



SCRIPT

The Notorious P.Y.G.

A motion picture written by the students of the D.C. Creative Writing Workshop

ACT I

Mother: What about 14th & U?

Freddy: Like I was saying before I was interrupted, there were no cabs at 14th & U. And I hope you didn't expect me to walk to the bottom of Adams-Morgan.

Daughter: Just like I thought, you didn't try.

Mother: Now I'm guh. Boy, why you so helpless? Go, and don't come back 'til you got a cab for us.

Freddy: So it's like that? You want me to get soaked for nothing?

Daughter: And? I know we ain't tryin' to be here all night.

Freddy: Aight. [He throws his hoodie on, turns around, and bumps into a woman with a tray of oils looking for shelter, knocking the oil bottles on the sidewalk.]

Incense Girl: Watch it, Freddy. Look where you're going.

Freddy: My bad.

Incense Girl: [Picking up her oils and replacing them in the tray.] Thank God the bottles didn't break. [She sits on a bench, wiping down the bottles and tray. She's pretty, but not beautiful. She's 18 or maybe 20. She wears a headwrap around her dreadlocks. She wears a kente cloth skirt that goes down to her ankles. Her sneakers are plain and worn from her time on her feet.]

Mother: How you know my son?

Incense Girl: Who, him? If you had raised him better, he wouldn't be knocking over helpless women. Would you like to buy some oils?

Daughter: Don't give her nuthin', Ma.

Mother: Come on.

Daughter: Ma, no! Don't give her any money.

Mother: Girl, be quiet. [Looks at Incense Girl] Do you have change for a ten?

Incense Girl: I can give you two fives, ma'am.

Mother: This is for the damage.

Incense Girl: Thanks, ma'am.

Daughter: Ma! You better make sure you got all your change back. They're only 3 dollars apiece.

Mother: Child, hush! [To Incense Girl] You can keep the change.

Incense Girl: Why, thank you.

Mother: Now tell me how you know my son, because I stay in his business and I ain't never seen you before.

Incense Girl: Um... I don't know him.

Mother: Don't try and act a fool. I heard you call him by his name.

Incense Girl: Who's trying to fool you? I called him Freddie or Bobby, just like you would if you didn't know somebody's name and wanted to be nice.

Daughter: Great mom. You just threw away ten dollars. You could have given that to me.

Gentleman: [Coming out of the rain] Man!

Mother: Excuse me, but is it about to let up?

Gentleman: Naw, I don't think so. I think it's getting worse, and I ain't even got my umbrella.

Mother: Oh, wow!

Incense Girl: If it starts getting worse, that means the storm is probably about to end. So just cheer up, sir. You want to buy some lotion?

Gentleman: My bad. I ain't got no change.

Incense Girl: Oh that's okay. I do.

Gentleman: You sure? Cuz it's a Benjamin.

Incense Girl: Seriously, just buy something and I'll be happy. Incense sticks are two for a dollar.

Gentleman: Oh stop. I really don't have much change. [Reaches into his pocket] But here— It's all I got.

Incense Girl: Thank you, sir.

Bystander #1: Be careful. Better give him something for it. The feds over there are writing down everything you're saying.

Incense Girl: But I haven't done anything! I'm just trying to make a little money to help pay the rent.

Bystander #2: Hey! Hey! Why are you messing with that girl? The police doing too much.

Bystander #3: Yes, way too much.

Incense Girl: Oh please, don't arrest me. I'm not out here robbing anybody. I can't afford to get locked up!

Note Taker: Ha! You funny. I ain't no cop. Really? I acted like 5-0 material to you?

Bystander #1: Oh, you're no Po-Po. Now I can tell from the look of them dusty Payless shoes, those ragamuffins on your feet.

Incense Girl: What's a Po-Po? And what's a 5-0?

Bystander #2: Well it's...it is what it is...police.

Incense Girl: I swear everything I've got is legal!

Note Taker: Girl, chill out. Do I look like a police?

Incense Girl: Then why have you been checking me out? And what's the video camera for?

Bystander #3: Man, all this ain't called for. Everybody can see she ain't from around here.

