

Involved

By

Lauren Furman and Emma Castiblanco

2023

ecastiblan@gmail.com
lsfurman97@gmail.com

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY.

ROCIO. 24.

ROCIO sitting in a lone office chair across from an unseen interviewer. Interviewer's POV.

ROCIO delivers her lines as a monologue, peppered with questions from the interviewer. As the camera switches from interviewer to ROCIO, the offices change, table changes, and seat changes. ROCIO wears slight variations of the same professional outfit. Shot reverse. Shot Discontinuous Montage.

INTERVIEWER 1

What are you passionate about?

ROCIO
(rehearsed)

It has been a lifelong dream of mine
to work at this company. I have been

INTERVIEWER 2

Why do you want to work here?

ROCIO (CONT'D)

eager to get involved with this line
of work. I see myself

INTERVIEWER 3

Where do you see yourself in five
years?

ROCIO (CONT'D)

integrating myself into the company's
community and mission. There are

INTERVIEWER 4

How does this position fit into your
career trajectory?

ROCIO (CONT'D)

few opportunities like this one and I
think it would be a great first step
in my career as I

INTERVIEWER 5
Why should we hire you?

ROCIO
envision myself growing with the
company. ROCIO pushes back the chair
to stand and shake each interviewers'
hand.

INTERVIEWER 4
Thank you

INTERVIEWER 3
Thank you for coming in

INTERVIEWER 1
Thanks, we'll be in touch

INTERVIEWER 5
Talk soon

INTERVIEWER 2
We'll get back to you shortly

ROCIO
(Forced smile)
I look forward to it.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE: INVOLVED

INT. HOUSE. KITCHEN TABLE.

ROCIO stands with her hand extended.

MOM
What are you doing?

ROCIO
Stretching.

ROCIO stretches both arms by interlocking fingers and
pressing palms away from the body.

MOM is reading a newspaper.

MOM

When will you be hearing back about the job?

ROCIO

I don't know. (beat)

Phone dings.

ROCIO pulls phone from pocket and sees an email notification.

MOM

Is that from them?

ROCIO

No.

MOM

They got back pretty quickly this time.

ROCIO

Well, it's not them.

Email subject line: "The job you don't want, but absolutely need."

Email response: "Thank you for interviewing with us today. We enjoyed meeting you. We received an overwhelming number of applications, and at this time we have reached out to the candidates who we are interested in moving forward with."

ROCIO scrolls through a lengthy email. Reaches end.

Email response continued: "If you are still reading this, you have clearly not taken the hint. This is corporate for GO FUCK YOURSELF. If a position opens up in the future, we strongly encourage you to reapply!"

MOM

Did you send a thank you email after the response? Never underestimate the power of politeness. It leaves a good impression.

ROCIO

You are totally right. I'll write one right now.

Hits reply to the email button.

Email response: "Thank you for your response. I look forward to being FUCKED by you in the near future should the opportunity arise."

ROCIO (CONT'D)

I got to go. Going to be late for my shift.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP- DAY

Wide shot of the sidewalk and front facade coffee shop that is clearly Starbucks, but is slightly different in this world.

A homeless man sits on the stoop of the next building holding a sign that says "Displaced by superstorm and corporate greed, anything helps"

ROCIO enters the frame at the left, speed walking past the homeless man, who seems like he is going to try to say something to her, but she doesn't notice him.

She enters the coffee shop.

INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY. INSIDE THE SHOP, A FEW IMPATIENT-LOOKING PEOPLE ARE WAITING TO ORDER.

A teenage barista with a deadpan expression is slowly asking the first customer what they want.

ROCIO hurries behind the counter, tying an ugly apron around her waist and putting on a hat with the company logo.

ROCIO

(To the OTHER BARISTA)

I'm here, I'm here.

OTHER BARISTA

(Deadpan, echoing)

You're Here.

ROCIO turns to the attractive male customer approximately her age who is ready to order.

ROCIO

Hi! What can I get for you?

The HOT CUSTOMER looks up from his phone and flashes a charming smile.

HOT CUSTOMER
Can I get two medium iced lattes,
please?

ROCIO writes the order on cups.

HOT CUSTOMER (CONT'D)
One with oat milk, and one without
milk.

ROCIO stops writing and looks unsure.

ROCIO
So just an iced coffee?

HOT CUSTOMER
No, a latte, please.

ROCIO opens her mouth like she is about to say something, but
when she looks up he is focused on his phone again.

She closes her mouth and finishes writing on the cup.

HOT CUSTOMER pays and thanks her. A minute later ROCIO hands
him his order over the pick-up counter.

He reaches for the cups, but ROCIO doesn't let go. He tugs
slightly.

ROCIO
(suddenly intense)
A latte with no milk is just a coffee.

HOT CUSTOMER
(slightly scared)
What?

ROCIO lets go of the cup after a beat.

ROCIO (CONT'D)
Just so you know.

ROCIO tries to recover with a smile, but it looks a little
unhinged.

HOT CUSTOMER turns and walks toward the door, looking over
his shoulder at her once before exiting.

ROCIO goes to turn back to the register, but a pimple-faced
boy with braces who is clearly much younger than her has
appeared, wearing a tag that says "MANAGER."

He is standing so close that ROCIO jumps a little bit.

ROCIO
Jesus Christ.

MANAGER
(simultaneously)
Did you just argue with a customer?

ROCIO
No -

MANAGER
You know that's against company
policy.

ROCIO
I wasn't -

MANAGER
And you showed up late again. Do you
even want this job? Do you even
respect what the apron stands for? Do
you even . . .

MANAGER continues chewing ROCIO out, but his voice fades into
the background as ROCIO stops paying attention.

SHOT LOOKING OUT BIG FRONT-FACING WINDOWS. ROCIO'S POV.

She sees HOT CUSTOMER waiting out front of coffeeshop holding
the two coffees.

An equally hot girl comes up and kisses him.

HOT CUSTOMER hands HOT GIRL the plain iced coffee. She beams
at him before plucking the plastic straw out of the cup and
tossing it toward the trash can on the sidewalk.

She misses but does not pick the straw up.

She rummages around in her bag and after a beat pulls out a
shiny gold metal straw, which she then places in her drink
and takes a big sip.

CUT TO:

Shot of ROCIO with her eyebrows knitted, somewhat confused,
somewhat disgusted.

CUT TO:

Back to ROCIO's POV. The hot couple kiss again and walk out of the frame hand in hand. After a moment the homeless man we saw earlier enters the frame. He bends down, picks up the discarded straw, and puts it in the garbage.

CUT TO:

Shot of ROCIO, her head now slightly cocked like she is deep in thought, considering what she has just seen.

MANAGER

. . . and honestly the apron doesn't even look good on you, and if you want to be a part of this team then you need to start acting like it.

ROCIO blinks back into the moment.

ROCIO

Sure, yeah, will do.

MANAGER

(walking away)

Seriously, don't make me fire you.

ROCIO

(under breath)

Oh, fuck off.

MANAGER

What?

ROCIO

(louder, same forced smile)

I said, "I love my job!"

MANAGER nods and walks into a back office. ROCIO'S smile falls from her face and she closes her eyes and sighs before putting her face in her hands.

