so I just stood up and walked out!

The group laughs. Stephen Kriegman approaches and talks to the COLLEAGUE.

STEPHEN KRIEGMAN
Jamie!

JAMIE
Stephen, how are you?

Walter walks off.

INT. NYU BANQUET HALL - LATER

Walter eats dinner in a large, well appointed banquet room. Walter listens as a CHATTY MAN talks.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Walter is walking up the stairs carrying a briefcase. He passes a MIDDLE-AGED MAN who is walking down the stairs with a SMALL DOG on a leash.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN (O.S.)
Excuse me.

Walter stops and turns.

WALTER
Yes.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
Are you Mr. Vale?

WALTER
Yes.

**MIDDLE-AGED MAN**

I thought so. How are you? It's me, Jacob Konigsberg. Do you remember me?

Walter doesn't.

**JACOB**

I used to live here with my mother. Your wife used to give me piano lessons.

**WALTER**

Oh. Right.

**JACOB**

It has been a long time. I thought that maybe you sold the place. Oh. This is Sprinkles.

(To the dog)

Say "hi", Sprinkles. Is your wife here with you?

**WALTER**

No. She passed away.

**JACOB**

What?! No! I had no idea. I'm so sorry. She was such a nice lady. And I just loved listening to her play.

WALTER

How's your mother?

**JACOB**

She moved to Florida. Now I live here. It's nice. There are a lot of new faces. I hardly know anyone anymore. But I have Sprinkles so...

**WALTER**

Nice to see you, Jacob.

**JACOB**

You too, Mr. Vale. Goodbye. Welcome
back.

Walter nods and keeps walking.

**INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - LATER**

Walter walks into the apartment. No one else is there.

He sets down his case and walks toward his bedroom but stops at Tarek and Zainab's door, which is closed. He listens. Nothing.

**INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - LATER**

Walter is reading over and "rehearsing" the paper that he has to present.

**WALTER**  
(Sotto)  
It is important to distinguish between both our current political assessment and our...It is important to distinguish between our current political assessment...

He stops and crosses out the world "both". He continues reading.

**INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Walter is practicing the piano. He continues to struggle. He sits back and takes a break. He notices the drum next to the piano. He looks at it for long moment and then continues playing.

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**INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, WALTER'S BEDROOM - LATER**

Walter is lying in bed awake. He listens as Tarek and Zainab come home.

**EXT. NEWSSTAND - MORNING**
Walter buys a newspaper.

INT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Walter is back at the conference. He is listening to a presentation by a GERMAN ECONOMIST.

GERMAN ECONOMIST
However, we do find that financial globalization can be beneficial under the right circumstances. Empirically, good institutions and quality of governance are crucial in helping developing countries derive the benefits of globalization.

Walter checks his watch. He is obviously bored.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - LATER

Walter is sitting in the park and eating some Indian food from a local cart vendor. He finishes and drops it into the garbage can. He checks his watch and starts to head back toward the conference when a SOUND catches his attention.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - LATER

Walter watches two young AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN drumming on BUCKETS with reckless abandon.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
We should have them come play inside.

Walter turns. THREE COLLEAGUES from the conference are standing next to him.

COLLEAGUE #1
Coming in?

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WALTER
Yes. In a minute. 
(Holding up his cell phone)
I have to make a call.

COLLEAGUE #1
See you inside.

Walter nods as the guys walk off. Walter watches them go. He turns and watches the drumming again.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Walter arrives on the top floor. He can hear the drum being played. He stops in front of his apartment. He listens for a moment and then slowly opens the door.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - LATER

Tarek is playing his drum in his T-shirt and underwear. He sees Walter and finishes with a flourish.

TAREK
Hey Walter. Welcome home.

WALTER
Hi.

Tarek casually gets up and puts on his pants.

TAREK
You're home early.

WALTER
It was a half day.

TAREK
How was the conference?

WALTER
Fine.

Tarek buttons his pants.

TAREK
Sorry about the pants. I've been playing like this since I was a kid.

Walter nods.
TAREK (CONT'D)
Hey. I think I might have a lead on a place in Brooklyn.

WALTER
That's good.
You can keep practicing if you like.

TAREK
Really? It won't bother you?

WALTER
No. It's fine.

TAREK
Great. Thanks. I'll keep my pants on.

Tarek laughs. Walter smiles.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Hey, Zainab's going to make dinner if you want to eat with us later.

WALTER
OK. Thank you.

Walter walks into his bedroom. Tarek watches him go and then starts playing again.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - LATER

Walter is lying down on his bed reading through his paper. His foot is tapping to the rhythm of the drum.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Walter and Zainab are sitting at the dinner table finishing their meal. Tarek is on the phone in the living room speaking in Arabic. He hangs up and rejoins the table.

TAREK
I'm sorry. That was my mother. If I don't call her every day she thinks something happened to me.
Walter pours himself some wine. He offers some to Tarek.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Yeah. I'll have a bit. Thanks.

Zainab shoots Tarek a glance. Walter misreads it.

WALTER
Are you sure that you wouldn't like some?

ZAINAB
I don't drink.

TAREK
(Jokingly)
She is a good Muslim. I'm a bad one.

Walter nods. Zainab gets up and starts to clear the table.

ZAINAB
Are you finished?

WALTER
Yes. Thank you. Here, let me...

ZAINAB
It's the least I can do.

Her comment is more of an indictment than a pleasantry.

WALTER
Well, thank you for the dinner. It was very good.

ZAINAB
You're welcome.

She leaves the room.

TAREK
So what's the conference about?

WALTER
Economic Growth in Developing Nations.
TAREK
That's us.
(Pointing)
Syria. Senegal.

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TAREK (CONT'D)
So have you written some books?

WALTER
Three. I'm working on my fourth.

TAREK
Four books?! Great. My father was a writer. A journalist.

WALTER
Is he still writing?

TAREK
No. He died. Before we left Syria.

WALTER
I'm sorry.

TAREK
So am I.

Zainab enters.

ZAINAB
Tarek. It's eight-thirty.

TAREK
Oh. We have to go.
(To Walter)
I have a gig tonight.

Zainab starts to put on her coat. Tarek picks up his drum.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Walter, you can come if you want.

Zainab shoots Tarek a glance.

WALTER
I have to get some work done but
thank you.

TAREK
OK. Well maybe another time

WALTER
OK.

TAREK
Bye.

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Tarek and Zainab leave. Walter watches them go and then looks around the empty apartment.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT BUILDING, STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Tarek and Zainab are walking down the stairs.

ZAINAB
(In French)
Why did you invite him?

TAREK
(In French)
We're staying in his apartment. What could I do?

ZAINAB
(In French)
Well I would have been the one stuck sitting with him while you played your drum.

Tarek turns and looks at her very seriously.

TAREK
You know you are very sexy when you're mad at me.

Zainab can't help but smile. Tarek starts to wrap his arms around her.

WALTER (O.S.)
Hello.

Tarek and Zainab stop in their tracks, already three flights
down. They both look up the stairwell. Walter is looking down on them.

WALTER (CONT'D)
If you don't mind, I think I will come.

Tarek and Zainab share a quick look.

TAREK
Cool.

Walter disappears back into the apartment. Zainab looks at Tarek. He shrugs.

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INT. SMALL RESTAURANT - LATER.

Tarek's Jazz Trio is playing. Walter and Zainab sit at a small table in the back. Walter is rapt. Zainab is sketching. She looks up from her pad and watches him before returning to her drawing.

EXT. SMALL RESTAURANT - LATER

Walter and Zainab are standing outside on the empty street. There's an awkward silence.

WALTER
He's very good.

ZAINAB
Yes.

WALTER
The whole band is very good.

ZAINAB
Yes.

And then nothing. Finally Tarek emerges.

TAREK
Sorry guys. Let's go.
They walk down the street.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Walter is sitting in the park and eating PIZZA. This time he is sitting directly across from the two African American drummers.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Walter walks into the apartment and sets down his briefcase. He notices Tarek's drum sitting in the middle of the room.

WALTER

Tarek?

No one answers. Walter walks down the hallway a bit.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Tarek?

Walter walks back into the living room and takes off his coat. He removes some papers from his briefcase and then he notices the drum again.

He sits down in the chair next to Tarek's drum. He takes the drum between his legs and he hits it a few times.

Then he starts to play. He stops and then he plays again. This time he is slightly more successful at finding a rhythm. He closes his eyes and bobs his head. He's really getting into it.

He opens his eye's open and Tarek is standing in front of him. He has headphones around his neck. Walter jumps.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Oh. Hi.

TAREK

It sounded good Walter.

Walter immediately stands.
WALTER
Yeah. Well. I was just...I'm sorry if I...

Tarek walks over and grabs another chair from the kitchen table.

TAREK
Don't be sorry. That's what it's there for.

Tarek sets the chair down and grabs the other drum from beside the piano.

TAREK (CONT'D)
I was lying on my bed listening to my music and then I was like "what's the crazy rhythm I'm hearing?".

Tarek sits down with the other drum facing Walter.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Sit. Come on. I'll show you.

Walter hesitates and then sits down.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Just put your feet flat on the ground.

Walter adjusts his feet.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Now take the drum between your legs. Like this.

Tarek grabs the drums with his knees. Walter follows.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Now you want to lift the inside edge off the ground with your ankles. Like this.

