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Blueprint

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Blueprint

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
in
Creative Writing
Screenwriting

by

Marissa Zeno

B.A. Dillard University, 2016

May, 2021

FADE IN:

SUPER: 2016

INT./EXT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY - DAY

It's graduation day at Nathan Hare University. On the campus grounds, last minute arrangements are being made as the sun rises on the stage. Chairs are being unfolded, university banners being hung, microphones being checked on stage.

Students begin to fill the CHAPEL, checking in with the faculty member at the door.

INT. CHEYENNE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

CHEYENNE LAINE (20s, AA, reserved, nonchalant) sits in front of her mirror applying makeup. She looks to the framed picture of her and her MOTHER. She finishes applying the makeup fighting back tears.

CHEYENNE

Wish you were here.

Packed boxes are filled with things from her apartment, clothes, large frames, books. Her apartment is virtually empty.

Her phone rings, snapping her out of her trance. It's her best friend Raymond.

RAYMOND (O.S.)

(loudly)

Are you ready yet? I need some help with my tie! Come open your door.

Cheyenne giggles and goes to open the door.

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK - DAY

Cheyenne opens the door to RAYMOND GRAVES (20s, AA, enthusiastic, lively, gay). He's all dressed up, cap and unzipped gown, his shirt is un-tucked and unbuttoned. He holds up two separate ties, one monotone bow-tie and one colorful straight tie.

RAYMOND

Please choose, because I can't right now.

Cheyenne laughs and welcomes him inside. She looks across the way and sees SASHA WILKES (20s, AA, attractive, apple pie personified). Just as Sasha looks over Cheyenne who looks away and rolls her eyes.

INT. SASHA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sasha is dressed almost perfectly. She sprays perfume on her wrist and drapes her gown over her arms. She looks over herself in the mirror as she clasps her necklace. In her trash basket we see an opened PREGNANCY TEST box.

She turns to the side in the mirror touching her stomach and quickly throws the idea away, zips up her gown, and heads out the door.

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Sasha comes out of her apartment and sees J.R. COLEMAN (20s, AA, tall, athletic, attractive). He's on the phone.

SASHA

(smiling)

Mornin'. Don't be late.

She touches his arm and walks past him.

J.R. nods, acknowledging her but still invested in his phone call.

J.R.

Yeah, I know coach. I won't miss it. I'm not gonna let you down.

(beat)

Alright, thanks again!

He hangs up and looks at the apartment across the way and sees Cheyenne and Raymond come out.

Raymond links arms with Cheyenne and skips while she tries to keep up going to the chapel across campus.

Cheyenne sees J.R. and looks down, ignoring him.

EXT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY - GRADUATION STAGE - DAY

Pomp and Circumstances plays loudly through the speakers as they graduates walk in towards the previously empty chairs. Friends and family fill the audience sections and they clap, cheer, and wipe away tears. Graduates do the same.

PRESIDENT ROE (40s/50s, AA, stern but caring) takes the stage, raises and lowers his hand to let them all know to sit. He's smiling out to the crowd, proud.

ROE

What a beautiful day for these beautiful...

(MORE)

ROE (CONT'D)

(beat)

And handsome graduates. This is your day.

(beat)

Thank you also to the family and friends who have decided to join us today. I know you must be proud,

(chuckles)

I am, too.

His speaking fades out and we scan the audience. Graduates smiling, taking pictures with each other, waving to their families. Families standing and clapping when names are called.

ROE (CONT'D)

Without further adieu, the graduates!

(beat)

Roland Anderson...

He begins calling student names.

Students proudly glide across the stage, take their degree, smile for a photo and walk off. Their lively, excited, happy.

DISSOLVE TO:

ROE (CONT'D)

Jerome Reese Coleman...

J.R. comes up to the stage. He fake dribbles a ball and shoots it. He shakes Roe's hand, taking his degree and the picture.

Coming down the steps he sees Cheyenne.

She shifts in her seat, uncomfortable under his glare.

Raymond, who's sitting behind her leans to her.

RAYMOND

Have y'all talked at all?

CHEYENNE

He called on the funeral, but not since then.

Raymond sits back.

DISSOLVE TO:

ROE

Raymond Graves...

Raymond struts across the stage, flamboyant as ever, recording the whole thing on his phone. He cheeses for his picture the way only he could.

DISSOLVE TO:

ROE (CONT'D)
Cheyenne Laine...

Cheyenne stands to take her turn, she faintly smiles for her picture.

ROE (CONT'D)
Your mother would be so proud.

Roe hugs her. Cheyenne accepts it, but doesn't really reciprocate it.

She gets back to her seat and Raymond shakes her shoulder excitedly.

RAYMOND
Aye! We did it! We degree'd!

She smiles with him.

DISSOLVE TO:

ROE
Sasha Wilkes...

Sasha smoothly walks down the stage with poise. No one would expect any less.

DISSOLVE TO:

The list of graduates ends.

ROE (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentleman, I present to you, Nathan Hare University's class of 2016!

The graduates all rise and toss their caps up in the air.

Later:

The ceremony is over and everyone is scattered across the grounds. Families taking pictures, graduates hugging each other, friends wiping away tears.

Cheyenne walks out of the aisle and his bombarded by Raymond and his phone.

RAYMOND

(loudly)

We got degrees out here! Okay!
Come on Black excellence!

Cheyenne is a little shocked, but she's used to it and smiles into the camera.

CHEYENNE

Ray, come on!

(laughing)

You're so extra right now.

RAYMOND

Okay and? You're not extra enough!
We graduated college! AHH!

They laugh together and smile for some selfies.

Cheyenne looks to the side and sees a surprising familiar face. Raymond looks too, this quiets him. Cheyenne walks up to THOMAS LAINE (40s/50s, AA, timid, fatherly). Cheyenne's father.

CHEYENNE

I didn't think you'd be here.

THOMAS

I wouldn't miss your graduation.

CHEYENNE

Well I was surprised you made it to
your wife's funeral so...

THOMAS

Chey , I just wanted to come say
I'm proud of you.

CHEYENNE

Yeah, I'm sure.

Raymond walks up.

RAYMOND

Hi Mr. Laine. Good to see you.

THOMAS

You too Raymond. Congratulations.

(beat)

Well what about dinner later? The
two of you. And you can invite Sasha
and Jay--

RAYMOND

Thank you...

CHEYENNE

No. Raymond's helping me pack.
I've got a flight to Atlanta.
(beat)
I got a job at a film production
company.

THOMAS

Oh. Wow, that's great.
(beat)
You should come by when you get back.

CHEYENNE

I'm not coming back Dad. Nothing's
here for me.

He's sore at that comment.

THOMAS

Well here let me...

He goes to grab his wallet out of his pocket. He takes out
three \$100 bills and hands it to her.

CHEYENNE

Mom left me money, you don't need to--

THOMAS

Chey, please. Take this.

He puts the money into her hands gently. She accepts.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Alright, well I'll leave y'all to
it. Congratulations again, baby
girl.

He walks away.

RAYMOND

Well that was...

CHEYENNE

Yeah.

Sasha walks up to Raymond and touches his arm, smiling, bubbly
as ever.

RAYMOND

Hey! Congratulations.

SASHA

Hey. You, too! Everyone looked
great.

She avoids eye contact.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Hey Chey...

(beat)

Congratulations.

CHEYENNE

Thanks.

Cheyenne musters a non convincing smile. Raymond waves to someone and walks away. Looking back to Cheyenne shocked and confused.

SASHA

Listen, Chey. I wanted to apologize--

CHEYENNE

It's a little late for that.

She tries to walk away, but Sasha grabs her. Cheyenne turns back and jerks away.

SASHA

Cheyenne, please, let me explain.

CHEYENNE

For what?

(beat)

You know out of everyone, I never would've expected you to be such a disappointment.

SASHA

That's not fair. I wanted to be there for you, for your mom but --

CHEYENNE

I gotta go...

SASHA

Cheyenne...!

CHEYENNE

Stop! Listen, I'm leaving. I'm going to Atlanta, I'm going to work my way up, tooth and nail at this production company. I'm going to get the perfect opportunity to make a name for myself, and never have to see you again...even that is too soon.

She shoots Sasha a dirty look and walks away. Sasha stands there frozen and scarred.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL VALET STATION- DAY

SUPER: 5 Years Later

CHEYENNE LAINE (Late 20s, stylish, professional) gets out of her car and hands the keys to the VALET.

VALET

Morning Ms. Laine, how are you?

CHEYENNE

Good Morning.

We think she's made the big time when...

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Name tag.

She walks past him. The valet sort of sinks into his station, putting his hand to his chest where his name tag should be and digs in his pocket to find it and place it on his shirt.

JAKE

Thank you.

She smiles walks past him into the hotel.

INT. EASTON SPRINGS HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Cheyenne walks into the beautiful lobby with marble floors, bright chandeliers, cozy couches, and a water and coffee table.

She walks up the front desk walk way. People part ways and greet her.

FRONT DESK GIRL

Good Morning, Ms. Laine...I uh, I had a quick question.

The GIRL shifts her eyes to a COUPLE standing to the side of the desk.

Cheyenne notices and greets them.

CHEYENNE

Good morning, how can I help you guys?

The MAN of the couple steps up,

MAN

Good Morning Miss. So, I did make a reservation for the weekend, and my account was charged here.

He shows Cheyenne his phone with the bank statement.

MAN (CONT'D)

But your front desk agent says that there isn't an available room.

Cheyenne looks concerned.

CHEYENNE

Let me check for you, one moment.

Cheyenne circles around to the front desk and types in what must be some magic spell because in three...two...one...

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

So sir, we do have your confirmation and down payment and we do have your room but it just hasn't been prepared, housekeeping might be a little behind. If you don't mind waiting it should be ready in about an hour.

The Man visibly objects but before the Man gets a chance to but in with his attitude, Cheyenne continues.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

I do apologize for the inconvenience, but may I suggest the brunch restaurant right across the street.

She digs into the drawer and pulls out a flyer.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

They have some of the best waffles in the city. Here's a complimentary gift card, tell them that Chey sent you. They'll be glad to serve you.

The Woman takes the flyer and skims through it.

WOMAN

Oooh, babe look! Build your own breakfast sampler! Come on, I know you're hungry.

The Man glances over the flyer and takes in his wife's excitement.

MAN

Alright then,

He almost doesn't but he does say...

MAN (CONT'D)

Thank you, ma'am.

CHEYENNE

Not a problem. We'll see you when you're back, feel free to leave your luggage behind the desk, where it'll be waiting for you.

He nods and turns away.

She gives a wholesome smile as they walk out the door.

YOUNG GIRL

Thanks, I'm still getting used to reading the reservations on the computer.

CHEYENNE

Don't worry about it.

The girl blushes, embarrassed in front of her boss.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

Have you seen Mr. Campbell?

Cheyenne's phone starts to ring. She answers the video call.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

(to the girl)

Nevermind, I'll come by later.

She walks away and talks into her phone.

INT. EASTON SPRINGS HOTEL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

CHEYENNE

Hi babes.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

INT. /EXT. TRAFFIC - RAYMOND'S CAR - DAY

Raymond, now matured, still the same, is sitting at a stop light.

RAYMOND

Hey, girl, hey!

(MORE)

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

(beat)

Please tell me you've changed your mind and are packed and ready to come to homecoming with me!

CHEYENNE

(sarcastically)

Yep, everything's in my Mary Poppin's bag and I'm gonna ride my unicorn all the way there.

RAYMOND

(rolls eyes)

So nasty, just so rude.

INT. CHEYENNE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Cheyenne walks into her office it's simple, minimalist. There are a few pictures hanging on the wall with her watermark in the bottom corner. There are only two PICTURES on her desk, one of her with her mother and the other with Raymond. As a whole it's organized, everything in place.

CHEYENNE

(chuckles)

Don't be surprised.

(beat)

I just...can't bring myself back there.

RAYMOND

Can you drive your car?!

(beat)

Chey, have you ever thought that where you don't want to be is exactly where you need to be?

CHEYENNE

Thank you, baby Yoda. Look, just tell me all about it when you get back.

Car horns sound in the background.

RAYMOND

The light just turned green! I could wait all day! Try me!

Cheyenne's office phone starts to ring.

CHEYENNE

Hey look, I gotta go. Talk later. Love you.

She hangs up her cell phone and picks up the office phone in one swift motion.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

Thank you for calling Easton Springs Hotel, I'm Cheyenne, how can I help you?

ROE (O.S.)

Uh yes, Cheyenne Laine?

CHEYENNE

Mmhmm, speaking.

ROE

Well, hello!

(beat)

It's good to speak to you.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

Roe stands at the window in his dark office, the window providing the light he needs.

Cheyenne looks confused.

CHEYENNE

I'm sorry, who's this?

ROE

Oh, excuse me. It's President Roe!
From Nathan Hare University.

Cheyenne recognizes the voice now, but she's still confused.

