

LOVE SIGNS
(AND OTHER MATTERS OPEN TO INTERPRETATION)

Written By

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FADE IN:

SUPER IMPOSE:

"Think you of the fact that a deaf person cannot hear. Then what deafness may we not all possess? What sense do we lack that we cannot see and cannot hear another world all around us? -- Author, Frank Herbert"

EXTREME CLOSE UP of the inner workings of a HEAD PHONE.

WE SEE sound vibrate the workings-- SILENCE.

As we pull out the sound gets louder and louder.

1 EXT. URBAN SIDEWALK - DAY 1

Extreme close up of CAR speaker it BOOMS with bass drenched music. The CAR behind BEEPS its horn.

ANGRY DRIVER
Move it! What are you deaf!!

The DRIVER'S lips move but his words cannot be heard.

2 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT - TITUS'S ROOM 2

MILAGROS looks down at a the Driver screaming from his car window. The music booms.

3 EXT. URBAN SIDEWALK - SAME 3

The Driver beeps his horn like a crazy man. Then jumps from the car and approaches the other driver, screaming.

ROLL CREDITS

4 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT - TITUS'S ROOM 4

Milagros, shuts the window.

Milagros turns and picks up her son two-year old TITUS.

5 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT - KITCHEN 5

GEORGE sits a the table hidden behind his newspaper.

MILAGROS
Didn't you hear that?

GEORGE
Hear what?

MILAGROS
The noise from outside. You should have closed the window in his room.

George crunches down the paper to look at his wife.

GEORGE
What for?

He yanks his paper back in front of his face.

Milagros puts Titus in his high chair.

MILAGROS
There you are big boy...wubby
bunny. Yeah I love you too honey.

She places a bib on him and gather's up a spoon and jar of food.

Titus bangs on the tray, he is trying to get his fathers attention.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
George. He's calling you. Talk to him.

GEORGE
I am reading.

MILAGROS
Sometimes I just don't--

GEORGE
My thoughts exactly.

Milagros sits at the table slamming down the jar and spoon her glare could burn a hole in the paper.

MILAGROS
You want to know what my thoughts are? Oh that's right I have no thoughts.

She turns to feed the baby.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
That's right huh sweetie pie, yes.
Daddy is a meany-beany. Open up.
Yum!

Turns back to George.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
The car stalled out again
yesterday. I thought you got it
fixed.

No answer.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
George. George!

GEORGE
I heard you. I'll have my brother
look it again.

MILAGROS

Good could you do that, because I'd prefer that none of the tires be the same size, than it stall out on me. You know each time we give it to him it comes back with a new issue.

GEORGE

Yeah, but you can't beat the price.

MILAGROS

You pay peanuts, you get monkeys... or this case a brother-in-law that can't tell a car engine from a BBQ grill.

6 EXT. URBAN SIDEWALK - BUS STOP 6

G. HARRIET "HARRI" MOORE, runs for the bus stopped at the curb. It pulls off just as she arrives at the stop.

HARRI

Damn!

She looks at her watch, whips out a cell phone.

6A MILAGROS POV: 6A

Milagros stopped at the light glances at the frenzied Harri on her cell phone.

6B EXT. BUS STOP 6B

Harri paces, turning to look up the street for the bus.

HARRI (CONT'D)

She's not there! Transfer me to Linda.

A beat.

HARRI (CONT'D)

Linda. I'm gonna be late. I knooooow. Just cover for me. No I already tried her. She's out. Okay. Bye.

END CREDITS

7 INT. SOCIAL SERVICES - MORNING 7

Harri rushes across the office, bringing attention to herself rather than blending in.

She slides behind her desk.

A head pops up over the cubicle.

LINDA
You really should buy a car.

HARRI
Shut up.

LINDA
Is that how you treat me after I
covered for you.

HARRI
When have you ever covered for me.

LINDA
Well remember that time...I know
that time when you...I mean, er I,
um....

A beat.

HARRI
When was that?

LINDA
I pulled your name for secret Santa
last year.

HARRI
You bought me Slim Fast.

LINDA
It was the creamy-delight. And If I
am such a bad person why'd you call
me to tell me you where going to be
late?

HARRI
I was desperate. So did you print
it for me.

LINDA
No.

HARRI
I should have known.

Harri gets up annoyed. Linda drops a file folder on her desk.

LINDA
What were you thinking?

HARRI
On my God, you are a life saver.

Linda indifferent sits.

LINDA (O.S.)
I. I covered for you. But he's
fishing for something. If I were
you, I'd review all my cases.

HARRI
What? Come on! You think so?

Linda stands, looks at Harri.

LINDA
The pit boss wants to see you.

Just then, LYNCH, more commonly known as the PIT BOSS appears.

LYNCH
Linda tells me you had court. How'd it go?

HARRI
Continued.

Linda excuses herself.

LYNCH
What's your schedule like for the day?

HARRI
Well, humm...let me see I have.

LYNCH
Doesn't really matter. I need to see you now.

HARRI
Okay let me gather my case files.

LYNCH
Two minutes.

CUT TO:

CLOCK TICKING: five, ten, twenty minutes have passed.

8

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES - HARRI'S CUBICLE

8

She is frantic. Trying to not to forget anything.

Linda pops up again.

LINDA
I don't think it's such a good idea keeping him waiting.

HARRI
I know, but I must have fucked up somewhere, or else he wouldn't want to see me.

LINDA
Maybe it's cause you've been late.

HARRI
I hope so. But...

9 INT. SOCIAL SERVICES - LYNCH'S OFFICE

9

Harri enters.

LYNCH
Take a seat.

Harri sits, tense.

LYNCH (CONT'D)
I know you weren't in court this morning. I have been looking for you.

Harri is puzzled.

HARRI
Looking...

LYNCH
Since Saturday evening.

HARRI
What? What for?

LYNCH
This stays here.

HARRI
Fine whatever.

LYNCH
Lynn Besh.

Harri scans her memory.

HARRI
Two and a half months ago. Daughter was abused. We closed that.

LYNCH
You closed it She is in intensive care at Boston Medical. Before she went into her coma she asked for you. She also told the doctors that her husband beat her after you taught her how to defend herself.

A beat.

LYNCH (CONT'D)
Tell me you did not tell a battered woman to fight back.

10 EXT. URBAN SIDEWALK - DAY 10

Milagros' arms flail wildly as if she is fighting back the SMOKE bellowing from her engine.

Titus screams from inside the car. Defeated she slides in behind the wheel, buries her face into her chest.

MILAGROS

It's okay Titus. Mommy is right here.

11 EXT. URBAN SIDEWALK - SAME 11

BRANDIES GRAYSON IV walks with a WOMAN IN A BUSINESS SUIT.

BRANDIES POV:

He sees the smoking car and Milagros trying to comfort her screaming son.

Brandies taps the Woman with him and points across the street.

12 EXT. MILAGROS' CAR 12

Brandies looks into the hood, then slams it shut.

SUIT WOMAN

Do you want us to call a tow truck?

MILAGROS

Ah yes please. I don't have a cell phone and as you can see this guy isn't a happy camper.

Milagros tries to comfort Titus, her back is to the pair.

BRANDIES (ASL)

Why don't you take her to Whispers. I'll finish up those briefs, see you back at the office.

Brandies walks away.

Milagros turns around.

MILAGROS

(yelling at Brandies)
Thank you!

SUIT WOMAN

I can give you a ride to the shop, my car is right here.

MILAGROS

Really? No. But you are at work. I couldn't ask you too.

SUIT WOMAN
Boss says I have to take you.

13 EXT. HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE 13

PICKETERS make a ring in front of the doors. Holding signs that read "Living Wage," "Medical Care for Medical Workers," "Good Unions Good People," "Say No To Union Busting."

14 INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY 14

Harri makes her way through the crowd and onto elevator.

15 INT. HOSPITAL - ICU NURSES STATION 15

Harri shows her badge to TALL NURSE.

HARRI
Jane forty six, risk of harm.

TALL NURSE
She's in there.

Harri walks toward the door, then turns back.

A beat.

HARRI
How bad is she?

16 INT. WHISPER'S GARAGE - DAY 16

Milagros walks in with a sleeping Titus in her arms.

WANDA WHISPER, nine months pregnant, emerges from the back. She smiles at Milagros and motions for her to sit down.

Wanda picks up the phone and places it on the TTY. She punches numbers on the adding machine. Then types into the TTY again.

MILAGROS
Can I use your phone?

Wanda continues to type.

A beat.

Wanda looks up and smiles. Then back to TTY.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
Excuse me could you point me to the pay phone. I have to call my husband.

Wanda looks up again. Smiles and walks over with a piece of paper.

Milagros is confused.

INSERT NOTE:

Your car is dead. Needs a new engine.

Milagros looks around the room.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
Huh?

A light flashes over their heads. Wanda holds up one finger.

MILAGROS POV:

Wanda walks to the back.

We can see clear into the garage. CARL WHISPER AND TWO MECHANICS work on cars.

WANDA (ASL)
What?

CARL (ASL)
I didn't call you.

WANDA (ASL)
You are so silly. I am just right there. If I go into labor, you will be the first to know.

Wanda turns to leave. Carl sneaks up close, rubbing her belly from behind.

Wanda melts into him, her face fills with a smile. She turns to kiss him.

WANDA (ASL) (CONT'D)
Now. I have work to do.

WANDA'S POV:

Wanda she spots Milagros watching.

WANDA (ASL) (CONT'D)
Let me get out there. Anything new on her car?

Carl looks at Milagros. Then at his wife.

CARL (ASL)
Looks like a monkey built the engine.

17 INT. WHISPER'S GARAGE - LATER

17

Titus sleeps on two chairs put together. Milagros is on the pay phone.

MILAGROS
It's pretty bad George. The engine
was smoking.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Don't let him fix it. I want a
second opinion from my brother.

MILAGROS
Oh George really!

GEORGE (V.O.)
How is Titus?

Milagros is astonished at the question.

MILAGROS
He is sleep. Why?

GEORGE (V.O.)
Yeah he could sleep at a car repair
shop couldn't he.

MILAGROS
(whispers into phone)
The owners are deaf.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Huh?

MILAGROS
The owners are deaf I said.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Then why are you whispering?

Milagros and Wanda's eyes meet. They smile.

MILAGROS
Just come get me. You hear that!

She slams down the phone.

Milagros storms to her seat, moving a chair that SCREECHES.
Titus does not move.

Wanda approaches with a CUP OF WATER for Milagros.

CLOSE UP of Milagros hand touching Wanda's hand.

WANDA (ASL)
Sorry for the wait.

Milagros smiles.

MILAGROS
Thanks. When is your baby due?

A beat.

Milagros motions toward Wanda's big belly. She awkwardly acts as if she is giving birth.

Wanda giggles.

WANDA (ASL)
Now.

MILAGROS
You know my son is--

The LIGHT flashes on Wanda's desk.