Bystander #4: Of course everyone sees that. Hey, why do you care anyway? You all up in her face for what?

Bystander #1: Man, he ain't nobody, just look at him.

Note Taker: How are your grandparents down North Carolina?

Bystander #1: How you know that?

Note Taker: Just look at you. [Turns back to Incense Girl] Ain't you from the suburbs? Way out in Maryland, probably Burkittsville or something. How you end up here in D.C.?

Incense Girl: What's wrong with being from Montgomery County? Lots of people are downsizing. Don't you know it's a recession?

Note Taker: I don't really care where you're from. Now will you shut up?

Gentleman: Aight, aight, calm down. He ain't gone do nothin' to you.

Sarcastic Bys: Let's say upstate New York. Man, whatever. You can be from anywhere you want.

Incense Girl: There isn't anything wrong with me.

Sarcastic Bys: Where I'm from?

Note Taker: Suitland, Maryland.

Sarcastic Bys: How'd you know that? So, you just know everything, huh?

Incense Girl: That does not mean he can mess with me.

Bystander #4: Of course he can't. Don't take nothing from him. [To Note Taker] Why you messing with people that ain't do nothing to you?

Incense Girl: He can say whatever he wants. I don't want any trouble from him.

Bystander #2: You think you know everything, don't you?

Sarcastic Bys: Where you think he from? [points to the Gentleman]

Note Taker: Anacostia... Within 5 blocks of the Big Chair.

Gentleman: Yeah, aight he knew. Do you make a quick buck out of annoying people?

Note Taker: Maybe I should some day.

Incense Girl: He shouldn't be rewarded for harassing people.

Daughter: Man, what is Freddy doing? My weave messing up.

Note Taker: Waverly neighborhood, in Baltimore.

Daughter: Shut up and stay out my mouth.

Note Taker: I said that out loud? Well sorry, I guess. But uh, ain't you from Baltimore?

Daughter: That's weird. I was born there.

Note Taker: Ha, ha! I always thought Baltimore was dirty. Ah, you're looking for a cab, right?

Daughter: Boy, you dirty. Don't talk to me.

Mother: Cierra, shut your mouth. If you can get us a cab, you will be the best.

Bystander #3: You probably some little suck up snitch.

Bystander #1: Naw, he just a suck up.

Incense Girl: I haven't done anything to anyone.

Note Taker: Ya'll know it stopped raining a minute ago, right?

Bystander #4: Huh? You should have said something sooner so we wouldn't have to listen to you. [Walks away]

Bystander #2: You probably from Merland...should've stayed there.

Note Taker: That's Maryland.

Bystander #2: Thanks a lot, professor. [sarcastically], Thank you...Bye.

Incense Girl: You're scaring all my customers away.

Mother: Come on Cierra, let's catch the 92.

Daughter: But Ma, I want a cab... Man, whatever.

Incense Girl: I just moved here and already I'm being picked on.

Gentleman: You mind me asking how can you tell where people are from?

Note Taker: Just by how they be. How they talk. Some folks hardcore ghetto, and some just be fakin'.

Incense Girl: You are just a mean person.

Gentleman: Can you make money that way?

Note Taker: Oh yeah. I get all the dough just teaching people some slang. Everybody want to talk like a rapper now days. I teach 'em how to act and then I put 'em in my videos.

Incense Girl: Why doesn't he mind his own business and leave me alone?

Note Taker: Woman, will you shut up? Or go somewhere else.

Incense Girl: Last time I checked, this was a free country.

Note Taker: Girl, chill out. You need to stop whining and go home.

Incense Girl: Oh! [Starts crying]

Note Taker: That how you sound when you cry? [Mimics noise]

Incense Girl: [Giggles] Wow!.

Note Taker: I could even teach this girl to talk right—proper D.C. English. Then she'd be popular, and make some serious money.

Incense Girl: What?

Note Taker: You remind me of the silly rabbit from the Trix commercials. Never listens to no one! [To Gentleman] I am fairly sure I could dress this girl down to fit in anywhere in Southeast. Boys would be geeking over her. Maybe she could even rap.

Gentleman: Whoa, slow ya roll, son. I'm a rapper. From that dirty south, Atlanta.