CHEYENNE

President Roe! How are you? What brings you to call?

ROE

I'm well, thank you. I wanted to make sure you knew about homecoming this week.

CHEYENNE

Yes, of course. Unfortunately I won't be there...work and all.

ROE

Well I was hoping you would change your mind.

(beat)

You see we're actually having a ceremony for your mother.

(MORE)

ROE (CONT'D)

She was such a beloved spirit here,
and we just want to honor her, as
well as some other students and
faculty who've ...passed.

CHEYENNE

Oh. Wow.

(beat)

Umm, that's so sweet, I just...I
don't know if--

ROE

Right, of course, I understand. I
also wanted to offer you an
opportunity.

(beat)

If I remember correctly, you were
nice with a camera. In the spirit
of homecoming, the board and I think
it'd be a great time to film a sort
of...promotional video for the campus.
You know for new students and tours
and all.

Cheyenne raises an eyebrow. This peaks her interest.

ROE (CONT'D)

I know that after graduation you
were working for a production company,
so I just thought to use our alumni
network to help our wonderful
institution. I'd be sure to
compensate you of course.

Cheyenne is hesitant. She drums her fingers on the desk.

ROE (CONT'D)

Please, just come for the ceremony
for your mother and we can discuss
everything else when your here. In
person.

CHEYENNE

Uhh...

She looks at the picture on her desk of her and her mother.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

Sure. Okay.

ROE

Amazing. Can't wait to see you.

(beat)

You have my number!

CHEYENNE

Okay, talk soon.

She hangs up. She leans back. Did I really just agree to this? She shakes her head in disbelief.

There's a knock at her door. Her boss, SAM CAMPBELL (30s/40s, white, critical) walks in.

SAM

Good Morning.

Cheyenne hops up out her chair to greet him.

CHEYENNE

Mr. Campbell, good morning.

SAM

Do you have those completed numbers from last week? I need to send them to corporate today.

Cheyenne opens up her file drawer and takes out a folder.

CHEYENNE

Right here, sir.

She hands them to him.

SAM

Great. Thanks. You're always on it, Ms. Laine.

Cheyenne smiles to herself.

CHEYENNE

Thank you, sir.

He turns to leave, Cheyenne stops him.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

Umm sir, I wanted to ask you something.

SAM

What's going on?

CHEYENNE

Something's come up and I need to go out of town, I wanted to talk to you about taking some time off.

SAM

Oh?

CHEYENNE

It's a...ceremony. For my mother.
I was asked to be there and I think
I should be. It's this weekend.

SAM

I see.

(beat)

Go ahead and fill out the paperwork
and I'll be sure to approve it for
you. You work hard, you should take
the time. Just make sure to come
back.

He grins without emotion, eerily.

SAM (CONT'D)

Don't know what we'd do without you.

Cheyenne nods her head.

CHEYENNE

Of course, sir.

He exits.

Cheyenne takes a deep breath and lets it out.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Planes zoom overhead as Cheyenne walks out to meet Raymond
with her luggage at his car in the arrival lane.

INT. RAYMOND'S CAR - DAY

Raymond is speaking on the phone.

RAYMOND

Yes, that'd be great. I can send
those designs right over. Thank
you. Talk soon.

He sees Cheyenne waving at him. He hangs up the phone and
turns up the music.

Loud music blasts from Raymond's car. He hops out immediately
as the car is put into park.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

HHHHEEEYYYYY! Oh my god!

Raymond pulls Cheyenne into a tight embrace. She hugs him
back just as hard.

CHEYENNE

Ohhh, I didn't realize how much I missed you!

Raymond lets go.

RAYMOND

Come on, come on! Let's get your things.

He grabs her luggage and places it in the trunk of the car.

They both hop back in the front seats.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

So. Here's the agenda. Drop you off, get cozy at the hotel

(beat)

You did get us a discounted rate right?

Cheyenne smiles.

CHEYENNE

I did us one better, I cashed in my points and upgraded us to a suite.

He pats her shoulder and mocks tears, crying.

RAYMOND

I knew that I loved you.

(beat, normal voice)

As I was saying, the comedy show's tonight. Did you wanna go?

Cheyenne gets comfortable in her seat.

CHEYENNE

Ray, you know I'm not here to be social.

RAYMOND

But you're here now! You might as well be.

Cheyenne is not convinced.

CHEYENNE

Meh. We'll see how I feel after I meet with Roe.

Raymond sighs dramatically but accepts this.

RAYMOND

Okay.

CHEYENNE

Who were you on the phone with when you pulled up?

RAYMOND

Huh? Oh! Umm, that was my mom. She was saying I should come by for dinner while I'm here.

CHEYENNE

Oh we should, I'd love to see her. Especially if she's making her smothered chicken.

(beat)

Chef's kiss!

RAYMOND

No ma'am.

(chuckles)

I told her we'd see.

CHEYENNE

Whatever, I'll call and go by myself.

Raymond rolls his eyes and shifts his attention away from his lie.

RAYMOND

Have you thought anymore about Roe's offer?

Cheyenne scrolls in her phone.

CHEYENNE

Hmm? Oh. Nah, not really. I mean sure the money would be nice but it's not like I need it.

(beat, sarcastically)

I've got my mediocre, full time job and I'm content.

Raymond jolts the car to a stop at a light.

RAYMOND

Oh, no, ma'am. We not doing this "woe is me" gig all weekend. You're here now, have some fun! Damn.

CHEYENNE

Yeah, yeah I know.

RAYMOND

Yeah, yeah.

(MORE)

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

(beat)
Something else gotta have you this stressed.

(beat)
Is it your mom?

CHEYENNE

Huh? No, no. I'm okay really.

He pats her leg.

Cheyenne avoids eye contact and scrolls through her phone, stuck on one post.

Raymond drives forward but notices she's distracted. He snatches her phone.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

Hey! Ray! Give me my phone.

She reaches trying to grab her phone back.

RAYMOND

Aht, Aht! I'm driving.

He looks between the road and her phone.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Ohhh, so that's who this is about?
A certain, former all-star basketball player posted that he was going to be in town and now you shook? Girl...

He snickers to himself.

Cheyenne snatches her phone back and blushes.

CHEYENNE

No!

RAYMOND

Yes!

Cheyenne rolls her eyes.

CHEYENNE

Man, whatever.

(beat)
Nobody cares bout that man.

Now Raymond rolls his eyes.

RAYMOND

Mmhmm, sure Jan.

(beat)

Have you two talked at all?

CHEYENNE

Oh you mean after he left for training camp and didn't tell me?

(beat)

Nah, guess his b.s. had his phone lines tied up...

(mumbled)

Or his hoes.

Raymond cackles.

RAYMOND

Well, maybe you can talk this weekend.

(beat)

Maybe he's single...

Cheyenne blushes again.

CHEYENNE

Doesn't matter if he is. He made his choice clear.

Cheyenne shrugs and goes back to scrolling on her phone.

EXT. FANCY HOTEL OVERHANG - AFTERNOON

Raymond pulls into the hotel overhang and parks.

They both get out of the car and go to the trunk to get the bags.

RAYMOND

Okay, negative Nancy! I'm just trying to give you a little hope!

Cheyenne smiles.

CHEYENNE

I appreciate you. I do.

(beat)

Come on, let's go check in.

They close the trunk and walk into the lobby.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Cheyenne plops belly up on to the bed.

Raymond rummages through one of his bags and pulls out a bottle of brown liquor.

RAYMOND

Chey! Get up! This is not the time
to rest!

He takes out two plastic shot glasses and pours into them.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Come on, come on! Take this!

He walks around and pulls Cheyenne up with one hand and hands
her the shot with the other.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Happy Homecoming!

They both throw the shots back and wince at the taste.

CHEYENNE

It's definitely been a minute.

Cheyenne rubs her throat trying to ease the sting.

They both laugh.

RAYMOND

Gotta pregame so we can keep up all
weekend! Show no weakness!

They smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY - DAY

Cheyenne and Raymond walk around on the yard of the campus.

A DJ is set up and playing loud music, students crowd around
dancing, talking, and laughing together.

Others are scattered across the campus walking with their
books and bags. Coming in and out of door rooms.

RAYMOND

Ah! Doesn't it feel good to be back?
Remember when I'd crash at your dorm
during finals? Living off campus
was not it.

Cheyenne smiles.

CHEYENNE

Yeah, you snoring loudly on my floor
wasn't it either.

RAYMOND

I resent that. You loved having me around.

Cheyenne links arms with Raymond.

CHEYENNE

And I still do.

Raymond leans on to her.

RAYMOND

I really am happy you decided to come this year.

Cheyenne holds his hand.

CHEYENNE

Yeah.

(beat)

It's weird to be back though.

She crosses her arms and they approach a bench and sit down.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

It's just...I really thought I'd never come back. Like, I was supposed to be some big-shot film maker or something. I feel like I came back to *her* empty handed.

Raymond looks concerned.

RAYMOND

You're not being fair to yourself. Even if you decide not to do the video, I think you should make use of your time back here.

(beat)

Get back to what yourself.

CHEYENNE

Stopping wasn't really a choice, it just happened. I wasn't "inspired" anymore.

RAYMOND

Well...find your spark again with this project.

Cheyenne looks away from Raymond, out to the campus taking in his words.

She looks back to him and smiles fondly.

CHEYENNE

Maybe.

She checks the time.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

Hey, I'll meet up with you later.

RAYMOND

Cool, I'll be in the arts building.

CHEYENNE

Why? What's there?

RAYMOND

Oh I wanted to go see Professor Glenn,
just go check in on her.

Cheyenne looks confused but they both wave bye to each other.

INT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY - PRESIDENT'S BUILDING - DAY

Cheyenne walks through the halls of the building looking at the portraits of past presidents and faculty of the university.

She stops at a portrait of her mother. She goes to touch it but someone steps out to greet her. TAHLIA REESE (20s, AA business casual, sweet)

TAHLIA

Can I help you?

CHEYENNE

Hi, I'm Cheyenne...

TAHLIA

Cheyenne Laine! Hi...

She reaches out to eagerly shake her hand.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

I'll let Dr. Roe know you're here.
You can go on in and have a seat.
I'm happy to meet you.

She smiles.

CHEYENNE

Thanks. You are...?

TAHLIA

Oh! Sorry, I'm Tahlia. I'm the SGA
President. I have work study here.
(MORE)

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

(beat)

It's really great to have alumni back, I'm a senior and I've had such a great experience here. Just give me one second!

Cheyenne nods and stares...she's an eager one.

INT. PRESIDENT'S LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Cheyenne walks in and looks at the portrait of the campus on the wall.

The university band plays in the background from outside. She goes to the window and sees the student activity.

PRESIDENT ROE (a little grayer) opens his door. This snaps Cheyenne out of her daze.

PRESIDENT ROE

Ms. Laine, how nice to see you! How have you been?

Cheyenne jumps.

CHEYENNE

Hi, good!

She steps up to him, they shake hands enthusiastically.

PRESIDENT ROE

Please, come in. Have a seat.

INT. PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

He welcomes her into the office and she sits down. He closes the door and then sits in his chair.

PRESIDENT ROE

It is so great to have alumni come back and participate in the festivities.

(beat)

What have you been up to in the "real world"?

Cheyenne smiles.

CHEYENNE

Not too much actually. I've been working in managing guest engagement at a hotel.

PRESIDENT ROE
Really? Which chain?

She hesitates a little.

CHEYENNE
Umm... the Easton Springs.

PRESIDENT ROE
Ahh, I was under the impression you
were working in the entertainment
industry, nonetheless good for you!

CHEYENNE
Thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT ROE
Are you doing anything with that
though? I remember your mother
talking so much about you--

CHEYENNE
Not much, actually.

Cheyenne takes a deep breath. Roe goes to change the subject.

PRESIDENT ROE
Yes, well. Let's talk about the
memorial, shall we?

Cheyenne nods.

PRESIDENT ROE (CONT'D)
The service will be Saturday morning
in the chapel. We'd love for you to
say a few words, if you'd like to.

CHEYENNE
Umm, I'm not sure that I'd be
comfortable with that.

PRESIDENT ROE
I'm sure we'd all really appreciate
to hear from you. It's been so long
since we've heard from you.
(beat)
It could even be...therapeutic for
you.

CHEYENNE
Mhmm.
(beat)
So, about the video...

PRESIDENT ROE

Yes, of course. Have you thought about the offer?

CHEYENNE

I have actually. I'm definitely interested in doing it.

PRESIDENT ROE

That's great! I'm so glad.

Tahlia knocks at the door and then walks in.

TAHLIA

Excuse me sir, your next appointment's here.

PRESIDENT ROE

Perfect timing, you can go ahead and send her in Tahlia.

Cheyenne looks a bit concerned.

PRESIDENT ROE (CONT'D)

Cheyenne, you remember your classmate Sasha Wilkes...

Sasha Wilkes (still just as pristine) walks in smiling and then, face crack.