WANDA (ASL)
Sorry. I have to get that.

MILAGROS
...is Deaf.

Milagros digs for paper finds a pencil and begins to write.

EXTREME CLOSE UP of her hand.

INSERT NOTE:

"My name is Milagros, Can you help me find people that are deaf to help my son?"

Milagros re-reads note and walks to desk.

Wanda looks up smiles.

Milagros points to her son, then to her ear, then breaks the pencil in her hand.

A beat.

Wanda shoots Milagros a look, then writes a note.

She holds it up.

MILAGROS POV:

Parenting is always a challenge. Especially when they break things.

A beat.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
Oh, no. That's not what I meant.

The TTY flashes again.

Milagros tries to hand Wanda the note.

Carl places an estimate sheet on the desk.

Wanda in between typing, hands the estimate sheet to Milagros.

Titus wakes up. Milagros rushes to him.

George enters the shop.

GEORGE
I thought you were going to be
outside?

MILAGROS
I was on my way out.

Wanda smiles at George.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Hello, how are you.

MILAGROS
George, lets go.

GEORGE
No I wanna see what this turkey has
to say...I mean--

MILAGROS
We are leaving. Now! Grab Titus.

Titus smiles at his father, he leans toward him.

CLOSE UP of Titus touching his father's cheek. Then wraps his arms around his Father's neck.

18 INT. HOSPITAL - LYNN'S ROOM

18

Harri enters the room. Her face says it all. We don't see the beaten woman.

Harri rushes back out of the room, she doubles over.

Tall Nurse rushes to her side.

TALL NURSE
Are you okay?

HARRI
What did he do to her.

TALL NURSE
Come on over here, take a seat.

Harri sits.

TALL NURSE (CONT'D)
She fought the bastard. Wasn't
smart. But gutsy.

19 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

19

Brandies sits on a bench, in the warm summer sun, eating a SANDWICH and reading some BRIEFS.

CLOSE UP of his half eaten sandwich on a brown bag.

A SHADOW of a male figure stretches over Brandies. Blocking the sun.

BRANDIES POV:

The Man's shadow moves closer, rises his arm ready to strike.

SHADOW MAN POV:

He sneaks closer to Brandies, zeroing in on him his. We see the shadow grow bigger on the ground.

CLOSE UP OF BRANDIES

He reaches calmly for his sandwich, takes a bite and...

Holds the sandwich out, over his left shoulder.

A hand takes the sandwich...

And returns it with a bite taken out of it.

Brandies puts the sandwich down, then hands over an unopened can of soda.

POP

PULL OUT to reveal...

BRANDIES GRAYSON, III drinking the soda as he walks into frame. He is dressed in his maintenance uniform, with a patch on the jacket with his first name.

He takes a seat on the Bench.

Brandies looks at him.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Hi, Dad.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
How'd you know it was me.

BRANDIES (ASL)
I always know it's you.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
You never know when some crazy person is gonna attack you from the bushes. You can't hear them, then bam!

He takes another bite of the sandwich.

BRANDIES (ASL)
It's day time Dad. And you told me
to meet you here.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
Ah huh! Someone could have
intercepted that message.

BRANDIES (ASL)
I am sure Home Land Security is
flagging all messages that include
instructions to bring a ham
sandwich and a soda.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
Maybe.

BRANDIES (ASL)
How is work today?

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
Same. Every year I work here, the
people are messy. Pigs! I clean my
heart out. I am proud of my job. No
one sees me. It just gets clean.
Maybe they think it's magic.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Thanks Dad.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
What for?

BRANDIES (ASL)
For encouraging me to go to
college. So I didn't have to go
into the family business.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
Don't thank me! You think you have
a better job, you are a lawyer. I
know about lawyers! Your mother
taught me to hate them more than
her! I might have re-married her
just to spite the lawyer.

Brandies laughs.

BRANDIES SR (ASL) (CONT'D)
Now your great grandfather would
have been proud. You attended the
school he could only get a job
cleaning. He worked along side
black men. Proud men like him. That
could speak and hear, but were
treated like they are deaf.

BRANDIES (ASL)
 I know. I Know. You've told
 me...how many times-- About the
 marches in the 60's and Howard
 University and Galludet--

Brandies Jr is distracted, beautiful group of COLLEGE WOMEN
 walk past, they watch.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
 They are messier, but definitely
 getting prettier each year. Damn
 college girls. Your grandmother,
 your mother. You settle down with a
 nice deaf girl. Save yourself the
 heart ache. Marriage is hard
 enough, a mixed marriage...
 Impossible.

BRANDIES (ASL)
 I am too busy for any woman. Don't
 worry.

Brandies gathers up his things.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
 You'll be home tonight for dinner?

BRANDIES (ASL)
 I'm always home for dinner Dad.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
 Just checking. You watch yourself.

BRANDIES (ASL)
 Love you.

Brandies walks away, leaving Brandies Sr sitting on the bench
 alone.

20 INT./EXT. HOSPITAL - DUSK

20

Harri emerges from the front doors. She looks drained,
 worried.

She is startled when her cell phone rings, she digs it out.

HARRI
 Hello?

Carl's car pulls up to the hospital entrance.

He runs to passenger side opens the door.

CARL'S POV:

He helps Wanda out. Her face is mixture of a grimace and a
 smile.

Carl motions wildly for a wheelchair.

With out thinking, Harri grabs a chair as she cradles the cell phone to her ear.

HARRI (CONT'D)
I am already out the door. I can
come back in the morning.

A beat.

Wanda smiles at Harri before she sits.

Carl signs thank you and pushes his wife through the doors, leaving his car running and open.

Wanda notices it.

HARRI (CONT'D)
This guy was so excited about
getting his wife inside he left his
car here.

A beat.

HARRI (CONT'D)
Okay. Now how long do they think
she will be awake? I see. I am on
my way back up. Thank you doctor.

She snaps her phone shut and runs behind Carl and Wanda.

HARRI (CONT'D)
Hey you! You left your car! Sir!

The pair get on the elevator.

Harri is certain they heard her.

HARRI (CONT'D)
That was rude.

21 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT - NIGHT

21

George is watching a game, the volume is loud.

Milagros turns it down.

GEORGE
What?

MILAGROS
The baby is sleep.

GEORGE
And?

He turns it up using the remote.

Milagros turns it back down.

MILAGROS
I am trying to read.

He talks, but, makes no eye contact.

GEORGE
When are you going to accept that he can't hear. He's different. I don't make enough to get him that fancy surgery to fix him. Oh! Come on ref! What kind of call was that?

MILAGROS
He's our son.

GEORGE
I love him. But, I just wish he could hear. Be a normal kid. I wish I didn't have to shovel shit all day in the bellies of the subway just to keep our heads above water.

MILAGROS
I can work to help out.

GEORGE
No wife of mine is going to work, cleaning rich peoples mansions. Coming home with stories about rich wine, rich food, rich cars.

MILAGROS
I'm a nurse.

GEORGE
See there you go bringing that up again. So what I'm not college educated. But I can provide for this family. End of conversation.

Milagros turns the TV up on the GAME louder and leaves the room.

22

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

22

The GAME plays on a TV in waiting room. Harri and BLACK DOCTOR are huddled in a corner talking, we can't hear what they are saying.

CLOSE UP on Harri's face, she is listening intently.

BLACK DOCTOR
...so again try not to tell her why she is here. She doesn't remember what happened to her. Keep your face as neutral as possible I am pretty sure she has some vision in her left eye.

Harri nods.

BLACK DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Did they arrest her husband?

HARRI
Well, I don't know. I just assumed
that--

BLACK DOCTOR
He left a note on her body, saying
he loved her. Can you imagine?
(a beat)
I try to stay out of the nurses
gossip. But I heard some things.
Try not to blame yourself.

Harri shrugs off the Doctor's comments.

HARRI
I should have followed procedure.
At least I'd have something to hide
behind.

DOCTOR'S POV:

Harri walks down the hall and peaks into the hospital room.

HARRI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hello? Can I come in?

23 INT. HOSPITAL - MATERNITY WARD

23

Carl emerges from a delivery room in scrubs. He pulls down his mask to reveal a smile from ear to ear.

He gestures to a Spanish Nurse for a phone.

She points to a pay phone down the hall. He walks to it.

No TTY.

He's too happy to care. He goes back to the nurse.

A BLACK NURSE emerges from the delivery room.

BLACK NURSE POV:

Carl tries to communicate.

BLACK NURSE
He's Deaf Teresa. Where is that
translator I asked for?

SPANISH NURSE
Oh. Right.

She gets a piece of paper and hands it to Carl. He writes a note. The Spanish Nurse reads it.

SPANISH NURSE (CONT'D)
In the lobby. In! The! Lobby!

She points down. Shakes her head and writes it down.

Carl happily shakes her hand and heads toward the elevators.

BLACK NURSE
You can always tell the first time
dads. You could hit em with a 2x4
and they wouldn't feel a thing.

A janitor walks past with a set of keys.

CLOSE UP on keys.

24 INT. BRANDIES HOME - NIGHT 24

CLOSE UP on hand dropping keys into basket.

PULL OUT to reveal Brandies he drops his brief case and skims the mail then looks up puzzled.

Looks up and around for his dad.

KITCHEN

BRANDIES POV:

He scans the kitchen, everything is in its place.

Puzzled he walks to the hallway and knocks on a wall.

A beat.

He flicks a switch, it makes every lamp in the house flicker.

25 INT. BRANDIES HOME - BEDROOM 25

Brandies enters his large room. Stuffed with work files.

A computer, a TV and stereo. Pictures of Civil Rights leaders hang on the wall.

Brandies skims through his CD collection as the closet door creeps open and a HAND SLIDES out.

Brandies is clueless.

CREEPERS POV:

He moves in slowly, pillow gripped in his hands, then pounces on Brandies, causing him to drop his CD's.

CLOSE UP CDS hitting the floor.

PULL OUT to reveal Brandies Sr dressed in his pajamas messing up his son's hair with a pillow.

Brandies just takes it. Then shakes his head in disbelief. He turns to his dad.

BRANDIES (ASL)
You haven't done that since I was four years old. And you scared the pants off of me. I couldn't sleep for months!

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
Your mother was really mad at me that time.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Aren't you too old for stuff like this?

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
Ah lighten up son. I was just having a little bit of fun.

BRANDIES (ASL)
What's for dinner?

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
I thought you were bringing it.

Brandies tosses a pillow at his father.

BRANDIES SR (ASL) (CONT'D)
Carl's father called. Wanda had the baby. A boy. His first grandchild he is hopeful...

BRANDIES (ASL)
What did they name him?

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
Solomon Carl Whisper. I like it.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Do they know yet?

BRANDIES SR (ASL) (CONT'D)
No he gets the test tomorrow. I'll pray for them.