Note Taker: You are? You ever heard of Ice Pick?

Gentleman: Ice Pick is me. Who you be?

Note Taker: They call me Higg. I produce rap—and videos.

Pick: I came up from Georgia to meet you.

Higg: I was planning to visit Hot-lanta to meet you.

Pick: Hey, where you stay?

Higg: 299 Brandywine. You should come by tomorrow. We might could hang out down Gallery Place or something.

Pick: Aiiight.

Incense Girl: [To Pick] Please sir, can you buy something? I've hardly got 10 dollars.

Higg: Sorry, I really don't have any small money.

Pick: [To Incense Girl] Girl, you fake. You said you could change a 20 just a while ago.

Incense Girl: [Sounds of frustration] You should be slapped with a pack of lunch meat. Yup, a pack of bologna.

Freddy: What. They left? And I finally got a cab, too.

Incense Girl: I'll take it off your hands.

Taxi Dude: Hurry up.

Incense Girl: I'm coming. Bye Freddy.

Freddy: Bye. [He's dazed]

Taxi Dude: Where you wanna go?

Incense Girl: 299 Brandywine [She calls so Freddy can hear]

Taxi Dude: [Looks her over] What 'chu mean, Brandywine? I ain't driving over there.

Incense Girl: Just get me out of here, and quick.

ACT II

The next day in Higgins' basement studio. Video equipment and papers are scattered around, and the place is a mess.

Higg: Well I think that's it, son.

Pick: I'm feeling that joint. I kinda got lost in the middle, though.

Higg: Wanna watch it again?

Pick: Naw, I'm good.

Higg: (Gets kind of in his feelings) So you don't wanna see no more?

Pick: Not now. I'm like jy sleepy. (stretches and yawns) I thought I was good at the whole filming thing, but you sick with a camera, you tight.

Higg: Oh... man you just gotta work at it more. Right now, you can't tell much difference in angles and lighting, but once you get behind the camera a little, you see that every movement counts. [looking at Pea] What's wrong?

Ms. P: Some girl at yo door.

Higg: Some girl? Wat's good wit her?

Ms. P: Look, she said you would be happy to see her. She look like a uptown chick, talkin all "proper" and stuff. I shoulda told her to go home but she jy cute... I thought she could be a new model for your videos or something. I hope I ain't makin' no trouble or nuffin, but you DO be havin' some weird people up in here- I'm out.

Higg: Oh that's cool, cuzzo. You said she talk proper?

Ms. P: Yea, like a lil uptown girl or something. I don't know why you bring these fools 'round

here!

Higg: Tell her to come down here. Bring her to my studio, cuzzo.

Ms. P: Aight son, that's on you. [Goes to get the girl]

Higg: [to Pick] Yo, this is gonna be tight son. Imma show you how to make a uptown chick into a soufside shawty. Imma film the way she talks, acts, all that, so we can watch the difference 'tween her and all the lil joints from school.

Ms. P: Here she go.

Higg: Aw, man. You just the girl from last night. For real, tho, I got enough footage. You can go on home now.

Liza: You don't have to be so rude. You don't even know why I came here. [to Ms. P] Did you tell him I rode my bike here?

Ms. P: Girl, no! Don't nobody care how you got here!

Liza: Oh wow! He isn't too good to film me. He told me so. I didn't come here fishing for compliments, or to be insulted. If you don't think I'm good enough, I can go elsewhere!

Higg: Good enough for what?

Liza: You! And your little "homies." I'm coming to you to get some advice, and I was going to pay you.

Higg: Oh!... What do you want me to do?

Liza: Well if you had any class, you might ask me to sit down. Didn't I tell you I was going to pay you?

Higg: Pick? Should I tell lil shawty to sit down, or just make her go home?

Liza: Oh-my-God! I won't be disrespected when I offered to pay you. Unlike the average "shawty."

Pick: But what do you want from him?

Liza: I want to be able to fit in. I wanna be a "soufside shawty," instead of a Montgomery County misfit selling Bath and Booty Works outside of the train station. No one even listens to me. I want to talk like you. Henry said he could teach me. And here I am, money in hand—not asking for favors—and he treats me like dirt.