Walter watches Tarek and follows suit.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Great. Feel OK?
WALTER
Yes.

TAREK
OK. Now Walter, I know you're a very smart man but with the drum you have to remember not to think. Thinking just screws it up. OK?

WALTER
OK.

TAREK
Now just give it a couple of bangs.

Walter gives it a couple of hard bangs.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Not so hard. You're not angry at it.

WALTER
Oh. Right. Sorry.

He bangs it a few more times.

TAREK
Better. Did you think?

WALTER
No.

TAREK

Tarek bangs out a simple bass beat. Walter joins in.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Good. Good ear. Now keep going.

Walter loses the beat. Tarek keeps playing.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Don't worry. Start again.

Walter tries again. And again. And then finally he gets it.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Yeah! There it is. OK. Good. Now keep it going and I will do this.

Tarek riffs off of Walter's bass beat.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Yeah. That's it. Keep it going.

EXT. STREET FAIR - DAY

Zainab is closing up her booth. Another VENDOR walks by and says good bye. Zainab smiles and nods good bye.

EXT. NEW YORK - STREET

Zainab is walking home with her supplies. Two NEW YORK POLICE OFFICERS are talking to THREE YOUNG HISPANIC KIDS. Zainab hesitates for the slightest moment before lowering her head and walking past.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - LATER

Zainab enters the apartment and sees Walter drumming. His shirt is unbuttoned exposing his white undershirt. He stops. He is breathing very hard and sweating.

WALTER
Hello.

ZAINAB
Hello. Where is Tarek?

She places her items down on the kitchen table and takes off her coat. She looks around the apartment.
WALTER
He went out. To look at another apartment.

She just looks at him with the drum. Walter is still out of breath.

ZAINAB
Are you OK?

WALTER
Yeah. Tarek is teaching me the drum. I'm practicing. Don't worry, I'll keep my pants on.

Zainab looks shocked. Walter's attempt at levity has fallen short.

ZAINAB
What?

WALTER
Nothing. I was just...nothing.

Zainab nods and walks into the kitchen.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - LATER

Tarek is playing with his band. Walter is at the bar watching. He is unconsciously tapping along on the bar.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - SAME

Tarek, Walter, and Darren - the saxophone player - sit at a table by the window, eating.

TAREK
Hey Walter, what time are you done tomorrow?

WALTER
I have to present a paper at eleven. I should be done by twelve-thirty.
TAREK
Cool.

DARREN
(To the waiter)
Hey man, could we get another order of this?
(To Walter and Tarek)
I love this food.

TAREK
That's good. Because the Chinese are taking over the world.

DARREN
That's not gonna happen.

TAREK
It's already happening. One day our kids will be going to China for jobs. Ask Walter.

Darren and Tarek look at Walter.

DARREN
You think that's true?

Walter is put on the spot.

WALTER
Well...if China continues to threaten the wage earners in the first-world economies by keeping wages down, then it's really just a matter of time. What they buy they inflate. What they sell they deflate. But then you have to ask the question 'who's paying the cost?'. And the answer is the Chinese people.

Beat.

TAREK
You see?

Tarek continues eating.
INT. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Walter is presenting his paper.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - LATER

Walter is walks out of the building talking to a FEMALE COLLEAGUE.

TAREK (O.S.)
Hey, Walter!

Walter and the Female Colleague turn. Tarek is standing a few feet away holding both drums.

Walter nods and says good bye to the Colleague who looks a bit confused. Walter walks over to Tarek.

TAREK (CONT'D)
How did the presentation go?

WALTER
Fine. Thanks.

TAREK
Cool. Guess what? I found an apartment in Brooklyn. We can move in on Monday.

WALTER
That's good.

TAREK
Yeah. It's small but it's a nice building. I just hope Zainab likes it.

WALTER
I think she will as long as no else lives there.

Tarek laughs.

TAREK
I think you're right. Come on, let's go. You should take off the name tag.

WALTER
Walter takes off his name tag and they start to walk.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Are you hungry?

TAREK
Yeah. I'm starving. Do you like shwarmas?

WALTER
Uh...yeah. I like sharmas.

TAREK
Shwarmas.

WALTER
Yeah.

They walk across the park.

INT. FALAFEL STAND - LATER

Walter and Tarek are finishing lunch. Tarek reaches into his bag and takes out a SMALL BAG.

TAREK
Here. This is for you. For letting us stay.

WALTER
Thank you.

Walter takes it and opens it. It's a CD.

TAREK
It's Fela Kuti. You know him?

WALTER
No.

TAREK
You don't know Fela? Oh, man! Walter, you are in for a treat. He started the whole Afro-Beat movement. And his drummer Tony
Allen was just scary, man. You want to play drums, you have to listen to this.

WALTER
OK. I will.

A HANDSOME ARAB MAN walks past with a PRETTY BLONDE WOMAN. Tarek sees him and waves.

OMAR
(In Arabic)
Hey Tarek. How's it going?

TAREK
(in Arabic)
Good, Omar. How are you?

OMAR
(In Arabic)
Not bad. It's fall in New York, you know? How's the band?

TAREK
(In Arabic)
Good. Playing a lot. New girlfriend?

OMAR
(In Arabic)
New friend.

TAREK
(In Arabic)
You have a lot friends

OMAR
(In Arabic)
I'm a very nice guy. Au revoir.

TAREK
Au revoir.

Omar walks off. Tarek shakes his head.

TAREK (CONT'D)
The Lebanese. Bunch of playboys. You ready?
WALTER

Yeah.

They pick up their drums and leave.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET FAIR - LATER

Zainab is talking to two UPPER EAST SIDE WOMEN who have stopped at her stall.

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ZAINAB

Yes. I made it.

UPPER EAST SIDE WOMAN

How much?

ZAINAB

Thirty-five dollars.

UPPER EAST SIDE WOMAN

Will you take thirty?

ZAINAB

No. thirty-five.

UPPER EAST SIDE WOMAN

OK. I know my daughter will think it's "cool". Here.

She hands her the money. Zainab takes it and drops it into a small pouch.

UPPER EAST SIDE WOMAN (CONT'D)

Where are you from?

ZAINAB

Senegal.

UPPER EAST SIDE WOMAN

Oh. I was in Cape Town two winters ago. It was just beautiful.

ZAINAB

(Handing her the bag)

Thank you very much.
Thank you.

The Woman walks away. A young Israeli man, ZEV is sitting at a nearby stall selling T-shirts.

**ZEV**

How far is Senegal from Cape Town?

**ZAINAB**

Far.

**ZEV**

I told a guy I was from Israel yesterday and he asked if I had ever visited the Holy Land.

Zainab smiles. Zev sees someone over Zainab's shoulder.

**ZEV (CONT'D)**

Hey, look who it is. What's up Tarek?

Tarek and Walter are approaching.

**TAREK**

Zev! How are you?

**ZEV**

Good man.

**TAREK**

Hey honey.

He kisses Zainab.

**ZAINAB**


**WALTER**

Hi.

**TAREK**

How's business?

**ZEV**

Ahh. You know.
Walter looks at the Zainab's jewelry.

TAREK
Her stuff is great, right? She made me this?

Tarek holds up his wrist, revealing a bracelet.

TAREK (CONT'D)
You should make one for Walter.

Zainab nods noncommittally.

TAREK (CONT'D)
So Walter and I are going up to the park to play for a little bit. OK?

ZAINAB
Tarek, I told you we have to pick up my new table today. He said he would only hold it for today.

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TAREK
I know. I know. No problem.

ZAINAB
Tarek. You always say "no problem" and then you are late or you forget.

Tarek smiles.

TAREK
I know. I will not be long. We'll go up and play and then we'll come back to help you. I promise, habibti.

He kisses her and starts to walk away.

ZAINAB
Yes. It's always "habibti" when you want your way. It closes at five p.m. Not Arab time, Tarek.

TAREK
No. Not Arab time. Real time, habibti.
ZAINAB
Don't "habibti" me.
They turn and start to leave.

WALTER
What does habibti mean?

TAREK
Habibti? It means "beloved one".

WALTER
Does she know that?

Tarek laughs.

INT. SUBWAY - LATER

Tarek and Walter are waiting for the subway. A CHINESE MUSICIAN is playing on the opposite platform.

TAREK
He's been playing here for a long time.

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WALTER
Is he good?

TAREK
I have no idea but it's cool. I always wanted to play down here. It's supposed to be good money.

WALTER
So why haven't you?

Tarek shrugs.

TAREK
Maybe some day we can do it together. Split the profits.

Walter watches the Chinese Musician.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - LATER.
Walter and Tarek stand in front of the DRUM CIRCLE in Central Park.

TAREK
What do you think?

Walter sizes it up and makes his assessment.

WALTER
I think I'll just watch.

TAREK
Come on, Walter.

TAREK (CONT'D)
It's easy. You just wait until you feel it. Let's go.

Tarek joins the drum circle. Walter lingers.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - LATER.

Walter is on the edge of the Drum Circle, waiting to "feel it". Tarek is next to him playing away.

Tarek looks at Walter and nods. Finally Walter starts to play. Slowly at first, but then he starts to really commit. Tarek encourages him with a smile.

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EXT. CENTRAL PARK - LATER

Tarek and Walter are leaving the park. Tarek checks his watch.

TAREK
Shit, we have to get home. Zainab is gonna kill me. I'm on Arab time again.