26 EXT. HARRI'S APARTMENT - SIDEWALK

26

Harri is crying as she walks, talking to God.
She gets to her door, when...

DENNIS
Harri! Wait.

Harri is startled.

HARRI
Dennis! What are you doing here.
Now is not a good time.

DENNIS
I am missing you.

HARRI
It's been a one of those days. I--

DENNIS
Maybe you can use the company...

Dennis helps her open the door.

27 INT. HARRI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

27

Harri is curled in the fetal position on the couch, staring into space.

DENNIS (O.S.)
So...you think you'll get fired?

HARRI
Getting fired is the last thing on
my mind. I don't want her to die.

Dennis enters with tea.

DENNIS
There is a such thing as second
chances.

Harri sits up to get the tea, their eyes meet.

Dennis moves in they kiss.

HARRI
I don't think this is such a good
idea.

DENNIS
That's your problem. You think too
much.

Harri still holds the hot tea careful, not to burn herself.

HARRI
Wow, this is hot!

DENNIS
I remember you liked it hot.

HARRI
And I remember, I got burned.

A beat.

HARRI (CONT'D)
I think you should leave.

DENNIS
You shouldn't be alone. I promise
to be a good boy. Keep my hands to
myself and everything.

HARRI
You mean you'll follow the rules?

DENNIS
Scout's honor.

A beat.

HARRI
I really don't want to be alone.

She puts down the tea and snuggles in close to Dennis.

28 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT - BEDROOM

28

Milagros is awoken by Titus's screams. She jumps out of bed
and toward the screaming.

MILAGROS POV:

George is leaning over the screaming child. She can see
Titus's legs kicking.

George has Titus pinned to the sofa with one hand, and is
doing something with the other.

Milagros, jumps in front of George knocking him away from
Titus and picks up the screaming child.

From over George's shoulder, we can't see Titus, and can
barely see Milagros.

MILAGROS
What the hell are you doing!?

Titus smiles and reaches for his dad.

GEORGE
What!?

MILAGROS
What were you doing to him!

CLOSE UP we see Milagros check Titus over who giggles.

GEORGE
He woke up, I wanted to let you
sleep. So to keep him quiet I gave
him chocolate I was trying to wash
it off his face.

CLOSE UP of Titus, his face and clothes are covered in chocolate.

MILAGROS

I thought--

Milagros walks away.

GEORGE

You really think I would do something to hurt my own son? I was trying to do something nice for you. And that's the thanks I get!

29 INT. BRANDIES' LAW FIRM - MORNING

29

Brandies walks to his office, he stops at his SECRETARY'S desk.

BRANDIES

Send flowers to Carl and Wanda
Whisper congratulating them on
their son.

She hands him a handful of messages.

SECRETARY

Harvard wants you to come and speak
at the disability forum next week.
They have called three times.

BRANDIES

Tell them that being deaf is not a
Handicapp.

Brandies walks into his office.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)

Scratch that. Just tell them no.
And if they ask why. Tell them its
a deaf thing they wouldn't
understand. Make sure the flower
arrangement is big, it's their
first child.

30 INT. HARRI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

30

The sun fills the room.

Harri wakes, pulling off a blanket.

She spots a note on the coffee table.

She reads it, and smiles.

An alarm clock BEEPS. It reads 8:00 a. m.

The coffee machine comes on in the kitchen.

Harri stretches.

KITCHEN

She opens the cabinet. There is a NOTE taped to a mug.

Harri'S POV:

INSERT NOTE

"Everybody deserves second chances. Love, Dennis."

31

INT. HOSPITAL - WANDA'S ROOM

31

CLOSE UP on cup of COFFEE on night stand.

A nervous looking Wanda tries to understand what DR. CALLY is telling them. Carl grips her hand tightly.

DR. CALLY
...the tests we have now are more
sensitive than when you were
children?

A beat.

CARL (ASL)
(to Wanda)
Is he saying he can hear?

WANDA (ASL)
(to Carl)
I don't know. I'm confused. Can you
call someone. I don't know what he
is trying to tell me about Solomon.

A TEENAGE GIRL, clicking gum and with an eyebrow pierce enters.

DR. CALLY
Who are you?

TEENAGE GIRL
I't almost my break, but my
supervisor said I had to come up
here...is that the deaf couple? My
best friend all through high school
was deaf. I sign a little.

DR. CALLY
Good tell them my name is Dr. Cally
and that her regular doctor is on
vacation.

TEENAGE GIRL (ASL)
Your doctor call is away on
vacation.

Wanda and Carl look at each other.

CARL (ASL)
Ask him what were results of the
hearing test.

TEENAGE GIRL
Now wait, you're signing too fast.
(ASL to Carl)
Slow, so I can understand you.

CARL (ASL)
Can our son hear?

TEENAGE GIRL
(to Doctor)
He said they are Deaf. I think?

The doctor nods.

DR. CALLY
Yes. I know.

Dr. Cally smiles.

Wanda begins to cry.

Carl looks heart broken.

DR. CALLY (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

Teenage girl shrugs.

TEENAGE GIRL
Can I go now doctor. It's my break
time.

DR. CALLY
One second young lady. If you left
now you'd be doing this couple a
great disservice.

TEENAGE GIRL
Whatever.

DR. CALLY
Ask them if they want to have
another hearing test done since the
one we did was inconclusive or wait
until the baby is older.

TEENAGE GIRL (ASL)
Do you want baby to have surgery
now or later.

WANDA
(using her voice)
What!!

CARL(ASL)
 (to Carl)
 Wanda calm down, please. I'll take care of it. You just rest. I'll call someone to help us.

WANDA (ASL)
 I don't want this kid in here anymore. Make her and the doctor leave.

DR. CALLY
 What did she say?

TEENAGE GIRL
 I think she said she doesn't want the kid, baby. And she blames you.

DR. CALLY
 They don't want the child?

CARL (ASL)
 (to girl)
 My wife is very upset. Can you please leave.

TEENAGE GIRL
 I understood that. He says he want's us to leave.

Teenage Girl breaks for the door.

Carl steps aggressively close to the doctor and motions toward the door.

DR. CALLY
 There's no need for this--

Carl glares at him.

The doctor flustered, hurries from the room.

32 EXT. URBAN SIDEWALK - BUS STOP

32

Harri is on her cell phone.

HARRI
 Here comes my bus now. No. It's okay you know I don't mind. I could use the exercise. Thanks again for setting the alarm and programming the coffee maker. I must admit I do miss having you around, to program stuff.

Harri giggles.

HARRI (CONT'D)
 Call me later. As a matter of fact I'll call you I am meeting the
 (MORE)

police at the hospital, so I won't
have my phone on. Thanks...you too.

33 INT. HOSPITAL - MATERNITY NURSES STATION

33

Dr. Cally, Spanish Nurse are talking as Teenage Girl stands
at the desk popping her gum and chatting on her cell phone.

TEENAGE GIRL

Can I go now?

DR. CALLY

Before you go, write your name and
number down if I need you confirm
that he threatened me.

TEENAGE GIRL

I didn't see that.

SPANISH NURSE

Just when I think i have seen it
all.

DR. CALLY

That father was very aggressive. I'm
not going back in there. Where is
the hospital social worker?

SPANISH NURSE

On the picket line outside.

DR. CALLY

Page for a social worker in the
hospital, then call social services
and see if they have a worker that
can come by and handle these
people.

34 INT./EXT. HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE

34

The picketers make their circle.

Harri cuts her way through the crowd and hears the page.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Paging any available Social
Services case worker to please dial
extension 0818 for an urgent
message.

Harri panicked, races to the hospital phone.

HARRI

I thought-- Never-mind. Hi. Yes
this is Harri. I am a department
social worker. Yes. Oh. Whew! I can
come by after my meeting. Right. I
got it.

35 INT. HOSPITAL - CAFETERIA

35

Harri's meeting with a POLICE OFFICER is wrapping up.

HARRI
Yes well thank you officer. You
have my card.

Harri walks away.

POLICE OFFICER
Oh and one more thing there Ms.
Moore. You should think about
putting a man on her door. He might
be stupid enough--

Harri turns back.

HARRI
You really think so? How do I get
that done?

POLICE OFFICER
She's the worst I seen and still
alive. A pretty girl like you alone
in this city, you gotta be careful
there with who you love?

A long beat.

HARRI
Right.

Pissed that she walked right into that one, she quickly walks
away.

POLICE OFFICER
I am serious there pretty lady.

36 INT. HOSPITAL - MATERNITY NURSES STATION

36

Harri arrives at the desk.

Spanish Nurse walks up from behind drying her hands.

SPANISH NURSE
Here I am.

HARRI
Hi. I am Harri. The social worker.

SPANISH NURSE
You've worked with us before I
think. You know-- Mable looked at
me like I was crazy when I asked
her if Harri was cute.

The women laugh.

HARRI
It's okay happens all the time.

SPANISH NURSE
A couple...um let me get her chart.
Here it is. Wanda Whisper, what a
name huh? Gave birth to a healthy
baby boy yesterday.

Black Nurse steps halfway out of a room.

BLACK NURSE
Teresa! I need your help. Now
please.

SPANISH NURSE
I am moving as fast as I can.

Black Nurse annoyed dips back into room.

Wanda emerges from her room, she puts a note to the desk.

HARRI
You had your baby, what you have?

Wanda smiles and turns to walk away.

SPANISH NURSE
That's her, the mother. She's deaf.

HARRI
Huh? I know her. I mean, I don't
know her, know her. I just happen
to be there when they were coming
in. I got wheelchair for her.

SPANISH NURSE
They told Dr. Cally they didn't
want the baby.

HARRI
Are you sure? They seemed pretty
excited about having a baby.

SPANISH NURSE
The doctor met with them and a
translator and I guess because the
baby isn't deaf, they don't want
it.

Dr. Cally walks by.

SPANISH NURSE (CONT'D)
Dr. Cally this is the social
worker, Harri. She's gonna handle
the Whisper baby.

DR. CALLY
Yes. Thank you for coming. They
were very clear that they didn't
(MORE)

want my advice. We talked through a translator, but I can tell when a mother is not bonding with her newborn.

HARRI

Where is the in-house worker?

SPANISH NURSE

On the picket line.

HARRI

Any mention of an adoption plan?

DR. CALLY

Not that I know of.

HARRI

So you are telling me that this mother intends on abandoning her child?

DR. CALLY

Yes. It's a simple matter for these people. Very close knit. Don't like outsiders. Essentially this child would be--

HARRI

Because he is hearing? Is that what they told you?

DR. CALLY

Listen little lady I can call someone at your office to fix this.

He looks at her over his glasses.

DR. CALLY

The last woman...was fired. I remember. What's your direct supervisors name?

Dr. Cally waits for Harri to respond.

SPANISH NURSE

It's abandonment. I had three mothers walk out on me last month for no reason.

An alarm BEEPS.

Spanish Nurse looks concerned.