Ms.P: What makes you think you got the bread to pay for him? He ain't cheap.

Liza: Why shouldn't I have it? I know what's going on, and I'm willing to pay.

Higg: How much we talkin'?

Liza: Now we're in business.

Higg: Sit.

Liza: [mockingly] Well, if you really want me to...

Higg: Man, sit down!

Ms P.: Shawty sit it down like he said.

Liza: [disturbed] O...kay?

Pick: Please have a seat. [points to chair between him and Henry]

Liza: Why thank you. [coyly]

Higg: What's your name?

Liza: Liza... Elizabeth, but I like Liza.

Higg: Elizabeth... Lizzy... Liza... Pizza!

Pick: With cheese and sausage!

Higg: Garlic sauce, mayne! [They both laugh at their joke]

Liza: What EVER! [to Ms. P] Why won't they speak to me with some sense?

Higg: Let's get back to business. How much you tryna pay me?

Liza: Oh ok, well I've never known anyone paying for "ghetto lessons," so I guess I can pay you \$50? I'm a little short on cash these days. That's my final offer.

Higg: You know Pick, seeing as though she only make 'bout \$100 sellin' them oils, that's half her money to me, son!

Pick: Okay I see you, hustla!

Liza: Who told you I only—

Higg: Half her money to me. Sounds like a plan!

Liza: I make more than \$100. But you want half of my hard earned money? That's not fair!

Higg: Shut it, girl.

Liza: [yells in frustration] But I need my money to help my dad!

Ms. P: Girl, nobody is tryna ROB you. Chill out!

Higg: [jokingly] Imma rob you if you don't stop all that fussing. Dang! You sound like a garbage disposal.

Liza: Jeez, you act like you're my dad or something.

Higg: Trust me, if I do choose to take you on, I'mma be worse than ya pops, times two! [Hands her a stressball] Here.

Liza: [head tilting slightly] What...is this?

Higg: Squeeze it if you feel the urge to get all "proper" on me. Remember this is Hood 101, not finishing school. I mean you wanna fit in, right?

Mrs. P: [laughs] Seriously? Man, don't even bother. It's like talking to a doorknob. [snatches it and throws it in the air]

Liza: [grabs it in mid-air] Give it back! He gave it to me, so it's mine now.

Pick: [laughing, to Ms. P] Yeah, give it back. I guess it's hers now.

Ms. P: Whatever.

Pick: Aye! What about the end of the summer joint at the CFE? If she can pass in that joint ... she can pass anywhere. I'll bet you every dime you spend, you can't do it. I'll even pay her back the money she gave you!

Liza: You are such a sweetie! Thanks umm... Pick?

Higg: I can't pass up a good thing. I'mma make a hoodrat outta this cat.

Liza: [indignant] What did you call me?

Pick: [to Hig] You ain't gonna get nowhere if you keep goin' on her son. Come on now, "H."

Ms. P: I don't think he goin' on her. He's just playin' around, you feel me? If anyone is gonna help this child, it's gotta be him. Just be sure he don't make her do nothing stupid!

Higg: You right. I mean what's life without a lil trial and error? I can make her into a club hoppin' honey in no time!

Liza: Honey? [looking unsure]

Higg: Yea, three months. One, if she pay attention. I'll take her anywhere and I bet she'll pass. Let's start today. Take her to get a weave, one of them curly bush joints. Take her lame clothes and throw them in the dumpster. Take her shopping, hook her up!

Liza: Throw my clothes away!? Weave!? Seriously? Are you crazy? [starts to get up]

Higg: We don't need your "uptight" attitude round here. You wanna fit in, you gotta look like you fit in. [to Ms. P] If she gives you lip, go on her!

Liza: Oh no! I'll call my daddy if you hurt me, I swear!

Ms. P: Where will I dress her up at tho?

Higg: The Goodwill. [laughing]

Pick: The Goodwill, tho? That's dirty son.

Ms. P: Yea that is dirty. Why you gotta dog her like dat?

Higg: I dog everybody! Cuzzo, Pick, I never meant to dog HER all I'm sayin' is we should help her out best we can.