Flames run through Cheyenne's blood and she stands shocked.

PRESIDENT ROE (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Well, you two will be working together on the promotional video.

CHEYENNE

(faintly)

What?

PRESIDENT ROE

Yes, we'd love to see our alumni involved in the video. Showing support for their alma mater and all!

CHEYENNE

I--I didn't know...

Cheyenne's hearing is distorted.

SASHA

Hi Chey,

CHEYENNE

I'm sorry, this was a mistake.

PRESIDENT ROE

Cheyenne, maybe you should sit down?

Cheyenne rushes out.

She bumps into Tahlia and goes to the hallway.

TAHLIA

Wait, what's wrong?

INT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY - PRESIDENT'S BUILDING HALLWAY

Cheyenne struggles to find her phone in her bag and finally stops to look.

She mumbles to herself under her breath.

CHEYENNE

I knew this was a mistake,
 (beat)
 Shouldn't have even come back
 (beat)
 I have to get out of here
 (beat)
 Where the fu--

Cheyenne hears heels clicking on the floor. She looks up from her bag to compose herself and sees, her mother.

LYNN LAINE (40s, AA, professional, motherly) stands in front of her, an imagination.

Cheyenne backs up to the wall. Shutting her eyes and opening them. She shudders.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

M-Mom?

Lynn goes to caress her daughter's face.

A tear falls from Cheyenne's eye.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

W-What is this? Am I dying?

Lynn smiles.

LYNN

No, sweetie.

CHEYENNE

Mom, I miss you so much.

LYNN

Shhh. Sweetie, you have to stay.

CHEYENNE

What? I don't--I can't.

LYNN

You belong here, surrounded by people who love you.

CHEYENNE

What are you talking about? I don't have anyone, especially here.

Tahlia walks through the halls looking for Cheyenne.

LYNN

You're not alone, sweetie.

Lynn walks off.

CHEYENNE

M-mom! Mom, wait!

Cheyenne goes to follow her and literally bumps into Tahlia. Cheyenne stumbles.

TAHLIA

I'm sorry, are you okay?

CHEYENNE

Where'd she go?

(beat)

Did you see her?

Cheyenne tries to get up and strains to look down the hallway. Tahlia helps her up.

TAHLIA

See who? Sasha? She's still in the office. I wanted to talk to you myself.

CHEYENNE

Why? I don't even know you.

Tahlia takes a breath at the harsh comment.

TAHLIA

I know, but...I sort of need you.

Cheyenne's face says it all. "Excuse me?"

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

This video that you're doing--

CHEYENNE

Not doing.

TAHLIA

Right.

(beat)

It's important. My whole life I've wanted to be here. To be surrounded by people who look like me, feel like me.

CHEYENNE

What does that have to do with this?

TAHLIA

Look. Full disclosure, our enrollment rates are dropping. We need students. New, transfers...anything. If we don't get them, or at least more funding we could lose accreditation, or even close the doors.

CHEYENNE

No way, NHU can't be that bad off.

TAHLIA

It's not far from it. We're trying to be proactive with this video. That's why we need you.

(beat)

I'm not asking for Roe, I'm asking for me. Please help keep this school open. For me, for future students. You're a graduate. You know as much as I do how important schools like this are.

Cheyenne straightens up, listening to her words. Looking in her eyes.

Behind her she sees her mother again. Lynn nods to her and mouths "*Stay.*"

Cheyenne looks confused, a short moment passes, but she listens to her mother.

CHEYENNE

Okay.

Tahlia smiles big.

TAHLIA

Yes! Thank you so much.

She hugs her. Cheyenne's uncomfortable.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

President Roe and Sasha sit at the desk looking over paperwork.

Tahlia knocks and walks in.

TAHLIA
Look who I found...

Cheyenne walks in behind her.

CHEYENNE
Sorry about that...I think I just
needed some air.

She takes a breath and looks at Tahlia who nods.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)
I'd be happy to still do the
video...with Sasha.

She musters a bland smile Sasha's way.

PRESIDENT ROE
Ah, well! I'm happy to hear it. I
was just going over the details with
Sasha here.
(beat)
Have a seat and we can look over
them.

CHEYENNE
Great.

She pulls up a chair and sits.

President Roe calls to Tahlia for some water.

SASHA
(to Cheyenne)
I'm glad you came back. I--

CHEYENNE
(to Sasha)
This isn't a reunion. You don't
have to treat it like one. It is
a...business partnership. That's
all.

Sasha is stunned. She straightens up back into her seat. Focusing her attention back on Roe.

Tahlia places the waters on the desk and pulls up a seat herself.

Cheyenne looks at her, Tahlia smiles.

PRESIDENT ROE

Now, Tahlia will act as a sort of liaison for you two. She'll escort you around campus, sort of like a walking press pass for all the events.

He chuckles, pleased at himself.

Cheyenne takes a sip of water. It's going to be a long weekend.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDENT LOUNGE - DAY

Students sit at scattered tables and on couches talking, eating, doing homework. Others are playing card games, doing homework.

Cheyenne, Tahlia, and Sasha walk in to the building all wearing different expressions.

Tahlia stands in front of the two of them.

TAHLIA

So, I figure we can get some lunch and then do a "POA"?

CHEYENNE

A what?

Tahlia giggles at herself.

TAHLIA

Sorry, SGA talk. A "Plan of Action" I mean we only have the weekend to catch events so I figure the sooner the better.

SASHA

Yeah, I agree. That's a great idea, Tahlia.

Cheyenne rolls her eyes.

TAHLIA

Awesome! I'm gonna go grab a snack
out the student store.

She walks off. Students are huddled together staring at
Sasha, whispering. Sasha blushes and tries to look away
when a student walks up to her.

FEMALE STUDENT

(shyly)
Hi, you're Sasha Wilkes, right?

SASHA

Hi, yeah.

The girl looks back to the group.

FEMALE STUDENT

See! I told you it was her!
(beat)
Can we take a picture with you?
We're freshman, but we know about
your reign as Ms. NHU. Such an
example!

Sasha sighs with relief.

SASHA

Yes! Of course.

She waves the girls over.

Cheyenne spots Raymond sitting at a table and waves to her.
She walks up to him.

RAYMOND

Is that...?

CHEYENNE

If we ignore it, maybe it'll go away.

He laughs.

RAYMOND

Here, I saved you half.

Cheyenne's eyes widen and she gasps.

CHEYENNE

Oh! A chicken Philly.
(beat)
So far, this is the best thing about
being back.

RAYMOND
Want to talk about it?

CHEYENNE
Not really. How was Professor Glenn?

She takes a bite.

RAYMOND
Oh, umm. Good. I actually got her
to look at some designs I was working
on. I'm planning to--

Tahlia walks up to their table with her bag of snacks and a
drink in her hand.

TAHLIA
Hi, I'm Tahlia! SGA President.

She reaches out a hand for Raymond to shake, and he does.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)
Cheyenne, you ready to get started?

Sasha comes up next.

SASHA
RAYMOND! HI!

They both hug each other.

RAYMOND
Sasha! Good to see you, you look
good as ever.

SASHA
Ray! So do you, how's--

Cheyenne stands up.

CHEYENNE
Yep, there's some empty chairs over
there.

Cheyenne takes the sandwich and goes that way.

TAHLIA
Nice meeting you!

SASHA
Guess we'll catch up later.

Sasha waves bye. They go to the table and settle in.

TAHLIA

So did either one of you have any
ideas to start with?

Cheyenne and Sasha jump in and talk over each other.

SASHA

Well, how about we--

CHEYENNE

I was thinking that--

They look at each other awkwardly.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

What I was going to
say was--

SASHA

I was just gonna mention
how--

Cheyenne breathes in with frustration.

TAHLIA

How about I just get us started,
(beat)

We definitely should show academic
life but, we should also show the
events for homecoming. It'd be great
to get the student life outside of
the classroom. Get newbies excited
you know?

Sasha takes the chance and jumps in.

SASHA

We should get interviews with students
from a bunch of orgs. I'm sure they'd
love the attention.

TAHLIA

Ohh, yeah that'd be great.

Cheyenne sort of leans back into her seat.

SASHA

(to Cheyenne)

Do you have any suggestions?

CHEYENNE

You both seem to have it covered.
I'll work behind the scenes.

TAHLIA

I'm sure you have some ideas.

CHEYENNE

(snarkily)

Oh, I have a couple.

Sasha rolls her eyes.

SASHA

Look, if you have something to say...

Tahlia sits up, feeling the tension rise.

TAHLIA

Wait, let's just take a breath...

CHEYENNE

Nothing to say to you.

SASHA

Then why are you here? What happened to your business partnership concept.

Tahlia looks around and notices people staring at them.

TAHLIA

Y'all, please. Just calm down--

CHEYENNE

I'm here for my mother's memorial, or did you forget? Considering you weren't at the funeral.

SASHA

No, I haven't forgotten, but the world doesn't revolve around yours, Chey!

Across the room we see J.R. COLEMAN (just as handsome as before) walk in. He spots the girls and walks over.

Raymond catches it all and watches from the sideline.

J.R.

Is everything okay here?

(beat)

Tahlia?

He looks at her concerned.

Tahlia looks awkward and uncomfortable.

J.R. notices Sasha and Cheyenne, he's visibly surprised.

J.R. (CONT'D)

Oh, umm. Hey Chey.

Cheyenne blushes and is just as surprised, probably more.

CHEYENNE

(to herself)

You've gotta be kidding.

(MORE)

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)
 (vocally)
 H-hey...

TAHLIA
 Umm, guys, this is my brother. J--

CHEYENNE
 J.R.

Cheyenne is standing, stunned in place.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)
 Umm, I'm gonna go shoot some B-Roll,
 or something.

TAHLIA
 Wait, I'll come with you. I can
 sign out the equipment.

Cheyenne grabs her bag, she looks to Raymond and they are
 both in sync and on the move.

EXT. NHU - DAY

RAYMOND
 Was that as fun as it looked?

CHEYENNE
 What do you think?
 (beat)
 Jesus!

Cheyenne is speed walking and Ray is keeping pace.

RAYMOND
 Chey, take a breath. You knew he
 was going to be here.

CHEYENNE
 Yeah, but knowing and seeing is two
 different things...I wasn't expecting--

Tahlia comes jogging from behind.

TAHLIA
 Hey! Wait up.

Cheyenne and Raymond turn around and stop.

MALE STUDENT 1
 Better hurry Tahlia,

MALE STUDENT 2
(sarcastically)
You're late for a SGA convention?

The two students chuckle to themselves.

Tahlia slows down, embarrassed. She reaches Cheyenne and Raymond. She catches her breath.

TAHLIA
(gasping air)
You...You know my brother?

RAYMOND
(snickers)
Oh, she knows him.

Cheyenne punches him.

CHEYENNE
That's not important. Come on, let's just get the camera and the stands. We can start shooting interviews today. Isn't midnight breakfast tonight? We can catch that, too.

TAHLIA
Oh, okay. Sounds good.

CHEYENNE
Lead the way, madam president.

RAYMOND
I'll catch up with you later.

CHEYENNE
Cool, hey, can you also talk to Glen about doing an interview? It could help us out.

Raymond waves her off with a thumbs up and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tahlia and Cheyenne walk down the hallway. Cheyenne takes in the event boards and takes a picture of one of the posters on her phone.

TAHLIA
Did you have any classes here?

CHEYENNE
Yeah, one I think...

The small talk is awkward for the both of them.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

Uh, my mom taught in this building,
though. I'd be here a lot.

TAHLIA

You miss her, huh?

Realizing what she's said they stop walking.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry. You don't have to
talk to me about that.

Another moment passes.

CHEYENNE

I do.

Tahlia smiles sweetly. She walks into an office center.

Student workers sit at computers typing, one files mail into
individual slots.

STUDENT WORKER

Hey Tahlia, can I help you?

TAHLIA

Hey, I just need the form to rent
out film equipment.

STUDENT WORKER

Sure,

They grab a form from a stack.

STUDENT WORKER (CONT'D)

Don't forget to get Morris to sign
off on it.

TAHLIA

Gotcha. Thanks.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING- DAY

Tahlia and Cheyenne walk out carrying the bulky equipment.

TAHLIA

So, I'll go back with Cheyenne and
start interviews.

CHEYENNE

Okay. I'm just gonna set up right outside the courtyard where the DJ is. We can meet up later.

Tahlia shakes her head "okay".

CUT TO:

EXT. NHU YARD - DAY

Cheyenne sets up the camera and the stand. Her phone is to her ear.

CHEYENNE

(into phone)

Yeah I'm right out front.

(beat)

Yep. I see you.

She waves. Raymond notices and heads her way.

Cheyenne looks into the lens of the camera and starts capturing the students in their natural habitat. They are happy, she snaps finds herself smiling at them.

Raymond walks up.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

Do you think we were that happy when we were here?

Raymond looks and tilts his head.