INT. DINING ROOM. EVENING.

Head in ROCIO's hands. Leaving where it was left off in the last scene. Muffled argument between LU and DAD.

MOM

(Vague mumbling)

Rocio. Rocio! Did hear me?

ROCIO looks up. We see a shot of the whole table, which is round. Ro sits across from her mom, Lu sits across from her dad. Her mom is looking across the table at Ro expectantly.

ROCIO

What? Sorry, just a little tired.

MOM

I said -

LU

(cutting off mom)

- I already told you, I'm not going to waste my time going to college when the planet is going to die before I can put a degree to use.

DAD

Luana, I swear -

MOM

(to ROCIO, speaking over him)

I said I saw Amanda Benson's mom today.

ROCIO starts to nod, and looks prepared to say something, but LU is yelling

LU

(loudly)

- Don't talk to me like I'm stupid when you're the idiot who won't recycle!

Without looking, MOM pulls a glass to her right in a little closer to her plate.

Just as it's moved, DAD's fist slams down where the glass was a moment ago.

MOM looks at ROCIO the whole time, intent on continuing their conversation. MOM gives her daughter a "sorry" smile. ROCIO nods along, and it's clear they both know this fight well.

ROCIO

That's nice. How is she?

MOM

Oh, she's -

DAD

- so stupid! You are all worked up over nothing, all the time, and I work too hard for -

MOM

She's great! And Amanda is doing great too. She's -

LU

- ignorant! We just had the derecho, a literal superstorm and you want to act like nothing's wrong.

MOM

-such a lovely girl. Gorgeous too.

ROCIO

Cool, very cool.

DAD

- one storm doesn't mean the whole fucking planet is out the window -

MOM

I guess she's getting married. It seems like everyone your age is getting married these days!

ROCIO

(eating)

Yeah, awesome, that's great for her.

LU

- I know you don't care, but I do.

MOM

(sharply)

Luana, watch it

(to Rocio)

And Mrs. Benson asked about you too, Ro.

ROCIO

Oh?

LU

Mom! Even you recycle, don't take his side.

MOM

(to Lu)

I think it's sad when the turtles choke on straws, but that doesn't mean you can speak to your father that way.

(to Rocio)

I told her you had mono.

ROCIO chokes on her drink.

ROCIO

Why would you say that?

DAD

Your sister went to college -

MOM

In case you run into her! That way you don't have to explain why you're...

MOM gestures up and down at ROCIO, mimes putting on an apron and pouring a coffee

LU bursts out laughing.

LU

Clearly, Ro is a great role model, that's why mom is giving her a tragic backstory to prevent the neighbors from asking questions.

ROCIO

(to Lu)

Hey! I'm not -

DAD

School is important, it sets you up for success.

LU

She graduated like two years ago! And she still hasn't gotten a real job -

ROCIO

I mean...everyone is having a hard time right now...the economy isn't-

MOM

Mrs. Benson said she hopes you feel better soon!

ROCIO

I don't actually have mono, mom. And I really wish you hadn't -

DAD

But she went. And it took her a while to figure out what she wanted to do.

LU

She went in pre-med, switched sophomore year to a major she made up -

ROCIO

The History of Culinary Arts was not made up. People underestimate the impact World War 2 had on pickling.

LU

(to Ro)

How very barista of you! Too bad you ended up switching again to a B.A. in communications.

MOM

I just figured you could use a little room to breathe, while you continue the job search.

ROCIO

Okay, but if she sees me she's going to think I'm spreading mono.

DAD

Communications can be a useful degree!

LU

She can't even call the dentist on her own -

ROCIO

That receptionist is really passive-aggressive.

LU

I already have more of a "job" than she does!

DAD

Volunteering for some local campaign does not count as a job. And your sister can get any job she wants, she's a hard worker.

LU

I know that. Her problem is that she doesn't care about anything.

ROCIO

That's not true! Would you please stop talking about me as if -

LU

(continuing over Ro)

And Justin's campaign is important to me, and he cares about climate change, and it's how I want to spend my time, and-

ROCIO is getting frustrated that everyone is talking over her.

DAD

Justin? So you're on a first name basis with this man? Is something going on between you two?

MOM

I know you don't have mono, I just panicked a little bit and blurted it out, okay.

LU

Dad!

ROCIO

(simultaneously)

Mom!

Both MOM and DAD put their hands up defensively, and for one blissful moment there is silence.

ROCIO looks down at her plate.

ROCIO

I care about things.

LU

(apologetically, rubbing her eyes)
No, I know. I'm sorry. I didn't mean
it like that, just.. Can you back me
up with Dad?

ROCIO

I mean, she's not wrong about it, Dad.
Going to college clearly was not my
magic ticket to success.

MOM

You'll find a job soon, sweetie.

DAD

It's about the principle of the thing.
It's about having options. Tell your
sister how good school was.

ROCIO

(to Lu)

I mean, I did learn a lot. And I think
you would like college.

LU

God, you are so wishy-washy! This is
what I'm talking about.

ROCIO

Not everyone is like you, Lu! Most
people don't care that much about
climate change or politics, and if
they do, they go to college and study
it. And it's great if Justin Thomas
wants to save the trees, really, but
that doesn't help me figure out what
to do with my life.

LU

(Clearly disappointed)

It's not just saving the trees,
alright. Justin understands how the
environmental issues and the economy
are connected. (breath) Ro, there is a
job opening at the campaign. If you
actually care, you could feed two
birds with one scone. A job and a good
cause. Just consider it. I know if you
looked into it more, you would see
that Justin wants to make real change
and actually understands how to do it.

DAD

She is looking for a real job. One that she can make a career out of.

LU

Well, she hasn't found one yet, and this job pays and would give her more useful experience than working at that coffee shop.

LU looks at ROCIO.

LU (CONT.)

That is not to say that service jobs aren't important, but come on, Ro. Do you really want to do that forever?

ROCIO sighs, looks dejected.

MOM

Okay, that's it. No more talk about jobs, climate change, or mono. We are going to figure out what we are watching tonight. I vote for an HGTV show- Love it or List it, anyone?

ROCIO

(Relieved)

I could go for a little Love it or List it. Always fun to pretend I could buy a house someday. Let me grab everyones' plates.

ROCIO clears the table and heads to the kitchen. She drops the plates in the sink and takes a deep breath.

INT. ROCIO'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM. DECORATED AS CHILD BEDROOM. ROCIO LOOKS OUT OF PLACE. EVENING.

ROCIO gets up to lock the door.

ROCIO lies on a twin-sized bed that seems barely big enough for her.

Close-up of ROCIO, her face lit up from her phone screen, which she is holding close above her.

SHOT OF PHONE SCREEN. ROCIO'S POV.

ROCIO opens porn website in incognito mode and is scrolling.
Sees a thumbnail and clicks it.

CUT TO (ON PHONE SCREEN):

INT. OFFICE WITH WINDOWS, PLANTS, DESK AND CHAIRS.

ADULT ACTRESS

(in a slightly sexy professional
outfit)

Thank you for taking the time to come
in today for this interview.

ADULT ACTOR

It was my pleasure. Thanks for
squeezing me in.