Ms. P: [to pick] HIM helping somebody?

Pick: I aint even seen' it. [laughs]

Higg: What's wrong with that?

Ms. P: Well, you can't just take her in like a stray dog off the street.

Higg: Why not?

Ms. P: Why not!? You don't know jack bout her, or her folks. What if she got a dude?

Liza: Pssst.

Higg: See! She ain't got no dude. She don't look stressed enough.

Liza: Who would want to date me?

Higg: I'm tryna tell you slim: Dudes will be lining up tryna get at you when I'm done.

Ms.: That's wild yung. You real reckless out here.

Liza: I'm outta here. He's loco! I don't need a "thug" teaching me!

Higg: Thug tho? Well cuzzo, let the chick roll. Forget taking her to the mall. Deuces!

Ms. P: See what you did? You got him guh. Come on girl [pulls Liza to the door].

Liza: [almost in tears] I didn't ask for clothes. I have clothes. And I have a little bit of self-respect, too. You can't take that away from me!

Higg: Real ungrateful chick, this is my last time offering to help you.

Ms. P: Stop! You the meanest out here, yung. Go home to your fam, girl. Tell 'em to keep you out the "ghetto"

Liza: Family? Yea right! All my dad cares about is himself.

Ms. P: Your momz?

Liza: She's the one who sent me to live with my dad. But I'm okay. I can take care of myself.

Higg: light! So wat's the problem then? She means nothing to nobody—but me. [Coaxing Ms. P] You can adopt her if you want. You're good at taking care of other people's kids. Now stop trippin'. Take her upstairs and—

Ms. P: So what's gonna happen to her? What's she gonna do for money? I mean, be for real.

Higg: Oh just let her stay over here. We've got room somewhere. [impatiently] And what she gonna do with money? She'll have clothes and a place to chill. She probably wastes all her money at Starbucks.

Liza: Oh my gosh. You're so mean; That's a lie! I don't even drink caramel frappachinos. I mean hardly ever.

Pick: Don't you think the girl has feelings?

Higg: Nah, I don't. Not any feelings I gotta worry about. It's none a my problem, right Liza?

Liza: What do you mean? I have feelings just like everybody does. You are rude and unequivocally brutal in not only your manners, but your grammar as well.

Higg: [to Pick] See what I mean? Lame.

Pick: Huh? What's lame?

Higg: Not what. Who. She is. Her proper English is killing me.

Liza: I don't want to talk ghetto, I just want to fit in.

Mrs. P: Stay on point, Cuz. I wanna know what the deal is. Is this a trade, or what? If she ain't getting paid, what's gonna happen when you're done? Gotta look ahead a lil, boo.

Higg: [impatiently] What's the big deal? When it's over, I kick her to the curb. That's where I found her in the first place.

Liza. You're the most self-centered, condescending jerk I've ever met. I've had about all I can take!

Higg: (snatching a bowl of Skittles off his desk and smiling slyly) Have some Skittles, Liza.

Liza: No way! You probably put rat poison or roach spray all over them. You're probably trying to kill me!

(Hig grabs a handful of Skittles and eats half of them, then offers her the other half)

Higg: Word, Liza. You make this deal with me, you'll be living the life. Eating carry-out every day, playing X-box all night, go-gos every weekend. How bout it, huh?

Liza. I shouldn't have eaten your candy in the first place. My dentist says I need to cut back on sugar.

Higg: Look, Lizzie. You got here on your bike, right?

Liza. What's the big deal? I ride my bike all over town, and I always wear my helmet.

Higg: That's all good, but I can ride you around on the back of my cousin's motorbike, soon as he gets it running.

Ms. P: Hey now, stop cising that girl. She needs to make her own plans.

Higg: A frek like her? How you s'posed to think of yourself when you don't have a self to think of. Sorry, cuz, but you're wasting your time always trying to help everyone else. Liza needs to look out for her own self. What's it gonna be, Liza?

Liza: I don't want to be living the life. I just want to stay alive.

Higg: It's all good. My cousin's gonna look out for you. You might could hook up with a nice dude who'll treat you right, instead of the dorks and lames who sit in the front row of the class.