RAYMOND

Hmm. Maybe. If it wasn't midterms or finals.

They smile at each other.

CHEYENNE

Where were you anyway?

RAYMOND

So, I've been keeping it under wraps but...

Cheyenne looks intrigued.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

I finished these designs and I wanted a professional to look at them.

(beat)

I'm going for a promotion.

CHEYENNE

Aw, Ray!

(beat)

Wait, Professor Glenn is a professional?

Ray rolls his eyes.

RAYMOND

Close enough. She worked for a design house in New York. If anything, it's a good recommendation.

CHEYENNE

Ohh, I see, I see. Good for you.

She hugs him. Looking back into her lens she captures some still shots.

Click. Click. Click.

In the crowd she comes across J.R. She zooms in, watching him.

Raymond catches her.

RAYMOND

You're staring.

She snaps up.

CHEYENNE

Am not!

Raymond gives her a "know-it-all" look.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

What?

RAYMOND

You tell me.

She sighs.

CHEYENNE

It's weird. It's like...all the feelings I had when we were here before are just back. Thought they were gone.

RAYMOND

Chey, that means they never left. Remember what I said before you came? This is where you're supposed to be right now, deal with this.

She looks back into her lens and notices J.R. notice her.
She straightens up and blushes. He waves and smiles at her.

CHEYENNE

I don't know, Ray, I...

Raymond in reading in his phone, not paying attention to her.

RAYMOND

Mmhmm...mhmm.

CHEYENNE

Ray!

RAYMOND

Huh? Oh, Glenn just emailed me back.
I'm reading the feedback.

She looks back at J.R. and smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDENT COMPUTER LAB - AFTERNOON

Students sit at computers with headphones, typing, in their own worlds.

Sasha and Tahlia are sitting involved at one screen, watching an interview they shot earlier.

On the screen we see a STUDENT with braids and a school sweater, they are nonchalant, uninterested.

SASHA (O.S.)

So, can you state your name, year,
and major for us?

KENDALL

Umm...I'm Kendall, I'm a sophomore.
I'm a Mass Comm major.

SASHA

Awesome, why'd you choose Mass Comm?

KENDALL

I really want to have my own talk
show one day.

SASHA

Interesting. So tell us why you
chose NHU?

KENDALL

It honestly wasn't my first pick,
but the program here is cool. The
teachers are nice, but my number one
school put me on the waiting list
and I really wanted to start this
semester.

In the lab Tahlia sits back, removing her headphones, nervous.

TAHLIA

This was useless...is there anything
here we can use?

SASHA

Here, fast forward a little, there
has to be something.

The video on screen scrubs forward.

KENDALL

...I mean, sometimes I feel like I
ended up here for a reason. Like I
said I want my own talk show, and
even though I'm just a sophomore I
feel like the classes I have are
preparing me for my goals.

The girls look at each other not getting too excited and
they fast forward a little more.

KENDALL (CONT'D)

I do really like being around people
who look like me, too. I feel like
I wouldn't get the same attention or
resources if I had gone to a bigger
school or even like a PWI, you know?

Sasha pauses the video. The girls look at each other smiling.
"This is it!"

The door to the lab opens and it's Cheyenne.

Sasha's smile shrinks, but Tahlia gets up to wave Cheyenne
over.

Cheyenne pulls up a chair.

CHEYENNE

So, how'd interviews go?

TAHLIA

Not...terrible. I think we're getting
there.

CHEYENNE

Yeah? Cool.

(beat)

Here's the B-Roll from the day.
There's some really nice shots of
the yard earlier with the DJ. With
some editing I'm sure they'll work
out great.

TAHLIA

Great. Sasha can you edit those
interview clips and send them to me?
Cheyenne, same with the campus shots?

Sasha and Cheyenne both nod their heads and agree.

Tahlia types onto a computer next to Sasha and pats the desk.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

Here Chey, I logged in for you, so
you can edit here.

Cheyenne takes a deep breath, but moves seats.

CHEYENNE

(gritting her teeth)

Thanks.

When Cheyenne sits down, Sasha shifts in her seat. They
both still look uncomfortable.

Cheyenne and Sasha both click and watch silently, working on
their own computers.

Tahlia leans back awkwardly noticing the silence.

TAHLIA

So...are either of you going to
midnight breakfast tonight?

SASHA

I am.

Sasha and Cheyenne mumble agreeing. "Yeah",
"Mmhmm"...awkward.

CHEYENNE

I wasn't...but I know Ray wants to
so I think I might go with him.

Tahlia nods excitedly.

TAHLIA

Cool. It's gonna be really fun!

The girls all continue to work in silence. As they type and click away time passes.

Students come settle in at other desks. Others walk gather their things and walk out. Sasha stands up to stretch. Cheyenne walks out and comes back with water, then Tahlia does the same.

Tahlia sits at a nearby computer, nodding off to sleep while a video runs on the screen.

Sasha turns around and notices her snoozing.

SASHA
(to Cheyenne)
Psst...Psst!

Cheyenne leaning back in her chair watching the video on the screen and rubbing her eyes. She notices Sasha.

CHEYENNE
Hmm? What's Up?

She yawns.

Sasha points towards Tahlia.

Cheyenne turns around and sees her sleeping, she laughs quietly, then looks at the time.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)
Oh wow, I didn't realize how late it was.

Sasha looks now, surprised, too.

SASHA
Oh, yeah. Jeez, I didn't even notice.

CHEYENNE
Yeah, I gotta go meet Ray for dinner.

SASHA
Before midnight breakfast?

CHEYENNE
Yeah...you know they run out of food quick.

They giggle together.

SASHA
True...guess we can call it then?

CHEYENNE

Yeah...let me send these last clips to her.

SASHA

Same.

They both sit up and type quickly on the computers and then stand up, gathering their things.

CHEYENNE

Sasha, I wanted to apologize for earlier...

SASHA

Don't even worry about it, I was just as rude...

Cheyenne smiles faintly, and changes the subject.

CHEYENNE

So, how many interviews did you guys do today?

SASHA

We got about three, only two that we can really use anything.

(beat)

I thought people would be more excited to speak about the school.

CHEYENNE

Sheesh. Maybe we'll have better luck tomorrow.

SASHA

(sarcastically)

So you're really gonna stick it out with us, huh?

CHEYENNE

(chuckles)

Well if the students won't tell us they're having any fun, at least we can show them having fun with the B-Roll I got.

They both laugh out loud. This finally wakes Tahlia.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

Mornin', sleeping beauty.

SASHA

Have a nice nap?

TAHLIA
That's down bad, y'all really just
let me sleep?

Tahlia wipes her face of drool.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Gross.

CHEYENNE
Welp!

Cheyenne and Sasha toss their bags on their shoulders and
head to the door.

SASHA
We sent the last clips to you so you
can send them to Roe.

CHEYENNE
Yeah, let us know what he thinks.
(beat)
See you later.

They leave Tahlia sitting alone at the computer.

CUT TO:

INT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY - YARD - NIGHT

Loud music plays, clusters of students are scattered and
sitting around the quad. Plates of breakfast foods are being
filled and passed around, buffet style.

Cheyenne and Raymond walk up. Cheyenne has her camera around
her neck.

They see some old friends and go to greet them.

OLD FRIEND 1
Ray!
(beat)
Chey!

They all hug.

OLD FRIEND 2
Ray! Why didn't you tell us Chey
was coming?
(beat)
Girl, we haven't seen you in years!

OLD FRIEND 1

I don't think since graduation!

(beat)

Atlanta, right? How is it?

CHEYENNE

Umm, Austin now. But it's...it's great. I've got a good job and all so--

OLD FRIEND 1

So how many movies have you done yet?

(laughing)

Five...Ten...? What?

CHEYENNE

I'm actually in the hotel business, but it's great. I actually just got a raise not too long ago...so...

OLD FRIEND 2

Girl, do not let her make you feel bad!

(beat)

Listen, I was working as a financial advisor after graduation and now I'm doing makeup full time. It's okay if your path changes, just keep following it. You're right where you need to be.

RAYMOND

Can I get an amen?!

The group laughs and "Amen" together.

They cruise around the crowd, the music plays, they dance together, grab some plates of food and eat.

In between bites of food and dancing with the group Cheyenne casually snaps a couple a shots.

Click. Click. Click.

When people notice her camera, they'll pose for her.

They take sips out of cups that are definitely filled with alcohol.

Dancing some more.

Through it all Cheyenne hears someone yell "J.R.!". She whips her head to the call and she sees him. J.R.

She grabs hold of Raymond.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

What's up?

CHEYENNE

J.R.'s here!

RAYMOND

Oooh! Let's go say wassup!

CHEYENNE

Raymond, no! I'm not drunk enough
for this!

J.R. cruises through the crowd with his old teammates/
friends. Somehow through everyone he spots Cheyenne. She
notices him at the same time.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

I'm going to the bathroom.

Before she goes she finishes off her cup and takes a big
swig of Raymond's.

RAYMOND

No ma'am! Come on,

CHEYENNE

I'll be back, refill please!

J.R. starts walking towards their group and Cheyenne is gone.
He daps Raymond up.

RAYMOND

Good to see you J.R.!
(under his breath)
Fine as ever

J.R.

What?

RAYMOND

Nothing!

J.R.

I thought I saw Chey over here?
It's been a minute, wanted to holla
at her.

RAYMOND

(shrugging)
I think she ran to the little girls
room.

J.R. nods his head in disappointment. He scratches the back of his head a little embarrassed and walks off.

INT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY - LADIES ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cheyenne stumbles into the bathroom trying to catch her breath.

She snatches some paper towels and runs the water over them. She wrings them out and places them on her face to cool off from the crowd and the night air.

CHEYENNE
(to herself)
Shit.

Moments later Sasha is coming out of one of the stalls. The sound startles Cheyenne.

Sasha moves to the sink to wash and dry her hands. In the mirror she looks to Cheyenne.

SASHA
Having fun?

Cheyenne turns her head to her still holding the napkin over her head.

CHEYENNE
Yeah, yeah ...you?

Sasha points to Cheyenne's head.

SASHA
Yeah!
(beat)
You...okay?

CHEYENNE
Huh?

She realizes she's still holding the napkin.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)
Oh, uh yeah. Just getting some air.
I forgot how hot it gets here.

They both force humble smiles.

SASHA
Yeah...

Cheyenne throws away the napkins.

CHEYENNE

Yeah....guess I'll see you tomorrow.

SASHA

Chey, wait.

Cheyenne stops at the door.

SASHA (CONT'D)

I wanna apologize.

CHEYENNE

I'm confused...didn't we do this earlier? It's fine.

SASHA

No, I mean...

(beat)

I mean about not being at the funeral.

CHEYENNE

Sasha, don't...

SASHA

No I mean...I don't know if we'll ever be back to how we were but I know...I know that was really messed up of me back then so I want to own up to it now. You needed me and...I wasn't there. I'm really sorry.

Cheyenne takes this in, she takes a deep breath.

CHEYENNE

Umm...thank you? I mean. Thank you. Really.

SASHA

I know we're just working on this video thing but...it's been nice seeing you again.

Cheyenne bites the inside of her cheek, tears come to her eyes. Maybe it's from the alcohol, maybe she's getting soft.

CHEYENNE

Yeah...I'm realizing a lot being back here too. It is nice.

They both smile at each other. A hug lingers in the air, but...

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

So, I'll see you tomorrow.

She shakes her head and walks out.

Sasha looks in the mirror and walks out herself shortly after.

INT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY - YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Cheyenne heads back outside. She takes her camera off her neck and scans the crowd with her lens looking for Raymond.

She holds it up to her and she's bumped into from behind and almost drops her camera, but she doesn't.

J.R. turns around not realizing who it is.

J.R.

My bad...

Cheyenne crouches around her camera.

CHEYENNE

Watch it!

J.R. looks down and sees her for the first time. His mouth drops.

J.R.

Chey.

(beat)

Shit, sorry. Let me--

CHEYENNE

It's fine.

(beat)

You used to be way smoother than that.

J.R.

Hah. Guess you still make me nervous...

Cheyenne blushes.

CHEYENNE

So...what are you back here for? No big tournament, or bowl, or...whatever.

They both chuckle.

J.R.

Nah, I'm done with the league dreams.

(beat)

I am coaching, though...and teaching. Right up the street at the high school.

Cheyenne's eyes widen.

CHEYENNE

Oh wow, good for you, really.

J.R.

Yeah, I actually really love it.
You should come stop by sometime,
teach these kids about film as an
art or something.

She chuckles.

CHEYENNE

Ah, we'll have to see. Not really
planning on sticking around after
this...

He's visibly disappointed.

J.R.

Well, it's really good to see you.
I'll have to tell my sister how lucky
she is to be hanging out with you.

Raymond calls for Cheyenne across the crowd,

RAYMOND

Chey!
(beat)
Let's go!