BLACK NURSE (O.S.)

Teresa!

SPANISH NURSE

Wait a second Mable. I have the check on the Umbers baby, lost the heart beat again.

(MORE)

(to Dr. Cally)
I'll be right back.

DR. CALLY
The name dear...of your supervisor.

A beat.

TEENAGE GIRL
Can I go now?

37 INT. HOSPITAL - WANDA'S ROOM

37

Harri enters.

HARRI
Mrs. Whisper?

Wanda nods and points to her chest.

WANDA (ASL)
I remember you. You gave me the
wheelchair. Thank you.

She moves her arms like she is pushing a wheel chair.

Harri sits down, writes a note.

She holds it up.

CLOSE UP on note it reads:

The hospital has notified me of your intent to leave the son
born to you.

We have taken emergency custody of this child until a hearing
in two weeks.

WANDA (CONT'D)
I don't understand! Please. Wait
for my husband.

Wanda grabs Harri.

WANDA (CONT'D)
No. Not right!

HARRI
Please don't touch me again.

Harri pushes her off.

Harri writes a note.

CLOSE UP on note that reads:

I see that you are upset. But you should have thought about
your choice.

Harri stands, and gives Wanda a form.

Wanda looks like she is reading her death sentence.

She runs from the room screaming, Spanish Nurse grabs her, and wrestles her to the floor.

WANDA
Why? Why you do this?!

CLOSE UP on Solomon Carl Whispers, he is wheeled past her and into a lock nursery.

WANDA (CONT'D)
My baby!

Dr. Cally looks unconcerned. Harri is astonished.

HARRI
Doctor. I hope you heard her right.

38 INT. HOSPITAL - MATERNITY WARD 38

Carl rushes off the elevator, past the nurses station, a few nurses rush after him.

He bursts into Wanda's room.

39 INT. HOSPITAL - WANDA'S ROOM 39

The room is empty.

SPANISH NURSE
Mr. Whisper, your wife is--

Carl pushes past nurse and begins to check into every room. Every few steps he knocks on the wall.

He squirms away from them.

SPANISH NURSE (CONT'D)
Someone call security. Now!

Spanish Nurse steps in his path.

SPANISH NURSE (CONT'D)
Mr. Whisper! Listen. Hey!?

CARL
No!

40 INT. HOSPITAL - SECURE ROOM 40

WE SEE through the rectangle window in the hospital room door Wanda in restraints sleep in the sun filled room.

FADE OUT

41 EXT. POLICE STATION - 3:00 AM 41

Brandies waits in the parking lot, Carl walks out.

Brandies hands Carl his things.

They get into Brandies' car.

42 INT. BRANDIES CAR 42

Brandies drives through the deserted streets, Carl sits in the passenger seat.

Eyes forward the men do not speak.

EXTREME CLOSE UP Carl's eyes.

43 INT. HARRI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM 43

CLOSE UP of Harri's eyes.

Harri lies awake in her bed. The glow from the moon shines through the window.

She jumps up. Runs out of the room.

LIVING ROOM

She looks at her cell phone.

Then digs through a pile of case folders on the coffee table.

Skims it, begins to write.

She pauses--

Slams the folder shut.

BEDROOM

She gets back into bed.

Her cell phone RINGS in living room. She dashes for it.

LIVING ROOM

HARRI
Hello?

A beat.

HARRI (CONT'D)
No. It's okay I was awake.

A beat.

HARRI (CONT'D)
And what's the prognosis?

A beat.

HARRI (CONT'D)
I can have someone bring her
children up, yes the older ones.

A beat.

HARRI (CONT'D)
Thank you doctor.

Harri fights back her tears.

She dials her phone. Sits.

HARRI (CONT'D)
Hi Dennis. Did I wake you? Can you?
I really don't want to be alone...

Harri rocks, as tears run down her face.

44 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT - TITUS'S ROOM 44

Milagros sits in the rocking chair she wipes tears.

A tiny night light, in the shape of a HEART glows in the
corner.

Milagros walks to the dresser and opens the bottom drawer.

She pulls out an manila envelope, opens it.

MILAGROS POV:

She runs her fingers over her name on her nursing degree.

Touches the paper to her heart. Slips it back into the
envelope and back in its place.

She kisses her son's forehead and clicks off the night light.

45 EXT. HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE 45

A HAND clicks on the monitor for a CAMERA.

We see reporter MARTIN FORB broadcasting live.

MARTIN
...this case has garnered strong
feeling among the staff here at the
hospital. I began to ask patients
here what they should have done,
and what they think about a mother
who would abandon a child because
he could hear.

MONTAGE

People being interviewed on camera in front of hospital.

THICK GLASSES
I don't know what the big deal is.
It's not like she got an abortion.

CUT TO:

OLD MAN
It's the government fault. They are
allowed to spy on us.

MARTIN (O. S.)
I asked you about a deaf woman
giving up her baby that can hear.

OLD MAN
What did you say, talk in this ear.

CUT TO:

TEENAGER ONE
It took my parents thirteen years
to hate me enough to kick me out. I
figure his parents could see the
future.

CUT TO:

SHORT WOMAN
The mother is deaf you say?

MARTIN (O.S.)
Yes.

SHORT WOMAN
My daughter was colic. I tried
every ear plug on the market, not
one worked. You ever heard a baby
scream for three hours straight?
Pure torture. Try that on them
enemy combatants, a baby
screaming...they'll give up what's
his name hiding in the mountains in
twenty minutes tops.

BACK TO SCENE

MARTIN
That is this communities' response,
thoughts on this matter. I am live
from the hospital-- Oh here is a
gentleman right here. Excuse me
sir, I assume you've heard of the
Deaf mother and her baby?

A BLACK MAN walks into the frame.

BLACK MAN
Yes, sir. Yes I have.

MARTIN
And what do you think? And remember
this is live television.

Martin flashes a phony smile.

BLACK MAN
What do I think? I know exactly
what they dealin wit here. It's not
like the momma don't love her
chile. But see what I am sayin.
It'll be like a black momma giving
birth to a blue-eyed, blonde hair
baby girl. Look like that girl that
played that serial killer woman.
You know who I am talking about?
Damn what's her name--

MARTIN
Charlize Theron?

BLACK MAN
Char who?

MARTIN
Charlize Theron.

BLACK MAN
No not her. But is she white?

MARTIN
Yes.

BLACK MAN
Good enough. Her then. Yah see a
black momma knows that little white
girl, her baby gonna get into
places she can't. People follow the
momma in the store, but give her
daughter the keys to the store--

Martin snatches back the microphone.

MARTIN
This is a white family. That is
deaf.

BLACK MAN
We got racism, they got hearism.
Same devil different name.

END MONTAGE

46

INT. WHISPER'S GARAGE - DAY

46

Carl, works under the hood of a car. He slams and whips his
tools back into the box.

George walks into garage, taps Carl on his shoulder.

Carl turns.

GEORGE
I have been calling for three days.

Carl, eyes him then get a piece of paper.

Carl writes, George reads note over Carl's shoulder.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
That one.

Carl writes more.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I can't wait that long.

CARL
Take it.

GEORGE
What did you say?

George steps close.

Carl doesn't flinch.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Tough guy huh? Too bad you can't
hear me call you an reject.

Carl circles his lips.

CARL
I can read your lips. Get out.

Carl points to the door.

George walks past him close, knocks over a few tools as he leaves.

Brandies walks in.

GEORGE
Hey, don't bother with this place
the service sucks.

George and Brandies eyes meet.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Hey! Your the deaf lawyer all over
TV for that couple who gave--

A beat.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(to Carl)
That's you!!

CARL (ASL)
This guy was just leaving.

GEORGE
What did he say about me? Awe your deaf too!?

BRANDIES
Yes I am.

GEORGE
You talk!!!

CARL
Out.

GEORGE
Wait a second. Your even stupider than I thought. Giving up a healthy baby. You know how many people wish they had a kid that's not a reject!

Carl lunges at George, Brandies holds Carl back.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What? What you gonna do!

BRANDIES
Take it easy. Please. Just leave!

GEORGE
I want my car fixed!

George walks away.

CARL (ASL)
Just like old times.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Yeah, but at least that guy is a lot smaller than the football players you picked fights with in high school. You okay?

CARL (ASL)
Yeah, I could have handled him.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Not that. I had twenty on you when I walked in the door. Are you okay?

A beat.

CARL (ASL)
Wanda hated how I encouraged her to meet more people outside the community. Wanda's right. I wanted it too bad.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Acceptance.

CARL (ASL)
I wanted it for Solomon. You know.
We even talked about the implant.
We could have never told Wanda's
parents. But we thought--

BRANDIES (ASL)
Carl...

CARL (ASL)
This pain, it feels like I am
cheating on Wanda or something.
Like I have to ask for forgiveness,
for wanting to be the same as them.
I am a proud deaf man. But I have
given up so much of my deafness...

A beat.

CARL (CONT'D)
I'm scared Bran. I'd re-fight every
tough guy I have ever fought to
just get out of their world. I
don't belong here. They took my
son! As if my pride as a man wasn't
enough for them.

47 INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM

47

Lynn BESH's THREE CHILDREN sit huddled together crying.
Lynn's mother MRS. LENARD and her sister LEENA try to console
the KIDS.

Harri stands across from them.

MRS. LENARD
Will he get custody?

Harri takes a deep breath.

HARRI
Let's deal with that after we know
for sure the children have--

MRS. LENARD
No we are dealing with it now,
cause its important now. My
daughter is going to die, that's
what you are telling us right?

HARRI
Well--

MRS. LENARD
I didn't bring my grandchildren
here for a show, they have been
(MORE)

lied to enough. I need you-- They need you to be honest with them.

HARRI
It's unlikely that your daughter, will survive. They tried--

MRS. LENARD
I heard the doctors. I am sure THEY tried everything. It's the system that I am not confident can do its job protecting my grandchildren Ms. Moore.

48 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT - KITCHEN

48

George and Milagros eat dinner in silence.

GEORGE
I was thinking I could take Titus to the park so you can get some rest or get your hair done. Something special for yourself.

A beat.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What do you think?

MILAGROS
I think...um. Yeah maybe.

GEORGE
Good. We can head out early. Don't worry about us.

MILAGROS
I didn't say yes. No. I don't need my hair done. What's the status on the car?

GEORGE
(mocking her)
What's the status on the caaaaar?

Milagros looks at him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Listen to how you sound. The car is broken, and you broke it like everything else around here!

MILAGROS
Excuse me! It's my fault!?

GEORGE
It's your fault we didn't get genetic counseling, it's your fault we had him!

MILAGROS
 What the fuck are you talking about
 George! How did we get from the car
 to genetic counseling?

GEORGE
 Forget it!

MILAGROS
 No, let's not forget it. Let's try
 to figure out why since the doctors
 told you, your perfect little boy,
 you dreamed of all your life--
 can't hear! Poof! There is your
 dream of a star athlete!