Pick: Dude, I'm gonna stop you on this one. P is on the money. If you s'posed to be taking care of this girl, you better let her know what it's all about.

Higg: What does she know? She's dumb as a bag of bricks. So, Liza, that's what it is. Feel me?

Liza: (huffs and puffs)

Higg: See? That's all she knows. She can't even get mad right. Pick, you oughtta know by now: a chick like this needs you to tell her what to do. Girl, here's the deal: For the next three months you'll learn how to talk slang. I'mma teach you how to represent. If you do good, you can kick it with me and my dawgs,. But if you don't know how to act, then you'll sit in the house by your own self. Bored. At the end of the summer, we're going to the CFE, nicely dressed. If everyone can tell you're fakin', you'll be a big-time busta, bum joint, world famous loser. If people accept you, you'll be a homie for life. Is that true enough for you, P?

Ms. P: Lemme talk to her, Hig. You're a dude. I know you don't mean no harm, but that doesn't mean no one gets hurt. Lizzie come on!

Higg: That's cool. Thank you, cousin. Take her upstairs.

Liza: You're just plain mean. You can't make me do anything I don't want to do. I don't care about your CFE, and I've never gotten picked on, no not at all.

Ms. P: You better watch your mouth, little girl. This convo's just too deep for you. Now come on. (starts to lead Liza toward the door)

Liza: Well, my word is bond. I'm not going to any club if they're going to make fun of me. If I knew what you were about, I would have stayed home. And don't think you can walk all over me, 'cause I'm not made of astroturf.

[P. and Liza leave and go up to the living room.]

Ms. P: This will be your spot to chill.

Liza: Oh Em Gee. I cannot stay here. This place is a mess. I'm afraid to touch anything. I'll bet there's rats in here.

Ms. P: Don't worry about rats. Our pit bulls kill anything that moves. Now sit down—let me do your hair.

Liza: Sit down on the floor? Usually I just leave my hair natural.

Ms. P: I can see that. But there's nothing wrong with you I can't fix. First off, we need to get rid of your bama costume. Halloween's over. You can have a pair of my jeans until you get some real clothes.

Liza: [Points to P's hand] What's that?

Ms. P: An eyebrow razor. Gotta arch them brows, sweetie. You got wolf butt for eyebrows. Now you better sit still.

Liza: [Pulls away in fear] I don't think that's natural...

Ms. P: [Pulls out flat iron] Girl, I tell you. You something else.

[Meanwhile, back in the basement...]

Pick: Sorry for asking, Higg, but are you a good guy when it comes to girls?

Higg: Have you ever met a good guy where a girl is the mix?

Pick: Iono. Maybe.

Higg: If you let a chick be your friend, she just gets jealous, demanding, and crazy. The minute I call myself making friends with a girl, I get even crazier. Women make a mess out of everything. Soon as she gets your number, you got to buy a new phone. Soon as you let her in your car, she be trying to grab the wheel. I don't need the drama. I'm better off solo.

Pick: Look, man, if I'm in this deal with you, I want you to know I'm not gonna play with that girl's head. That's just not me.

Higg: What that chickenhead? That thing? Forget it, yo. I'm strictly business wit' her.

[P appears at the door]

Ms. P: Let me talk to you, Henry.

Higg: Wats up? Come on in. Don't throw away her shirt. I'll keep it as a souvenir. [laughs]

Ms. P: You don't want to touch it, though. I better wash it first.

Higg: Oh... [throws it on the floor] Well wat you wanna say?

Pick: Is this personal?

Ms. P: Nah, you good. Henry, can you please watch your mouth around her?

Higg: Watch my mouth? [laughs] Why you say dat? I just speak the truth.

Ms. P: You're missing the point. You get heated and say whatever you want. Now you know we family. Me, I've heard it all. But you can't be sayin' whatever in front of her.

Higg: Whatever! Man I don't just say whatever! Girl, you lunchin'.

Ms.: See, that's what I mean. You say that and she thinks it's time to eat.

Higg: [starting to understand] Oh, I get it. That's why she so pressed to learn slang. I hear you, now. Kill, I do.