WALTER
What is Arab time?

TAREK
It means I'm late by an hour. All Arabs are late by an hour. It's
EXT. 72ND STREET SUBWAY STATION - LATER

Tarek and Walter hurry down the stairs of the subway station.

INT. 72ND STREET SUBWAY STATION - CONTINUOUS

Walter and Tarek approach the turnstile. They can hear the train arriving.

TAREK
That's our train!

They pick up the pace. Walter puts down his drum to take out his METROCARD. Tarek quickly picks it up.

TAREK (CONT'D)
I got your drum. My card is empty. Can you swipe me?

Walter swipes his card for Tarek to pass through and then he swipes his own turnstile.

Walter passes through. Tarek struggles a bit with both drums. He gets halfway through when the turnstile bar locks. He's stuck.

TAREK (CONT'D)
(Laughing)
Hey. You paid for the drum and not me. Here take this.

Walter takes Tarek's drum and Tarek quickly ducks under the turn style that Walter just paid for.

TAREK (CONT'D)
(Re: the train)
I think we missed it. Zainab is not going to be happy if...

Suddenly a MAN takes Tarek by the arm.

MAN
Excuse me, sir. Could you please step over here.

Tarek reacts by pulling his arm away.

**TAREK**
What are you doing?

**MAN**
NYPD. Could you please step over here?

He reaches for Tarek again who instinctively moves his arm again which agitates the Cop. Another COP enters into the action.

**COP #2**
Just step over here, pal.

**TAREK**
Please, what do you want...

**COP #1**
You jumped the turnstile.

**TAREK**
I did not jump it! I paid. I paid! It just didn't work.

Walter steps up.

**WALTER**
Sir, I did pay his fare.

**COP #2**
Could you step back please?

**WALTER**
But I paid this man's...

**COP #2**
Sir, stand over there.

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**COP #1**
(To Tarek)
Can I see some ID.

Tarek takes out his wallet. He shows them an ID CARD. Walter
steps back to the wall and sets the two drums down. Cop #2 stands between him and the action. Walter can barely make out what is being said.

**COP #1 (CONT'D)**
You got anything else, Tarek.

**TAREK**
No.

**COP #1**
Where are you from?

**TAREK**
Syria. Why?

Tarek is starting to panic. The two Cops share a look. Another train passes. Cop #1 asks Tarek a few more questions which Walter cannot hear.

Suddenly Cop #1 starts to handcuff Tarek.

**TAREK (CONT'D)**
Why? I'm sorry. What did I do?

Walter steps forward to intervene.

**WALTER**
I don't think that's necessary.

**COP #2**
Well we do. You can come down to the station and make a statement.

**WALTER**
But he didn't mean...

**COP #2**
Sir, that's all I'm saying. Now step back or we are gonna take you in too.

**WALTER**
Where are you taking him?

**COP #2**
Ninth Precinct.
TAREK
Walter take the drum. Tell Zainab what happened but don't let her come for me. I will call you.

The two Cops lead Tarek away. Walter watches helplessly.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Don't let her come! I will call her!

Walter watches him go.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - LATER
Walter enters and shuts the door and Zainab is sitting on the couch working on her jewelry.
She stops when she sees Walter standing alone, holding the two drums.

ZAINAB
Where is Tarek?

WALTER
He was arrested.

ZAINAB
What?!

WALTER
Yes. In the subway.
Zainab immediately starts to panic.

ZAINAB
Arrested?!

WALTER
Yes. It was just a misunderstanding. They said he would be released later tonight.

Zainab really starts to lose it. Her reaction is more than Walter was prepared for.
ZAINAB
How could this happen? He knows better! He would not do anything wrong.

WALTER
He didn't. I'm sure we it will be OK.

She begins to pack up her work.

ZAINAB
No. It won't be OK.

WALTER
Yes it will. I went down to the precinct and made a statement.

ZAINAB
(Snapping at Walter)
That doesn't matter! He is illegal! As am I! We are not citizens. Do you know what that means? Do you?! Of course you don't. How could you?

She picks up her things and walks down the hall to her room. Walter sits, stunned.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Walter is talking on his cell phone and pacing.

WALTER
Yes. His name is Tarek Khalil. Khalil. K. H. A. L. I. L. That's right. Yes. I came down and made a statement. They said he would be released. That was six hours ago. Well when should we know? Tomorrow? Why? But he...OK. OK. Thank you.

Walter hangs up.

EXT. POLICE STATION - MORNING
Walter walks out of the police station. He crosses the street. Zainab is standing there.

ZAINAB
Well?

WALTER
They've moved him.

ZAINAB
To where?

WALTER
To a detention center in Queens. He was turned over to immigration. They said we can see him during visiting hours tomorrow night from five to ten.

Zainab shakes her head.

ZAINAB
I can't visit him or I will end up in that place too.

Zainab fights to restrain her emotions. She turns and walks away. Walter watches her go.

EXT. WALTER'S APARTMENT BUILDING – NIGHT

Zainab's bedroom light is on.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, TAREK'S & ZAINAB'S ROOM – SAME

Zainab is sitting on her bed and talking on her phone.

ZAINAB
Yes. We are going tomorrow. The appointment is at eleven. I don't know, he found him. What? No. I don't want to. I just don't, Tarek. Yes. I've already called him. I know. I know. I just want you to be here with me, Tarek.
EXT. NEW YORK, DOWNTOWN - DAY

A sea of skyscrapers near One Center Street.

INT. DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING, ELEVATOR BANK - DAY

Zainab and Walter exit an elevator and walk down the hall.

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INT. LAW OFFICE - LATER

Walter and Zainab talk to an, MR. SHAH, an INDIAN IMMIGRATION LAWYER who is jotting down notes. He is clinical, almost cold in his approach.

MR. SHAH
Zainab, you're also undocumented, right?

ZAINAB
Yes.

MR. SHAH
You know you can't visit Tarek at the detention center, right?

ZAINAB
Yes. I know.

MR. SHAH
How long have you known Tarek?

ZAINAB
Almost a year.

MR. SHAH
Mr. Vale?

WALTER
A week.

MR. SHAH
A week?

Walter nods.
MR. SHAH (CONT’D)
Does Tarek have any family living here?
Walter looks to Zainab.

ZAINAB
His mother lives in Michigan.
This is news to Walter.

MR. SHAH
She's also undocumented, correct?
Zainab hesitates.

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MR. SHAH (CONT’D)
It's OK. This is all confidential.

ZAINAB
Yes, she is.

MR. SHAH
Does she know that Tarek is in custody?

ZAINAB
No. Tarek told me not to tell her. He doesn't want to worry her.

MR. SHAH
Has he ever been convicted of a crime?

ZAINAB
No. He has had no trouble. He is a good person.

MR. SHAH
Do you know if they ever applied for asylum?
Walter looks at Zainab. She is very uncomfortable.

ZAINAB
Yes. When he first arrived from Syria. But he didn't get it.
MR. SHAH
When was that?

ZAINAB
Seven years ago.

MR. SHAH
And did they appeal it?

ZAINAB
I don't know.

Mr. Shah jots something down.

WALTER
Why wouldn't they appeal it?

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MR. SHAH
Fear of being deported. It used to be that when your asylum case was denied, they let you go until your appeal. A lot of people didn't bother with it. Getting denied once was enough to spook them.

WALTER
So what happens if that's the case?

MR. SHAH
Then there may be a final order of deportation on him which means he won't even go before a judge this time. He'll just be deported.

ZAINAB
They had to leave Syria! They had no choice!

This is also news to Walter.

MR. SHAH
Look, one step at a time. Let me talk to him then we'll have a better idea of his status and what our options are.

WALTER
Is there anything I can do?

MR. SHAH

Visit him.

The lawyer slides a card across the table. Walter takes it.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Walter rides the subway. He looks down at the lawyer's card.

EXT. QUEENS - LATER

Walter emerges from the subway into a very industrial neighborhood. Factories and fences. He checks his piece of paper and starts walking.

EXT. QUEENS - LATER

Walter is still walking. The area is very deserted. He stops and tries to locate a street address amongst the anonymous factories. He checks his sheet of paper and continues walking.

EXT. QUEENS DETENTION CENTER - LATER

Walter is standing in front of the DETENTION CENTER. It looks like most of the other factories around it but perhaps with a bit more barbed wire.

He presses a button and the automated door slowly opens. He walks inside.

INT. QUEENS DETENTION CENTER

Walter walks into a small brightly lit waiting room. A few SODA MACHINES and TWELVE BLUE PLASTIC CHAIRS. In one corner is a guard booth with THREE GUARDS. One FEMALE GUARD is wearing a Muslim headdress. Walter approaches the window and waits in line. The other people waiting comprise a mix of nationalities: African, Latin American, Chinese, Indian.
The Guard talks to a MAN in front of Walter. The Man has a Slavic accent.

GUARD
That detainee has been moved.

SLAVIC MAN
To where?

GUARD
I don't know.

SLAVIC MAN
He was here yesterday.

GUARD
But now he's not. That's all I know. You can call ICE. The number is on the wall. Next. Sir, step aside please.

The Slavic Man reluctantly steps aside, staring at a piece of paper. Walter steps up to the window. He sets a piece of paper on the window sill.

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WALTER
Hi. I'm here to see Tarek Khalil.

