

VINDICATION

Written by

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EXT. WALLACE HOME - LOS ANGELES 2010 - EVENING

BETHANY WALLACE (17), Caucasian, an overweight and plain looking girl stands outside of her house looking in the window. LAUGHTER can be heard as she watches her family sitting at the dinner table. TEARS stream down her face.

MOM (V.O.)  
If you don't get it together,  
you'll be 600 lbs. before  
graduation.

DAD (V.O.)  
Boys don't like fat girls. And if  
they do, it's only for one thing.

With her eyes closed tight, she clutches the purse on her hip that is slightly unzipped.

MOM (V.O.)  
Don't you want to look like your  
sister? She's so beautiful.

Bethany wipes her tears.

DAD (V.O.)  
I don't think you should go to  
prom. I think you'll just get your  
feelings hurt. The fat girls always  
end up standing by the food table  
alone.

The laughs in her head mix with the laughter from the house. Her SADNESS shifts as she cleans off her face, takes a deep breath and enters the house.

INT. WALLAS HOME - CONTINUOUS

MOM and DAD, who are both Caucasian and in their late forties, and KATHERINE (15), Caucasian, beautiful sit at the dinner table.

MOM  
... and then I told Lauren to turn  
that damn thing off.

They all LAUGH not stopping to notice that Bethany has entered the room.

DAD  
Hey Bethany, want some dinner? Your  
mom made spaghetti.

MOM

And for your diet I made yours with  
vegetables instead of pasta.

Bethany sits as Katherine leans over and gives her a hug.

KATHERINE

It's really good. I had some of  
both.

The table is filled with a LARGE spaghetti dish, garlic bread  
and a pie. Her mother places a SMALL scoop of veggie  
spaghetti and a LARGE portion of dry salad on a plate and  
sits it in front of Bethany.

MOM

(squeezing lemon juice on  
top)  
The salad is your dessert.

DAD

No pie for you.

Katherine squeezes Bethany's hand under the table and smiles  
at her.

KATHERINE

(whispers)  
I'm not going to have any pie  
either.

MOM

(to Katherine)  
Honey, you're not your sister.  
You're debutant, and she is...well,  
not.

Mom finishes with what's on her plate and THROWS it against  
the wall breaking it. Bethany and Katherine both tense up as  
Bethany grabs her purse.

MOM (CONT'D)

(to Katherine)  
Clean it up!

Katherine RUNS into the kitchen for a moment returning with a  
towel. She DROPS to the floor picking up pieces of the plate,  
then retreats back into the kitchen.

DAD

This is a really great dinner.  
(to Bethany)  
Isn't it a great dinner?

Bethany forces a smile.

BETHANY

Yes. Great.

Bethany looks down at her feet to see Katherine. TEARS roll down her face as she works to catch her breath. Bethany now absent of emotion, stands, and out of her purse pulls a 9mm gun.

Katherine SCREAMS then cowers against the wall. Dad now stands with his hands up as Bethany shoots him in the head then immediately turns the gun on her mother.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Dinner was just lovely.

Bethany shoots her mother in the head.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

(softly)

Katherine.

Katherine slowly comes around the corner. She runs to Bethany hugging her.

KATHERINE

You saved us.

BANG. A shot to the abdomen as Katherine slowly slides down Bethany onto the floor. Bethany grabs a piece of GARLIC BREAD and exits out the back of the house.

EXT. WALLACE BACKYARD - EVENING

Bethany grabs a LARGE gym bag hidden under the porch stairs. She takes off her clothes, HOSES herself down, dries off and puts on different clothes from the bag. Her phone BEEPS.

She walks down the driveway passing a window. She stops, peers in to see the dining room, SMILES and continues to a waiting car.

INT. WALLACE HOME - CONTINUOUS

Katherine lies on the floor, blood flowing out of her stomach. Then, her eyes blink.

INT. JOEY'S OFFICE - PRESENT DAY - MORNING

JOEY RILEY (late 30s), an African American woman whose beauty lives in her power. She wears the dopest outfits always accented with jewelry or scarves.

The office is well organized, clean and expensively modern. She sits at her desk where a STACK of files all stamped "CLASSIFIED: COLD CASE LOS ANGELES MOST WANTED" live.

She opens a file marked "BETHANY WALLACE." She sits back in her chair and dials a number on speaker.

INTERCUT JOEY/ VOICE

JOEY

I need the kids to be dropped off  
at the sitter, please.

VOICE

When should the kids arrive?

JOEY

By six o'clock.

VOICE

On the way.

EXT. 405 HIGHWAY - MORNING

A group of SIX people riding black motorcycles with bags attached to their backs and helmets covering their faces BULLDOZE their way through traffic on the 405.