ADULT ACTRESS

I was looking through your resume and
you are quite qualified to fill my
position.

ADULT ACTOR

Thank you. My time with marketing has
really left me quite experienced.

ROCIO scrolls through the video, fast forwarding and then
hitting play.

ADULT ACTRESS

We try very hard to have open
communication, between us, management
and our customers. How would you say
you are as a communicator?

ROCIO fasts forward fast forward.

ADULT ACTOR

When I was in marketing, what I
enjoyed most was working with
customers. I enjoyed learning about
their missions and collaborating on
ideas to get-

ROCIO fast forwards.

Handsome new man comes into the room. (about 20 minutes into
the video, over 3/4s done)

ROCIO

Finally. (ROCIO repositions herself

and puts hands into pants)

ADULT ACTRESS

Mark thanks for joining us. This is
Jeb.

JEB stands up and shakes MARK'S hand

He is thinking about joining the team.
Jeb I thought it might be nice to talk
to one of our best team members. Mark,
do you want to add anything about your
experience here?

MARK (ANOTHER ADULT ACTOR)

I can't say enough about how much I
have loved my time here. From the
work-life balance to the amazing
projects we get to be a part of-

ROCIO groans, frustrated and turns off video and exits the
internet browser. She scrolls through phone and opens
LinkedIn App.

We see several posts that sport photos of smiling people
around her age, declaring their love for their corporate
jobs, much of it using the same language we heard in the
initial interview scene ("It's been my dream to work at X,"
"I'm so passionate about X", "I would like to thank X for the
opportunity to send emails on their behalf", etc...).

ROCIO comes across a post that is a video from someone she
went to college with, and turns her phone horizontal to watch
it.

CUT TO:

ON PHONE SCREEN. NICE-LOOKING OFFICE.

A dude in his twenties is sitting in leather office chair,
looking at the camera

CORPORATE DOUCHEBAG

Hey LinkedIn! I'm so proud to announce
that after just three months with X
company I've been promoted to regional
manager and received a raise! I'm here
to tell you that hard work pays off,
and give you some tips on how to level

up at your job. The key is really just to give it your all: I'm talking replying to most of your emails, only taking 2 hour lunch breaks, only skipping work on game days or when you really want to.

He turns and shoots a mini-basketball into a hoop attached to a dark computer monitor.

CORPORATE DOUCHEBAG (CONT'D)

But really, I treat every day in the office like it's my game day, and that's why I'm the MVP. That's why my dad decided to promote me, and if you just set your mind to it, you can probably get your dad to promote you too!

In the distance we can vaguely hear ROCIO's own father yell something at the TV.

ROCIO groans and exits out of the video.

She clicks onto her own profile, which is pitiful looking. She has one message, from Chipotle, which she opens.

Shot of screen reads: "Hello! We are very impressed with your profile! Your bachelors degree in Communications may qualify you for the following position: Burrito Engineer. Click the link to learn more!"

She rolls her eyes. On the side of the screen there is an ad for the incumbent in the local election, which gives her pause. She closes the app and opens google, typing in the name of the candidate LU told her about.

ROCIO scrolls through the page looking at the issues and blurbs, many of which refer to environmental issues, such as the debate about tearing down the trees by the river. She looks at the clock, which shows it's almost midnight, and then at the apron and hat from the coffee shop that are on a chair, waiting for her next shift.

COFFEESHOP.BACK OF SHOP. INT. DAY

MANAGER

(wearing a high school class of
2023 tee)

Ro, can you please go grab the
register? Tam has really bad cramps
and said she needs a minute

ROCIO is sitting on an upside down milk carton box, scrolling
through LinkedIn. She looks up.

ROCIO

I'm on break.

MANAGER continues to stand above her, arms crossed.

ROCIO

Fine. But just so you know, girls
don't get their periods two weeks in a
row like this. She's probably just
outside talking to Mark.

MANAGER

(surprise/hurt)

Oh, I mean, she said she was done
seeing him. (beat) And I have a cousin
who had her period for like three
straight weeks. Period cramps are
legit medical issues. Endometriosis
and all that shit. Uterine lining
shedding can be painful. The pink tax
is fucked up. People don't realize how
much shit women go through. (mumbles
off/trails off).

ROCIO

Yeah, I can only imagine.

MANAGER

But seriously I need you to go up
front. Also - could you clean the
espresso machine? I know it's
technically my day, but you are so
much better at it than me.

ROCIO groans and gets up, walking out to front of shop. Sees
man waiting at register.

ROCIO

Fuck.

Drops to floor. Looks around. She is the only one in the front of shop. Manager is gone. Deciding what to do now that she is awkwardly hunched on the floor, she decides to crab walk a bit so she is right behind the register. Pops up.

ROCIO

Hey.

EX-BOYFRIEND

(Surprised)

Hey Rocio, how are you? Didn't see you there. What are you doing back here? I haven't seen you since the summer after high school graduation.

ROCIO

(Dodges question)

Your usual?

EX-BOYFRIEND

(Genuinely happy and surprised that she remembered)

Yeah that'd be great.

Goes to make drink and big pause, ROCIO realizes she has no idea what he drinks.

Really slowly while making eye contact to get hints if it's right starts reaching for different containers.

EX-BOYFRIEND is happy and oblivious to her struggle. Eventually in silence and after really long time finishes a drink.

Hands it off to him quickly and asking him questions so he is unable to comment on the drink.

ROCIO

So what brings you back here?

EX-BOYFRIEND takes sip of drink. Shakes head, disgusted by drink, but smiles at her.

EX-BOYFRIEND

I am just back for a few days visiting the fam. (Beat) I heard you were still around... I mean I figured you would be off in Europe, writing the next New York Times Bestseller.

ROCIO

Ha.. I mean.. what? I finished college two years ago. No one our age is really doing anything yet right? Like, you're here too? And I never said I was going to be a writer or anything.

EX-BOYFRIEND

Oh, well, I am actually about to go to law school in England this fall. I'm around for like a few days and then me and some friends are heading to LA. We're going to be helping with some wildfire prep. And I definitely remember you said you were going to be a writer.

ROCIO

No, like, maybe I might have mentioned thinking it would be cool to be a writer, but I never said anything about winning the Pulitzer prize.

Laughing it off, but a bit assertive

EX-BOYFRIEND

No. I remember... you actually said that was a reason why we couldn't keep dating in college. You were like... "I just don't have the time for a boyfriend if I am going to publish my first novel before senior year."

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK. PARK. OUTSIDE.

YOUNG ROCIO sitting with YOUNG EX-BOYFRIEND on park bench.

YOUNG EX-BOYFRIEND is teary eyed. ROCIO seems a bit annoyed, but mostly uncomfortable.

YOUNG ROCIO

I just don't have the time for a boyfriend if I am going to publish my first novel before senior year and also be pre-med...

CUT TO:

COFFEE SHOP. INT. PRESENT (FLASH FORWARD)

ROCIO

I mean... we were so young. I am sure it had more to do with being in a serious relationship that was too intense or the long-distance

EX-BOYFRIEND

No, you said something like "You were a really great first boyfriend, so easy and uncomplicated, but I would only be holding myself back if we were to keep dating"

ROCIO

That's not exactly how I remember it.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK. PARK. OUTSIDE.