The Guard takes it.

GUARD
You been here before?

WALTER
No.

GUARD
Can I see your license please?

Walter takes out his wallet.

INT. QUEENS DETENTION CENTER - LATER

Walter is let through a large metal door. There is an X-RAY MACHINE immediately in front of him.
Walter empties his pockets and steps through.

Walter waits for the sliding metal door to open. It does and he steps into a small room. The door slides shut and he is alone in the small white room until a door on the other side slides open.

He steps through and walks down a small hallway. On the left side of the hallway are small, glassed in, meeting rooms for lawyer consultations.

Walter enters into a large bright room. It resembles a prison visitation room. Along the perimeter of the room is a clear fiberglass wall with twenty-five small cubicles. Each cubicle has one seat and a phone. On the other side of the fiberglass is another seat and a phone.

Walter looks around the room at the VISITORS and DETAINNEES.

INT. QUEENS DETENTION CENTER, VISITING ROOM - LATER

Walter is still waiting. After a moment a door opens and Tarek walks out wearing a blue jump suit. He sees Walter and smiles.

They each move toward the other and settle into a vacant seat. They both pick up the phone as they sit down.

TAREK
Walter. Thank you for coming.

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WALTER
Of course.

TAREK
How is Zainab?

WALTER
She's upset. I have a letter from her.

TAREK
You can't give it to me. It has to
be sent to me by mail. But you can put it up to the glass.

Walter hesitates.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Go ahead. Open it and place it up to the glass so I can read it. It's OK. It's allowed.

Walter complies. He sets down the phone so that he can press the letter up against the glass. Tarek reads the letter.

Walter looks around the room, trying to give Tarek some privacy. He watches the various immigrant families speaking to one another. Tarek taps the glass and points to Walter's phone. Walter picks it up.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Thank you, Walter.

Walter nods as he folds up the envelope and places it back into his coat.

WALTER
How are they treating you?

TAREK
OK. The place is very depressing. There is no privacy. The lights are always on.

WALTER
Do you need anything?

TAREK
No. I just want to get out of here.

WALTER
Zainab and I met with a lawyer today.

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TAREK
Yes. What did he say?

WALTER
He is going to stop by to see you tomorrow.
They both sit for a moment. Unsure what to say next. Finally Walter's curiosity gets the best of him.

**WALTER (CONT'D)**
Tarek, Zainab said you were denied asylum.

**TAREK**
You mean when we came here? Yeah.

**WALTER**
Did you go to your deportation hearing?

**TAREK**
Yeah.

**WALTER**
You did?

**TAREK**
Yeah. We did everything they told us to.

Walter can only nod, unsure of what else to say.

**TAREK (CONT'D)**
Hey, could you tell Darren? I didn't call him.

A GUARD walks past and taps Tarek on the shoulder and speaks to him. We can't hear what is being said.

**TAREK (CONT'D)**
(To Walter)
I have to go. They have to do a bed count. Usually, I can visit for one hour. Can you come tomorrow?

**WALTER**
Yes.

**TAREK**
Good. And tell Zainab I will call her as soon as I can.

Walter nods. Tarek gets up.
TAREK (CONT'D)
Goodbye, my friend.

WALTER
Goodbye.

Tarek walks away. Walter watches him go.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM/ KITCHEN

Walter and Zainab are sitting at the kitchen table. Zainab is holding her letter.

ZAINAB
Did you ask him if he went to his hearing?

WALTER
Yes. He said that he did.

Zainab stands up.

ZAINAB
Walter, I'm going to leave now. I have a cousin in the Bronx. I will stay with him for now.

WALTER
You don't have to leave. You can stay here.

ZAINAB
I think it's best if I leave. When Tarek calls me then I will tell him. You know how to reach me if you need to. Is it OK if I leave Tarek's things here for now? My cousin's place is not very big.

WALTER
Yes.

EXT. WALTER'S BUILDING - LATER

Zainab walks away from the apartment.
INT. SMALL BAR - NIGHT

Walter drinks at the bar and watches Tarek's band play without Tarek.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Walter practices the drum.

EXT. WALTER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Jacob walks Sprinkles in front of the apartment building. Walter walks outside and waves hello as he walks past.

INT. QUEEN'S DETENTION CENTER, VISITORS ROOM - LATER

Darren and Tarek are talking. Walter sits and listens.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Walter eats alone.

EXT. STREET CORNER - MORNING

Walter buys the morning paper from a kiosk. He walks to the corner and waits to cross the street. A large group of CHINESE TOURISTS led by a TOUR GUIDE step up next to him. He is surrounded by them.

INT. QUEEN'S DETENTION CENTER, VISITOR'S ROOM - SAME

Tarek talks to Mr. Shah.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Walter is playing the drum. He finishes with an "end beat". He looks around the quiet apartment.

INT. QUEENS DETENTION CENTER, VISITING ROOM - DAY

Walter is waiting for Tarek. The visiting room is empty.
Suddenly the door opens on the detainee side of the glass and a VERY YOUNG LATIN WOMAN walks out tentatively. She almost looks absurd in the oversized blue jumpsuit.

She looks at Walter, unsure if she is supposed to approach the glass and talk to him. Walter just stares back, also unsure of what to do. They are caught in awkward moment. Finally Walter manages a nod. She nods back and smiles. It is the innocent smile of a child.

Suddenly a female guard appears in the doorway and beckons the Young Girl back inside. The Young Girl looks at Walter one last moment before disappearing behind the door.

INT. QUEEN'S DETENTION CENTER, VISITING ROOM - LATER

Walter is talking to Tarek.

WALTER
But I thought you said you went to the hearing.

TAREK
We did. I remember it.

WALTER
So why is there a final order on you? Did he say?

TAREK
No. He didn't know yet. He just said that unless he can find a way to reopen the case quickly they're going to deport me.

WALTER
Maybe you should call your mother. She might have...

TAREK
No. I don't want her to worry. I can handle this.

Tarek shakes his head.
WALTER
Did he say anything else?

TAREK
Yeah. Three years ago I was working for some guy who said he was going to sponsor me for my green card but then he turned out to be jerk. But the lawyer said that might allow us to reopen the case. I don't even understand it.

Walter nods.

TAREK (CONT'D)
Walter, there are guys who have been in here for years! I can't do that Walter. I'll go crazy.

WALTER
He's trying to deal with the case as quickly as possible.

Tarek goes silent.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Tarek. I have to go back to Connecticut. I'll be reachable by phone if you need me for anything.

Tarek's mind is racing. He shakes his head.

TAREK
OK. Just please...don't forget about me in here.

WALTER
I won't.

TAREK
Are you still practicing?

WALTER
Yes.

TAREK
You should go back to the drum circle.
WALTER
(Quickly)
No.

Tarek laughs.

TAREK
OK. But listen to that Fela CD. That will help you, I promise.

WALTER
I will.

TAREK
So show me what you've been working on.

WALTER
What?

TAREK
Show me. On that. Come on. I need some music, man.

Tarek points to the shelf in front of Walter.

WALTER
Now?

TAREK
Don't worry. They can't arrest you. At least not yet.

WALTER
OK.

Walter looks around and then cradles the phone in his shoulder and starts to bang a simple beat on his counter top.

Tarek watches and listens for a moment.

TAREK
Ah. There it is. Good. Good. You are getting better.

And then he joins in. The two men continue to play together.
INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - MORNING

Walter is packing his suitcase. Suddenly there is a knock at his door. He exits the room.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Walter opens the door. Standing there is a strikingly attractive forty-five year-old ARAB WOMAN. She seems startled to see Walter.

WALTER
Hello.

ARAB WOMAN
I'm sorry. I must have the wrong apartment.

She starts to walk down the hall.

WALTER
Can I help you?

ARAB WOMAN
I'm looking for my son.

WALTER
Are you Tarek's mother?

ARAB WOMAN
Yes.

WALTER
Oh. This is Tarek's apartment. I...share the apartment with him.

The Arab Woman is cautious.

ARAB WOMAN
He did not mention that he lived with someone.

WALTER
I'm not here very often. I live in Connecticut.
ARAB WOMAN
Is Tarek here?

WALTER
No. He's...uh...he's not here. But please come in.

Mouna hesitates.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Please.

ARAB WOMAN
Thank you.

Mouna walks into the apartment. She stands by the door.

WALTER
I'm Walter. Walter Vale.

ARAB WOMAN
I'm Mouna Khalil. I'm sorry to show up unannounced but my son calls me everyday. He has not called me now for five days. I have tried his cell phone but he does not answer.

WALTER
Would you like to sit down?

MOUNA
Thank you.

Mouna sits.

WALTER
Would you like something to drink? Coffee or water?

MOUNA
No. Is my son alright, Mr. Vale?

WALTER
Tarek was arrested. He's being held in a detention center in Queens. They are trying to deport him.
MOUNA
Where is Queens?

WALTER
It's not far from here. Twenty minutes.

MOUNA
You have been there?

WALTER
Yes. I saw him yesterday. He's OK.

MOUNA
How did this happen?

WALTER
He was stopped in the subway station. He didn't do anything wrong.

MOUNA
I would like to go there. To Queens.

WALTER
OK. But Mrs. Khalil. The lawyer mentioned that...I don't think that you can...

MOUNA
I know I can't visit Tarek, Mr. Vale. I just want to see where they are holding him.