GEORGE
 I knew you wouldn't understand.

MILAGROS
 What? That you are a selfish
 bastard!

GEORGE
 That's selfish! Wanting a healthy
 kid, that's not going to get called
 a retard everyday of his life?

MILAGROS
 No that's not selfish George. It's
 just plain stupid.

Milagros gets up, slams plate into the kitchen sink.

49 INT. HOSPITAL - BOARDROOM

49

Brandies, Carl, Wanda and TWO ATTORNEYS sit on one side of
 the table. A hospital ADMINISTRATOR and ATTORNEY sit on the
 other side.

INTERPRETER #1 speaks as Brandies signs. And signs for
 Brandies when he speaks.

INTERPRETER #2 signs for Wanda and Carl.

ADMINISTRATOR
 ...Correction, we didn't take the
 child. They told one of our doctors
 and a hospital employee that they
 planned to abandon the child.

BRANDIES (ASL)
 One of your doctors called social
 services on my client with out
 trying to communicate--

ADMINISTRATOR
 Now wait a second we had a
 translator.

BRANDIES (ASL)
A trained licensed ASL interpreter?

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY
Well, not exactly...

BRANDIES (ASL)
That's obvious. One of your staff members sent a kid to interpret medical information? If my clients had spoken Haitian creole, do have a translator on staff?

ADMINISTRATOR
Well, yes we do.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Spanish?

ADMINISTRATOR
Of course we have--

BRANDIES (ASL)
Greek?

ADMINISTRATOR
Yes, I believe we do.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Vietnamese? Chinese? Portuguese?

ADMINISTRATOR
I see your point.

BRANDIES (ASL)
No I don't think you do. If my clients spoke Spanish we would not be here today. Because no one would have misunderstood them. It would have never been interpreted that this loving couple would have wanted to give up their baby because the child couldn't hear the Spanish they spoke.

ADMINISTRATOR
This isn't a court room Mr. Grayson.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Lucky for you it's not. You need to contact the department on my clients behalf and withdraw the complaint.

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY
I am afraid we can't do that, you see--

There is a KNOCK on the door.

Harri enters.

Harri and Brandies's eyes lock.

Have they met before?

CLOSE UP on Carl and Wanda's hands, she squeezes his tightly.

HARRI

I am sorry I am late.

Harri doesn't know where to sit and ends up sitting on the same side of the table as Brandies team of attorneys.

ADMINISTRATOR

Perfect timing Ms. Moore. We were just going to explain why the hospital could not withdraw the compliant.

HARRI

Oh, you can withdraw it.

ADMINISTRATOR

But, it wouldn't be wise would it?

HARRI

For who?

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY

If I might jump in here. There are systems in place, er ah in the system to catch situations that could harm children. In this case your clients were giving up their baby--

Wanda squeals with heartbreak.

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY (CONT'D)

Even if we concede that it may have been a misunderstanding. You know your clients could have brought a translator with them--

BRANDIES (ASL)

Blame the victim, that's original.

Harri is deep in thought.

ADMINISTRATOR

What we mean is, if we pull back this complaint, we could receive pressure to review other instances where we referred our patients to social services...

BRANDIES (ASL)

You mean open yourself up to lawsuits for ruining peoples

(MORE)

lives... Where does social services stand?

A long beat.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
Ms. Moore?

Harri's mind is a million miles away.

A beat.

HARRI
Excuse me?

BRANDIES
Social services, what's your position?

HARRI
Oh, well. Umm. We got your stuff, you sent. And umm. Reviewed it with my supervisor and think that life support is...

The room erupts.

Wanda screeches.

BRANDIES
Excuse me!

HARRI
Oh my God...I am sorry. I mean. We feel that we need to think about, review the case. The Doctor. Dr. Cally signed an affidavit that he understood them to abandon the child for medical reasons.

BRANDIES (ASL)
What medical reasons?

HARRI
To be fair the rules also apply to...handicapped people who abandon healthy children, we just never thought it would happen.

Carl squirms.

BRANDIES (ASL)
It hasn't happen.

HARRI
That's a matter of interpretation.

BRANDIES
Poor choice of words in this case wouldn't you agree?

A beat.

BRANDIES (ASL) (CONT'D)
There is no reason why my clients
cannot see their son.

The room reluctantly agree.

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY
We'd feel better if someone where
with them--

BRANDIES (ASL)
You can't be serious.

Carl tugs Brandies.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
Completely ridiculous. But my
clients want to see there son. I
want assurances no media.

ADMINISTRATOR
Ms. Moore can you arrange the
visit?

HARRI
The child is still here. Why are
you asking me?

BRANDIES
Liability.

HARRI
I have plans, I mean work at
another site. I can't stay.

ADMINISTRATOR
I am sorry I can't...

Wanda begins to cry. She rushes from the room.

BRANDIES
We'll see you in court.

Brandies presents papers to hospital administrator.

Brandies and his law team leave.

50

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

50

Near elevator Carl holds Wanda in his arms he kisses her
gently on the forehead.

Brandies flanked by his attorney's walk toward the couple.

Brandies presses the up button.

CARL (ASL)
We're leaving? I can't take
anymore. Wanda is--

BRANDIES (ASL)
We're going to see Solomon.

51 INT. HOSPITAL - BOARD ROOM 51

Hospital attorney is on a cell phone. The Administrator scans the papers.

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY
That was brilliant.

ADMINISTRATOR
Maybe I should have hired him.

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY
Judge Shortens signed the temporary
custody order. Giving custody to
the doctor. His docket is full but
they can squeeze us in for an
injunction.

ADMINISTRATOR
Where are the lawyers from social
services?

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY
Out of position at this point.

52 INT. SOCIAL SERVICES - LYNCH'S OFFICE 52

Mr. Lynch stands with his back to Harri and a LAWYER from Social Services.

LAWYER
I see. We'll we'll be in touch.
Have you handed everything in?

HARRI
Yes. Why do you keep asking me
that?

LAWYER
We'll be in touch. Mr. Lynch.

Lynch nods, but never turns around.

Like a robot the Lawyer stands and leaves.

LYNCH
I thought I had trained you better.

HARRI
How was I supposed to know. I
remember you saying--

LYNCH
I know what I said, thank you.

HARRI
What's next then?

He turns to face her.

LYNCH
You drew two short straws Harri. I really thought that I could protect you, but you're in case review and a decision is being made about your termination. I am sorry.

HARRI
The doctor said that they didn't want the child. I took his word for it. I've done dozens of these. I followed procedure!

A beat.

Lynch turns around.

LYNCH
Harri it's...out my hands. Maybe if Besh case, wasn't-- Why didn't you get an interpreter Harri?

53

INT. BRANDIES' LAW FIRM

53

An Interpreter #1 signs to a WOMAN waiting in the lobby.

George gets off the elevator.

He holds the door.

GEORGE
Come on. Come on!

Titus steps off the elevator.

George picks him up.

George wanders through the office. SECRETARY stops him.

SECRETARY
Can I help you?

GEORGE
I am looking for that deaf lawyer.

SECRETARY
There are several deaf lawyers that work here...sir.

GEORGE
The one I see on TV about the
couple that don't want their baby.

SECRETARY
Mr. Grayson? He's out of the
office.

GEORGE
I can wait.

54 INT. HOSPITAL - BABY NURSERY

54

Carl strokes Wanda's hair as she holds SOLOMON, gently
touching his face.

Brandies watches the family from a distance, Carl approaches
him.

CARL (ASL)
I don't know how you did it, but
thank you.

BRANDIES (ASL)
I called in a few favors. I'm sure
they have a few tricks of their
own.

CARL (ASL)
It was a misunderstanding Bran.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Now you are gonna go soft on me!?

CARL (ASL)
This has scared all the fight out
of me. I promised Wanda I'd get him
back.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Carl you were wronged here. What
they did, and how they intend to
smear you, Wanda and deaf people is
wrong.

CARL (ASL)
What does it matter Bran. I can't
hear them anyway. I can go back
into the community. Re-join my
simple life. The deaf understand
what happened.

BRANDIES (ASL)
What about another deaf couple, who
don't have a best friend who is a
lawyer, who has judges for friends.

CARL (ASL)
I only have a responsibility to
Wanda and our son.

BRANDIES (ASL)
 Because of what is being done to you, we can force change for deaf people in this hospital. Hell their are already laws, but they are not following them.

CARL (ASL)
 I am mechanic. I chose to fix a thing that is concrete. I know engines. But, I don't know people's heart or how to fix it.

55 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM 55

Milagros enters the apartment door with a laundry basket.

MILAGROS
 George I'm back. Sorry about that. I had to put the stuff through again. For some reason--

Milagros stops short.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
 George?

She scans the room.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
 Titus!?

WE SEE basket fall to the floor emptying its contents.

She runs into the baby's room.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
 George? Titus! Oh my God.

Milagros rushes for the phone, frantically dials it.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
 Come on pick up!

56 INT. BRANDIES' LAW FIRM 56

George's cell phone rings. He looks it and puts it back into his pocket.

SECRETARY
 Is that your phone ringing?

57 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT 57

MILAGROS
 Come on George answer. Shit!

She throws down the phone. And paces. She is crazed with worry.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
I am so fucking stupid!

Milagros dials again.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
I'd like to report a missing child.
Yes. About an hour. My husband--
No he lives here with us. We live
together. Yes, he took him. No he
didn't take him to the park. George
hates the park. Why can't you? Look
I know something is wrong. Can you
do an amber-- Why not? What's that
supposed to mean?

Milagros hangs up the phone. Grabs a jacket and runs out the door.

58 EXT. URBAN SIDEWALK - AFTERNOON 58

Milagros walks panicked, stopping people at random.

Milagros AD LIB's asking for a man and a little boy.

MILAGROS
George! Geoooooooooorge!

She trips, falls to her knees.

The pedestrians just walk around her.

MILAGROS (CONT'D)
Titus!

59 INT. BRANDIES' LAW FIRM 59

Brandies enters office.

George holds a sleeping Titus in his arms.

SECRETARY
This man says he knows you?

GEORGE
Remember me?

BRANDIES
Sure you were about to punch a
friend of mine.

GEORGE
That's why I am here actually. Can
we talk in your office.

60 INT. BRANDIES' LAW FIRM 60

George places Titus on the couch.

GEORGE
Me and my wife ain't getting along
to well..

BRANDIES
I am not a divorce lawyer. But I
can refer you...

Brandies starts to write on a piece of paper.

GEORGE
We just found out Titus is deaf,
well pretty much deaf.

BRANDIES
Titus?

GEORGE
My son.

He points to Titus.

BRANDIES
Being deaf never got in my way. But
I don't see how this involves Mr.
Whisper.

GEORGE
I was thinking we could trade.

BRANDIES
Cars?

GEORGE
Kids.

