

Case #: 0000273578
by
Nadia Voukitchevitch

Nadia Voukitchevitch
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INT.STUDIO APT IN EAST LA-NIGHT

OPEN ON:

Total darkness, all of a sudden we hear a baby crying and crying a painful cry, finally a night table light comes on that is flickering cause the bulb is about to burn-out, a tired looking 25 year old African-Latina woman, CRISTINA WASHINGTON unwraps herself from a 3yr old boy, ALWYN sleeping in her arms, gets out of bed, slides into her slippers and walks across the room to pick up the crying baby, ANISHA in an old wicker bassinet. She passes by an 8 year old boy, TYLER who is woken up and pats him on the head.

CRISTINA

"It's OK, go back to sleep."

CRISTINA walks back across the room and rocks the baby girl back and forth, she stumbles in the dark as she goes to the kitchenette and grabs a half empty bottle, the baby pushes it away, and CRISTINA, smells it and tosses the milk into the sink. She fills up the bottle with the rest of the milk in a galloon in the fridge and hears ALWIN calling out for her.

ALWYN

"Mama, Mama!"

CRISTINA

"Alwyn, I'm coming go back to bed."

ALWYN

"I'm in bed."

ANISHA starts to suck on the bottle and slowly goes back to sleep in Cristina's arms, she attempts to put her gently back in the bassinet, but just as soon as her hands release her, ANISHA starts crying again, she picks her up again and walks over to the bed, she sits done and continues to rock her. ALWYN cuddles up to her and she puts her arm back around her. TYLER is already asleep in his toddler bed that is too short for him. Cristina looks over to the digital clock on the night table CU it reads: 3:30AM

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. DAWN-STUDIO APT-EAST LA

In total darkness, we hear the alarm go off, CLOSE-UP it reads: 5:15AM and CRISTINA sits up immediately like a robot

whose button to get-out-of-bed was just pushed, she almost trips on a toy on the floor, she gets baby ANISHA dressed, puts her back into her bassinet. Then wakes up TYLER and starts dressing ALWIN. She puts on an outfit she has laying on a chair that looks like it was worn the day before, and goes to the kitchen to make some oatmeal.

TYLER

"Mom, I don't want oatmeal."

CRISTINA

"Tyler, do we have to go through this again, you gotta eat something and that's all I got right now."

TYLER

"But you said yesterday we could have MCDs'"

CRISTINA

" I know, maybe you'll have it for dinner...Alwyn get in here and have your breakfast! Come on we gotta go soon..."

Alwyn rushes into the kitchen with his shoes on backwards, Tyler starts to laugh and baby ANISHA throws her bowl on the floor. Cristina grabs a rag and wipes it up with one swift move and switches Alwyn's shoes around.

CRISTINA

"Tyler, get your backpack and your brothers, let's go."

Tyler goes back into the bedroom and Alwyn chases in after him pushing him, they both come out with their backpack on, and Alwyn is still struggling to get his on the right way.

TYLER

"Mom, Alwyn pushed me."

CRISTINA

"Come on just help your brother, we don't have time for this. You're suppose to be the big brother."

TYLER

"He's still a baby..."

ALWYN

"I'm not a baby, I'm a boy, a big boy."

Cristina puts on a backpack herself that is bursting at the seams, grabs a diaper bag and jacket and blankie for ANISHA, she heads for the door. OTS yells out.

CRISTINA

"Come on Tyler, we're gonna be late!"

They all hurry out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAWN -BUS STOP on STREET in EAST LA

All of them rushing down the street to catch a bus. We see two buses go by that don't stop, the sign reads: "OUT OF SERVICE" Cristina looks down at her watch, as she cradles ANISHA and moves back and forth trying to stay warm, Tyler and Alwyn holding hands look like they are freezing.

ALWYN

"I'm cold Ma'"

CRISTINA

"Button up your coat. Come on here comes the bus, get ready. Tyler help your brother."

Cristina pulls out her bus pass and shoves the kids on first and struggles to get in with ANISHA, a black elderly woman helps her up.

INT. DAWN- BUS

We see all four of them sitting in a row in the handicapped seats, Cristina is looking out the window still half asleep.

CUT TO:

EXT. MORNING- BUS STOP- BALDWIN HILLS

Cristina looks at her watch, CU: 6:30AM. They all get ready to jump off the bus and walk down a street for another 8-9 blocks.

ALWYN

"Ma' hug, hug, hug..."

CRISTINA

"Alwyn, baby I can't carry you now, I didn't bring the stroller."