He waves to her to come over then notices he's interrupted
who she's talking to. Oops.

Cheyenne waves back.

CHEYENNE

Guess I gotta...

J.R.

Til next time then.

Cheyenne walks off but turns around to see him watching her
walk away.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - BEDS - MORNING

Cheyenne and Raymond are sleeping peacefully until,

BZZ. BZZ. BZZ.

Cheyenne checks her phone. She silences it and rolls back over.

BZZ. BZZ. BZZ.

Cheyenne puts her pillow over her head to drown out the noise.

BZZ. BZZ. BZZ.

RAYMOND

Chey, answer them, damn!

He throws one of his pillows at her.

Cheyenne angrily turns over and answers the phone.

CHEYENNE

Yes, Tahlia?! It's 8am and I'm hungover. What do you--

(beat)

Slow down.

(beat, sighs)

Alright, alright. I'll meet you. Just give me a minute.

(beat)

Okay. Bye.

She hangs up and kicks her feet like a child and flops back in bed.

RAYMOND

(groggily)

What'd she want?

CHEYENNE

She wants to talk about the project in person.

Cheyenne gets up and goes to the bathroom and comes out brushing her teeth.

RAYMOND

And she couldn't wait until she saw you later...why?

CHEYENNE

(brushing her teeth)

Apparently she sent the clips we had to Roe and he wasn't thrilled with it so she's having a meltdown.

She's back in the bathroom, coming out pulling her hair into a messy ponytail.

RAYMOND

For what? Y'all can't make students
be interactive.

Cheyenne's getting dressed now. She throws on a hoodie and
jeans. She sits on the bed to tie her tennis shoes.

CHEYENNE

Yeah well...guess we'll have new
ideas of torture to come up with.
(beat)
I'll see you later.

She smooches the air towards Raymond who's still in bed.
She walks out towards the door.

RAYMOND

Mmhmm...bring back breakfast!

The door closes.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Cheyenne walks into coffee shop. There are plenty of windows
for the daylight to shine through. The atmosphere is calm,
busy with morning people, but not hectic. Soft music plays,
while people work and chat quietly.

Cheyenne sees Tahlia and she waves her over.

Cheyenne takes a deep breath.

TAHLIA

What took you so long?

CHEYENNE

I had to get dressed, jeez. Weren't
we all at the same party last night?

We see Tahlia, wearing a jeans and a blazer, and Sasha,
wearing yoga pants and a nice sweater. They look more put
together than Cheyenne does.

TAHLIA

I'm SGA President, my appearance
never lacks.

SASHA

This is the quickest outfit I could
put together.

Cheyenne sits down.

TAHLIA

Enough.

(beat)

I sent Roe what we had yesterday.
He emailed me back this morning
and...listen.

Tahlia pulls out her phone and begins reading.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

"Good morning Tahlia, thank you for
sending this over, this looks great-
"

CHEYENNE

What's the problem?

SASHA

Shh. Keep going.

TAHLIA

"This looks great, but I was hoping
for much more. You know just as
well as I do that Nathan Hare
University school spirit exceeds
beyond what you and your peers have
shown. Please delve deeper into
what this university has to offer
future students. We're counting on
you, three. Best. President Roe."

Cheyenne and Sasha sink into their chairs defeated.

SASHA

So, what now?

CHEYENNE

I mean, I have some footage from
last night we can add in-

TAHLIA

What? No. Adding in a *party* isn't
gonna fix this.

Tahlia sighs.

SASHA

We'll figure it out. I'm gonna grab
us some coffees.

Sasha hops up and into the coffee line.

Tahlia pulls her laptop out of her backpack and starts
aggressively typing.

TAHLIA

Okay...lets brainstorm! We have to get this right.

Sasha reaches the front of the line and orders.

SASHA

Good morning, can I get three cold brew coffees with light heavy cream.

BARISTA

Yes ma'am, anything else?

SASHA

Sure, can I get three cranberry muffins also.

BARISTA

Yes ma'am. Your total is \$19.68. Name for the order?

SASHA

Thanks. It's Sasha.

Sasha goes to swipe her card.

BARISTA

Thank you, we'll call your order right over there.

The barista motions to the pick up area.

Sasha steps over. While she waits she notices a white woman with an interesting and familiar design on her T-shirt and bamboo earrings.

Sasha steps up to her.

SASHA

Hi, I love your shirt!

WHITE WOMAN

Oh, thanks, girl!

SASHA

I think I've seen that design before, isn't it a Black designer?

WHITE WOMAN

Huh? Oh! No. I got this right up the street at Urban Outfitters! The earrings too, aren't they great?

Sasha's smile fades into a cringe.

SASHA
(facetiously)
Mmhmm.

BARISTA
Sasha!

SASHA
Right here!

Sasha walks up to take her order.

WHITE WOMAN
Have a great day!

Sasha faintly smiles back at her, when she turns her back she rolls her eyes.

Sasha sits down with the coffee and disgust.

SASHA
That shit always bothers me. Ugh.

TAHLIA
What? What happened?

Cheyenne goes for the coffee and muffin but still intrigued.

SASHA
That white woman. I know I saw that design from a Black woman. You know what...

Sasha goes into her phone, scrolls for a few seconds,

SASHA (CONT'D)
Here! Look at that!

On her phone is a design almost exactly the same as the one on the woman's shirt.

CHEYENNE
Oh wow, that's crazy.
(beat)
But you know that shit happens all the time. All these major brands just copy the culture because they have none.

SASHA
Yeah, I know but still. That designer probably worked hard to make her own name and now it's just overshadowed by some mainstream brand where the
(MORE)

SASHA (CONT'D)
CEO doesn't even know what a Telfar
is.

Cheyenne takes a bite and looks confused.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Really...?
(sighs)
It's a Black luxury brand.

Cheyenne nods and goes back to her muffin.

TAHLIA
Come on Sasha, it's not anything
new, Black culture has *been* the
blueprint for damn near everything.
(beat)
Now back to the project. We have to
figure out what were gonna do, we
can't just start from scratch.

Cheyenne takes a sip of her coffee, thinking. Her eyes
widen...

CHEYENNE
What did you just say?

TAHLIA
That we can't start from scratch...?

CHEYENNE
No. Before that?

TAHLIA
Black culture being the blueprint?

CHEYENNE
Yes! Yes, that's our angle!

TAHLIA
What are you saying?

Cheyenne puts her coffee down and leans in, serious and
excited all at once.

CHEYENNE
(to Sasha)
Think about it, what are homecomings
like at an HBCU?

SASHA
Umm...reunions for old alumni to
relive the glory days?

TAHLIA

A celebration of school spirit?

CHEYENNE

Yes, but, more than that.

(beat)

HBCU's are this hub, this safe space
of a variety of Black people.

Athletic, brains, creatives. All of
that and when those people go into
the world, we create the culture.

We create what's "trendy" or
"popular". We're the *Blueprint*.

Tahlia and Sasha catch on quick and they smile with excitement
and passion.

TAHLIA

Oh my god...I love it!

SASHA

Cheyenne, that's brilliant. Instead
of showing us excelling at just
academics, or sports like every other
schools "inclusion efforts"...

CHEYENNE

Let's show us having fun, being
carefree in our own space.

(beat)

Equal parts Black girl magic and
Black boy joy!

Cheyenne smiles pleased with herself.

TAHLIA

Okay! Awesome! What now?

Sasha and Tahlia look to Cheyenne who wasn't prepared for
the extra attention.

CHEYENNE

I don't know! You're the planner
Ms. SGA President.

TAHLIA

It was your idea!

SASHA

Wait. The tailgate's this afternoon,
we can get some more interviews then.

TAHLIA

No one wanted to talk to us before,
why would they now?

SASHA

We just weren't asking the right questions! Come on. Let's think some up real quick.

CHEYENNE

Right...we can show them off too. Dancers, artists, alumni.

TAHLIA

Combine that with the classroom footage and...

CHEYENNE

You have the makings of a perfect HBCU experience.

They all smile and get to work, sitting up at the table taking out laptops and notebooks.

MONTAGE:

- The girls sit and talk at the table, writing and reaching over each other's notes
- Talking and laughing pointing at their screens
- Tahlia checks the time. They get up from the table and leave the coffee shop.

EXT. OUTSIDE COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Tahlia pulls out her car keys and unlocks her car, Sasha goes to get in the passenger seat.

Cheyenne pulls out her phone and calls Raymond before hopping in.

No answer.

CHEYENNE

Hey Ray! We're heading on campus now. We had a moment about the project and...it's gonna be great. Can't wait to tell you about it!

(beat)

Talk soon. Meet you at the tailgate!

She hangs up and slides into the back seat of the car. Tahlia drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY YARD - DAY

The yard is full of college student life. It's a large, paved, circular area in front the student union of the school outlined by beautiful, green oak trees.

The university symbol hangs proudly on banners and light posts. Some of the trees have Divine 9 Greek plot paraphernalia where frats are grilling up barbecue and sorority's are passing out sweets.

Purple and gray balloons, streamers, and banners are on every reasonable surface.

A DJ spins some records on stage next to an emcee who's hosting and hyping them up. Students dance and gather around.

Organization tables are set up all around the pavement. Students walk to and from one to the other.

Cheyenne, Sasha, and Tahlia enter together, carrying their equipment.

CHEYENNE

Where do we start?

Tahlia looks to the DJ table and sees the emcee and his mic.

TAHLIA

I got it.

She walks up to the EMCEE, whispers something quick in his ear. He pauses the DJ.

EMCEE

Hello, hello, hello! Once again
wanna welcome y'all to Nathan Hare
University's annual homecoming
tailgate!

(beat)

We're out here showing support for
Panther basketball as they take on
the Eagles at tonight's game! We
know y'all are gonna bring home the
W!

(beat)

Alright before we keep the party
rolling, we have a word from your
SGA President, Ms. Tahlia Reese!

Tahlia steps up and takes the mic.

TAHLIA

Thank you!

The crowd silences and stares at her.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

Umm...hey everyone! So great to see everyone out here!

A faint "booooo" is heard from the crowd. Someone else says, "bring the beat back!"

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

Right, I just wanted to let everyone know, we are doing student interviews right over here!

She motions towards Cheyenne and Sasha who are standing, and watching, mouths wide open.

When they see everyone shift their gaze to them, they smile and wave awkwardly.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

We really want to showcase all the culture, talent, and personality we have here on campus.

(beat)

We'd really appreciate a moment of your time!

Stares.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

Okay, well...Go panthers! Whoo!

J.R. stands in the crowd and starts clapping loudly.

J.R.

Whoo! Alright!

Tahlia looks out and smiles faintly at him and hands the mic back. The DJ starts up the music again and the crowd resumes.

Tahlia walks back over to Cheyenne and Sasha.

SASHA

Well, that's...promising.

Cheyenne looks and notices J.R. looking their way.

CHEYENNE

I have an idea...

Cheyenne walks his way.

J.R.

Twice in a week, maybe I *am* the lucky one.

CHEYENNE

Hey J...I kinda need a favor...

J.R.

You want me to talk some people up and send them your way.

CHEYENNE

(smiling hard)

Yes, please! We need this, it's not gonna be lame, that's why we need people...so it's not. Lame.

J.R.

(smiles)

I got you. Don't worry, let me work the crowd.

CHEYENNE

Awesome. Thanks.

Cheyenne starts to walk off.

J.R.

You know you owe me right?

Cheyenne smiles.

CHEYENNE

I'm good for it.

J.R. watches again as she walks off back to the others. He wants her.

SASHA

What now?

CHEYENNE

Now we wait.

TAHLIA

Should we sort of...mingle in the crowd? Tell them what we're doing? Why?

CHEYENNE

That's a great idea, but...why don't I go. I've worked in guest services for some years now, I know how to get what I want from people.

Sasha and Tahlia look at each other and agree.

SASHA

Go for it.

Cheyenne begins cruising through the crowd with a small notebook and pen talking to several students.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY YARD - DAY

CHEYENNE

So you're in the band?

BAND STUDENT

Yeah, both my parents were in band here, so it's a dream to play for NHU.

CHEYENNE

See those ladies over there, they'd love to hear all about your story!

BAND STUDENT

Nah, I'm good.

Cheyenne stops him.

CHEYENNE

Hey wait...

(beat)

What did you want when you were a freshman?

BAND STUDENT

I don't know...to feel accepted I guess. Before I made the band forreal I was sort of a loner.

CHEYENNE

See. If you go over there, you can tell a whole bunch of people who are gonna feel like you, that they'll have a place here.

The band students eyes sort of light up. He agrees and walks over.

Cheyenne throws a thumbs up to Sasha and Tahlia.

DISSOLVE TO:

Later:

Cheyenne cruises through the crowd to a GANG OF GIRLS who are all dressed in unique combinations of school shirts.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

Wow! I love the style!

They all cheese and say "thank you's".

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

Are y'all sisters?

GIRL 1

Well, we are.

She points to GIRL 2.