YOUNG ROCIO

You were a really great first boyfriend, so easy and uncomplicated, but I would only be holding myself back if we were to keep dating.

YOUNG EX-BOYFRIEND is full on sobbing. ROCIO seems uncomfortable and attempts to pat his shoulder.

YOUNG EX-BOYFRIEND

We can still be friends, right? It's just that I love you.

YOUNG ROCIO

Oh, I just think it'd be easier for me if we didn't.

YOUNG EX-BOYFRIEND through tears just sobs and throws himself on ROCIO's shoulder. She stiffens.

CUT TO:

COFFEE SHOP. INT. PRESENT (FLASH FORWARD)

ROCIO

I mean.. I wanted us to stay friends, and you were the one who said it would be too difficult.

EX-BOYFRIEND

Yeah Ro, you're right. (BEAT) umm it was nice seeing you. I guess I'll see you next time I visit.

He hands her \$10 and salutes her with his drink. Leaves.

MANAGER

You know that guy is way out of your league, right?

ROCIO

Well, that's because I am in a league no one has even heard of. Not as if you've ever been off the bench.

MANAGER

What are you talking about?

ROCIO

I don't know. Just fuck off.

ROCIO scowls and MANAGER gives her a look and walks off.

ROCIO watches EX-BOYFRIEND go. Waits for him to be out of sight.

EX-BOYFRIEND passes by homeless guy who sits in front of the shop, hands him a few bucks. ROCIO pulls out phone and texts LU to send her a link to the job application portal.

INT. FAIRLY CROWDED BUS. ROCIO HAS HER LAPTOP OPEN AND IS EATING A SANDWICH.

At the next bus stop, MAN WITH CRUTCHES and leg cast with a giant "Be Libertarian with me" goes into the bus.

ROCIO does not notice and OLD MAN sitting on her right, makes a throat clearing noise to get her attention.

ROCIO looks up and sees MAN WITH CRUTCHES.

She turns to her left. PREGNANT WOMAN pats belly and shrugs. ROCIO groans and shoves the rest of the sandwich in her mouth. Mustard spills onto the keyboard which she then slams and shoves into backpack. ROCIO stands up.

ROCIO

Here, you should sit.

ROCIO gestures at the open seat.

MAN WITH CRUTCHES struggles to stand as the bus sways, smacks the man to his right with a crutch.

MAN WITH CRUTCHES
No, I'm good.

OLD MAN gives ROCIO a disappointed look. ROCIO sighs.

ROCIO
Look, it's really no trouble. You
should have the seat.

ROCIO moves farther from the seat to make more room for MAN WITH CRUTCHES. MAN WITH CRUTCHES is on his phone with headphones on and does not respond.

ROCIO is just far away enough from the seat that it would be too awkward to try to sit back. OLD MAN shrugs, continues newspaper crossword.

ROCIO and MAN WITH CRUTCHES sway with the bus together and keep bumping into one another.

At the next bus stop, YOUNG MAN comes on to the bus talking loudly on the phone. YOUNG MAN takes the empty seat. LU comes on the bus, after putting bike on the rack on the front of the bus. She is still wearing her helmet. She sees YOUNG MAN talking loudly and MAN WITH CRUTCHES.

LU
Jerk!

YOUNG MAN looks at her, pauses the conversation, but then resumes.

LU
This guy (motioning to the MAN WITH CRUTCHES) needs to sit. Not just for him, but for all of us. I don't want to get knocked down by him when he inevitably loses his balance. Move!

YOUNG MAN
Some crazy lady is yelling at me. Hold on. I gotta move to the back.

LU motions to MAN WITH CRUTCHES to sit. He complies. LU goes to stand by ROCIO. ROCIO looks a bit shameful at her lack of previous action.

LU

Hey, Ro! I'll be in the office later today. I'm just going to pick up some fliers first from the print shop. You shouldn't be nervous. Everyone is super chill. They are going to love you.

ROCIO

I'm not nervous. I've done this a bunch of times.

LU

I know that. Just be yourself. Also you got mustard on your shirt. Take my sweater.

LU drops the messenger bag on the floor and pulls off her knitted sweater, struggles to get it over her helmet. Hands sweater over to ROCIO.

ROCIO

Thanks! Although it smells a little like weed.

LU

That's just my signature scent. Don't worry. No one will notice. Mom never has.

ROCIO

She definitely has. She just doesn't say anything to you.

LU

Whatever. We both know, even if they won't admit it, that mom and dad smoked. They had to. I have a feeling they were cool at one point.

ROCIO laughs. Bus stops.

ROCIO

Thanks again. (Motioning to sweater). Love you and see you soon!

LU

No problem. Love you, sis!

ROCIO gets off of the bus and LU waves from the window.

EXT. BUSY STREET. DAY. SHOT OF BUILDING FACADES ON WHAT LOOKS LIKE A MAIN STREET, WHERE A FEW PEOPLE GO BY ON THE SIDEWALK.

THERE IS AN OFFICE BUILDING WITH A REVOLVING GLASS DOOR CENTERED, AND NEXT TO IT A SMALLER, SORT OF RUN-DOWN-LOOKING RESTAURANT.

ROCIO enters the shot from the left and walks toward the office building, but goes past it, turning instead into the restaurant.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT. DAY.

The restaurant is about half-full and there is the low sound of background chatter. ROCIO approaches the podium that reads "Please wait to be seated." She looks a little confused and fusses with the sweater. A young woman approaches the podium and looks ROCIO over, unimpressed.

RUDE HOSTESS

Table for one? It will be a twenty-minute wait.

ROCIO

(laughs nervously, looks around at all the empty tables)

Uh, no, I'm not eating alone, I'm here for an interview.

RUDE HOSTESS

(without looking up)

We aren't hiring.

ROCIO

I'm sorry, I must have the wrong address, I'm actually looking for the offices of Justin Thomas.

RUDE HOSTESS

(finally looking up)

Oh. Yeah, you can follow me.

RUDE HOSTESS puts down the menus she is holding and leads ROCIO through the dining room, past the bar, and into the kitchen. As they walk the hostess talks, although ROCIO has not asked her any questions.

RUDE HOSTESS

My dad hates the other guy, the one Justin's up against. Says he's a slimy no-good piece of liberal shit. The worst of the worst, doesn't care about the people who are working hard and just wants to send us all down the drain into a socialist hellscape.

The RUDE HOSTESS looks over her shoulder at ROCIO, expectantly.

ROCIO

(not quite sure what to say)
Oh. Okay.

RUDE HOSTESS

So anyway, dad lets Justin use the restaurant's backrooms as a campaign space.

ROCIO

Does he also think that Justin is (clears throat) a piece of liberal shit?

RUDE HOSTESS

Totally. He just really wants to see the other guy lose more than anything else, and Justin's the only other candidate that actually has a chance of winning. Especially after Castillo mistook the Red Cross for child traffickers and UNICEF for the USSR.

She leads ROCIO into an even further series of back rooms, finally coming to a door that sports a slightly crooked piece of paper with the words "Justin Thomas" taped to it.

RUDE HOSTESS

Good luck.

RUDE HOSTESS leaves the way they came. ROCIO watches her go and then turns back to the door, knocking timidly.