ALWYN:

" But my feet hurt..."

CRISTINA

backpack." " Tyler, help your brother with his

TYLER

" No, it's too heavy..."

Cristina grabs Alwyn's backpack and keeps walking up the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. MORNING- APT

CU of Cristina banging on a iron gate door, the apartment building looks like it's condemned. An old lady about 85 years old comes out, it's her maternal grandmother, SUZIE,

SUZIE

"I was getting worried, you don't want to be late for that job interview."

Cristina, hands over ANISHA, gives her a kiss and drops off the diaper bag. She turns to leave and..

TYLER

"Ma I gotta go peep."

CRISTINA

"OK, make it quick, and wash your hands."

ALWYN

" I don't go potty."

CRISTINA

" You need to go too? Come on tell me..cause you better go now"

ALWYN

" No, I don't want to"

Tyler comes back from the bathroom, she grabs his hand and Alwyns, gives her grandmother an kiss and heads for the door.

SUZIE

" Be careful, mi hija! And Good Luck!"

CRISTINA

" Thanks grandma I'll see you at 9!"

CRISTINA runs down the flight of stairs of the dilapidated duplex, and bumps into JOE, a 40+ year old crack head

standing at the bottom smoking a joint, he tries to stop her from getting thru...

CRISTINA

"Get out of my way..."

JOE

"What kinda way is that to greet a friend of your husband's? How's RAMON doing anyway?"

CRISTINA

"He's holding up"

She pushes him away, Alwyn is getting scared and tries to pull back, Tyler is giving him a dirty look. Joe grabs her arm.

JOE

" I hear he's doing 15, that's a long time to wait, you call me if you need me if you get lonely, you hear, mi negrita"

He tries to give him a kiss and she kicks him in the groin missing his dick by a few inches, and yanks the kids down the street running away.

TYLER

" I don't like him Ma'"

Cristina just keeps walking and is starting to look mad. They finally reach the bus stop, there's at least 10 people waiting ahead of them.

ALWYN

" Ma' I gotta go to the bathroom."

TYLER

" You see you shoulda gone at Granma's"

Cristina grabs him and they walk towards a McDonald's.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAY. STREET- BUS STOP

The bus is approaching, everyone starts to get closer to the curb. Cristina and the boys start running faster.

CRISTINA

(Yelling)"Hold the bus, hold it!!!"

The bus shuts its doors and pulls away. Cristina catches her breath and looks down at her watch CU 7:30AM.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAY- BUS STOP

Cristina and the boys get off the bus, and rush towards a United Methodist Church, she signs-in Alwyn and gives him a kiss good-bye. The teacher greets Alwyn and helps him take off his coat.

CRISTINA

"His homework is in the backpack and I put a juice box and a hot dog for his lunch."

TEACHER

"Ok, I got it, have a good day!"

Cristina gives Alwyn a big kiss and heads for the door...

ALWYN

"Bye, Mama! I love you and big as the ocean!"

CRISTINA

"I love you too, Baby!"

Alwyn sends her a flying kiss Good-Bye and Cristina sends him one right back.

CUT TO:

INT. RECEPTION AREA- GENERIC OFFICE BLDG.

Cristina steps into the reception area wiping off some sweat from her forehead and adjusting her pants and blouse. There are at least 10 women already seated and a bunch coming in after her... Cristina signs-in and takes a seat, she looks up at the clock on the wall, it reads: 8:10AM

FADE OUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

A woman is tapping Cristina on the shoulder, she dozed off...

RECEPTIONIST

"Excuse me, you can't stay here, we are closing for the day."

CRISTINA

(Startled)" What?! Where am I?"

RECEPTIONIST

"You are at AMCS Staffing. And everyone is gone, I'm closing-up"

Cristina looks up at the clock on the wall and it reads:
11:45AM

CRISTINA

"But, but I have an interview at 8AM..."

RECEPTIONIST

(With attitude)" Well you missed your turn then, cause I'm sure I called you at 8AM sharp.

CRISTINA

" But I was here the whole time I didn't hear my name."

She walks over to the sign-in window and slides open the glass window that was already shut.

RECEPTIONIST

"Well, that's probably cause you were asleep then, cause I called everyone on the list and believe me there were at least 100 people who came through here is morning..."

Cristina starts to get up and pick up her stuff she slowing walks over, she looks very pale all of a sudden as if all her blood just rushed down to her feet and she grabs on to the back of one chair as he walks over to the Receptionist.

CRISTINA

"Miss, I was here at 8AM, and I signed-in right when I got here."