GIRL 1 (CONT'D)

But not all of us. We all met last year and got real close.

GIRL 3

Yeah we all are in the same major and study together and stuff.

(beat)

I probably be failing if it wasn't for them.

CHEYENNE

That's so cool.

(beat)

Not you failing, but that you have each other.

They all smile and lean their heads on one another.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

I'm sure my friends over there with the camera would love to see y'all outfits and hear more about your experience here.

GIRL 1

I'm not sure...Tahlia can be kind of...a lot.

CHEYENNE

Trust me, I know.

(beat)

But she just wants the best for this school and for the students. Like y'all. You're practically success stories.

They laugh.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)
Just give her a chance, okay?

Girl 1 rolls her eyes.

GIRL 1
Deal.

They stand up off the steps where they were sitting and go towards Sasha and Tahlia.

Cheyenne watches pleased. She scans the crowd for her next victim.

Looking out she notices J.R. talking to some of the athletes doing the same thing. He catches her sights and smiles and shakes his head.

Cheyenne nods back to him. Back to the mission.

As time passes we see Cheyenne and J.R. both circling through the crowd.

Sasha and Tahlia are filming and talking with a multitude of students and they are all smiling and enjoying their time on camera. There's a line to talk to them.

Cheyenne smiles noticing the success. She looks at her phone, still no call from Raymond. She goes to call again.

CHEYENNE
Hey Ray, I'm at the tailgate. Just looking for you. Let me know if you still wanna make the game. Call me.

She hangs up.

J.R. walks over to her.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)
Hey, thanks so much again. We really appreciate it.

J.R.
Ah, it's no problem really.

CHEYENNE
I know your sister's gonna be so happy. Look at her.

They look over to Tahlia, she's laughing and for the first time since they've met she looks like a normal student, not a politician in training.

J.R.

Yeah. I remember looking like that
when we hung out.

Cheyenne blushes.

CHEYENNE

(laughs)

Come on, J.

J.R.

What? I'm serious. I missed you,
Chey.

Cheyenne scratches her neck to fill the awkward void.

CHEYENNE

Yeah, you're saying that but I don't
know...

J.R.

Know what?

CHEYENNE

(sighs)

If you miss me so much then why'd
you just disappear on me?

J.R.

Disappear?

CHEYENNE

Yeah. After graduation you were
supposed to come see me in Atlanta
and you just didn't. You never
called, texted...you tell me.

J.R. lets this sit in and his disappointment shows, but it's
not in Cheyenne.

J.R.

Listen...I had a lot going on then,
I was going to training camp, trying
to make the draft...

CHEYENNE

Listen, I'm not..."mad". At least
not anymore. I did care about you,
and it *is* good to see you again
but...we're different now.

J.R.

Chey...

CHEYENNE

It's fine...

The Emcee comes on the mic to gather the crowd.

EMCEE

Alright, Alright everyone! The time has come, we're gonna start closing everything down so the team can go warm up, and then the doors are gonna open at 7pm! Y'all have been a great crowd, it's been a great day! I'll see you next time. Go Panthers!

Both the Emcee and the DJ start breaking down their equipment and students start to fan out and leave the area.

Sasha and Tahlia are finishing up interviews, they look to Cheyenne, smiling, waving, and giving thumbs up!

CHEYENNE

I'm gonna go check on them. See you later.

She walks away from him, taking a deep breath.

He stands alone rubbing his hand up his face, frustrated.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY YARD - DAY

Sasha is holding the camera on a student.

Tahlia is standing next to her asking the questions.

TAHLIA

You said you're a senior, do you have anything you'd like to say to any new students?

The INTERVIEWEE takes a quick moment to think.

INTERVIEWEE

Umm, not much really...Just make the most of your time here. These four years will change you so much and teach you so much about yourself, just be open to it. Know that you're in a safe space to grow.

(beat)

We have the rest of our lives to be "in the real world" so take this

(MORE)

INTERVIEWEE (CONT'D)

four to be surrounded by the brilliant
and creative people around you.

(beat)

And umm yeah...Go panthers!

They laugh into the camera.

Tahlia touches her heart. Sasha lowers the camera.

SASHA

And that's a wrap.

(beat)

Thank you so much for coming over.

INTERVIEWEE

Cool, thanks.

They walk off.

CHEYENNE

If all the interviews sound like
that, I know we got something good
going.

TAHLIA

Yes! It's gonna be great! This
was...amazing. Thank you, Chey.

Tahlia pulls her in for a hug. Cheyenne is surprised but
smiles and accepts it.

CHEYENNE

What are you thanking me for?

TAHLIA

I don't know...I mean, for your help,
for today. We couldn't have done it
without you.

SASHA

Yeah Chey, between you and J.R. we'll
have enough footage for one video
per new student they get next year.

They laugh together.

CHEYENNE

Cool, are y'all going to the game?

SASHA

I'm not, I'm starving. Wanna go
grab something?

CHEYENNE

I've been trying to call Ray, we were gonna go.

SASHA

Oh. Okay, well just let me know. I'm gonna go bring this camera in.

TAHLIA

Yeah, I'll go with you.

They leave Cheyenne. She pulls out her phone again and calls Raymond.

Ring. Ring.

Answer!

RAYMOND (O.S.)

(blunt)
Hello?

CHEYENNE

(happy)
Hey! I'm so happy you answered! Where have you been all day? There's so much to catch you up on! So, we got this email from Roe this morning and he basically hated the video Tahlia sent so we've been at the tailgate all day trying to get more material and we had a great turn out! Ah, Ray, you should've seen it!

(beat)
J.R. even helped, but that's a whole other story that I don't even wanna-

RAYMOND (O.S.)

Yeah, great for you, Cheyenne.

Cheyenne catches on to his tone.

CHEYENNE

Wait. Wait Ray, what's wrong? Why do you sound like that?

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - BEDS - AFTERNOON

RAYMOND

I didn't get that promotion.
(MORE)

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Shit, I'm still gonna be stuck as a steamer, or casting models or whatever boring thing they need done.

(beat)

Dammit!

CHEYENNE

Ray, I'm sorry. You know you'll get another chance, right? You're crazy talented.

RAYMOND

Sure, it's another notch under the belt, more product for my portfolio. Tell that to my loans, oh and my bills. Tell that to my rent.

(beat)

Damn. Now I'm starting from scratch. Again.

CHEYENNE

Raymond, you'll be fine. You'll get through this.

(beat)

Hey, were you able to ask Glen if she could do an interview for us? A professor could really help out...

RAYMOND

What? Really? You're asking me that right now?

(beat)

Chey, you nothing but opportunity flowing to you. You're so ungrateful!

Cheyenne steps back.

CHEYENNE

Excuse me?

Raymond paces around the hotel room.

RAYMOND

Cheyenne, look at the opportunity you got this weekend. You've got a successful steady job. Yet all you've done is doubt your place here.

CHEYENNE

Okay, I get you're upset but you're out of line right now. Chill.

RAYMOND

Oh? I'm out of line? Chey, all I've ever done is be your cheerleader. Your support system. You even asked me to help you with this! The one time I need some support or comfort or whatever you can't.

(beat)

Or just don't!

CHEYENNE

Are you saying I haven't been yours?

RAYMOND

As of late, no. You've been so wrapped up in the drama of being back here. You've barely shown any interest in my work!

CHEYENNE

If you needed help why didn't you ask?

RAYMOND

You didn't have to ask when your mom was in the hospital. When they fired you in Atlanta and you needed somewhere to stay before you got the hotel gig and came home. You're my best friend, I shouldn't have to ask.

Cheyenne is quiet, standing on the now empty yard. Sun setting.

CHEYENNE

Ray, I--

RAYMOND

I have to call my mom. Figure this out. Talk later.

He hangs up abruptly.

Cheyenne stands baffled. She looks out at the lifeless area. Frustrated. Confused. Sad. Is Raymond right?

She starts walking into the student center.

INT. STUDENT LOUNGE - EVENING

She stomps pass Tahlia, Sasha, and J.R. all sitting at a table eating some fries.

TAHLIA

Hey! Chey, where are you going?

Cheyenne ignores them and keeps going.

SASHA

Cheyenne! Over here.

Sasha stands up and goes towards her. Cheyenne stops.

CHEYENNE

I gotta go.

SASHA

Thought you were gonna go to the game?

CHEYENNE

Just

(beat)

Leave me alone, alright?

SASHA

Chey, what's wrong?

Cheyenne fights back tears, but she's tired of holding everything in.

CHEYENNE

What's wrong?

(beat)

All of this.

She waves her hand up.

SASHA

Hey, just come sit. We can talk about it. What happened?

Cheyenne backs away from her.

CHEYENNE

It doesn't matter what happened. You don't care.

Tahlia walks up.

TAHLIA

Cheyenne, of course we care. What's going on?

CHEYENNE

You only care that I helped get your video done.

(MORE)

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)
But what did I get out of this?
Nothing. When I leave here I'll
still have nothing. Got it?

J.R. walks up.

J.R.
Hey, that's my sister, calm down.

Cheyenne snorts.

CHEYENNE
And how fitting is that pairing.

Cheyenne rolls her eyes.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)
I'm done with all of you.

She continues to stomp out the building.

They all stand there confused. J.R. rushes after her.

TAHLIA
What is going on?

Sasha looks concerned.

SASHA
Can you drop me off somewhere?

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Cheyenne is waiting for an uber. J.R. walks up with his hands up.

J.R.
I come in peace.
(beat)
Are you okay?

Cheyenne is too tired to argue again, tears stain her face. She just shakes her head no.

J.R. (CONT'D)
You wanna go somewhere?

Cheyenne shakes her head yes.

J.R. (CONT'D)
Come on.

He puts his arm around her and she follows him to his car.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL OVERHANG - EVENING

Sasha hops out of Tahlia's car and goes straight to the hotel desk.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Sasha rushes up to the front desk, where the attendant looks concerned but also oblivious.

SASHA

Hi, I'm here to see someone. Can you tell me their room number?

FRONT DESK GUY

Umm. Ma'am. I don't think we're supposed to do that...

SASHA

Okay, well can you call him and tell him to come down?

FRONT DESK GUY

Umm...I don't know how to do that.

SASHA

Can I talk to someone in charge please?

As she begins to argue with him she hears a "ding" off the elevator. Raymond steps out into the lobby.

She rushes his way.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Raymond!

RAYMOND

Sasha. What are you doing here?

SASHA

We need to talk, it's about Chey.

Raymond rolls his eyes.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Ray, please. Let me buy you a drink.

This changes his mind.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

J.R. pulls his car into a spot. "Reserved for coaches"

He gets out and opens Cheyenne's door. They walk into the gym.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - CONTINUOUS

The team is running drills, practicing, while another coach blows the whistle. He stops and nods to J.R.

Cheyenne and J.R. go to the top of the bleachers and sit.

Cheyenne says nothing. J.R. sighs.

J.R.

See this guy on the end, he's got good hands but he's cocky.

(beat)

Coach trying to drill it out of him, but he knows it, too.

Cheyenne watches the court.

J.R. (CONT'D)

Oh, and number 52, his dad is in the NBA, donated hella money to the school too.

J.R. looks at Cheyenne.

J.R. (CONT'D)

Come on. I know you not trying to hear me talk about the team.

(beat)

What's going on?

Cheyenne sits quietly.

J.R. (CONT'D)

Look, if you didn't want to talk to me--

CHEYENNE

I miss her.

J.R. sits up. Listening.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

When things just go wrong, I always think about what'd it be like if she was here. If they'd be easier to deal with.

J.R.
Chey, that's normal.

CHEYENNE
I mean, I handle it but...I just
really need her sometimes.

Tears come to the brim of her eyes again.

J.R.
Hey...

CHEYENNE
I'm fine, I'm just saying.
(beat)
Coming back to campus after being
gone for years, I thought I'd feel
closer to her, you know? But running
into you and Sasha...
(beat)
I know I hadn't dealt with it all,
but it's just...overwhelming.
(beat)
Y'all were two people I needed and
you both just disappeared. Knowing
what I was going through.

J.R. looks at her seriously, intently listening.

J.R.
You know we weren't plotting against
you.

CHEYENNE
It felt like it.

It's awkwardly quiet for a moment.

J.R.
For me, I didn't intentionally seek
out to hurt you or abandon you, but
after I didn't get drafted, I was
tired of explaining why I failed.
Why I didn't make it, what I was
going to do next. I didn't know.

CHEYENNE
Did you know that I wanted to be
with you?

J.R.
I did.

CHEYENNE
And still...

J.R.

I'm sorry.

(beat)

I wanted to come back successful,
someone to be proud of I guess.

Cheyenne grabs his hand.

CHEYENNE

No one wasn't proud of you.

(beat)

I was proud of you. To be with you.

They look at each other, almost for the first time since they've been back. The awkwardness sets in and they look away back to the court.

J.R.

I'm sorry, Cheyenne. Truly.