They all exit together and immediately separate going off in different directions.

INT. SIMON LIVINGSTON'S OFFICE - MORNING

A motorcyclist walks with a MANILA ENVELOPE directly to the receptionist's desk. They hand the envelope to the person sitting at the desk. It reads "SIMON LIVINGSTON open asap" with a picture of SIMON (mid 30s), a Caucasian man, athletic and professional, attached to the outside.

INT. SIMON LIVINGSTON'S OFFICE- MORNING

The receptionist enters and stands by the door. Simon swings around in his chair. His tailored suit jacket hangs on the back. Simon holds his hand out.

The receptionist gives it to him, and he opens it. The receptionist QUICKLY steps back, nervous.

SIMON  
(into the phone)  
No, commissioner. You don't get to  
decide how I represent the union  
members that you took a shit on.  
I'll see you in court.

He hangs up the PHONE turning his focus to the contents of the envelope. His face shifts.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
Well, isn't this some interesting  
fucking shit?

He motions for the receptionist to leave and turns back around in the chair.

INT. DRUG HOUSE - DAY

DRAKE ANDERSON (early 30s), a suave African American man, sits in the kitchen reading a newspaper and sipping CONGAC. SOFT INSTRUMENTAL music plays. Behind him two nearly NAKED girls are passed out on the couch. A KNOCK on the kitchen window.

The girls jump up grabbing GUNS from under the couch. He motions to them that everything is okay. They return to the couch.

Drake rolls back in his chair to the window and cracks it open.

DRAKE  
What?

VOICE  
Let me get two.

Emotionless, Drake grabs two small BAGGIES as money appears on the window sill. The exchange happens, and Drake closes the window going back to reading. Another KNOCK on the window.

The person slides him an ENVELOPE. "DRAKE ANDERSON open asap." Drake's face is completely FLUSH. He quickly opens the window and sticks his head out followed by his Glock. He turns, looks around the room, hides the ENVELOPE under his shirt, locks the window and GRABS his keys.

DRAKE  
(to the girls)  
Yo, we closed. Get out.

The women quickly grab their clothes and exit out the back of the house. He locks the door behind them as he exits out the front.

EXT. AN OLD WAREHOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Coming from all directions: JESS PETERS (30s), a Caucasian woman with a messy ponytail wearing a t-shirt, jeans and an oversized hoodie, MAX ANDERSON (mid 20s), an African American man wearing an "LAPD" hat and backpack, RUMIKO TROUNG (early 20s), an Asian woman in all black on a wildly decorated SKATEBOARD with black hair, colorful highlights and tons of HIP HOP tattoos, EMILIANO GARCIA (mid 50s), shy, in a long sleeve button up plaid shirt and sweater vest, and Drake all arrive with their envelopes in hand.

They are in front of an old WAREHOUSE. They look at each other. Drake and Max recognize each other. Drake gives him a head nod. Max avoids then smiles.

EMILIANO  
(reading a note and  
counting)  
We're all here.

Emiliano opens the door. They all walk in.

INT. WAREHOUSE - EARLY EVENING

The elevator door opens, and they all exit into a hallway of office doors.

RUMIKO  
This is like that old school,  
Indiana Jones type shit.

They look at her.

RUMIKO (CONT'D)  
What? I'm twenty- two. That's old  
shit to me.

They walk down the hall surveying their surroundings. Drake takes his phone out.

EMILIANO  
No phones.

JESS  
Instructions were specific.

DRAKE  
To hell with those instructions.  
I'm a detective. I document.

Drake tries to use his phone, but the screen is BLACK. Max tries to open the doors on each side, but they are all LOCKED. The group reaches the last door that reads BOARDROOM. Emiliano turns the knob, and it OPENS.

RUMIKO  
(smiling)  
The Temple of Doom.

INT. BOARDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A long WOOD table sits in the middle with chairs around it. A screen is pulled down at the front of the room. In the middle of the table is a REMOTE CONTROL.

DRAKE  
Okay. What's next?

JESS  
We're here for a reason.

Emiliano picks up the remote.

RUMIKO  
Gonna hit the news, old man?

EMILIANO  
I prefer to be called doctor,  
respectfully.

Rumiko smiles and nods. Emiliano sits and points to the screen hitting the "POWER" button. The screen turns on, lights turn out and the slideshow begins.

MAX  
All the way down here for a damn  
movie?

DRAKE  
Shut up.

Max cowers to him. Max walks toward for the door. There is no handle. He BANGS on it for a second then turns to see everyone else sitting silently MESMERIZED by what is on the screen. Max sits.

Photo: Three DEAD Caucasian bodies on the table at the morgue. One woman, one man and one teenage girl.

