PIPELINE SIDES

LAURIE

Fucking fifth period. The substitute was an idiot. I asked my kids what’d they do while I was gone. Three weeks while I was gone. You know nobody could give me a straight answer? Then Alejandro finally cracks. Watched The Wire, Season Four - he tells me. Said the sub was trying to show them what not to do. You fucking kidding me? The cute young blonde straight outta Teacher’s College. Patricia or Patrice or some shit. What the hell are they teaching them over there? The last sub they sent me showed ‘em Dangerous Minds. Do they really believe public school is Michelle Pfifer and Hillary Swank and corny fucking music and close ups? I’m a white chick who has never had the luxury of winning over a class full of Black and Latino kids. This is war. Got my fucking face cut by the family of a failing student. Fuck them and their lies and the substitutes that show them these dumb ass godforsaken setting us back 300 educational years bullshit flicks. TEACH you assholes! I left you lesson plans for fuck’s sake!

JASMINE

Our school is fuckin’ fucked. Bitches can’t never mind their own damn business. Gossip whores at every level. It’s like- private school for what? For who? Ain’t nothin’ you do here private! My parents are stupid crazy paying all this money to keep me away from all the kids in my neighborhood cuz they’re so damn spooked I’ll get pregnant or shot or some shit if I go to Public, but I’m like – they must not’ve ever been in the staircase here at freakin’ Fernbrook cuz for reals... it’s all types of teen fuckery going on and these rich bitches are the nastiest – straight up. It’s like they privilege bought them some extra freak or somethin’, or maybe they ain’t never known what it’s like to be desperate so they rather figure that out through sex or whatever. It’s tragic. And I cannot keep myself in this wasteland of talent. Stuck up girls in my dorm acting like I’m gonna steal their fabric softener or grab their granny panties out the laundry cuz I don’t have my own or whatever. Like are you serious? Bitch I may not have your money, but I have BOTH my mother and father at home workin’ their asses off at two jobs just to have me study up here with the rest of you cuz they think your privilege will rub off on me by association or some shit.

OMARI

I had woke up that day thinkin’ ‘bout you. Hadn’t seen or talked to you in weeks but the check came on time. I woke up with that check in my hands and I had a feeling about that. Like I didn’t know what to say but I wanted to say somethin’ to you. I called you but you didn’t answer. So I went to class. Sittin’ there listening to the class talk about Native Son. About the character Bigger Thomas and who he was and what lead him to his act of rage. Teacher kept saying he was “unleashed”. I kept thinking – animal. And we discussin’ this Bigger Thomas. Discussin’ his circumstances and what he comes from and this and that. Single mother. That got brought up. One of the students said he only had his mother. And I’m sittin’ there listening to this. On a day where I woke up with you on my mind and tried to call you. Tell you I had this feelin’ about getting these checks. Tell you I hadn’t seen you in a minute. Wonder where you been. But you didn’t answer your phone. So I sat there. Listenin’ to single mother poor angry animal Bigger Thomas. And when the Teacher come askin’ me what I thought... I felt like he was sayin’ somethin’ to me. Like he knew I was sitting there, thinkin’ about you, feelin’ single mother poor angry animal Bigger Thomas-like. And I say, I don’t want to talk about it. Cuz all I’m thinking about is you. And how I haven’t talked to you in weeks but I get this check on time. And I’m thinking--- who does that??? What kinda nigga just sends checks and calls that fatherhood?

DUN

You keep thinking this is me? You act like I did something wrong. What did I do wrong? Was I not able to answer your call fast enough? When it’s only eight of us working 4 different schools in one building, did I not reach you fast enough? Did I not run from one hallway to another at a speed that makes you satisfied? I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry that while I’m sitting up here, barely breaking minimum wage and dealing with the attitudes of 100 teens and teachers per minute, that I’m not a suitable servant to your beck and call. I do what I fucking can. I’m not Cox – sitting up here stealing computers from the school lab or Bender- flirting with teenage girls. I’m Dun. I’m the last of the good guys wearing a uniform and greeting kids with a smile when they enter the building. I try to make a sunny day out of shit. And I answer every call I get at the security desk. I do my job, damnit. And this time Laurie, maybe the job got the better of you. That shit happens. But don’t go taking me down with you. You get in trouble, you get early retirement. You wanna know what I’d get???? --- --- I do my damn job.

NYA

I have tried... like religiously.... like an ongoing prayer... to protect you. I have tried to buffer you from it all. Tried to flee you and free you. Follow instructions from your father. From other mothers. From my own mother. From whomever. And I still don’t... ... ... I don’t have the answer. They could press charges. They could take you from me and I wouldn’t be able to stop them. I want instructions. I will take a bullet for you. I will suffocate the sun for you. I will steal the sky for you. I will blind Moses for you. I will strip the wind and the rain and the forests for you. Before I let you die or rot or lose your freedom, I will surrender my own. You know that? I would die if you could be born again without this oppressive rage. I just... I don’t know what to do. I need you to tell me. Tell me how to save you. Tell me how to give you another life. Tell me what will take this failure away. Because I have listened to everyone else. I’m ready to listen to you. Guide me. Give me the answer. Just give it to me and I’ll do it. I swear.

XAVIER

Maybe he should come stay with me. It’s important. Maybe they won’t press charges if we... ... if we tell them that we are changing his circumstances. I’ll pull him out of Fernbrook. He’ll get enrolled in the school in my neighborhood. Not here. The school is failing Nya. You can’t watch him all day. But I can give him a better surrounding. You do what you can. I know that. I’m not suggesting you’ve done anything wrong. But you resist... you and him... the offers I make. You can ride or die for this hood all you want. That’s good for you. But that’s not good for our son. --- I’m working with the parts I get, Nya. That’s all I get access to. He doesn’t let me in. That doesn’t mean I’m not still active. I work from whatever way he dictates. He always dictates. But he’s the son. And he can’t always be the dictator. It can’t always be a democracy. Sometimes we have to---- and I try but you... ... ... it’s like we’re running two different governments. Sometimes it’s time---- --- and I’m not saying you don’t do your part--- but I’m the man. Not you. And he needs a firmer hand. Maybe he’s had too many damn choices and he doesn’t know how to follow a leader. He thinks it’s him. But where is he going?