She can hear chatter behind the door but there is no answer. She turns the knob.

CUT TO:

MAIN ROOM. SMALLER CONFERENCE ROOM OFF TO THE SIDE.

THERE ARE A FEW RUN-DOWN-LOOKING DESKS IN THE MIDDLE WITH COMPUTERS AND A FEW MORE AROUND THE WALLS. THERE ARE A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE AT THEM, TYPING OR TALKING ON PHONES.

There is a reception desk in front of ROCIO and the phone on it keeps ringing.

A flustered-looking woman approaches and, ignoring the phone, looks at ROCIO.

VOLUNTEER

Hi! How can I help you?

ROCIO

I have an interview.

VOLUNTEER

Ah, yes, please take a seat, and
Vanessa will be right with you!

The VOLUNTEER motions to a row of four folding chairs set against the wall next to the conference room, facing toward the office. A young man with curly hair sits in one of the middle chairs, and ROCIO takes a seat the end chair farthest from him. She sizes him up.

Together, they watch as a man tries to get hand sanitizer out of a dispenser, but nothing comes out. He tries again several more times.

SEATED MAN

It backfires when the sanitizer runs
out, you know? Becomes like a super-
germ cesspool, I bet. (beat) lots of
dirty hands, and all.

The other man is still pressing down on the pump repeatedly, even though nothing is coming out.

ROCIO

(nodding)

Yeah, I hate when that happens, I feel
so dumb.

The man at the sanitizer unscrews the top and tips the bottle upside down, but still nothing comes out. He screws it back on and leaves it there. The man sitting next to her gets up and tosses it in the trash after the other dude leaves.

ROCIO
Bit of a weird vibe here, huh?

SEATED MAN
(with eyebrows raised)
You think so?

ROCIO
You would think they would want to
impress us a little before they
interview us, wouldn't you?

OFFICE MAN
So you're not impressed?

ROCIO
(small chuckle)
I wouldn't say so. I'm not really into
the whole political thing though, my
sister is the one who suggested this.
Anyway, are you ready for your
interview?

SEATED MAN opens his mouth, but before he can reply, the
conference room opens and a woman in a pantsuit steps out.

VANESSA
(to SEATED MAN)
Charlie, darling, I'm so sorry but I'm
running behind and I'll have to push
our meeting until tomorrow. Oh, and
can you tell David I need those proofs
by tonight?

CHARLIE
Sure, Van, no worries.

CHARLIE smiles at ROCIO, who is shocked

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Good luck with your interview, I hope
by the end you're at least a little
impressed.

He exits.

VANESSA
Hi! You must be Rocio! I'm Vanessa,
come on in.

ROCIO follows VANESSA into a dingy conference room with a

big, oval table and some rolling chairs. An AC unit runs loudly in the corner.

VANESSA
(sitting, motioning across the table from her. She is a little sweaty-looking, and talks quickly)
Please, sit! Lu has told us so much about you! Let's get this interview started.

ROCIO sits and takes a breath, prepared to slip into her usual interview mode. The camera shows us a shot of ROCIO from VANESSA's POV, then a shot of VANESSA from ROCIO's POV, mirroring the way the first scene is set up.

VANESSA
So, tell me, do you have shoes with good arch support?

ROCIO
(eyes slightly unfocused, sounding rehearsed)
It has been a lifelong dream of mine to work at -

She blinks hard, eyebrows knitting. The camera angle breaks from the shots of them facing each other to a side view of the table, where they are both on camera.

ROCIO (CONT'D)
Wait, sorry, did you just say shoes?

VANESSA
Yeah, lots of walking when you're canvassing.

ROCIO
I have sneakers

VANESSA
Great! Okay, let's see, are you afraid of getting pepper-sprayed?

ROCIO
Excuse me?

VANESSA
You know, pepper spray? (she reaches out an arm and mimes spraying Rocio)

ROCIO
I guess I'm as afraid as a normal
person is?

VANESSA
(nodding, under her breath)
We can work with that.

ROCIO looks around as if searching for a camera on a prank
show.

ROCIO
Sorry, why is that important?

VANESSA
Oh, it's not terribly important, it's
just that a lot of people are not fond
of politicians or their employees,
especially if you approach them at
home or on the street or look at them,
and, well, there have just been a few
. . . incidents.

VANESSA smiles and tucks her hair behind her ears.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Okay, are you able to lift up to fifty
pounds at one time, and how do you
feel about costumes?

VANESSA motions to her right, where the camera cuts to show
us an indeterminate, furry mascot head with huge eyes. ROCIO
looks at the creature and then back at VANESSA.

ROCIO
What is that?

VANESSA
(writing, lips pursed)
No to costumes, then?

VANESSA flips to the next page of her notepad

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Ah, yes, okay, and tell me, lastly,
why do you want this job?

ROCIO stares at her for a moment, and then her eyes wander to
the poster of Justin behind VANESSA on the wall. He's
smiling, and the words "fight for better, change for good,
vote for Justin Thomas" are next to his face. ROCIO's eyes

soften.

ROCIO

(starting slow but gaining
intensity)

I don't want to be twenty-four working
at a coffee shop anymore. I don't want
high-schoolers telling me what to do
or that I look ugly in an apron or
that my ex is out of my league. I want
to be like my sister. I want to care
as much as she does, I want to be
insane about something. I want to get
paid and like myself at the same time.
I want --

ROCIO suddenly remembers that VANESSA is there, and seems
suddenly embarrassed

ROCIO (CONT.)

I want to do something good.

VANESSA

(writing on the notepad)

Well, alright, that's all the
questions I have for you.

ROCIO stands up and straightens her sweater. She obviously
thinks she blew it.

ROCIO

I'll keep an eye on my inbox, I look
forward to hearing from you.

VANESSA

(laughing)

What? Oh, no, darling, no need, you've
got the job

ROCIO

(in disbelief)

What?

VANESSA

Can you start on Monday?

ROCIO nods, still shocked

VANESSA

Great! I'll send you the paperwork
this afternoon!

VANESSA opens the door and leads ROCIO to the front. VANESSA hands ROCIO a t-shirt and shakes ROCIO's hand. She starts to go back to the conference room but then turns back

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Oh, and you should probably wear those
tennis shoes.

VANESSA gives a little wave and goes back to the conference room. ROCIO makes her way back through the maze of backrooms, through the kitchen, and out into the dining room.

CHARLIE sits at the bar, sipping a beer with a laptop open. He notices ROCIO, and sees the t-shirt in her hands. He gives her a thumbs up and mouths the word "impressive". She gives him a thumbs up in return, still a little shell-shocked.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

LU is at the kitchen table, scrolling on her phone. DAD comes in and pours the last of a pot of coffee into his mug and sits down next to LU with a newspaper. On the front page, we see something about the upcoming election.

ROCIO
(muffled, from upstairs)
Shit!

Sound of footsteps on stairs briefly, before we hear her apparently fall.

ROCIO
Fuck, shit, damn it!

LU and DAD both look up, then back to their respective media. We hear loud footsteps down the stairs, then on the floor. ROCIO runs into the shot, wearing slacks and a sports bra, carrying her barista apron. LU looks up.