RECEPTIONIST

"What's your name again?"

CRISTINA

(clearing her throat) "Cris, Cristina Washington."

RECEPTIONIST

" I have you down for 8:05AM."

Cristina realizing that she is not going to get anywhere, takes her leave.

CUT TO:

INT. CASE WORKER'S OFFICE

Cristina is sitting in front of her caseworker at CSSD. She looks really tired now and as if she wants to tune out all that she is hearing. She's staring at the wall behind the lady, where there's a poster from some local Church, saying: "Ask God, and the shall receive."

CASEWORKER

"Unfortunately, there is nothing you can do except wait for the father of your children to get out and start paying, did you get down to Social Services today?"

CRISTINA

"Yes, I did, right before they closed, but my caseworker had already left for the day..."

CASEWORKER

"Remember, I said you gotta get there early, just call her,

CRISTINA

(interrupting her) "I've done that, but she never answers my phone calls, and says that the waitlist for low-income housing is at least a year long maybe longer since last month when she checked. I'm hoping something will open up at the shelter near my place, I'm being evicted again..."

CASEWORKER

(looking at her watch) Well, like I said, we are doing all that we can, you just have to be patient there are soo many millions of kids in the system right now. Listen I'd love to stay talking to you, but I gotta take my 15 min break now.

Cristina gets up and heads for the door.

FADE OUT TO BLACK:

FADE UP TO:

INT. BUS.

We see Cristina on the bus, with a Walkman, (yes an old 90's Walkman) she is staring aimlessly out the window zoned-out to her music we get into her head listening to Bjork _____ or "Breathe Me" by Sia. She looks down at her worn-out Mickey Mouse watch, it reads: 5:50PM. She looks stressed and anxious now.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAYCARE. DUSK

Cristina sees the late pick-up notification when grabbing the kids' backpacks, they both look sleepy and hungry. She rushes them down the street to catch the bus.

CRISTINA

(talking to herself) "Not again, another \$20 on a late fee."

TYLER

(Pulling on her hand and looking up trying to catch her eyes) "You K, Mama? Mama, u k?"

CRISTINA

"Mommy's fine, she's just tired."

He stops her and tries to hug her, she picks him up and gives Alwyn the backpacks to carry, he looks annoyed.

INT. BUS. DUSK

Cristina's POVs of sad looking LA streets, as the bus gets nearer to EAST LA. The sunset helps paint a better picture of the landscape. And the as it grows dark it all looks desolate and quite scary.

Tyler and Alwyn are sitting right next to her, Tyler is scoffing down an old pack of crushed crackers that Cristina must have dug-out from the bottom of her purse. Alwyn is starrng at another Mexican kid playing with his Nintendo, who's elbowing his grandmother sitting next to him while playing.

ALWYN

" Mom, when am I gonna get my video game?"

Cristina doesn't hear him, he pulls on her sleeve, and asks the question again.

CRISTINA

(Without looking at him) "When Mommy gets a job, or maybe when your Daddy comes back home.

Alwyn turns away, looking at the kid's Nintendo with longing eyes... Tyler puts his hand out for more and gives his Mom the empty wrapper.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT. BUS STOP

The bus that just dropped them off, wipes the screen and we see a dark quite deserted street. Cristina takes the two boys by the hand and starts to make her way up the hill to her Mom's apt.

INT. CRISTINA MOM'S APT. NIGHT

Anisha is asleep in her Mom's bed, she wraps her in a blanket and gives her mom a kiss good bye.

MOM

"Mi'hija how did your job interview go? Did you get the job?"

Cristina looks at the boys, and takes her to the kitchen still carrying Anisha on her shoulder.

CRISTINA

"Don't you think if I got it I would have told you? No Mom, I didn't even get to be interviewed I was late 5 mins."

MOM

" See I told you to get there earlier..."

CRISTINA

" Mom, please don't start, I don't want to argue, I'm tired, you know how slow the buses run, I just want to get home and shower..."

Cristina summons the boys to the door and they leave.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO APT IN EAST LA- NIGHT.

The boys take their plates to the sink and start to get into bed. Cristina covers Anisha in the bassinet and draws the curtains. She starts to look around for her purse and realizes that she left it behind at her Mom's apt.

CRISTINA

"Alwyn, did you see my bag?"

ALWYN

"No, didn't you have it? I was carrying mines and Tyler's backpack, remember?"

Cristina looks through the kitchen picking up plastic bags to see if it's buried underneath them. She looks really distressed.