BRANDIES
Excuse me?

GEORGE
Trade kids. They have a normal kid.
We have a deaf kid. We can just
trade.

BRANDIES
Kids are not cars Mr...?

GEORGE
Torula. Sorry about that.

He reaches out his hand.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I am George Torula.

BRANDIES
Mr. Torula have you been drinking?

GEORGE
No.

BRANDIES
Does your wife know you are here?

GEORGE
No.

BRANDIES
That's a problem. One of many, many problems with trading children.

GEORGE
My marriage is destroyed. I am desperate to get back to where we were before--

BRANDIES
You go to marriage counseling, not give away your child. You think you have problems now?

GEORGE
My wife loves babies, she's a good mother. Besides they don't want him right?

BRANDIES
Mr. and Mrs. Whisper are victims of discrimination. The hospital never bothered to get someone who knew sign language. They never said they didn't want their son.

GEORGE
The doctor said in an interview, I saw it...

A beat.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You are saying they didn't reject the kid, like, they said in the papers.

BRANDIES
No.

George ponders the situation, then panicked realization fills his face.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
Mr. Torula? Are you okay?

A beat.

GEORGE
I am sorry Mr. Grayson. I, I um. We should go.

BRANDIES
 Thank goodness he's too little to
 realize what you intended to do. My
 hope is that you weren't serious.

George scoops up the sleeping Titus. And leaves the office.

The secretary walks in.

SECRETARY
 What did he want?

BRANDIES
 You wouldn't believe me if I told
 you.

61 INT. WHISPER'S GARAGE 61

Wanda is typing on TTY. Carl kisses her on the cheek.

62 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT 62

The phone rings.

Milagros jumps for it.

MILAGROS
 Hello? Hello!

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
 This a relay call, the caller is
 deaf.

MILAGROS
 Yes.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
 This is Wanda from Whispers Auto
 your car needs a part that they
 don't make anymore. It could take a
 long time to find used one. Would
 you like us to store the car or
 make arrangements for tow, go
 ahead.

MILAGROS
 My son is deaf, I would like to
 know where I can take him to meet
 other deaf children. Go ahead.

63 INT. WHISPER'S GARAGE 63

Wanda reads message.

Then types.

64 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT 64

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
That is what you were trying to
tell me. Sorry. I hope he is happy
boy. Even if deaf. There is group
for mom with kids I know about...

65 EXT./INT. HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE 65

It's 9:00 am. Brandies enters, gets on elevator.
Harri walks into lobby, rushes for elevator door.
A hand stops the doors from closing.

HARRI
Thank you.

She realizes it is Brandies and she tightens up.

BRANDIES
I don't bite. I'm just a lawyer.

Harri forces a polite smile.

Brandies gets off at his floor.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
You see, not one nibble.

Harri bares her teeth in a false smile.

The doors begin to close. Brandies sticks his hand into the
door.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
You still don't remember me?

HARRI
Yes. How could I forget the man
that is suing, to get me fired.

Harri pushes his hand off the doors and presses the button
for them to close.

66 INT. GEORGE & MILAGROS APARTMENT - DAY 66

Milagros packs a last few things in a baby bag.

Luggage sits by the door.

George is silent on the couch.

Milagros looks at him, starts to speak, then stops. She grabs
her luggage, and shuts the door behind her.

67 INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

67

Harri meets with Lynn's doctor.

BLACK DOCTOR
 ...I am sorry she died this morning
 at 3:00 am.

Harri looks away.

BLACK DOCTOR
 We tried to call you.

A beat.

BLACK DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 Her mother is here now, making
 arrangements for her body--

HARRI
 Thank you doctor.

Harri gets up. She feels sick, she hurries for the elevator
 she needs air.

The doors open.

Mrs. Lenard and Leena step off elevator.

MRS. LENARD
 Now you decide to show up?

LEENA
 Come on momma.

HARRI
 Mrs. Lenard. I am so very sorry for
 your loss. I...I...

MRS. LENARD
 Sorry is not going to bring my baby
 girl back!

Mrs. Lenard goes for Harri, LEENA holds her back.

LEENA
 Momma!

MRS. LENARD
 You should have protected her! You
 knew about him and you didn't even
 try!

Harri cowers like a trapped mouse.

She's certain she's going to pass out.

HARRI
I am sorry. I'm sorry. I hope you
can forgive me.

Harri hurries away, bursting into the stairwell.
She cries as she paces, her body language is prayerful.
She flops to the floor like a dirty towel and whimpers.

68

INT. HOSPITAL - BABY NURSERY

68

Brandies smiles as he watches Wanda snuggle Solomon.
She smiles back.
Carl enters.

CARL (ASL)
Sorry I am late. Did I miss
anything?

BRANDIES (ASL)
No the doctor isn't here yet.

CARL (ASL)
It's just a hearing test right?

BRANDIES (ASL)
Right. The other side will be here.
To make sure we're not doing
anything.

Wanda looks up and smiles at the pair.

They turn so that she can't see their signing.

CARL (ASL)
What if the test comes out the
other way?

BRANDIES (ASL)
Both you and Wanda carry the gene,
it's unlikely Solomon is hearing.
But if he is then, it may give some
credit to their claims--

CARL (ASL)
But it's not true.

BRANDIES (ASL)
I know that. I requested that the
results be sealed for three days. I
need time to prepare a case for the
probate court.

CARL (ASL)
I doesn't matter to me Bran. The
details. Just get our son back, I
(MORE)

want to take my son home and get back to normal.

BRANDIES (ASL)
I've been meaning to tell you, that guy, the one that I saw in your garage last week. He came to my office with his son. He wanted to trade his son for Solomon.

CARL (ASL)
What did you tell him?!

BRANDIES (ASL)
What do you say? I wondered how many parents really felt that way about their kids. It made me think about my...my mother, my grand parents. I felt four all over again. It sucked.

CARL (ASL)
I had forgotten about that Bran, I am sorry you...

69 EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

69

Milagros looks prettier, happier, younger as she pushes Titus in a swing.

Other children bounce around the playground.

Milagros notices George watching them. She stops the swing, and pulls Titus out.

She puts him in his carriage and hurries away.

GEORGE
Milagros, please!

She keeps walking.

70 INT. HOSPITAL - MATERNITY WARD

70

Brandies, Carl and Wanda wait along with the Hospital Attorney.

The ASIAN DOCTOR emerges with a medical device.

ASIAN DOCTOR
I'll wait to hear from you.

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY
I trust that--

The Doctor turns and walks down the hall.

WANDA
I don't think I can wait.

A woman with the hospital lawyers seems to be paying attention to the trio.

Carl notices.

CARL (ASL)
Maybe we should go someplace private. Walls have eyes.

The trio walk to the stairwell.

71

INT. HOSPITAL - STAIRWELL

71

Carl looks at the light, with a grimace.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Too dark in here.

Harri's cry echoes off the wall.

Brandies looks at Carl and Wanda.

WANDA (ASL)
What?

Brandies looks over the rail.

BRANDIES POV:

He sees a woman curled up and crying.

Carl and Wanda look on.

WANDA (ASL) (CONT'D)
Who is that?

Brandies, touches her shoulder.

Harri does not move.

He grabs her arm to help her up.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Miss. Are you hurt?

Harri just cries.

BRANDIES (ASL) (CONT'D)
Carl get help.

Carl runs up the stairs.

Brandies crouches down to her.

BRANDIES (ASL) (CONT'D)
Are you hurt?

He tries to see her face.

Harri opens her arms and hugs Brandies tight around his neck, she cries hard.

At first he is tense, then he absorbs her into his body.

Tall Nurse runs down the stairs to them.

TALL NURSE
Is she injured?

BRANDIES
I don't know?

FADE OUT

72

INT. HARRI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

72

Harri awakes on her couch. She looks around disoriented.

BRANDIES (O.S.)
Hi.

HARRI
I failed that exam.

BRANDIES
He was a tough teacher.

HARRI
Yeah.

BRANDIES
You look good.

HARRI
No I don't.

Harri get's up, goes to fridge.

BRANDIES
You almost had me convinced.

HARRI
What? That I was a bratty, snobby first year law student that made a fool out herself.

BRANDIES
Yeah. That was true.

HARRI
I am really sorry. I seem to be saying that a lot lately?

BRANDIES
Now I am confused. Sorry for what? For trying to get me kicked out of law school, for acting like you
(MORE)

didn't know me, or for ruining my
friends life?

Harri begins to sob.

Brandies rushes to her.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
As I remember it you weren't the
only one that thought having an
interpreter was cheating.

Through tears.

HARRI
How stupid was that...

BRANDIES
Only a little stupid.

Harri smiles.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
Good, a smile. My job here is done.

Brandies gets up.

HARRI
Do you have to go?

BRANDIES
I probably should.

73 EXT./INT. BRANDIES HOME - 3:00 AM

73

Brandies enters, drops his things.

His dad is in the living room watching TV - not close
captioned.

BRANDIES SR
I love this old show.

BRANDIES
What show Dad?

BRANDIES SR
Love American Style.

A long beat.

BRANDIES SR (CONT'D)
Pretty tough case?

BRANDIES
Yeah. Just when I thought I had it
all figured out.

74 INT. SOCIAL SERVICES - LYNCH'S OFFICE

74

Harri knocks as she walks in.

HARRI
Do you have a second?

LYNCH
Not really Harri. What is it?

HARRI
I thought we should send a letter
to Lynn's family. Condolences.

LYNCH
Fine.

HARRI
The Whisper Baby? I was thinking
that we--

LYNCH
I've been on the phone with the
hospital attorney all morning. That
attorney for the family has them
ticked off, they're not budging.

HARRI
But I...

LYNCH
How's Dennis?

HARRI
You probably know better than I do.
Tell him, and your Mom I said hi.

Harri walks out.

75 EXT. BRANDIES' LAW FIRM - DAY

75

Harri paces in front of the building.

Brandies walks out.

Harri rushes to him.

HARRI
Brandies.

BRANDIES
Grace?

Harri smiles.

HARRI
I just wanted to say thank you for
staying and to tell you that the
lawyers...

BRANDIES
Hey, you know better than that.

HARRI
I just wanted you to be--

BRANDIES
What are you doing for the next
couple of hours?

76 INT. KARATE GYM - LATER

76

Harri looks around gym, at artifacts, pictures on the wall.

A class warms up.

Brandies enters in Karate gear.

MONTAGE

The class practices basic moves.

Brandies spars with classmate - wins.

Harri watches impressed.

Brandies spars with KARATE INSTRUCTOR, it's fierce.

BACK TO SCENE

Brandies walks over to Harri.

HARRI
Wow. I didn't know you could fight
like that.

BRANDIES
My Dad used to drag me here. Wanted
me to learn to fight. No deaf
school for me, he would tell me. I
went to public school, that's where
I met Carl. We fought our way home
many a day.