LU
Nice outfit.

ROCIO
Shut up.

ROCIO turns the empty coffee pitcher upside down. Groans.

ROCIO
Perfect, really.

ROCIO turns to LU and DAD.

ROCIO (CONT'D)

Have either of you seen my campaign shirt? The gray one?

BOTH

No

ROCIO

I literally don't know where it could be. I put it out last night so I would have it this morning . . .

DAD

Is that what baristas are wearing these days?

ROCIO

(exasperated)

No, Dad! I'm just returning the apron. I start my new job today, but I can't find that stupid T-shirt.

DAD

Ah, yes, first day on the "job"

LU

Dad, it's a real job.

DAD

It can definitely lead to a real job.

ROCIO

(cupping hands and yelling upstairs)

Mom! Have you seen my shirt?

MOM

(Entering the room, holding the shirt)

Yes, I was just ironing it! I want you to look good for your first day!

ROCIO takes the shirt and pulls it over her head, tucks it into her pants and brushes her now messy hair out of her face. She looks silly with the t-shirt and slacks combo.

ROCIO

So? Do I look okay?

MOM

(beat)

You look great, baby. I'm sure everyone will take you... very seriously!

ROCIO

Mom! Why did you say it like that?

MOM

I didn't say it in any kind of way!

At the table behind them, LU is shaking her head at ROCIO.

ROCIO

(EXASPERATED)

Ugh, I don't have time for this, I'm going to be late.

She leaves, apron in hand.

MOM

(Calling after her)

Good luck honey!

EXT. COFFEESHOP. DAY.

THIS SHOT MIRRORS THE FIRST ONE OF THE COFFEE SHOP, ON THE DAY WE SAW ROCIO HURRYING TO WORK. IT'S THE SAME FACADE, ALTHOUGH THE DAY IS A LITTLE SUNNIER. THE HOUSELESS MAN WE ALREADY SAW IS SITTING ON THE SAME STOOP.

He has sign that reads: "If you don't want to see me, provide basic human needs."

ROCIO hurries into the scene like before, still holding the apron. She goes past the man, and into the shop.

A beat passes and she exits the shop without the apron, instead with a coffee and a pastry bag in each hand. She offers the homeless man one of the food/coffee combos.

He hesitates and then takes it, thanking her. She smiles, then checks her watch and starts running, until she is out of frame. The homeless man looks after her and takes a sip of the coffee.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT CANDIDATE BASE.

About fifteen people are milling around waiting. Most are in jeans and tennis shoes, some in t-shirts like the one we see ROCIO wearing.

CHARLIE is among them, wearing a slightly different t-shirt and jeans. ROCIO runs into the shot, slowing to a walk as she approaches the circle.

CHARLIE sees her and waves. She goes over to him. Close up of them.

ROCIO
(breathing heavily)
Hey.

CHARLIE
(looking at her, chuckling a little)
Nice pantsuit.

ROCIO
I'm not late.

CHARLIE
I didn't say you were.

ROCIO
You were thinking it, though, weren't you?

CHARLIE
No, actually I said exactly what I was thinking, which was "nice pantsuit"

ROCIO
There's nothing wrong with my slacks!

CHARLIE
No, there's nothing wrong with them!
You just look a little... formal for canvassing.

ROCIO
I wanted to look professional. I want people to take me seriously. I thought this was normal!

CHARLIE
Of course! (BEAT) It's just that things are actually a little more low key around here. The only person who

wears pantsuits is Van.

Just then Vanessa walks up, wearing a pantsuit, carrying a stack of clipboards.

VANESSA
Hello everyone!
(To ROCIO)
Nice pantsuit!

ROCIO forces a smile and then tips her head back once VANESSA hands her a clipboard and moves on.

CHARLIE
Don't worry about it. You look fine.

ROCIO
Hopefully the voters agree with you
and I'll be safe from pepper spray.

VANESSA
Okay, everyone, eyes on me, eyes on me! It's that time again! Canvassing!!
You all have your lists and scripts,
so find your partners and get to it!

ROCIO
(turning to CHARLIE)
Do you want to be partners?

CHARLIE
I would love to -

ROCIO
Great!

CHARLIE
But we are actually assigned partners,
and I'm with Jenny.

He points across the circle at a young woman who waves at them.

CHARLIE waves back. ROCIO smiles and waves weakly.

CHARLIE
(walking away)
Good luck though! You've got this!

ROCIO watches him give Jenny a hug. The two of them chat and laugh. An older woman approaches ROCIO.

BETH

Hello there! You must be RoKIO (she says ROCIO's name wrong)

ROCIO

Oh, it's pronounced Rocio. Ro-See-Oh

BETH

Oops! I'm so bad with names, I'm sorry. But it's nice to meet you! I'm Beth, we'll be canvassing together.

ROCIO

Nice to meet you too. I'm excited to learn.

They walk away, and ROCIO looks over her shoulder at CHARLIE once. BETH is asking her questions, which she is only half listening to.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL AREA. SINGLE DETACHED HOUSES. DAY.

Many of the houses have variations of "In This House We Believe" except with the amendment "unless it affects our property value".

ROCIO and BETH (middle-aged woman, dressed modestly with a noticeable golden cross) huddled on a sidewalk corner.

BETH

Okay, so since this is your first time canvassing. How about you just watch what I do?

Walks to the front door. Rings doorbell. A shirtless 13-year old boy opens the door.

BETH

Good morning, I'd like to speak with Pat Daly. Are they home?

BOY

Dad, some lady wants to talk to you.

Man (presumably PAT DALY) comes to the front door also shirtless. Hears TV in the background.

PAT DALY

Sorry, we're not interested in any boy

scout cookies. Please have a nice day.
Get out-

BETH
Actually, we are -

PAT DALY slams the door.

BETH
They don't always want to talk I
guess. (Beat) Okay then, let's
continue.

BETH and ROCIO got to the next door.

BETH
Good morning. I'd-

RELIGIOUS MAN
I am so glad you are here. Do you have
time to talk about our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ?

BETH
Confused. Normally, I do. But
actually... well I guess...

BETH turns to ROCIO as if maybe they should hear him out.
ROCIO is just shaking her head and points to the sheet with
names and addresses.

BETH
Maybe another time. We have a lot to
do today.

RELIGIOUS MAN
(giving off culty vibes)
It would only be a few minutes.

ROCIO
No, that is really alright. We need to
get going.

ROCIO closes the door on the man slowly. RELIGIOUS MAN blocks
the closing door with his foot.

RELIGIOUS MAN
There is no rush for those who know
how to wait.

ROCIO mouths "what the fuck" to BETH. BETH does not seem to

notice.

ROCIO

That is really okay. Just let's just go.

ROCIO pulls BETH away. RELIGIOUS MAN is still at the doorway watching them go. He is smiling and waving.

RELIGIOUS MAN

We will meet again as we have always been together.

ROCIO and BETH walk to a new street.

DIFFERENT HOUSES.

Reading, verbatim from her clipboard. Dogs are barking loudly in the background.

BETH

You're absolutely right. Our studies show that cities taking steps to mitigate and adapt their communities against climate change-

CAMERA FLIPS TO SHOW A WOMAN AT THRESHOLD, HOLDING BACK 4 YAPPING, SMALL DOGS WITH HER FEET.