(beat)

That might not be enough but--

She grabs his hand and looks at him.

CHEYENNE

No, it is. Thank you.

They sit for a moment taking a deep breath. Cheyenne wipes away a tear.

She gets up still holding his hand.

J.R.

Where we going?

CHEYENNE

Can you bring me to my hotel?

J.R.

Lead the way.

They walk down the bleachers and out the gym.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Waiters and waitresses buzz like worker bees through this restaurant. It's classy yet casual, the lighting is set just right, noise level at a humble buzz.

A hostess seats Raymond and Sasha.

HOSTESS

I hope you guys enjoy, someone will
be with you shortly.

Sasha politely thanks her and they pull in their chairs.

SASHA

Alrighty Ray. What's going on?
You're not your usual bubbly,
flamboyant self. You're...mopey.

They both chuckle at the word.

SASHA (CONT'D)

And I know something happened with
Cheyenne. You're the only one who
could've set her off like that.
What's up?

Raymond's eyes widen in agreement and he takes a deep exhale.

RAYMOND

I don't know. I kinda blew up on
her, but I think she deserved it. I
took my frustration out on her...I
didn't get this promotion I was
betting on and...

SASHA

Did she say something?

Raymond gets a little defensive.

RAYMOND

God, no! She's always been supportive
about my career. And me. She's
just been so involved with herself
these last few days. It's like...I'm
always there for her, giving her
advice or whatever and this one time
where there was something that I
really wanted and I didn't get
it...maybe I was jealous? I don't
know...

SASHA

Do you think you were wrong?

RAYMOND

No...

SASHA

I don't think she's going to be mad
at you.

RAYMOND

Really?

SASHA

From living with her freshman year,
I know it takes a lot for her to cut
you off. She's a creature of defense,
but with you...she's different. You
will always get a second chance with
her.

Raymond breathes in, accepting this.

RAYMOND

I just wish she fought more for you.
And J.R. too. She needs y'all.

(beat)

I need y'all. People need friends.
Good friends.

Sasha grabs Raymond's hand.

SASHA

I know. I've tried reaching out to
her since we've been here but it
might just be over.

RAYMOND

I'm not defending her behavior to
you, but...why weren't you there
Sasha? She needed us.

Sasha pulls her hand back and squirms into her seat.

SASHA

I know.

She takes a deep breath.

SASHA (CONT'D)

I know. I just couldn't...I was
going through a lot. I went to
therapy and everything so I've sort
of come to terms with it now, but...

Raymond sits up in alert. He reaches out his hand again.

RAYMOND

You can tell me.

SASHA

No, I know I can. And I should have
when it happened I just felt so alone.
I needed to be alone.

RAYMOND

Okay, well you're not now. What is it?

She exhales.

SASHA

I had an abortion.

Raymond leans back in quiet shock.

SASHA (CONT'D)

I found out I was pregnant right around the time of Mama Lynn's funeral and...I couldn't handle that.

RAYMOND

Oh my God. Sasha, I...

SASHA

Please don't patronize me.

RAYMOND

Of course not.

Sasha becomes slightly frantic.

SASHA

I did what I had to do at the time. I was Ms. NHU, and I couldn't start a grad program, pregnant.

(beat)

I wasn't ready.

Sasha bows her head into her lap.

Raymond stands and goes to kneel at her side. He grabs her hands in her lap.

RAYMOND

Sweetie, not one of us would judge you.

(beat)

We know you are smart, and capable, and strong.

(beat)

Of course we would have been there for you. I'm so sorry you felt so alone.

Sasha lets out a small sob.

SASHA

It was something I was so ashamed of
for a while, and I needed real help.

(beat)

I couldn't ask you, either of you,
especially Chey, I mean she had lost
her mother--

Some more tears start to fall.

RAYMOND

Shh...you're okay. We're okay.

He soothes her back.

She tilts her head on to his.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Okay,

He kisses her forehead and gets back in his seat, wiping
away his own tear.

Sasha snuffles and smiles.

SASHA

Whew...so.

(beat)

What are we drinking?

She picks up a menu.

RAYMOND

Sasha...you have to tell her.

SASHA

I know.

She lowers the menu.

SASHA (CONT'D)

It's not something you just...say.

RAYMOND

It could be...

(beat)

It's time. You should have gave us
more credit.

SASHA

Take your own advice hmm?

RAYMOND

Chile, please, we've been through worse than this. I know we'll be fine. Just a lemon squeeze is all.

(beat)

Now, what's on this menu since you treating me!

He grabs the menu from her and they smile.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

J.R. pulls up to the hotel.

CHEYENNE

Thanks. For tonight.

J.R.

No problem.

Cheyenne goes to get out of the car but J.R. stops her.

J.R. (CONT'D)

Hey Chey, I know you've probably hated being back, but...I'm really really happy that you are. Even for a weekend.

(beat)

She'd be proud, too.

She sits back in her seat.

CHEYENNE

You know she's the one who told me to stay?

He looks at her confused.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

She came to visit me. I thought I was dying.

They both laugh.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

But she told me to stay. So I did.

She shrugs and smiles.

J.R. calmly walks closer and stands directly in front of her, leaving little space.

She lets him.

J.R.
I love you, Cheyenne Laine.

He lightly pinches her chin and brings her lips to his.
They kiss. Fireworks and fanfares play. Release.

They both pull away smiling. She finally gets out the car.
He rolls the window down.

EXT. HOTEL OVERHANG - NIGHT

J.R.
You still owe me for the tailgate!

She comes to the window smiling.

CHEYENNE
What do you want then?

J.R.
Be my date for coronation tomorrow
night.

CHEYENNE
Deal.

He smiles as she backs away from the car. He pulls off as
she walks inside.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Raymond sits on one of the couches in the lobby.

Cheyenne notices and stops by him.

CHEYENNE
Forgot the key card?

RAYMOND
I was waiting for the desk attendant.

CHEYENNE
You wanna come up with me.

RAYMOND
Yeah, he taking too long.

Cheyenne reaches out her hand to help him up.

He rolls his eyes and takes it. They go hop in the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

CHEYENNE

I'm sorry for neglecting you. And being selfish.

RAYMOND

I'm sorry I yelled at you for neglecting me. And being jealous, I just really needed the promotion. I've gotten behind on some payments, and rent went up, so it would've just given me some breathing room.

CHEYENNE

Ray, why didn't you tell me. You know I'd help as much as I could.

RAYMOND

I know I just wanted to do it for myself. To know that I could.

CHEYENNE

Ray, of course you can.

Cheyenne smiles a little. She leans her head on Raymond.

RAYMOND

I love you.

CHEYENNE

I love you, too.

(beat)

That's why when I get this check for the project, I'm giving it to you. You can use it for your rent or to finance your dream designs, or whatever you want. Its yours.

Raymond stands in shock. The elevator door opens. Cheyenne holds his hand and they walk down the hallway.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cheyenne walks to the room and pulls out her key card.

RAYMOND

You're completely serious? Are you crazy? I can't--

CHEYENNE

Then take it as a loan and pay me back some date...whatever date you want. But it's yours.

She opens the door and they walk into the room.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - BEDS - MOMENTS LATER

Raymond hugs her.

RAYMOND

Thank you.

(beat)

Seriously.

He kisses her forehead. She giggles.

They both go into their bags to get their PJ's and then crawl into their beds.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

I talked to Sasha.

CHEYENNE

Hmm.

(beat)

Cool.

RAYMOND

You should talk to her too. She needs you.

Cheyenne clicks off the light.

CHEYENNE

I talked to J.

RAYMOND

Hmm, J. Cool.

Cheyenne sits up from the bed and turns on the lamp again.

CHEYENNE

Bitch, that's all you have to say?
I thought you would've been way more interested.

Raymond hops over into her bed excitedly.

RAYMOND

You know I am! Spill tea!

They laugh.

CHEYENNE

So he took me to his gym and...

FADE TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - BEDS - MORNING

It's early morning, the sun barely risen.

Cheyenne quietly goes into the bathroom.

MONTAGE:

- Cheyenne is brushing her teeth.
- Cheyenne grabs and puts on a black dress.
- Cheyenne brushes and styles her hair.
- Cheyenne does her makeup.
- Cheyenne slips on a pair of black heels.
- Cheyenne grabs her purse off the bed and slips out the door.

Raymond rolls over still sleep at the sound of the door.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cheyenne walks down the hallway and into the elevator.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Cheyenne walks off the elevator and down the aisle of the lobby. It's empty except for a few guests getting coffee.

She walks out the glass door and hops into an uber.

EXT. CAMPUS CHAPEL - MORNING

Cheyenne steps out of the uber onto the pavement leading up to the campus chapel.

She walks up the walkway and inside.

INT. CAMPUS CHAPEL - MORNING

The chapel is full, but not crowded. Gentle organ chords play as people are mingling in the pews. A choir sits in the pews on stage.

Cheyenne takes a seat in the back. A student hands her a program.

CHEYENNE

Oh, thank you.

She looks on the front page. "Gone but never forgotten, a memorial of dear lives lost from our beautiful faculty, administration, and students"

Cheyenne opens the program and she sees a list of names under several categories. Her eyes wander to faculty, then down the line to Lynn Laine.

On the opposite side of the folder there are pictures of all the names listed. She spots her mothers. Tears brim to her eyes.

President Roe walks in and notices Cheyenne. He sits next to her.

PRESIDENT ROE

Glad to see you made it.

Cheyenne hears him and looks up, wiping a tear away.

CHEYENNE

Oh, yeah.
(sniffles)
Something told me I should come.

He touches her shoulder, stands and walks to the front row of the pews.

The REVEREND walks to the center of the altar.

REVEREND

Welcome everyone to this memorial,
this celebration of life lost.
(beat)
We are happy to have you all. If
you don't mind we'll get started and
have a reading from...

The sound fades out and Cheyenne goes into auto-pilot. She's there but not present.

A WOMAN sits down taking President Roe's place.

Again, Cheyenne barely notices.

LYNN (O.S.)

I wish they had picked a different
picture than that one.
(beat)
I always hated that faculty picture.

Cheyenne's calm this time when she sees her mother.

CHEYENNE

(whisper)

I like it...you look sincere.

LYNN

Hmm. That means I look soft, can't put the fear of failing into freshmen like that.

Cheyenne giggles.

Another guest turns around to look at her confused.

CHEYENNE

Sorry.

LYNN

(giggles)

Shh.

(beat)

So. Are you happy you stayed?

CHEYENNE

I think so. I know now that I needed to be here. It wasn't easy, though.

LYNN

Oh, I know, sweetie. I know you're strong though. I knew you'd be okay.

CHEYENNE

Really?

LYNN

Of course. You're *my girl*. Strong is in your blood.

Cheyenne goes to touch her mom's hand when she's snapped back to reality.

PRESIDENT ROE

If we could have Cheyenne Laine, the daughter of a previous teacher we had here at Nathan Hare.

(beat)

Cheyenne, would you please...

Cheyenne is shocked. She looks around and her mom is gone. She stands awkwardly and makes her way to the front of the chapel.

Her shoes click-clack on the tile floor as people watch her take the podium.

CHEYENNE

Umm...I-I really wasn't prepared for this, but...my mom...my mom told me that I was strong...so I'll do my best.

(beat)

My mom wanted you to think she was a harsh teacher but she was actually one of the sweetest anyone had ever met.

(beat)

She pushed her students to be the best they could be here, because she knew that "in the real world", laziness or sub-par work wouldn't fly. At least not for...us. Black people I mean.

Cheyenne clears her throat.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

I guess all that I can say about her legacy is that...she loved her students, her work. It went far past the classroom and...to have her as a mother was...was the greatest gift I'll ever have. I love her dearly and I know that anyone who remembers her does as well. Thank you.

Just as quick as a tear falls Cheyenne wipes it away and walks to the back of the chapel and then out the doors, outside.

EXT. CAMPUS CHAPEL - DAY

Cheyenne is catching her breath, pacing. She takes out her phone and calls a number.

Someone answers.

THOMAS (O.S.)

Hello?

CHEYENNE

Dad?

Some tears fall from her eyes. She covers her mouth.

THOMAS

Cheyenne?

CHEYENNE

Yeah.
 (sniffles)
 Umm. Hi. How are you?

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

INT. THOMAS' HOME - DAY

Thomas, grayer and more wrinkles stands in his kitchen with the fridge door open in awe.

THOMAS

Doing better now. Are you okay?

CHEYENNE

I'm okay, I'm okay.
 (sniffles)
 Umm, I was wondering. I'm in town,
 so if you want to get dinner soon.
 I can be available.

THOMAS

Oh, that'd be great sweetie. I'd
 love that.

CHEYENNE

Yeah?
 (beat)
 Okay.
 (sniffles)
 Okay.

She smiles and some more tears fall down her face.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Cheyenne walks into the room and Raymond is lying on the bed.

RAYMOND

Where have you been?