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WALTER
OK. I can take you if you'd like.

MOUNA
Thank you.

WALTER
Let me get my coat.

Mouna nods. Walter leaves. Mouna breathes deeply in an attempt to control her emotions. She looks around the apartment and spots Tarek's drum. The sight of it is almost
enough to push her over the edge.

**INT. SUBWAY - LATER**

The Chinese Musician is playing on the platform. Mouna and Walter are watching him.

**INT. SUBWAY CAR - LATER**

Walter and Mouna are sitting side by side on the subway.

**EXT. SUBWAY STATION, QUEENS - LATER**

Walter and Mouna exit the subway station and walk down the empty street.

**WALTER**

Have you been to New York before, Mrs. Khalil?

**MOUNA**

No. Tarek wanted to come to New York to play music. I did not want him to go but...do you have children, Mr. Vale?

**WALTER**

I have a son. He lives in London.

**MOUNA**

And your wife?

**WALTER**

My wife passed away.

**MOUNA**

I'm sorry.

**EXT. QUEENS STREET - LATER**

Walter and Mouna stop across the street from the detention Center.

**WALTER**
That's it.

MOUNA
This is where the prison is?

WALTER
Yes. That's it.

Walter points to the Detention Center.

MOUNA
It does not look like a prison.

WALTER
I think that's the point.

MOUNA
How many people are in there?

WALTER
Tarek said about three hundred.

WALTER (CONT'D)
There is a coffee shop on that corner. It's not very nice but...

MOUNA
I'll wait there. Here.

She takes a letter out of her bag and hands it to Walter.

MOUNA (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Walter turns and walks into the facility. Mouna lingers, taking in the building.

INT. QUEENS DETENTION CENTER, VISITATION ROOM - LATER

Walter is waiting for Tarek. He is watching as a LATIN WOMAN holds her BABY up to the glass as her HUSBAND taps on it from the other side.

Finally a door opens and Tarek walks out. He waves and smiles. Walter picks up his phone. Tarek picks up his.
TAREK
Walter, I thought you were leaving.

WALTER
I was. Tarek, your mother is here.

This stops Tarek cold.

TAREK
What? My mother?! Where?

WALTER
She is waiting outside.

TAREK
When did she arrive?

WALTER
Today.

TAREK
Oh man. Why did she come? She can do nothing for me.

WALTER
She said she hadn't heard from you.

TAREK
Walter. Listen to me. She can not stay here. She doesn't know anyone in New York. I'm sorry but you must get her to go back to Michigan.

WALTER
OK. OK. Here. I have a letter from her.

Walter takes it out and puts it up to the glass.

INT. QUEENS, DINER - LATER

It's a dingy place occupied by truck drivers and factory workers. Mouna sitting in a booth clutching a cup of tea. She looks very out of place.

Two DETENTION CENTER GUARDS enter and sit down in a booth. Mouna watches them. An Arab Walter is cleaning the counter. He keeps looking at Mouna.

WAITER
Do you need anything else?

MOUNA

No.

WAITER

(In Arabic)
Where are you from?

MOUNA

(In Arabic)
I am Palestinian from Damascus.

WAITER

(In Arabic)
Ah. I knew it. I am from Egypt. Alexandria. I'm Nasim. Why are you here?

MOUNA

(In Arabic)
I am visiting my son.

NASIM

(In Arabic)
He is in detention.

MOUNA

(In Arabic)
Yes.

The Waiter shakes his head.

NASIM

(In Arabic)
It's a bad place. I'm lucky. I have a green card.

He nods to the Guards.

NASIM (CONT'D)

(In Arabic)
They're the ones taking care of your son. They come here everyday. They don't tip.

Mouna is uncomfortable.
Walter enters and walks over to Mouna's booth.

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NASIM (CONT'D)
Hello, sir.

Walter nods and sits down. He hands Mouna her letter.

MOUNA
How is he?

WALTER
He's good but he's concerned about you being here.

MOUNA
I will not leave.

WALTER
Mrs. Khalil, I'm not sure that your being in New York will do any good. We have a very good lawyer working on Tarek's case...

MOUNA
(Politely but forceful)
Mr. Vale, I cannot go back to Michigan knowing that my son is in that building. Even if I can't see him, I will stay.

She stands up, ready to leave.

MOUNA (CONT'D)
Shall we go?

Walter stands. Mouna digs in her purse.

NASIM
(In Arabic)
The tea is on me.

MOUNA
(In Arabic)
Thank you.

NASIM
(In Arabic)
Is that your lawyer? Or your husband?

MOUNA
(In Arabic)
Goodbye.

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NASIM
(In Arabic)
See you next time.

Walter follows Mouna out.

EXT. WALTER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER.

Walter and Mouna arrive back at Walter's apartment building. Jacob emerges from the front door with Sprinkles.

JACOB
Oh. Hello, Mr. Vale.

WALTER
Hello, Jacob.

He sees Mouna.

JACOB
Oh, hello again. Did you find your son?

MOUNA
Yes. Thank you.

JACOB
(To Walter)
I let her in earlier.  
(To Mouna)
I'm Jacob, by the way. I live on the third floor. And this is Sprinkles.

MOUNA
Nice to meet you, Jacob. I'm Mouna.
JACOB
So you two know each other?

There is an awkward pause.

MOUNA
Yes. Mr. Vale knows my son.

JACOB
Oh. Who is that?

MOUNA
Tarek.

JACOB
Oh. Tarek. He is very nice. And so is his girlfriend. They are both so polite.

MOUNA
Thank you.

JACOB
My mother and I are planning a trip to go to Israel next summer. She's always wanted to go.

MOUNA
I hope you enjoy it. Now if you'll excuse me.

Mouna nods and heads into the building.

JACOB
Oh sure. We need to go on our walk and do our business. Very nice to meet you, Mouna.

MOUNA
You too, Jacob.

Mouna continues up the stairs. Walter follows her.

JACOB
Goodbye, Mr. Vale.

WALTER
INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - LATER

Walter and Mouna enter the apartment. Mouna picks up her suitcase.

MOUNA
Thank you, Mr. Vale.

Walter turns.

WALTER
Where are you going?

MOUNA
I will find a hotel.

WALTER
You can stay here. You can use Tarek's room.

MOUNA
Thank you for your offer but I cannot accept this. I don't want to impose on you.

WALTER
You're not imposing. Please. I would like you to stay.

MOUNA
Again, thank you. But I will manage. Goodbye.

Walter finally steps aside and opens the door.

MOUNA (CONT'D)
Goodbye.

She leaves.

EXT. WALTER'S APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mouna walks down the stairs.
WALTER
Mrs. Khalil?

She turns. Walter is standing at the top of the stairway.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Please. I was with Tarek when he was arrested. He was in the subway in the first place because of me. Please. Stay. Even if it's just for the night.

Walter's plea is heartfelt. Mouna looks at him and then she looks down the stairs for a long moment, considering her options.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, TAREK'S ROOM - LATER

Walter enters the room and sets down Mouna's suitcase. She follows him into the cramped bedroom.

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WALTER
The bathroom is just across the hall.

MOUNA
Thank you, Mr. Vale.

WALTER
You can call me Walter.

MOUNA
And I am Mouna.

Walter nods.

WALTER
Do you need anything else?

MOUNA
No. Thank you. Good night.

WALTER
Good night.

Walter leaves, shutting the door behind him. Mouna sits on the bed and looks around the room.
EXT. DETENTION CENTER - NIGHT

Desolate streets. The sound of an airplane taking off breaks the night quiet.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY - MORNING

Walter walks out of his bedroom. He hears talking from the living room. He walks down the hall and sees Mouna sitting on the couch in the living room, talking on her cell phone in Arabic. He turns and walks back down the hallway.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN

Walter pours a cup of coffee. He notices two newspaper's on the counter. One is the Financial Times and the other is Al Hayat, an Arabic newspaper. He picks up the Financial Times and reads the front page. Mouna enters.

MOUNA

Good morning.

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WALTER

Good morning.

MOUNA

Tarek said hello.

WALTER

How is he?

MOUNA

I can't really tell. He wants me to leave. But I am not leaving.

WALTER

Well, you can stay here as long as you need to.

MOUNA

Thank you. That is very generous of you.
WALTER
Thank you for the newspaper.

Mouna nods and pours some more coffee for herself.

MOUNA
Walter? Did Tarek and his girlfriend, Zainab, live here together?

WALTER
Uhm...Yes. They did.

MOUNA
And where is she now?

WALTER
She's staying with her cousin in the Bronx.

MOUNA
I would like to meet her.

WALTER
We can go by her stall.

MOUNA
Her what?

WALTER
Her stall. She sells jewelry in a stall.

MOUNA
Oh. OK.

EXT. DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

A large office building in downtown Manhattan.

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME

Walter and Mouna are standing in silence.
MOUNA
Do you spend a lot of time in the city?

WALTER
No. Not really. I just came down to present a paper at a conference.

MOUNA
You wrote it?

WALTER
Yes. Well I coauthored it.

MOUNA
Congratulations.

Walter shrugs.

INT. MR. SHAH'S OFFICE - DAY

Walter and Mouna are talking to the Mr. Shah.

MR. SHAH
And what happened after the hearing?

MOUNA
We appealed. It took two years.

MR. SHAH
And your appeal was denied?