CRISTINA

(Under her breath) "I had the rent money in there."

ALYWIN

"Mom do you want me to go over to Grandma's..?"

CRISTINA

" No you stay here I'll watch your brother and Anisha, I'll be back soon."

She grabs the keys and her coat and shuts the door. Alwyn goes back to bed and Tyler is already asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. CRISTINA'S MOM APT. NIGHT

Cristina is freakin' out.. and yelling at her Mom..

MOM

" I'm telling you mi hija you didn't leave it here, don't you think I would have called you. Maybe you left it on the bus"

CRISTINA

" Oh sssssshit!! OK, you know just forget about it, I figure something out."

MOM

" Mi hija where are you going? Who's with the boys?"

CRISTINA

"Who do you think? No one, I gotta get back."

She heads for the door and her Mom's stops her and shoves a \$20.00 bill in your down her coat pocket.

MOM

" This is all I got mi' hija, please take care..."

CUT TO:

Cristina wandering aimlessly down the East LA Streets, she is in a daze and tears are streaming down her face, a bus goes by, and she tries to stop it but it keeps going on. We see the "OUT OF SERVICE" sign come on. All of a sudden JOE appears out of nowhere. He startles her and starts harassing her...

JOE

"Where are your kids Cris?"

CRISTINA

"That's none of your business, just leave me alone already."

He grabs her and forces her into an alley, she tries to push him away, but he is stronger and has a firm grip on her neck now, he starts to unfasten his belt.

JOE

"You scream, and I'll kill you while I'm fucking you dumb. I've wanted a piece of this for a long time and I've waited long enough!!"

Cristina screams as loud as she can, but he covers her mouth and pushes his elbow into her neck to hold her still, he pulls down her pants and rips off her panties and shoves them down her throat, she almost throws-up.

JOE

" You're gonna like this mi negrita. You'll see I'm way better than Ramon... Ay! Que rica que estas..."

Cristina is now motionless and has a dead look in her eyes, he starts raping her and biting her boobs, she doesn't move he's the one shaking her every time he thrust his penis in her. An old lady walks by the street, and sees her, and rushes along as if she didn't see anything.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. ALLEYWAY EAST LA. NIGHT

Joe is finally done and releases her, she falls down onto the ground, he's had her pinned to the wall the whole time. She takes out her panties from her mouth and starts to catch her breath again.

JOE

(pulling his pants up again)

"See that wasn't so bad mi negrita, why do you play so hard to get? You know you liked it, I felt your wet pussy throbbing and grabbing on to mi cañón!!"

Cristina tries to get up and stumbles, she is trying to pull up her pants, her neck is all red and her throat is starting to bruise. She gets up and tries to spit in his face, but he slaps her down to the ground. He grabs her by the hair and whispers in her ear...

JOE

" You better go home to your kids now, before I give you some more..."

CUT TO

EXT. CRISTINA'S APT. NIGHT

Her neighbor is crying on the steps leading up to the door of her apt. Cristina starts running up the stairs to her.

CRISTINA

"What happened? What's wrong Carmen?"

CARMEN

(Sobbing) "They are gone, they took them..."

CRISTINA

" What? Who? Carmen where are my kids????!!!!?"

CARMEN

(still crying) " Chi, Child Protective Services, oh my God! I'm so sorry... I tried to stop them I told them you were at the store and coming back..."

CRISTINA

" When did they take them?!?!

CARMEN

"Ju, just now, like 5 mins ago."

Cristina runs into her apt, the door was left open, there stuff is all there, the place looks exactly as she left it...

CUT TO:

CU of Cristina banging on her's Mom Apt door. Suzie opens the door finally, she is a wreck and you can see she's been drinking..

CRISTINA

" they took my babies!!"

SUZIE

" I know mi hija, I called them I was worried about you.."

CRISTINA

" You did what?!?!?! Are you out of your mind?!?!?! Do you know where they'll end up!! Oh my God my poor babies!!! I'll never see them again!!!"

SUZIE

" It's better this way, mi'hija you can't even take care of yourself, look at you.."

Cristina is hyperventilating, she goes to the kitchen to get some water. Suzie follows her..

SUZIE

" You can't do it all yourself, plus that man, Ramon will never get out, you know that.."

CRISTINA

" You had no right!!!"

She throws the glass at her, Suzie ducks, Cristina walks-out.

FADE TO BLACK:

TITLE COMES UP OVER BLACK DROP READS:

There are over _____ Million children removed my CPS that end up in foster care and of that _____% end up in jail.

FADE OUT:

THE END