CHEYENNE

I went to the memorial.

Raymond's face is stunned.

RAYMOND

Are you okay? Why didn't you ask me
 to go with you?

CHEYENNE

I wanted to go alone. I'm fine.
Really. I'm good.

(beat)

I called my dad.

RAYMOND

Just full of surprises this morning.
How was that?

CHEYENNE

It was...nice. We caught up a little
but we're going to get food before I
leave. He said he might cook, but I
don't know about that.

They both giggle.

Cheyenne sits on the bed next to Raymond. He soothes her
back. She leans her head onto his shoulder.

CHEYENNE (CONT'D)

You were right, Ray...this is exactly
where I was supposed to be.

RAYMOND

Aww sweetie...

(beat)

I told you so.

He laughs. She pushes him into the bed. She stands up on
the bed and begins to jump.

CHEYENNE

Come on!
(jump)
Get up!
(jump)
We've got a
(jump)
Coronation
(jump)
To get ready for!

Raymond flails on the bed.

RAYMOND

Okay, okay! I'm getting sea sick!

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

INT. HOTEL SUITE - EVENING

- Raymond is putting on his tuxedo jacket
- Cheyenne is in her formal dress and puts on lipstick in the mirror.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SASHA'S HOTEL - EVENING

- Sasha steps out in her dress and high heels and into an uber.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. J.R.'S HOUSE - EVENING

- J.R. straightens his tie in the mirror and checks his teeth.
- He breathes into his palm.
- He goes into a drawer and grabs a piece of gum.

J.R.

Tahl!

(chewing)

Hurry up, I gotta go pick up Chey soon.

INT. TAHLIA'S ROOM - EVENING

Tahlia is fully dressed and ready. Tahlia types away at her laptop screen.

TAHLIA

Finishing up now, J!

She hits one last key.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

...and sent.

She dramatically crosses her fingers.

J.R. (O.S.)

Tahlia!

TAHLIA

Coming!

She hops up from her desk and rushes to the front.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL OVERHANG - EVENING

Cheyenne and Raymond walk out of the glass doors dressed in their formal attire looking stunning. They almost walk in slow motion to J.R.'s car.

J.R. and Tahlia get out of the front seats to welcome them looking just as amazing.

J.R.
Hello, gorgeous.

Cheyenne blushes.

RAYMOND
Oh, hey to you too handsome!

Cheyenne laughs and J.R. rolls his eyes.

Tahlia giggles.

TAHLIA
It's okay, Ray, you're in the back with me.

Tahlia and Raymond get in the back, Cheyenne in the passenger. And they're off!

INT. J.R.'S CAR - EVENING

Smooth R&B music plays as they drive to coronation. Cheyenne turns around to face Tahlia.

CHEYENNE
Hey, you look great.

Tahlia smiles.

TAHLIA
Thanks, so do you.

CHEYENNE
I'm sorry I snapped at you the other day, you didn't deserve that.

TAHLIA
(smiling)
Apology accepted. I didn't mean to make you think that I was using you for the video, I just--

CHEYENNE

Don't worry about it. I needed to do it just as bad as you did.

They both smile and lean back into their seats.

J.R. gives a side eye and smirk to Cheyenne. She smiles back at him.

CUT TO:

EXT. STUDENT BUILDING - EVENING

Groups of people, all dressed in formal attire walk up the steps and into the building for the coronation.

Our group walks up and is met by Sasha.

SASHA

Hi, ohh, everyone looks so nice!

Sasha notices J.R. is holding Cheyenne's hand. Raymond sees and locks his arm around hers.

RAYMOND

I'll tell ya *all* about it.

SASHA

(giggles)

I'm sure.

RAYMOND

Let's go have some fun!

They all walk inside.

INT. STUDENT BUILDING - EVENING

The space is decorated elegantly. A stage with a runway and podium set to the side for the host.

There's purple and gray cloth hanging elegantly from the pillars and covering the walls. Tables and scattered precisely with varying gray and purple tablecloths and centerpieces with flowers and pearls.

Students and faculty are all dressed for the occasion and scattered throughout the space. Some mingle with each other, some are sitting and enjoying food and drinks, and others are in lined in the photo stations.

Appropriate music plays over the speakers setting the tone just right.

J.R.

I'm gonna go find us a table.

CHEYENNE

Okay, cool.

RAYMOND

Oh, I see Professor Glenn, I'm gonna go say hi.

They both walk away.

The girls stand, left awkwardly.

SASHA

So, Tahlia, how'd the video come out?

TAHLIA

Oh! It looks really great! Those last interviews really just added the sweetest touch.

SASHA

Awesome, can't wait to see it.

An awkward silence passes. President Roe walks up to the girls.

PRESIDENT ROE

Ladies, great to see you all. You look beautiful.

ALL

Thank you sir.

PRESIDENT ROE

Tahlia, I just saw the new video you sent...

Tahlia freezes with anticipation. She grabs Cheyenne's arm a little too hard.

TAHLIA

Oh? Did you enjoy it?

President Roe holds his poker face, enjoying her agony.

PRESIDENT ROE

I...

(beat)

Loved it!

They all sigh with relief.

PRESIDENT ROE (CONT'D)

It was truly poetic! You girls made a tremendous team! I'd love to work with you in the future.

(beat)

Actually, Cheyenne, I was wondering if I could speak with you a moment?

Cheyenne looks surprised.

CHEYENNE

Of course, sir.

(to the girls)

Excuse me.

Cheyenne walks side by side with President Roe. They stop at a high table.

PRESIDENT ROE

Well, Ms. Laine, it's obvious the work you've done this weekend is more than stunning.

(beat)

I spoke to some of the students whom you all interviewed and they raved about your enthusiasm.

CHEYENNE

Oh, I was just doing what needed to be done sir. Nothing special.

PRESIDENT ROE

No, but you are, and I'll have that check first thing Monday morning, but...

(beat)

How would you like to become a member of our staff? Permanently? We can set you up with the freshman orientation teachers. You'd be a great first person to meet on campus.

Cheyenne is in shock.

CHEYENNE

Wow, sir...I'm shocked.

(beat)

Yes, yes, I'd love to accept! Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROE

I know your mother would be so proud of you.

CHEYENNE

I know she is.

PRESIDENT ROE

Well, please. Enjoy the rest of your night and we will be in touch.

CHEYENNE

You too, thank you again!

He walks off. Cheyenne smiles the biggest she has all weekend.

J.R. walks up to her.

J.R.

Hey found a table...

(beat)

Everything okay?

CHEYENNE

Looks like I'll be around for a while.

(beat)

Roe offered me a job.

J.R.

Hmm. Really?

CHEYENNE

Yep...

(beat)

You good with that?

J.R. chuckles and smiles at her.

J.R.

I'm good with that.

He brings her in for a kiss.

The party continues around them, lights flash and music plays.

Cheyenne sees Sasha sitting alone.

CHEYENNE

I'll come find you. I need to handle something.

J.R. sees Sasha too.

J.R.

Got it.

Cheyenne walks towards Sasha's table. She sits down calmly.

CHEYENNE

The decorations look great, huh?
Way better than when we were here.

SASHA

Eh...still the same banners as always.
Probably just keep em in storage all
year.

They chuckle awkwardly, filling the silence between them.

CHEYENNE

So...can we talk? Really?

SASHA

I'd like that.

CHEYENNE

First, you know I've talked to
Raymond, but I'd still really like
to hear everything from you.

(beat)

Second, I'm so sorry you went through
all that alone and I was no better
to you.

SASHA

I'm gonna stop you right there, you
didn't know.

(beat)

I'm sorry for not being there and
then not even giving you any reason
as to why. I'd be mad at me, too.

The girls continue to talk in the background when Tahlia
takes the stage.

TAHLIA

Good evening everyone...

The crowds shushes and shifts attention to her.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

Thank you all for gathering us tonight
to welcome NHU's Royal Court for the
year.

(pause for applause)

We'll begin with welcoming each class'
Mister and Miss and then finally
introduce our Mister and Miss NHU.

(pause for applause)

Let's begin! Introducing Miss
Freshman...

Tahlia's voice over introduces each young man and woman from each of the classes as they come to and from each end of the stage. They then parade down the middle taking their bows to the audience.

Stepping off the stage to sit at the royal court table.

Cheyenne captures every major move from the crowns and gowns to the crowds cheers and tears.

It's pure magic.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

And now, the moment we've all been waiting for...Mr. and Miss NHU and their court will have their dance.

The court all stands up, the gentlemen helping the ladies. They make their way to the dance floor and begin a short ballroom dance.

When the court finishes, everyone applauds and they bow again and go back to their table.

TAHLIA (CONT'D)

Just beautiful. Thank you all. And may your reigns be productive and influential to your classes and this illustrious university.

(pause for applause)

Now, before we conclude, some alumni and myself have put together a short presentation for our beloved president Roe and all students of this university.

The lights dim. A screen drops in the middle of the stage. A projector fires up as the video starts.

The video starts, silent.

A student stands in front of the camera.

SASHA (V.O.)

What does going to an HBCU mean to you?

A video flashes with the basketball team running on the courts, throwing baskets.

The band plays in the bleachers, still no sound on the video.

STUDENT ON CAMERA

What does going to an HBCU mean to me?

Another video starts, scanning across a classroom. Some students engage, raising their hands, others write at their desks.

The professor writes on the board.

STUDENT ON CAMERA (CONT'D)

It means everything to me.

Upbeat music starts playing and the video kicks into high gear,

Video footage from the tailgate, the game, and the party all play meshed together perfectly. Students dance and are lively.

The school dancers strut in the middle of the yard of the university.

Groups of students pose for pictures in front of the camera.

An older alumni couple in University apparel stand for a picture, the man kisses his wife.

STUDENTS ON CAMERA

I love going here!

STUDENT ON CAMERA

(smiling)

I've never felt more at home somewhere, you know other than my house...

STUDENT ON CAMERA (CONT'D)

My parents went here, so I knew that I was going to go here. I wouldn't wanna be anywhere else...

More videos play of the student life, purple and gray flood the screen.

STUDENT ON CAMERA (CONT'D)

I've learned so much here, not just academically but personally, about myself...

Shots of students sitting away from the party, but still enjoying themselves play. A student sits on a bench reading. Another laying on a blanket, writing in a book in the grass.

STUDENT ON CAMERA (CONT'D)

It's hard being in the minority all the time and here, we're the majority. No one judges us for talking a certain way or the things we wear.

STUDENT ON CAMERA (CONT'D)

It's like there's so much culture and style here on just this one campus that you see in "the real world" all the time and you just see how we flourish out there.

STUDENT ON CAMERA (CONT'D)

Here, they teach you inside the classroom on whatever your major is, but they also teach you that there's more to life than what you learn in the classroom.

Another video plays of a student walking down the halls of a building on campus. There's a clip of a student working in the work study offices, smiling, waving at the camera.

STUDENT ON CAMERA (CONT'D)

There's so much here that gets overlooked and then reprocessed on someone who looks nothing like us, so, to be surrounded by it and not have to worry about someone stealing or appropriating who you are...it's a blessing.

The music fades into silence.

SASHA (V.O.)

What does going to an HBCU mean to you?

Tahlia comes on the screen as the last student interview.

TAHLIA

(on screen)

Going to an HBCU is like coming home to family. It means everything to me.

The video fades to black. The lights in the room come back up.

The audience cheers and claps. Their faces show it all, it's a success!

President Roe stands and claps, causing a ripple in the rest of the audience.

Tahlia motions for Cheyenne and Sasha to both come on stage.

They grab hands and walk to the runway and wave to the audience.

Raymond screams out in the audience.

RAYMOND
Yay! Go friend!

J.R. follows suit.

J.R.
Alright, Chey!

Tahlia hands them the mic to say a few words.

SASHA
Thank you all, so much, really.
This was all Cheyenne Laine's vision.
We were happy to help her.

CHEYENNE
Wow, umm. Thank you all. I just
wanted to do something I know my
mother would be happy, and proud to
see, to showcase all the love that
HBCU's have to give was, and is, a
great feeling.
(beat)
Really, thank you all.

The crowd continues to clap.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHEYENNE'S OFFICE - DAY

Cheyenne's new office is bare, but she has flowers and sets
down PICTURES of her, Raymond, Sasha, J.R. and even Tahlia
on her desk.

She hangs some art on the wall when there's a knock at the
door.

President Roe walks in.

PRESIDENT ROE
Good morning...
(beat)
Ready to go?

Cheyenne smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. NATHAN HARE UNIVERSITY - STAGE - MORNING

President Roe stands on stage welcoming the new freshman
class.

PRESIDENT ROE

And without further delay, I'll
introduce your freshman orientation
teacher...

(beat)

Ms. Laine...

Cheyenne stands up and walks up the stage to the podium,
happy, smiling.

CHEYENNE

Thank you sir...

(beat)

Hello class of 2025...Welcome home.

She smiles out to them.

THE END.