MOUNA
Yes.

MR. SHAH
Then they should have sent you a bag-and-baggage letter which basically tells you where to show up and be deported.

Mouna nods.

MR. SHAH (CONT'D)
But you didn't receive it?
MOUNA

No.

MR. SHAH

You sure?

MOUNA

Yes. I would remember this.

MR. SHAH

Did you move?

MOUNA

Yes. Eventually we had to. But we had our mail advanced.

Mr. Shah is satisfied.

MR. SHAH

Well, it wouldn't be the first time that happened. And pre 9/11 it wasn't much of a priority tracking people down.

Mouna bristles at the implied connection.

WALTER

So if they didn't get the letter then does this help us?

MR. SHAH

It keeps our chances alive. If they got it and just ignored it then we couldn't push to reopen the case.

MOUNA

So you can help him?

MR. SHAH

It's still a long shot. Like I said, the Government's approach has changed radically.

(MORE)

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MR. SHAH (CONT'D)

It's very black and white now. Either you belong or you don't. Which means a lot of people who have been living here for years are suddenly being swept up and thrown
into detention.
(He starts writing)
Tarek's lucky. Most of them don't even have lawyers.

Mouna blanches.

**MOUNA**

Lucky?

**MR. SHAH**

(Without looking up)
Relatively speaking. We just have to move quickly to get an emergency stay from the board of immigration. Then, we'll stick with the motion to reopen pending his green card application.

Mouna and Walter share a look. They're lost.

**MOUNA**

Can you explain what that means?

**MR. SHAH**

Actually, I don't have the time right now. I have to be in court very shortly

**MOUNA**

How long will he be in detention?

**MR. SHAH**

(Without looking up)
I can't predict that. I'm sorry but I am gonna have to wrap this up.

Walter looks at Mouna. Mouna stares at the Mr. Shah.

**MOUNA**

Do you have children, Mr. Shah?

**MR. SHAH**

Yeah. Two kids. And for what it's worth my uncle was deported after raising a family here for twenty-three years. If I can get Tarek out, I will.
Mouna softens.

MOUNA
Thank you. Where are you from?

MR. SHAH
Queens.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET FAIR - LATER

Walter and Mouna are standing at the fair.

MOUNA
Which one is she?

WALTER
There. In the middle.

MOUNA
(surprised)
The black woman? That is Zainab?

WALTER
Yes.

MOUNA
She is very black.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET FAIR - LATER

Zainab is sitting at her table when Walter approaches.

Zainab
smiles. She is genuinely surprised and happy to see him.

ZAINAB
Walter?

WALTER
Hi Zainab. This is Mouna Khalil. Tarek's mother.

Zainab blanches.

ZAINAB
Oh.

She quickly stands up.

MOUNA
Hello, Zainab.

ZAINAB
It is a pleasure to meet you, Mrs. Khalil.

MOUNA
Please. Call me Mouna.

ZAINAB
OK. I'm sorry. I did not know you were coming.

MOUNA
Neither did I.

Mouna looks at her for a long moment. Then she inspects her jewelry. Zainab is uncharacteristically nervous.

MOUNA (CONT'D)
Your jewelry is very beautiful.

ZAINAB
Thank you.

MOUNA
Do you have time for coffee or a walk?

Zainab looks around at her table.

ZAINAB
Yes. I would like that. But I have to watch my table.

Mouna and Zainab both turn to look at Walter.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET FAIR, - LATER

Walter is sitting behind Zainab's table in the fair. It's a long way from the classroom. A FEW YOUNG WOMEN walk past and browse Zainab's jewelry. They look at Walter who just nods.

INT. CAFE - SAME

Mouna and Zainab sit and talk.
ZAINAB
I'm living with my cousin. He has
two kids. And his mother. I mean
his wife...I'm sorry, I am very
nervous.

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MOUNA
Why?

ZAINAB
I don't know. Have you spoken with
Tarek?

MOUNA
Yes. He called me this morning. He
is doing all right.

ZAINAB
I wish that I could see him. Just
for a minute.

MOUNA
Me too. How long have you been
here?

ZAINAB
Two years. I was in detention when
I first arrived. Three months. It
was horrible. I would probably
still be there but they closed the
facility for poor conditions. They
released some of the women on
parole because we were...low risk.
I met Tarek one year later.
(Beat)
I am sorry for what happened with
Tarek. I hope you do not blame me.

MOUNA
Blame you? No. I do not blame you.

Zainab starts to break.

ZAINAB
Tarek was doing nothing wrong. I
miss him so much. I don't know what
I am going to do without him.
MOUNA
He said the same thing about you.

ZAINAB
He did?

MOUNA
Yes.

Zainab smiles.

ZAINAB
Like what?

MOUNA
Anything. Whatever you want.

MOUNA (CONT'D)
Zainab, I would like you to do something for me.

ZAINAB
What?

MOUNA
I would like you to show me something that you and Tarek liked to do. Some place that you like to go.

ZAINAB
OK. But maybe we should get Walter first.

They both smile at the thought of Walter still at Zainab's table.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - LATER

Walter and Mouna walk down the street listening to Zainab who is wheeling her jewelry supplies behind her.

EXT. STATEN ISLAND FERRY - LATER
Walter, Mouna and Zainab are standing at the railing of the Ferry which is making its way across the harbor.

The STATUE OF LIBERTY looms large; the ferry route providing a perfect vantage point.

MOUNA
So what is in Staten Island?

ZAINAB
I don't know. We never got off. We just would go to the other side and then come back.

WALTER
Why?

ZAINAB
It's free. And it felt like we were going somewhere.

Mouna smiles.

ZAINAB (CONT'D)
That is where the towers were. I never saw them but Tarek did.

Zainab crosses to the other railing and points.

ZAINAB (CONT'D)
And over there is the Statue. And behind that is Ellis Island.

Zainab smiles.

ZAINAB (CONT'D)
Sometimes Tarek would point at the statue and jump up and down like we were arriving to New York for the first time. It was very funny.

MOUNA
Can you go up in the Statue?

WALTER
Yes. I think so.

MOUNA
You haven't been?

WALTER
No.

MOUNA
Oh.

Walter's cell phone rings. He looks at it.

WALTER
Excuse me.
(Into the phone)
Hello? Oh. Hi Charles.

He walks away from the Mouna and Zainab.

WALTER (CONT'D)
What's that? Yes. I'm still in New York actually. I stayed down here to do some research. What's that? Oh. I'm on a boat. Yes, a boat.
(MORE)

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WALTER (CONT'D)
Listen Charles, I'll explain when I see you but I have to go right now. I'll call you back. Goodbye.

Walter hangs up the phone and rejoins Mouna and Zainab.

INT. QUEENS DETENTION CENTER - LATER

Walter is visiting with Tarek. Another detainee walks behind Tarek and taps him on the shoulder. Tarek nods hello and then keeps talking to Walter.

TAREK
You went on the ferry?

WALTER
Yes.

TAREK
My mother too?

WALTER
Yes. She liked it.
TAREK
Did Zainab tell you how we used pretend we arriving in New York for the first time?

WALTER
Yeah. She told us.

TAREK
You know they don't even let us outside here. They just cut a hole in the roof in one place.

WALTER
Really?

TAREK
Yeah. It's crazy stuff.

Tarek looks around the room.

TAREK (CONT'D)
And they seemed to get along? Zainab and my mother?

WALTER
Yes. I think your mother likes her very much.

TAREK
My mother's not going home, is she?

WALTER
I don't think so.

TAREK
I know she's thinking about my father. He spent seven years in jail in Syria for something he wrote in the newspaper. By the time they released him he was very sick. He died two months later. That's when we came here.

WALTER
I'm sorry.

TAREK
She thinks the same thing is gonna happen to me.

Tarek thinks for a long moment. He shakes his head.

TAREK (CONT'D)
You know I have never seen them together. Zainab and my mother.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET, NIGHT

Walter and Mouna are walking home.

WALTER
Are you hungry, Mouna? We can stop for dinner.

MOUNA
I would prefer to cook if you don't mind?

WALTER
OK.

MOUNA
Should we stop at a market?

WALTER
Yeah. That's probably a good idea.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - LATER

Mouna is preparing dinner. Walter comes in and takes a bottle of wine out of the refrigerator.

WALTER
Would you like a glass of wine?

MOUNA
No thank you.

Walter pours his glass.
WALTER
Mouna? I need to go back to Connecticut tomorrow. For work. I told Tarek.

MOUNA
How long will you be gone?

WALTER
I don't know yet. I'll try to make it back to visit Tarek as soon as I can.

MOUNA
You don't have keep visiting him, Walter. I'm sure you are busy.

WALTER
I'll see what I can do.

MOUNA
OK. Dinner will be ready soon.

Walter walks out of the kitchen.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Mouna and Walter are eating in silence.

MOUNA
Do you go to Broadway, Walter?

WALTER
Broadway? Uhm. No. I haven't been in a long time.

MOUNA
Tarek sent me the CD for "Phantom of the Opera" for my birthday. The music is lovely. Have you seen it?

WALTER
No. I haven't.

MOUNA
I haven't either but I think I know every word.

Walter smiles. Silence.

**WALTER**
Tarek is teaching me the drum.

**MOUNA**
Really? How is it going?

**WALTER**
Well, I sound a lot better when he's playing with me.

Mouna laughs.