A CLASSMATE walks over.

CLASSMATE
Good work out today Brandies.

They shake.

CLASSMATE (CONT'D)
And you must be his girlfriend? Hi
I'm Kevin, it a pleasure to meet
you.

He extends his hand.

HARRI
Harri. Nice to meet you too. But
we're just friends.

CLASSMATE
Right. Keep it on the down low--

He walks away.

77 INT./EXT. GYM - NIGHT

77

Brandies and Harri walk out.

BRANDIES
If you were my girlfriend.

HARRI
Hypothetically.

BRANDIES
Yes, of course. Hypothetically.
What would we be doing on a Friday
night?

HARRI
Let me see. I'm pretty hungry after
watching you work out.

She does a karate move.

HARRI (CONT'D)
Hi-Yah!

BRANDIES
That was pretty good. Okay. We
could eat.

HARRI
I like to listen to music on those
clunky headphones in the book
store. I get lost for hours. We
could listen to the new release of--

A beat.

HARRI (CONT'D)
Oh.

BRANDIES
It's okay. I like music too.

HARRI
But how can you? Never mind.

Harri looks embarrassed.

BRANDIES
I've got an idea. I live around the
corner. I'll change my clothes. And
you can ask my Dad why I had to go
(MORE)

to public school and I'll take you
someplace nice.

78 EXT. URBAN SIDEWALK - NIGHT

78

Brandies and Harri pull up to curb. The street is packed with cars.

BRANDIES
The Wiglets must be throwing
another party.

HARRI
Where do you live?

BRANDIES
That house there. Look someone
already took my spot.

HARRI
I can wait here if you want.

BRANDIES
No. Come in.

Harri gets out, they walk a few feet.

Brandies stops.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
Damn. I forgot my gym bag. Hold on.

Harri'S POV:

Brandies runs back to the car.

We hear FOOTSTEPS.

Harri turns around, no one is there.

HARRI
Who's there?

79 EXT. BRANDIES CAR - NIGHT

79

Brandies, opens the door but his keys slip out of his hands.

BRANDIES
Shit.

He feels for the keys down under the car.

80 EXT. URBAN SIDEWALK - NIGHT

80

Harri spots a glimpse of someone crouched behind the car.

She walks to get a better look.

It is Brandies Sr.

HARRI
Can I help you, did you lose
something?

Brandies Sr creeps closer to Brandies, he passes low on the passenger side.

Harri watches confused, until she sees Brandies Sr pop up and walk behind Brandies.

Brandies closes the car door.

BRANDIES
Got it!

He sees Harri's frightened face.

HARRI
Behind you!

Brandies swings around and KNOCKS his father out cold.

Harri runs up.

She sees the horrified look on his face.

HARRI (CONT'D)
You know him?

BRANDIES
That's my father.

81 INT. BRANDIES HOME

81

Brandies Sr lays on the couch with an ice pack on his head.

Harri fans him.

Brandies paces.

HARRI
...he just ambushes you?

BRANDIES
Ever since I was a little kid.

HARRI
That's just plain weird. I'm sorry.

Brandies Sr begins to wake up.

He looks at Harri.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
Beautiful.

Harri pauses.

HARRI
Ah. I think he's awake.

Brandies turns around.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Dad, I didn't know it was you.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
That's the whole point. Twenty-four
years of sneaking up on you and you
finally let your instinct
work...she is beautiful. She have a
mother?

Brandies Sr. rubs his chin.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Dad! Please!

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
Okay a sister?

BRANDIES
He's fine.

Harri wears an awkward smile.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
Tell her she is staying for dinner.

BRANDIES (ASL)
No. You scared her to death. We are
not staying.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
She looks like your mother a little
in the eyes.

Brandies Sr studies Harri's face up close. She fights the
urge to bolt.

BRANDIES (ASL)
Were not staying Dad.

HARRI
Is everything okay?

BRANDIES
Fine.

BRANDIES SR
(to Harri)
Hi.

HARRI
Hi.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
 (to Brandies)
 What's her name.

BRANDIES (ASL)
 Grace.

Harri looks uncomfortable.

HARRI
 Maybe I should wait in the car.

She heads for the door.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
 (to Harri)
 There are crazy people out there.
 You wait here for my son.

He guides her back to into room, she has no clue what he is saying.

BRANDIES
 Come up stairs, you can wait in my
 room while I change.

Harri doesn't want to stay at all. She shoots a weary look at Brandies Sr.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
 Beautiful.

Brandies Sr glares at her as if he could put her in a pot and eat her. But his eyes are gentle.

He twinkles his fingers at her "bye-bye."

Brandies grabs her hand and leads her up stairs.

BRANDIES
 Come on. He's harmless really. I'm
 the one you should worry about. I
 haven't eaten all day.

Brandies smiles.

82 INT. BRANDIES HOME - BEDROOM

82

Harri scans his room, looks at photographs of him growing up. She runs her hand over his law books and reads his degree on the wall.

Brandies enters, shirtless.

BRANDIES
 Why didn't you finish law school.

HARRI
I wanted to. But I lost interest after my mom died. She dropped out when she got pregnant with me and I thought I'd go for her. Is this your mom?

BRANDIES
Yeah, she left when I was six. That's when my dad started sneaking up on me. I wasn't safe anywhere. Church, school, home.

Brandies laughs.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
I guess he was trying to teach me something, now it's just a way for him keep me young in his mind.

HARRI
That's why you still live here, with him.

Brandies nods.

BRANDIES
I liked you then. Even though I thought you were a hearist.

HARRI
I hated me then. My mom was dying and I needed someplace to put all that stuff I had built up.

Harri thumbs through his CD collection.

HARRI (CONT'D)
Oh, my God you have this! How do you...?

Brandies walks over to the player. Put's in the CD.

Harri picks up the BULKY PAIR OF HEAD PHONES and Harri is about to place it on her ears when...

Brandies stops her.

He places her hand on his chest.

WE HEAR his heart beat.

He places her hand on the sub-woofer.

WE HEAR bass tones.

Their eyes are locked.

He places her hand on his ear and gently guides her to remove his hearing aid.

She instinctively removes the other.

NO SOUND.

He turns her around, her back to him and positions the head phones on her shoulder. One ear phone over her heart and the other on her back.

He presses her close.

The music vibrates between them.

The move sway slowly, for hours. Just like that.

83

INT. HARRI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

83

They are in bed. Harri is laughing hard.

HARRI

That has got to be the funniest thing I've heard. And the police didn't catch on?

BRANDIES

No. It was pretty funny.

HARRI

What's the sign for funny?

Brandies shows her.

HARRI (CONT'D)

How would I spell my name?

BRANDIES

Ms. Moore?

HARRI

Harri.

BRANDIES

Your name is Harri!? Your not a...

Harri pushes him.

HARRI

No, I'm all woman.

BRANDIES

Whew! I can just see the Jerry Springer episode now.

HARRI

How'd did your parents react to you being deaf?

Brandies shifts his body.

BRANDIES

My mom was hearing. I think she was sad. My grandparents didn't really want anything to do with me. Now, my dad's family. They threw a party. I think he's proud. But sometimes I, get the impression that he thinks I'm fooling myself.

HARRI

About what?

BRANDIES

About being who I am.

HARRI

God. I wish I knew who I was.

BRANDIES

My mother used tell me a story when she put me to bed at night, about the guardians of the reef, an advanced race of humans that lived under the water. They married sea creatures, dolphins, whales...and giant majestic kettle fish known for their expressive eyes... The reef people, like many creatures under the sea had no need for ears. They used their hands, their eyes, telepathy and vibration to communicate...

Brandies sits up in bed.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)

The children of the kettle fish and reef people learned they had special powers that allowed them to turn from a human into any one of the beautiful creatures in the ocean. One day the reef people warned the people of Atlantis about the great flood that was coming, but for some reason they didn't listen. The reef people knew this flood would be devastating...And millions of them volunteered to warn the land dwellers...

Brandies, moves to on the edge of the bed.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)

They said good-bye to their family and friends and walked up from the ocean on to every shoreline on the planet, magically turning themselves into looking like race of people that lived there. No one could tell the difference between the reef people and humans, except that, the reef people couldn't

(MORE)

hear. And because they were no longer underwater, and the land dwellers didn't use telepathy, they created a language using their hands to communicate...

Brandies walks to the window.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
Some of the reef people even after warning the world of the flood decided to stay and make a life on dry ground. And that is why, she said, there are deaf people, once called reef people, in every race. You have a lot to be proud of she would say... Maybe, she would say, you are a descendant of the reef people, the guardian people of the sea that chose to live on land.

CLOSE UP on Brandies looking out window.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
The challenge the reef people had, you will have too, she told me...it isn't your ears that's the problem, but overcoming those who will refuse to listen to you...

Long beat.

HARRI
That's a beautiful story. She must be so proud of you.

Harri'S POV:

Brandies looks out window.

BRANDIES (SPEAKING AND ASL)
I wish I knew. The last time I saw her she was happy to see me. But I thought I hated her. I thought-- I thought I...didn't need her in my life, and I told her.

84 INT. SOCIAL SERVICES - MONDAY MORNING

84

In Harri's cubicle Linda hugs Harry, she's crying.

LINDA
I mean...I know I gave you a hard time. But I never meant for you to...

HARRI
Linda it's okay. I'm ready.

Linda sniffles.

LINDA
That's what I admire about you.

Harri gathers up her folders.

HARRI
Wish me luck.

Harri walks past fellow SOCIAL WORKERS that stare at her like she's walking into the lion's den.

LINDA
(to herself)
Your gonna need it.

85 INT. SOCIAL SERVICES - BOARD ROOM

85

THREE MEAN LOOKING WOMEN sit on one side of the table.

Lynch sits at one corner.

LYNCH
Take a seat.

Harri sits across from the trio.

MEAN WOMAN
We have carefully reviewed your cases since you started--

MEAN WOMAN TWO
I have a question before we start. We have your resume, why didn't you finish law school?

HARRI
I don't see how that's relevant.

One of the Women sits back in her chair.

MEAN WOMAN
It's relevant Ms. Moore with respect to your understanding of the complexities we face in running an institution that cares for families and children. Answer the question, please.

HARRI
I...this is stupid. If you are going to fire me fire me. Okay.

Harri gets up.

MEAN WOMAN TWO
Ms. Moore we are not done with you. I would be disadvantageous for you to leave. A multi-million dollar-- As a matter of fact, there is the real potential that a second legal
(MORE)

action will be pending against this agency because of your choices. You at least need to go on record having contributed your rationale. Regardless of what this board concludes.

Harri hesitates, then takes a seat.

HARRI
I transferred out.

MEAN WOMAN
Says here that you had some trouble there too. You received a academic demerit for harassing a deaf student. A fellow student--

HARRI
Yes, but I can explain--

MEAN WOMAN
Please allow me to finish my statement completely Ms. Moore. If I need a response I will ask you for one. Are we clear?