WOMAN AT DOOR

I am so sorry. I just... now is not a great time. Thank you though.

Slams door.

Scene switches to different house, but the same angle shot of Beth

BETH

I understand where you're coming from. However, our studies show that implementing-

ANGRY MAN

I am really more concerned with the potholes over on McClare. When are you going to do something about those? Huh? My car is all scuffed up from those. Go work on that, alright? I don't see the town doing a damn thing about them. Come back when you get

those fixed!

Door slams.

CUT TO:

Another door slams.

CUT TO:

Another door slams.

CUT TO:

Another door slams.

EXT. HOUSE.

BETH

Would we be able to speak with Mr. and Mrs. Jones? Do they live here?

MRS. JONES

Yes, I am Mrs. Jones and my husband is Mr. Jones.

BETH

Would it be possible to grab Mr. Jones? We would love to be able to speak with both of you. We see from our records that you are both registered voters.

MRS. JONES

He is actually unavailable at the moment.

BETH

Is he at work? We could come back at another time to talk with you.

MRS. JONES

No, he is not at work.

BETH

Oh, well then will he be back soon?

MRS. JONES gives a creepy smile.

MRS. JONES

I am afraid he won't be back for a

while.

ROCIO
Maybe, we just go to the next one.

MRS.JONES
I think that would be best.

BETH
Are you sure? We can always call him
and ask when he might be back.

ROCIO
(whispers)
Shut up, Beth. MRS. Jones I doubt you
will be able to reach him.

ROCIO
We're gonna go now. Okay. Thanks. Take
care.

ROCIO and BETH walk away.

They pass a strange, human-shaped piece of dirt that looks
recently dug up and reburied in the lawn. Single rose-bush.

BETH
What a rude woman!

ROCIO
Let's just make a quick note so that
no one comes back here, okay?

BETH
I guess, but maybe if we come back
later, she'll be in a better mood.

ROCIO
She could also be in a worse mood, so
let's just cut our losses.

EXT. HOUSE.

BETH
Good morning, I'd like to speak with
Mary DeMarco. Are they home?

MARY DEMARCO
Yes. This is her.

BETH

I am working on behalf of Justin Thomas, candidate for city council. What do you think about the city's current preparedness for natural disasters caused by climate change?

MARY DEMARCO

I think it's a huge problem. And we definitely need to do more to be ready for more storms.

BETH

You're absolutely right. Our studies show that cities taking steps to mitigate and adapt their communities against climate change decrease the negative effects and recovery time from natural disasters. Justin Thomas supports increased funding to improve our cities mitigation and adaptive plans. Can we count on you to vote for Justin Thomas this coming election?

MARY DEMARCO

I am just so glad that people are actually going to do something about all these crazy superstorms. That Derecho left us without power for weeks. So what's the deal with this Justin? Why do you both feel so strongly about him to be out here today?

Clearly unprepared for this question. Starts flipping through her script. Unable to find a suitable response. Ultimately decides to go off script and just close the script.

BETH

Well, for me. I like Justin's honesty. He is truthful and open about his intentions. He asks his community for a lot, trying to create new green infrastructure and address housing insecurity, but he definitely gives much more in return. Always going above and beyond. He loves his community, and he loves the people in his city. And he cares about all of us. Not just those with money to donate to his campaign. He truly

values everyone. And wants to make sure that everyone in our city has a place and is safe and cared for. He also wants to help us make it easier to take care of one another. I guess overall he is really just a great person.

MARY looks impressed. And is nodding along.

MARY DEMARCO

Wow. He really sounds great. And like he'll make a great leader. He almost sounds too good to be true. He's not like the Second Coming of Christ or something?

MARY laughs. ROCIO laughs as well. BETH looks furious.

BETH

He is most certainly not our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. What are you talking about? He is just a man doing good. I mean who would even joke about that? A satanist?

Both ROCIO and Mary look mortified and embarrassed.

MARY DEMARCO

I didn't mean... I mean your candidate just sounds so great... I'm sorry...

BETH

Jesus Christ is not someone to just joke.

MARY DEMARCO

I know that. I just... You know, I totally forgot I have a Zoom meeting to hop on to right now. So thank you both for coming by. Have a great day. Door slam.

BETH

The audacity of people.

BETH walks off and ROCIO trails behind her.

ROCIO

Hey, Beth. I feel like we have a lot more to get to today. What if we tried

splitting up? We'll get more done, and I feel like I have already learned a lot from you and I'd like to try a few on my own. If I end up having too much trouble, I'll text you.

BETH

Okay. That is probably a good idea. You'll be doing these on your own in a little bit anyway.

ROCIO nods.

ROCIO

Okay. I'll see you back at the car at 2:00. Sounds good?

BETH

See you soon. Good luck!

BETH waves at ROCIO as ROCIO turns to a new house.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL AREA. EARLY AFTERNOON.

ROCIO walks down the sidewalk alone now, holding the clipboard with the manual and resident list.

She flips to the next page and then looks up at the house in front of her, which sports the same address. She takes a deep breath and walks up to knock on the door. An elderly man opens the door.

OLD MAN

Can I help you?

ROCIO

(reading from the script)

Good morning! I'd like to speak with William Moore. Are they home?

OLD MAN

That's me. What's this about?

ROCIO'S POV OF THE SCRIPT. IT SAYS "IF `YES, THIS IS {VOTER_NAME}', GO TO SECTION 3."

SHE FLIPS TO SECTION THREE. BACK TO THE VOTER'S POV AS SHE READS.

ROCIO

(sort of mechanically)

I am working with Justin Thomas. What do you think about the city's current preparedness for natural disasters caused by climate change?

OLD MAN

(politely)

Oh, I'm afraid I'm not really into all that mumbo-jumbo.

ROCIO looks at him, then down at the script. ROCIO's POV of the script. It reads "If they support, go to Section 4. If they say its "mumbo-jumbo, go to Section 5." ROCIO flips to section five and we see the script briefly before the POV switches back to the voter's POV of ROCIO.

ROCIO

(stammering slightly)

I understand where you're coming from. However, our studies show that implementing climate mitigation and adaptation strategies is imperative in reducing the harms of climate change on our community, health, and economy. Don't you think we should be taking steps to better prepare our community for future superstorms and other natural disasters?

ROCIO looks up at OLD MAN, her eyes pleading for him to agree.

OLD MAN

(still politely)

You seem like a very passionate young lady! I just don't think this city needs protection from the weather.

ROCIO'S POV OF THE SCRIPT.

It reads: "If they support, go to Section 7. If they oppose, go to Section 8."

She flips to section 8. The shot lingers on the script, so that the audience has time to read.

"Section 8: FUCK `EM" Shot of ROCIO's face as she reads this and frowns, eyes widening.

OLD MAN
Is everything okay, miss?

ROCIO lets the script fall shut, and looks up at him, seemingly slightly panicked

ROCIO
(flustered)
Uh, yes, everything is great! Um, actually, I have to go, but, um, don't forget to vote!

She starts to walk away.

OLD MAN
Okay, have a nice day!

ROCIO
(over shoulder)
You too! She rounds the sidewalk and goes out of view.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAME LOOKING NEIGHBORHOOD. NEW HOUSES.

ROCIO walks along, flipping through the script and shaking her head. She mutters under her breath, then closes the packet.

WIDE SHOT.

ROCIO puts the script into the homeowner's trash can.

Walks out of shot. OLD MAN watches from the window. ROCIO comes back into shot and takes the script out of the trash can and places it into the recycling bin. She steals herself and walks up, knocking on the door. A middle-aged woman answers. Shot similar to the interview with POVs switching between the two women.

MELINDA WALKER
Yes?

ROCIO
(smiling at the woman instead)
Hi! I'm hoping to speak with Melinda Walker. Are they home?

MELINDA WALKER
That's me. What's this about?

ROCIO

I'm working with Justin Thomas's campaign, and I was wondering if you could tell me what you think about the city's current preparedness for natural disasters caused by climate change.

MELINDA WALKER

Oh. Well honestly, I don't really care all that much.

ROCIO

What if I told you our studies show that implementing climate mitigation and adaptation strategies is imperative in reducing the harms of climate change on our community, health, and economy? Does that sound like something you would be interested in supporting?

MELINDA WALKER

Sweetie, this really isn't something that matters in the real world.

ROCIO

What? Why not?

MELINDA WALKER

(looking surprised and a bit annoyed)

Well, sweetheart, I am much more concerned with grownup issues, like paying my bills. I am already working two jobs, I have three kids and a sick father that I'm taking care of. So, sorry, but my main priorities are things like being able to put gas in the car and keeping up with my house payments rather than if some rain is going to ruin my day.

ROCIO

Okay well this would actually help you with that. And first off, I am an adult and second, I want to live in a better world than this one. I would like to have kids one day too and be able to afford to take care of them and also not worry about them living

on a decomposing planet.

MELINDA WALKER

Recycling and organic eggs are not enough to make a better world.

ROCIO

No, but more extensive and reliable public transportation will lower your commute expenses, since you won't need to get gas for your car. And healthier air and water means fewer people get sick, so no huge hospital bills. And more locally grown food means not paying for expensive shipping, lowering grocery bills. And preventing natural disasters, prevents destroyed housing and needing to pay for repairs. And bet-

SHOT INCLUDES BOTH WOMEN. ROCIO IN FRONT OF THE DOOR AND MELINDA IN THE DOOR FRAME.

MELINDA WALKER

Okay, I get it. So this guy, you said Thomas Justin

ROCIO

Justin Thomas, but yes

MELINDA WALKER

So Justin Thomas, he wants to implement this environmental stuff to make things less expensive? Is that right?

ROCIO

Yes. It is definitely part of it, but he also has a bunch of other stuff that could really help our community and make it easier for everyone to not just get by, but also not make living so fucking difficult- oops, sorry. Didn't mean to curse.

MELINDA WALKER

(Laughs) No you are right. Things are fucking hard. (Sighs) I don't remember it always being so hard.

As if to emphasize her point, a baby starts crying in the

background.

MELINDA WALKER (CONT'D)

I really gotta go check on her. I'm gonna think about what you said. Do you have a flier or something?

ROCIO pulls a little crumpled up flier from her shoulder bag. Hands it to MELINDA.

ROCIO

Here! And if you want to come to one of our meet and greets, we'd love for you to join, and you can meet Justin.

MELINDA WALKERS

Maybe. I'm not completely sold yet, but let me look this over. (motions to flier) If I continue to like what I am hearing, I'll see if I can get a sitter and go to that meeting.

ROCIO

Amazing!

Baby crying.

ROCIO (CONT'D)

I'll let you go now. Thanks for listening. Have a great day.

ROCIO walks away from the door. Does a little dance and a small dog barks at her. She happily barks back and the dog stops. Takes a moment to compose herself, then looks at the clipboard.

INT. ROCIO'S BEDROOM.

ROCIO is on her bed, scrolling again on LinkedIn. She has updated her profile. Job description "A work in progress"

LU enters bedroom. Does not knock on the door and bounces on ROCIO's bed.

LU

So I heard you got the most people to consider voting this election. And twice as many people to say they'll be voting for Justin as Beth did. Not that she is really much of competition. She only got 3 people. So

6 isn't really all that amazing.

ROCIO shutting her laptop.

ROCIO

(teasingly)

Okay so you came in here to what? Give me backhanded compliments, is that it?

LU

(Smiling and chuckling)

No, I wanted to say I am proud of you. You seem to have a real gift for getting people to take their heads' out of their asses.

ROCIO

Probably because I don't say things like that to people.

LU

Well that's why I was benched from canvassing.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK. EXT. DOORWAY OF HOUSE. LU IS AT THE DOORWAY OF A MOM WITH A TODDLER AT THEIR HOME.

LU

The people don't want to hear the truth and would rather be complicit in the destruction of our planet if that means not needing to change their way of life. Like these morons don't see that the shit has hit the fan and that they are literally boiling themselves alive. I mean how fucking stupid are you? You want your kid to die in a wasteland? Hey kid, guess what? Your mom wants you to live in a world of constant pain and suffering. Isn't that wonderful?

Toddler's eyes are welling with tears. She clutches her stuffed animal.

CUT TO:

FLASH FORWARD. INT. BEDROOM.

ROCIO

Enough. I get it. You know I get it, but talking like that has obviously not been working. No one wants to hear they are an idiot. And honestly, most of them aren't, they just have their priorities elsewhere. Like sinking island nations that people have never really even thought about is not going to be more important to them than being able to afford gas.

LU

Well if they saw that huge gas companies literally only care about the bottom line and not about people's well being then maybe we could put them out of business.

ROCIO

Lu, I agree. I just don't think that this scare tactic is going to be the thing that saves us. We need to meet people where they are. (beat) You need to stop insulting their intelligence and being an ass.

LU

Whatever. I don't really care about saving those that don't want to be saved. But if they can't get onboard they are going to take the whole ship down with them, including those of us who actually give a fuck.

ROCIO

Well it's hard, but we do need everyone on board and being a dick isn't going to help anyone.

LU

Ugh.. I can't argue with you anymore. (beat) I have something for you.

ROCIO

Yeah? What is it?

LU pulls out a book that she was keeping underneath her.

It is "Parable of the Sower" by Octavia E. Butler.

The book looks worn and there are post-its sticking out from all over it.

LU

Read this. It'll get you fired up. I
read it in the fifth grade, but, ya
know, not everyone can be the
voracious reader I am

Lu does sarcastic hair flip.

ROCIO looks over the book.

ROCIO

Thanks.

LU

Okay I gotta go shit and get to bed.
Love you. You want the light on or
off?

ROCIO flips her bedside lamp.

ROCIO

Eww. Get out of here. And off is fine.
Thanks. Goodnight. Love you.

LU shuts the light off and leaves the door open ajar.

ROCIO opens the book to the first page.

There are doodles and drawings in between the text.

One of the pictures is a drawing of what seems to be LU and
ROCIO.

ROCIO is bigger and appears to be planting a tree while LU is
watering it with a watering can.

ROCIO smiles and turns to the first page, covered in
highlighting.

BLACKOUT.