**MOUNA**
How is your teaching going, Walter?

Walter seems caught off guard by the question.

**WALTER**
My teaching?

**MOUNA**
Yes.

**WALTER**
Well...I have a lighter schedule so I can work on my book.

**MOUNA**
Your book? What is it about?

**WALTER**
Well, it covers quite a bit, so it's hard to explain.

Walter drinks his glass of wine.

**MOUNA**
Are you almost finished?

**WALTER**
I'm close.

**MOUNA**
You don't like to talk about your work?

WALTER
No. It's just a bit complicated.

MOUNA
Why is that?

Walter is agitated.

WALTER
It just is. It's just not a process that's easy to talk about with someone who's not a writer.

Walter's cheap shot lands. Mouna is stung.

MOUNA
I didn't mean to pry.

There is an awkward silence.

WALTER
I shouldn't have spoken to you like that.

MOUNA
It's OK.

Walter picks up the wine bottle and fills his glass.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Walter is sitting on the edge of his bed and takes off his shoes. He pauses.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - MORNING

An empty New York street. Mouna and Walter round the corner walking together. She is holding his briefcase. Walter is carrying the drum and his duffle bag.

They arrive at the Parking Garage. Walter hands a ticket to the GARAGE ATTENDANT. He takes his briefcase from Mouna.
WALTER
Thank you. You have my number if you need anything.

MOUNA
I'll be fine. Thank you. Have a safe trip.

WALTER
Well good bye.

MOUNA
Goodbye.

Mouna turns and walks down the street. Walter's car arrives.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE - LATER

Walter pulls into his driveway. He gets out of the car. He opens the trunk and takes out his bag and then his drum.

INT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, CLASSROOM - LATER

Walter walks into the lecture hall. He sets his briefcase down.

WALTER
Good afternoon.

He takes out some papers and opens them.

EXT. NEW LONDON - LATER

Walter is stopped at a traffic light in town.

INT. WALTER'S CAR - SAME

Walter sees Karen walking toward him. She is talking on her cell phone and does not notice him. Walter just watches her pass without saying a word.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE, OFFICE - NIGHT

Walter sits in his office working. He stops and listens to the silence.
INT. WALTER'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Walter pours himself a drink and wanders around the empty house.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE, FRONT HALL - CONTINUOUS

Walter opens the front door and walks outside.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Walter walks onto the front lawn and looks around the sleepy neighborhood. He listens to the quiet. It's a stark contrast from New York.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Walter roots through his briefcase and pulls out the FELA KUTI CD. He slips the CD into the stereo. He presses play. FELA KUTI's, "DON'T GAG ME" blares over the speakers.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE, PIANO ROOM - LATER

Walter is sitting in a chair and playing the drum along with the Fela song. He is only wearing a T-shirt and boxers.

INT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Charles talks to Walter. They stand up and shake hands.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE - DAY

Three MOVERS are carefully removing the piano from Walter's house as Walter and Barbara Watson look on.

INT. WALTER'S CAR - DAY

Walter drives back down the highway. The Fela Kuti music is playing. He is tapping on the steering wheel.
INT. WALTER'S BUILDING, STAIRWELL - LATER

Walter walks quickly up the stairs to the fourth floor. He seems to be moving with a little more pep.

As he approaches his door, he hears music emanating from his apartment. It's a PIANO SONATA. The music stops him in his tracks. He listens for a couple of moments. Finally he walks inside.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Walter enters to find Mouna mopping the floor. Fresh flowers are on the table. She sees Walter and smiles.

MOUNA
Walter.

She turns down the music.

MOUNA (CONT'D)
I did not expect you so soon. I was just cleaning a bit. I hope you don't mind.

WALTER
No. Thank you.

MOUNA
I like this CD very much. The music is lovely.

She picks up the CD.

MOUNA (CONT'D)
Is it your wife?

WALTER
Yes.

MOUNA
She was beautiful.

WALTER
Thank you.
Mouna sets down the CD. She notices Walter's glasses.

**MOUNA**

These are different glasses?

**WALTER**

Yes.

**MOUNA**

Are they new?

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**WALTER**

Yes.

**MOUNA**

They're nice.

**WALTER**

Thank you.

**MOUNA**

I was going to make some lunch. Are you hungry?

**WALTER**

Yes. Thank you.

Walter leaves. Then he returns.

**WALTER (CONT'D)**

Mouna?

**MOUNA**

Yes.

**WALTER**

I was wondering if...Thursday night... Do you have plans?

Mouna laughs.

**MOUNA**

No, Walter, I have no plans.

**WALTER**

Well, I thought that...we might do something.
MOUNA

OK.

WALTER

OK.

Walter nods and walks toward his room. Mouna watches him go and smiles.

INT. QUEENS DETENTION CENTER, VISITATION ROOM - LATER

Walter and Tarek are talking. Tarek is very anxious.

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TAREK
They keep moving people.

WALTER
To where?

TAREK
I don't know. I think to other detention centers. Two Moroccan guys were just moved. They had no idea. Suddenly they were just gone.

WALTER
Has anyone said anything to you?

TAREK
No one in here knows anything. I'm not a criminal. I have committed no crime. What do they think? I'm a terrorist? There are no terrorists in here. The terrorists have money. They have support. This is not fair!

WALTER
I know.

TAREK
(Angrily)
How do you know?! You're out there!

Tarek's question stops Walter in his tracks. Tarek tries to regain his composure.
WALTER
I'm sorry.

TAREK
It's just... I'm starting to wonder if I'm ever going to get out of here. I sit in here at night and I keep thinking about Zainab.

TAREK (CONT'D)
I just want to play my music and live my life. What's so wrong about that?

EXT. NEW YORK CAFE - DAY
Walter, Mouna and Zainab are sitting at a cafe. Walter is on his cell phone.

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WALTER
(Into the phone)
OK. OK. Please do. Thank you. Bye.

He hangs up.

MOUNA
What did he say?

WALTER
He would make some calls but they can move him to another facility at their discretion.

ZAINAB
What facility? Where?

WALTER
He said it could be anywhere. Upstate. Pennsylvania. There is even one in Louisiana.

ZAINAB
Louisiana? Where they had the floods?

WALTER
Yes.

MOUNA
That's so far.

WALTER
Yeah.

MOUNA
Did the lawyer say anything else?

WALTER
No. No he didn't know anything else.

MOUNA
No one seems to know anything. It feels like Syria.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT
Darren and the Bass player are playing. They have a new drummer. Mouna and Zainab sit at a back table talking.

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Mouna notices Zainab's necklace. Zainab takes it off and gives it to her.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET, KIOSK - DAY
Walter buys two newspapers. One in English and one in Arabic.

EXT. STREET - DAY
Mouna walks along the street. She stops at a small CLOTHING STORE and looks into the window. She walks into the store.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Mouna is sitting on her bed, speaking in Arabic. Walter, dressed in a jacket and tie, is sitting in his bedroom. Suddenly Mouna appears in the doorway.
MOUNA
Sorry to keep you waiting.

WALTER
That's alright. How is he?

MOUNA
He says hello. He wants to make sure that you are practicing your drum.

Walter smiles.

WALTER
I am. You look very nice.

MOUNA
You too. Should we go?

WALTER
Yes.

They leave.

INT. NEW YORK CAB - LATER

Walter and Mouna ride in the cab. Mouna looks out the window.

MOUNA
This city is just so huge! It never ends.

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The cab pulls over. Walter and Mouna climb out.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - CONTINUOUS

Walter pays the Cab Driver and turns to Mouna.

WALTER
Ready?

MOUNA
For what?

Walter points to the "Phantom of the Opera" marquee behind
her.

MOUNA (CONT'D)
Really? The Phantom? Are we seeing it?

WALTER
Yes.

MOUNA
Now?

WALTER
Yes. Is that OK?

MOUNA
That's wonderful. Thank you. I am so excited.

Walter smiles as he and Mouna walk toward the theatre.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

The lights and sounds of Times Square. Walter and Mouna walk through the throngs of tourists after the play. Walter hails a cab and they jump in.

INT. NEW YORK RESTAURANT - LATER

Walter and Mouna both sit in a French restaurant finishing their salad.

MOUNA
I have to say that show was really kind of scary.

WALTER
Yeah. It was kind of scary.

The both smile. A WAITER approaches and picks up their plates.

WAITER
Are you finished?

MOUNA
Yes.

WAITER
How is everything?

MOUNA
Very good. But I think I would like a glass of wine.

WALTER
I'm sorry. I didn't even think to ask.

MOUNA
It's OK. It's not every night that you see The Phantom.

(To the Waiter)
I'll have a cabernet.

WALTER
Two please.

WAITER
Certainly.

The Waiter leaves.

WALTER
I haven't been to theatre in a long time.

MOUNA
Me neither. There is a place in Syria called Maaloula. It is a huge outdoor theater. It's beautiful. We used to take Tarek there to see concerts.

The Waiter sets down the two GLASSES of wine.

WALTER
Cheers.

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MOUNA
(In Arabic)
Cheers.
They clink glasses and drink.

**WALTER**

Mouna, I've taken a leave of absence for the rest of the semester.

**MOUNA**

Really? Why?

Walter is suddenly self-conscious.

Walter is suddenly self-conscious.

**WALTER**

I just thought I might spend some more time in New York.