HARRI
Yes.

MEAN WOMAN
Fine. Where was I? Humm...yes. A fellow student. Not named. Probably to protect him from future harassment. Was it a male?

HARRI
Yes.

MEAN WOMAN
I see. Now were you asked to leave because of this or did you leave on your own choosing?

HARRI
I can't remember.

MEAN WOMAN
It's important to this board Ms. Moore that we have all of the facts. If in deed you were asked to leave for harassing a deaf student. And you have now found yourself, and we hope quite incidentally in the middle of a custody battle with a deaf couple--

MEAN WOMAN TWO
If we know this Ms. Moore, don't you think the other side does as well. Your actions, excuse me. Your choices in the past, and this
(MORE)

incident create a pattern. A pattern that suggests you are insensitive to the needs of people different than you.

HARRI

I've had about enough of this-- the doctor told me that this couple intended to abandon this baby, I--

MEAN WOMAN TWO

The doctor denies ever making that statement, he claims you spoke to a nurse that confused the information.

The room begins to spin.

HARRI

What? No! No I spoke directly to him.

MEAN WOMAN

We don't see a complaint form from him. Or any other documentation, other than your--

HARRI

I had just left another case, I was only there because they asked...the other workers were on strike and...

MEAN WOMAN

Yes, please calm down Ms. Moore. I supposed the other case you are referring to Lynn Besh.

HARRI

Yes, I had just finished meeting with--

MEAN WOMAN TWO

Please Ms. Moore that case is being formally deposed, I recommend that you speak to an attorney before you comment any further.

MEAN WOMAN

Fine. Thank you. Ms. Moore. Although we feel that you were acting within the powers granted to you...

A beat.

MEAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

And we feel that the hospital even though it publicly blames us, they are internally taking this case all the way we have...

A long beat.

MEAN WOMAN (CONT'D)
 Not found just cause to terminate
 you.

Harri is confused.

Dazed she gets up to leave.

MEAN WOMAN TWO
 Oh and Ms. Moore I almost forgot.
 The department is pursuing
 supervision in the Whisper Baby
 case. You are to argue placement in
 a foster home, with a plan and six
 months supervision post placement
 back in the home. Seems your the
 perfect woman for the job...

HARRI
 What! That's bullshit and you know
 it! I was doing my job. But You are
 trying to hurt this family!

The trio sits back.

HARRI (CONT'D)
 I'm not doing it.

MEAN WOMAN
 If you don't... or if you quit. You
 loose the protection of this agency
 for any civil damages due in this
 case and the Besh case.

HARRI
 (to Lynch)
 Are your just gonna sit there and
 let them do this?

Lynch looks away.

MEAN WOMAN TWO
 This meeting is adjourned, pending
 further investigation. I make a
 move to keep Ms. Moore's status the
 same.

Harri storms out.

MEAN WOMAN
 That went well. I really like that
 shirt on you.

MEAN WOMAN TWO
 Thanks, you know I wasn't sure if
 it was my style.

The women gather their things and leave chattering about
 everything and nothing.

Mean Woman Two looks back.

MEAN WOMAN TWO (CONT'D)
Russell we are gonna grab some
lunch, you wanna come?

86 INT. HARRI'S APARTMENT - LATER

86

She answers the door.

Brandies walks in.

BRANDIES
I brought lunch?

HARRI
Not really hungry.

BRANDIES
Okaaaay?

HARRI
I saw the review board today--

BRANDIES
Did they fire you, because I know a
really good lawyer.

HARRI
They brought up the whole law
school thing and you...and this
case and the other case--

BRANDIES
It's in the past. I'm over it.

HARRI
I thought I was too. I need to tell
you something...

A long beat.

BRANDIES
If its about Carl and Wanda's baby.
I've told you. Let me handle this.
It's gonna look odd, I know that
we've been...ah what have we been?
But it's not like its witness
tampering or anything. I know you
made a mistake, right?

A long beat.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
Right? You told me that YOU made a
mistake. You KNOW that they wanted
to keep their son.

A beat.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
Graaaace! What's the problem!

Harri starts to cry.

BRANDIES (CONT'D)
This isn't a game Harri!

HARRI
Don't you think, I fucking know that! I of all people know, this is not a game. A woman I was supposed to protect-- I was supposed to protect her children...is dead because of something I told her!

A long beat.

HARRI (CONT'D)
And now...

BRANDIES
And now?

HARRI
I wonder if the reef people who decided to stay here ever got home sick?

BRANDIES
Harri, what is going on with you?

HARRI
I wonder, if they could hear...would they want to stay. Maybe because they couldn't hear it, the bad shit. They couldn't hear what people were saying about them, they stayed.

BRANDIES
I don't know Harri. It's just a fairy tale.

HARRI
I started calling myself Harri, after my mother died. I thought it made me sound tough..tougher than the name Grace. That was my mother's name.

There is a KNOCK at her door.

Harri opens it.

She is in tears.

DENNIS (O.S.)
Hey Harri, where you been? You okay? I mean I heard about--

Harri opens the door wide.

Brandies and Dennis eye's meet.

HARRI
Ah...Brandies. This is my
boy...boyfriend Dennis.

BRANDIES
Nice to meet you Dennis. I was just
leaving.

Brandies walks out past Harri.

Dennis talks at Brandies's back.

DENNIS
Sure dude. Great to meet you. Any
friend of Harri's is a friend of
mine.

87 INT. BRANDIES' LAW FIRM - THREE DAYS LATER

87

CLOSE UP on FISH TANK in lobby.

Wanda, Carl, the Interpreter, Brandies his legal team, the
hospital lawyers, and administrators sit around a table.

Harri sits across the room notebook in hand.

The room nods.

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY
Did someone start the recorder. Ms.
Moore your closest.

Harri presses record.

ADMINISTRATOR
All parties are here, the Whispers
attorney, the hospitals
representatives, and the department
of social services. Would the
department like to make a
statement?

A long beat.

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY
Ms. Moore?

A long beat.

HARRI
No. Not at this time.

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY
We were given the impression that
you had a recommendation for this--

HARRI
You were misinformed.

The hospital attorneys squirm.

ASIAN DOCTOR
Fine, I'll read the results then.

A long beat.

ASIAN DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Three physicians, a geneticist, and
a physical exam have concluded...

A long beat.

ASIAN DOCTOR (CONT'D)
That the child Solomon Whisper
is... deaf. He carries the genetic
marker that both of his parents
have.

Wanda sobs in her husbands chest.

The hospital attorney's huddle.

HOSPITAL ATTORNEY
In light of this information...we
offer our apologies to the family
and defer to social services.

Everyone looks at Harri.

HARRI
I was the one that...it doesn't
matter now, really. What matters is
that Mr. and Mrs. Whisper can take
their son home.

Harri gathers her stuff walks toward the couple.

A beat.

The Interpreter signs for Carl and Wanda.

HARRI (CONT'D)
Thank goodness your guardian didn't
get home sick. You're lucky. I am
really sorry. I wish I were a
kettle fish.

88

INT. GYM - DAY

88

CLOSE UP on GOLD FISH in a bag being held by MOTHER #1's son
sitting in the circle.

A group of seven MOTHERS, some deaf some hearing. Wanda with
Solomon in a sling and Milagros with Titus on her lap sit in
a circle.

BRENDA
 We have a new mom with us today. A
 friend of Wanda's. She is still
 learning to sign.

Milagros smiles.

WANDA (ASL)
 Her son Titus is deaf. Why don't we
 go around and introduce ourselves.

MOTHER #1 (ASL)
 My name is Camille. I am deaf I was
 born deaf. My son Craig is hearing.
 And this is his new fish.

She asks her son the fish's name.

KID
 Sally.

He finger spells.

The mom's smile.

MOTHER #2
 Hi. I am not technically deaf I
 would be called hard of hearing. I
 damaged my ears at work. My
 Daughter Millie is hearing. Oh My
 name is June.

MOTHER #3 (ASL)
 My name is Alice. I am deaf. I am
 the only deaf in my family. No one
 we know is deaf. My daughter is two
 she is not deaf.

MOTHER #4
 My son lost his hearing after an
 ear infection. He has had a hard
 time adjusting. Oh my name is
 Veronica.

MOTHER #5 (ASL)
 My son has the cochlear implant. I
 am deaf. My husband is deaf. My
 name is Gerry.

BRENDA
 Welcome Milagros and Titus. I'm
 Brenda I have a grown son who is
 lawyer. He is the fourth deaf
 person to graduate from Harvard law
 school. I started this group ten
 years ago. You know there was this
 story I used to tell my son, about
 the guardians of the sea...

89 INT. BRANDIES HOME - NIGHT

89

Brandies walks in from work. He drops his stuff. Looks around.

BRANDIES
(to self)
Oh, not tonight Dad.

He looks in the living room there are two tea cups.

He looks into the office...no one there.

Then he walks into the kitchen.

90 INT. BRANDIES HOME - KITCHEN

90

His father is bent over looking in the oven.

WE SEE someone is in the fridge. The door closes.

Brandies freezes in his tracks.

HARRI
Oh. I didn't hear you come in.

Brandies Sr's head pops up.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
Hi son. Look who I found roaming campus.

BRANDIES (ASL)
She looks like, she can take care of herself to me.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
She was registering for classes, I was cleaning and she saw me. Sad story about her boyfriend.

BRANDIES (ASL)
I heard.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
You know Dennis? You kids these days. Anyway...here she is. Beautiful huh? Can't get over how much--

BRANDIES
I know, looks like mom.

BRANDIES SR
I am missing my favorite show. You finish cooking.

He hurries out.

HARRI
What did he say?

BRANDIES
His show, it's on.

HARRI
I wonder what it is?

LIVING ROOM

Harri enters as Brandies Sr sits down.

BRANDIES POV:

From door way.

Brandies shoos Harri off.

HARRI (CONT'D)
The Love Boat...now that's funny.

BRANDIES SR (ASL)
You two go talk. Leave the old man
alone. Don't end up like me the
only love I am getting is from the
TV.

Brandies snickers.

HARRI
What did he say?

They walk into KITCHEN.

BRANDIES
You are going to have to learn to
sign I can't keep translating, a
lot of what my dad says is open for
interpretation.

HARRI
Teach me then?

BRANDIES
I don't know about that. The last
girl... hey she kinda looked a lot
like you, come to think of it...

HARRI
It wasn't me. I'm sure. You don't
look familiar.

BRANDIES
Funny, that's the same thing she
said too.

HARRI
Really, she did, huh? Whatever
happened to her?

BRANDIES
She went fishing.

They kiss.

HARRI
With a net, or a hook?

BRANDIES
What?

HARRI
She went fishing with net, or a
hook?

BRANDIES
Neither, she just jumped in.

CLOSE UP

The kiss again.

DOLLY BACK

FADE TO BLACK