Photo: Woman sits at the kitchen table with a GUNSHOT wound to her head. The man is on the floor in front of the table with a GUNSHOT wound to the head, and the teenage girl lies in a PUDDLE of blood coming from her abdomen.

Photo: Family pictures of the man, woman, child and another child. Final shot: photo labeled "Los Angeles Most Wanted 2010 BETHANY WALLACE."

EMILIANO

I know this case.

The lights come up. Everyone looks around at each other.

MAX

How?

DRAKE

I know it too.

JESS

I know.

Everyone looks at her.

DRAKE

Back then I was a beat cop. I worked it.

EMILIANO

I'm a professor. I teach it.

MAX

What class?

EMILIANO

"Unsolved Crimes and Uncaught Killers."

JESS

(to Emiliano)

You're a criminology professor, (points to Drake) he's a cop, I'm a PI. What about you two?

RUMIKO

CSI.

All eyes look to Max, who avoids for a moment.

MAX

Hacker.

RUMIKO

Dope.

JESS

So...

The door unlocks and opens. Joey walks in with her assistant, a woman in her early twenties who is almost military in her presence.

JOEY

Thank you all for coming. Jess is solving mysteries already. I like it.

DRAKE

What is all this? The envelopes, all of us and how the hell did you find me?

RUMIKO

Like you were lost?

DRAKE

Like I was deep undercover, and I got an envelope delivered to me at a location that no one should know about. Like that could have gotten me killed.

Joey smiles at Drake.

JOEY

Oh, Drake.

(laughs)

Please everyone let me explain.

(to Drake)

Your life was never in danger. Your fellow dealer Lox took a brick and twenty stacks to your contact Bruno in Westside Park on the south side of LA. He had been gone for exactly-

Points to her assistant who's looking at her tablet.

ASSISTANT

Twenty- eight minutes.

JOEY

And as he sat in traffic, my package was delivered, and you left right on schedule.

Drake is amazed and sits.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Now that I have your attention, Bethany Wallace has been on the Los Angeles FBI's Most Wanted list since 2010 when she went from sole survivor to prime suspect. We believe she's back.

DRAKE

In LA?

JOEY

Killing and in LA, yes. I have been tasked with bringing to justice LA's Most Wanted criminals who have evaded capture.

MAX

Cold cases.

JOEY

This is my winning team.

Everyone looks around the table.

JOEY (CONT'D)

I present a job opportunity.

The assistant hands out paperwork.

RUMIKO

Now this sounds like some A-Team shit.

Joey smiles.

JOEY

Close.

MAX

So, we're some division of the LAPD?

EMILIANO

No. LAPD would never fund all this.

JESS

You got that right, Doc.

JOEY

We are independently funded, and the funds run very, very deep. The people in the LAPD who need to know do, but we unofficially work for the FBI.

JESS

What's the plug? The hook? The bullshit ass bureaucracy that always comes with the FBI?

DRAKE

Things have changed since you-

RUMIKO

Ya'll know each other?

JOEY

(interjecting)

You will continue to live as you were, but your work is now here and completely confidential. As far as anyone knows, you have taken a job on assignment with the LAPD. Should you ever decide to leave this assignment, your present job will be waiting for you.

DRAKE

Gotta be bullshit.

Joey points to the forms they have just been given as they begin to flip through them.

JOEY

No bullshit. Double the salaries that you are presently making with complete access to all technology, vehicles, doctors, resources, tools and toys that you will need to make us secretly look like fucking caped crusaders.

JESS

And what do you do?

DRAKE

Watch us work?

JOEY  
Supervise. Facilitate. Put out  
fires. Pay bills.

Joey looks at her assistant again, who pushes a button and all of their phones begin to beep. They all take them out and look.

RUMIKO  
Damn, lady. What's this for?

JOEY  
Signing bonus.

Joey smiles.

EMILIANO  
We do all the work, and you get the  
credit?

JOEY  
LAPD gets the credit. FBI gets  
cases closed. You get paid...  
again, everyone wins.

MAX  
But what do you get?

JOEY  
They trusted me. This force was my  
idea.

DRAKE  
Who are you?

Joey smiles and continues.

JOEY  
I'm Joey. To be clear, if you stay  
you accept that I run this, and I'm  
nice enough to share it with you.  
No one knows we exist. You have no  
one to complain to, no unions. If  
you walk, you'll get a direct  
deposit for work completed, and our  
business is over. Period. There is  
no coming back. The only people you  
are allowed to talk to are within  
this room.

RUMIKO  
With no vaseline.

DRAKE

Ice Cube would be proud.

Rumiko opens her jacket to reveal a tattoo on her chest that reads, "NWA." Drake nods.