**MOUNA**

Walter, you do not have to do this for Tarek.

**WALTER**

I want to.

**MOUNA**

But you have to be in Connecticut. You have your teaching. And your book.

**WALTER**

It's fine really.

**MOUNA**

This is not your problem, Walter. It's OK that you are busy.

Her simple words strike a chord with Walter.

**WALTER**

I'm not busy. Not at all.

(Beat)

Mouna, the truth is I haven't been doing any work for a long time.

**MOUNA**

You just presented your paper at the conference.
He is beginning to unravel.

WALTER
I didn't even write it. I just read it. I've been teaching the same course for twenty years. It doesn't mean anything to me. None of it does. I pretend. I pretend that I'm busy. That I'm writing. Working. But I'm not doing anything.

Walter trails off.

WALTER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

MOUNA
Don't be. I appreciate you telling me this.

The Waiter returns and pours some more water.

MOUNA (CONT'D)
Walter, what would you do if you didn't teach?

WALTER
I don't know.

MOUNA
I think that is exciting. Not to know.

Walter considers this as if for the first time. He smiles.

WALTER
Mouna, what do you do?

MOUNA
Do you mean for work?

WALTER
Yes.

MOUNA
I work in a car dealership. I take care of the accounting.

WALTER
Really?
Walter smiles.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - LATER

Mouna and Walter walk into the apartment. Mouna takes off her coat.

MOUNA
What time is it?

WALTER.
Twelve thirty.

MOUNA
No?! Is it?

WALTER
Yes.

MOUNA
My God. Twelve-thirty! I have not been up this late in a long time.

WALTER
I think that happens a lot in New York.

MOUNA
Thank you, Walter. That was a very nice evening. It's the most fun I've had in a long time.

WALTER
I told Tarek I was going to take you. He was very happy about it.

Mouna is touched by the comment. Her mood shifts.

MOUNA
Good night, Walter.

WALTER
Good night.

And with that she turns and walks into her bedroom.

INT. WALTER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Walter wakes up. He checks his watch. He notices that his phone is blinking. A message. He picks it up and listens to it.

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WALTER
Damn it!

He throws open the door and hurries into the...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mouna is sitting at the table.

WALTER
There's a message from Tarek. Something's wrong.

MOUNA
What did he say?

WALTER
Just that they were moving him. He didn't know what it meant.

Without another word, Mouna is up and putting on her coat.

INT. NEW YORK TAXI - LATER

Walter and Mouna ride in the cab. Walter is on the phone.

WALTER
Well when do you expect him back? Can you have him call me the minute he is? It's an emergency. Thank you.

(He hangs up.)

He's still in court.

(To the CAB DRIVER)

Can you hurry please?
MOUNA
I hate this feeling.

EXT. QUEENS DETENTION CENTER - LATER
Walter and Mouna get out of the cab. Walter rushes in. Mouna waits outside.

INT. QUEENS DETENTION CENTER - LATER
Walter walks up to the guard booth.

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WALTER
Hello. I'm here for bed 38. Tarek Khalil.

The MALE GUARD checks the computer screen. Walter waits.

MALE GUARD
He is no longer with us.

WALTER
What does that mean?

MALE GUARD
I'm not sure.

WALTER
You're not sure? Was he moved to another facility? Another state? What?

MALE GUARD
I don't know. I just know that this detainee is no longer in the facility.

WALTER
Well can you ask someone who does know?!

MALE GUARD
Hold on.

The Guard picks up the phone and dials. He has a long
conversation that Walter cannot hear.

There are a few other visitors in the waiting room. They watch Walter.

    MALE GUARD (CONT'D)

Sir?

    WALTER

Yes. Did you find him?

    GUARD

He's been removed.

    WALTER

Removed? To where?

    GUARD

Deported.

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    WALTER

What? When?

    GUARD

He was deported this morning.

    WALTER

He...how can that be? Is there any way to contact him?

    GUARD

I don't know. I don't think so.

    WALTER

You don't think so? What kind of answer is that?!

    GUARD

I'm sorry, sir. That's all the information that I have. Now please step away from the window. You can call the ICE if you have any further questions. The number is on the wall.

Walter's wheels are spinning. He is helpless. He looks around the room at all of the other immigrants visiting friends and
family members. They are watching him with blank faces.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Sir. Please step away from my window.

Walter doesn't move. He checks his watch.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Sir. For the last time, step away from my window.

Finally, Walter turns and starts to walk out of the detention center.

He reaches the exit and then spins around and storms back toward the guard booth. He completely loses control.

WALTER (Angrily shouting)
You can't just take people away like that! Do you hear me?! He was a good man. A good person! He had a life here! You can't just take away whoever you want!

(MORE)

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WALTER (CONT'D)
It's not fair! We are not just helpless children! Do you hear me?!

The Guard just stares back blankly. The other visitors watch in disbelief. They are unaccustomed to this type of outburst as is Walter who now stands trembling in the middle of the room.

It's as if something inside him snapped. Something that he has been holding on to for a long time. He is suddenly adrift. Unsure of what to do next.

MOUNA (O.S.)
(Gently)
Walter.

Walter turns. Mouna is standing there. He looks at her. Helpless.

MOUNA (CONT'D)
Walter. Let's go. There is nothing
we can do. Let's go.

Walter looks a bit lost. He looks back at the Guard who just stares back at him.

**MOUNA (CONT'D)**

Come on, Walter.

She reaches out and takes Walter's hand. And then she leads him out.

**INT. NEW YORK TAXI - LATER**

Walter and Mouna ride in a taxi. They are both depleted. Mouna shakes her head.

**MOUNA**

He did nothing wrong.

She is overwhelmed by the events. She breaks down and starts to cry. Walter puts his arm around her.

**EXT. NEW YORK STREET FAIR - DAY**

Walter watches as Mouna tells Zainab. Zainab buckles and hugs Mouna.

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**INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Walter is looking out the window. Mouna walks out of the kitchen and turns out the light. She walks over and stands next to Walter.

**MOUNA**

Walter, I need to go back to Syria. I should to be there for Tarek.

**WALTER**

When are you going to leave?

**MOUNA**

Tomorrow. I already bought a ticket. It's best for me to be there as soon as possible.
Walter just looks at her. The news is piercing.

**WALTER**
You won't be able to come back here.

**MOUNA**
I know.

Beat.

**WALTER**
Mouna. I'm sorry.

Mouna smiles warmly.

**MOUNA**
Good night, Walter.

Mouna leans in and kisses him gently on the cheek. She turns and walks toward her room. Walter watches her go and then looks back onto the street.

**INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - LATER**

Walter is lying awake in bed. There is a knock at the door. He sits up.

**WALTER**
Yes.

The door opens and a shaft of light cuts across the room. Mouna stands in the doorway.

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Walter stares at her for a moment and then turns down the sheets. Mouna walks over and lies down next time. Walter pulls the sheets back over her.

They sit in silence for a long moment holding each other.

**MOUNA**
It's my fault. What happened to Tarek. I did receive the letter telling us to leave. I threw it away. I never told him.
Walter can only listen.

   MOUNA (CONT'D)
   We were here for three years by the time the letter arrived. I had found a job. Tarek was in school. Everyone told me not to worry. That the government did not care. And it appeared to be true. And then, after time, you forget. You think that you really belong.

Walter gently touches her.

   WALTER
   It's not your fault.

He puts his arm around her and she collapses into him.

   WALTER (CONT'D)
   It's not your fault.

They lie together.

INT. KENNEDY AIRPORT - LATE AFTERNOON

Mouna and Walter are sitting in the airport.

   MOUNA
   Have you visited your son in London?

   WALTER
   No. Not yet.

   MOUNA
   You should visit him.

Mouna takes a small decorative pouch out of her purse.

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   MOUNA (CONT'D)
   Here.

Walter takes it and opens it. It's a WRIST BAND from Zainab's collection.
MOUNA (CONT'D)
Zainab and I picked it out especially for you.

WALTER
Thank you. It's very nice.

MOUNA
Let me see.

Mouna puts it on Walter's wrist.

WALTER
I like it.

MOUNA
So do I. You look cool.

WALTER
Cool?

MOUNA
Yes. You are very cool, Walter.

Walter smiles. Mouna checks her watch.

MOUNA (CONT'D)
I should go.

The both stand up.

INT. KENNEDY AIRPORT, SECURITY CHECKPOINT - LATER

Walter and Mouna arrive at the security check point. Mouna sets down her bag.

MOUNA
Thank you, Walter. For everything.

She leans in and they hug long and hard.

WALTER
I don't want you to go.

Mouna kisses him.

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MOUNA
(She whispers)
I don't want to go, habibi.

Then she picks up her bag and walks off. Walter watches her go. She turns and waves. Walter waves back and then she disappears into the security check point.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

Walter walks quickly along the street with his drum.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - CONTINUOUS

Walter approaches the subway and enters.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - CONTINUOUS

Walter swipes his card and walks down into the subway.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Walter walks along the subway platform. He stops about midway and sits down on a bench.

The uptown subway train enters and obscures our view of him. Finally the train pulls away. Walter is still sitting but now he is playing his drum.

He is fully committed.

Another train wipes frame.

EXT. STREET FAIR - DAY

Zainab sits behind her table, staring straight ahead. We hold on her for a long moment and then...

CUT TO BLACK

Black Card:
"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp