

## **TWO PERCENT**

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INT. HUSBY APARTMENT - TEENAGE BEDROOM - NIGHT

WENDY (14) is on the bed, swiping on her phone.

WENDY

He got those cute dimples when he  
smiles.

STINA (13) sits on the floor while REBECCA (14), is  
braiding her hair.

STINA

Aoh!

REBECCA

Sorry.

HALLWAY

HELEN GEBREMARIAM (45), an Eritrean woman, enters the  
front door, carrying grocery bags, while speaking on her  
cellphone.

HELEN

(into the phone)

Yes, sir.

(pause)

No, I understand that.

KITCHEN (CONTINUOUSLY)

HELEN

(into the phone)

Yes, tried to tell them that but--

(pause)

She places the groceries on the sink.

HELEN

(into the phone)

Yes, it won't happen--

(pause)

Hello? Hello?

(to self)

Damnit.

Helen turns and discovers the dissorderly state of the  
kitchen.

TEENAGE BEDROOM

Wendy, Stina and Rebecca are lounging when-

HELEN (O.S)

(from the hallway)

Rebecca?

Rebecca gets up and opens the door ajar.

HELEN (O.S)  
(from the hallway)  
Can I talk to you for a minute?

Wendy and Stina look at each other with unease.

KITCHEN

CRASH!!!

Dirty dishes tumbles after being thrown in the sink.

HELEN  
What have I told you about leaving  
the kitchen like this!!

REBECCA  
Relax, we were just--

HELEN  
--What do you think it's like to  
come home to this?

DING DONG, THE DOORBELL RINGS.

REBECCA  
We just ate, I was going to--

HELEN  
--stop! I don't want to hear your  
excuses!

REBECCA  
It's not an excuse, it's just--

TEENAGE BEDROOM (SIMOUNTAINSLY)

Wendy and Stina gaze with empty eyes as they hear shouting  
from the kitchen.

HELEN (O.S)  
(from the kitchen)  
I've had it with this, you hear me!

KITCHEN

HELEN  
Who pays for the food?! Who pays for  
your phone?! Is it too much to ask?

DING DONG.

REBECCA  
We were gonna do it!!!

Helen looks at Rebecca, suprised.

REBECCA  
Why you gotta get so crazy. Why  
can't be more like other moms?

Helen is speechless. Rebecca walks out.

HELEN  
(shouting)  
And get the door!

REBECCA (O.S)  
(from the hallway)  
I'm not expecting anyone!

Rebecca slams the door to her room.

DING DONG.

Helen draws a sigh.

FRONT DOOR

Helen opens the door and is met by a friendly faced,  
scrawny, ERITREAN MAN (59) with cheap suit and a  
briefcase.

MAN  
Helen?

HELEN  
Yes?

MAN  
Hello, hope I'm not disturbing.

HELEN  
Well, it depends.

MAN  
My name is Isaak Berhane.

HELEN  
Yes?

He cast a glance over his shoulder, then at Helen.

MAN  
I'm with the PFDJ.

HELEN  
The resistance?

He gives her a cautious smile.

HELEN

I don't care for politics.

She reaches for the door knob.

ISAAK

I have a message from Eritrea.

She looks at him, contemplating.

HELEN

Messege?

ISAAK

Yes, from your Selam.

We slowly move in on Helen's face.

MUSIC RICES AND WE CUT TO:

KITCHEN (MOMENTS LATER)

Isaak is seated by the kitchen table and while Helen serves him a cup of coffee.

ISAAK

Thank you.

He takes a sip.

ISAAK

Ah, perfect! Two things I never get used to in this country. The winters and coffee. But this.

He raises the cup, smiles, takes another sip. Helen stares at him, unmoved.

ISAAK

So. I work as an interpreter for the immigration services.

HELEN

You must be busy.

ISAAK

Yes, many young people are fleeing Eritrea, many, many. But we are also collecting information for the PFDJ, about the army, the country and so on.

HELEN

Does the authorities here know you're doing this?

ISAAC  
The authorities?

He chuckles.

ISAAC  
So there was a young girl that had  
just arrived here with her brother.  
She asked for you. Said she had  
promised to bring you something.

He opens his briefcase, takes out a folder and browses  
through it.

ISAAC  
(to self)  
Let's see, let's see. Where did I  
put it? Ah! Here it is!

He pulls an envelope and slides it over to Helen. She  
looks at it, hesitantly.

ISAAC  
Well? Open it.

Helen opens the envelope and takes out a photograph.

HELEN  
Oh, god.

She palms her mouth, trying to hold back the tears. Isaac  
puts on his reading glasses and leans over the table.

ISAAC  
So, I'm sure you recognize your  
sister. From what the woman told me,  
this fellow is her husband Abraham,  
this is their son David, that is  
their oldest son Senay and the  
little girl is their youngest,  
Selam.

HELEN  
I can't believe this!

ISAAC  
Beautiful, picture isn't it? Very  
good photographer.

HELEN  
Yes!

The joy settles as she looks closer at the picture. Her  
smile turns to a frown. He notices. She looks up at him,  
dead serious.

HELEN

You're not with the PFDJ.

He looks at here for moment, confused.

ISAAK

What do you mean?

HELEN

Where did you get this picture?

ISAAK

I just told you, your sister--

HELEN

--no family in these rags could afford such a photo.

He looks at her in disbelief.

ISAAK

Miss... You can't be serious?

HELEN

Only one that could afford something like this would be the--

His surprised facial expression turns into a cunning smile.

HELEN

You're with the embassy.

He smiles, connivingly.

HELEN

This is a christian home and liars aren't welcome.

ISAAK

I'm not the only one telling lies here am I, Helen?

HELEN

I don't know what you're talking about.

ISAAK

Senait Girma of the 271th corps. Graduated at the Sawa Defence Training Center. Highly decorated from the great struggle as combatant and later on as a sniper. Youngest female to be promoted to the secret service. Lead targeted killings domestically and behind enemy until  
(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
 you decided to betray your country  
 by deserting.

She glares at him for a momentent.

TEENAGE BEDROOM (SIMOUNTAINSLY).

Stina looks at her new braids in the mirror, Rebecca takes out some school books from here backpack and Wendy is on the bed with her phone.

WENDY  
 Oh, shit it is going down.

REBECCA  
 What?

WENDY  
 Ahmed says he wants to meet Jessica  
 now by the train.

STINA  
 That guy is an idiot.

WENDY  
 She want us to go with her.

REBECCA  
 I'm good.

STINA  
 Damon will probably be there.

WENDY  
 Please, let's go.

KITCHEN

Isaak and Senait sit by the kitchen table, facing each other.

SENAIT (Helen)  
 Arlight. What do you want?

ISAAC  
 I've come to give you an offer.

SENAIT  
 You can't offer anything I need.

ISAAC  
 This is from the highest place.  
 First off, full pardon for deserting  
 The Eritrean Defence Forces and  
 illegally exiting the country.  
 (MORE)



ISAAK (CONT'D)

Exemption from what you owe the Eritrean government in taxes, which is 2% of all your income in this country since you arrived, whether it'll be wages or social welfare benefits.

SENAIT

And what do you want in return?

ISAAK

The opposition in this country is getting too comfortable. The president would like to send them a message. Perhaps there could be some accident.

SENAIT

I want you to leave. Now.

ISAAK

Please, miss. You should at least consider.

SENAIT

I've forgotten everything that I learned in the army. I just want to live my life here in peace.

ISAAK

We could also have your army pension restored.

She rises and opens the door to the hallway.

SENAIT

I'm afraid I'm not interested. Now please leave.

Isaak smirks as she points to the door.

SENAIT

Please be reasonable, miss. This is a generous one time offer.

Senait looks at him, unpersuaded. He looks her up and down, pondering.

ISAAK

Can I ask you something? Do you feel safe in this country?

She lowers the pointing arm, meekly. Isaak notices a picture frame and reaches for it.

ISAAK

Well, this has to be your daughter  
that I've heard so much about?

TEENAGE BEDROOM (SIMOUNTAINSLY).

Rebecca sit by her desk while Stina and Wendy are putting  
on their jackets.

WENDY

Come on, you can do it later.

REBECCA

This has to be handed in tomorrow  
morning.

Stina and Wendy head for the door.

KITCHEN

Senait stands by the door, Isaak is sitting by the kitchen  
table, glancing at the framed photo of Rebecca.

ISAAK

Really adorable, just to bad there  
is no man in the house?

WENDY (O.S)

(from the hallway)

Text us when you're done, OK.

HALLWAY

Stina and Wendy close the door to Rebecca's room and walk  
towards the front door.

As they pass the kitchen they see Senait standing by the  
door, but she ignored the girls, eyes locked on Isaak.

Isaak breaks eye-contact with Senait, glance at the girls  
passing by in the hallway, smiles and then looks back at  
Senait.

MUSIC RISES AND UNTIL:

WE HEAR THE FRONT DOOR BEING SLAMMED SHUT.

STAIRWELL (OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT)

Stina takes her hand off the front door and walks away  
with Wendy.

WENDY

I love her mom but sometimes she's a  
bit crazy.

STINA  
Yeah, I know.

And we cut back to:

KITCHEN

Senait snatches the framed photo out off Isaak's hands, puts it in a kitchen cabinet and attends to the dishes on the sink.

SENAIT  
I don't remember anything from my time in the army. I can't help you, now please go.

Isaak looks at her, undeterred.

TEENAGE BEDROOM (SIMULTANEOUSLY)

Rebecca sitting by her desk doing homework. She stops writing, raises her gaze and thinks.

KITCHEN

ISAAK  
You don't remember anything? Really? I find that hard to believe. From what I heard, you were one of best. I spoke with the general and heard a thing of two. Told me that he was your sergeant when you were a cadett. Tender age, those teenage years, ey?

Senait puts down the dishes, standing still, head bowed.

ISAAK  
A woman that age is like a fruit. Just ripe, ey.

He lights a cigarette, takes a drag.

ISAAK  
Don't be foolish.

He takes a drag on the cigarette.

ISAAK  
You been through a lot already. I know all about it.

He blows some smoke and smiles.

ISAAK  
Would be unfortunate your daughter  
(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
would go through something like  
that? Wouldn't it?

He grins, pleased.

We see Helen from the back as she raises her bowed head.

HELEN  
Can ask you something? Do you feel  
safe in this country?

His contempt smile is replaced with a confused expression.

Top KITCHEN DRAWER is pulled out and she whips out a 9MM  
RUGER SR22 WITH A SILENCER. Senait points at Isaak.

PUI! PUI!

Isaak gape at at her, motionless, with the TWO BULLET  
HOLES on his forehead.

She glares at him with eyes burning with rage, still  
aiming at him.

He begins to tilt forward, eventually tipping over the  
kitchen table, revealing the BLOOD STAINS on the back  
wall.

Everthing is perfectly still for moment except the gun  
smoke coming out of the barrel of her silencer and the  
puddle of blood that is forming around Isaak's punctured  
head on the table.

Suddenly, Rebecca walks into the kitchen but stops in her  
tracks, gasped.

Senait still has her arm reached out, aiming with a slight  
tremble.

Rebecca approach Senait, who is still stands static. She  
looks at her mother, confused. Rebecca turns to look  
toward the kitchen table.

REBECCA POV: THE KITCHEN TABLE IS EMPTY. NO ISAAC. NO  
GORE. NO BLOOD.

We see that where Senait WAS holding THE GUN, she is now  
holding a KITCHEN HAND MIXER.

A tear runs down Senait's face.

Rebecca opens her arms and embrace her mother.

Senait comes to life and lowers her hand with the hand  
mixer.

Rebecca holds her mom tight.

The hand mixer slips out of Senait's hand, sails down to the kitchen floor.

REBECCA

It's OK mom. It's OK.

They hold each other.

THE END.