Ms. P: And please don't say "kill." She'll be calling the feds, for real.

Higg: light iight, is that it?

Ms. P: No. We gotta start cleaning up more around this house.

Higg: Kill. I mean cool.

Mrs. P: Oh, and when you come downstairs, put clothes on too.

Higg: It's not like I forget. I just don't feel like it. But alright, I won't walk around in my boxers.

Mrs. P: Good. And you can't just put pants on, you've got to pull them up. She don't want to see your draws hanging out.

Higg: I don't need to advertise. You know the bait be lovin' them some Hig.

Mrs. P: I hope you not getting smart.

Higg: Naw. No, I hear you. Are you done yet?

Mrs. P: Ok...Well your girl Meeka left her jeans and a shirt here. Can she put 'em on?

Higg: She sure can... is that it? [Mrs. P. leaves] Yo, Pick--my cuzzo got high expectations. Everybody else be sayin' I'm a no-count, good for nothing thug, but she still thinks I've got potential. I don't know why.

Mrs.P: We got a problem! That girl's popz is here, he says he's a lawyer, and he wants to talk to you. He wants to know why his daughter's here.

Pic: What tha'?

Higg: Tell him to come on down.

Mrs. P: O-kay...

Pick: What if he is like a cop or something?

Higg: So what?

Pick: Whatever he is, there's gonna be drama.

Higg: I can deal with the drama. Let's just see what he's got to say. [sneakily]

Mrs. P: Hey. Here go Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: [uncertain which man he's supposed to talk to] Whattup!

Higg: It's all good. Have a seat.

Doolittle: I guess you know why I'm here.

Higg: Don't start nothin' won't be nothing. You're not from around here, are you?

Doolittle: Where's my daughter?

Higg: So you're ready to take care of her now? Buy her clothes, keep food in the house, make sure she stays outta trouble? Fine, you can have her.

Doolittle: Now, I don't remember saying anything about clothes and food. I just want to be part of the deal here. She's my child, so what's in it for me?

Higg: Well your child came here on her own free will to see if I can teach her how to talk right so she can survive out here on these streets. Why's there supposed to be something in it for you? Don't try to play me for no sucker. How do I know you didn't put her up to it?

Doolittle: What!?

Higg: If you ain't in on it, how'd you know she's here?

Doolittle: Watch how you talk to me, son.

Higg: So now you wanna start something. Fine, I'ma call my crew, and we can settle this like men.

Doolittle: Now wait just a darn fool minute. Who said anything about starting something? You're an entrepreneur, and I'm a businessman myself. I just want to see can I get my fair share of whatever you've got going on here.

Higg: I thought you're supposed to be a lawyer.

Doolittle: Rrrright... I do a little bit of both.

Higg: Then you've got a lot going on. What made you take time out from your busy day to come around my way?

Doolittle: Well, see, she left all her stuff at her Mom's when she came to stay with me. Now her Mom's getting put out of her house in Maryland, so I said I'd bring Liza her stuff—she's got a whole box of Harry Potter books and Justin Bieber cd's.

Higg: So how you know she here?

Doolittle: I called her cellphone!

Higg. And why'd you think you could come here asking me for cash?

Doolittle: Couldn't you at least give me gas money? It took half a tank to get my old mini-van out there and back. Gas is high as I-don't-know-what.

Higg: I'm supposed to pay you to take care of your own child?

Doolittle: I'm just a little short on cash these days. When I said she could stay with me, I didn't know how much she ate! A hard-working real estate agent can't make ends meet in this market.

Pick: Didn't you say you were a businessman?

Doolittle: I sold real estate for a while, til they laid me off. I do auto detailing, too. You want me to hook you up with some floor mats?

Higg: Naw, I'm good. I hear you, though. It's hard out here for a hustler. [pulls a roll of money out of his pocket] Why don't you go ahead and take her home, and here's ten dollars for gas.

Doolittle: Ten dollars? That won't get me around the block. Besides, I don't have room for her. My girlfriend and two of her grandkids just moved in with me.

[Mrs. P walks in]

Higg: Cuzzo this is Liza's Pops. He came to take her home.

Mrs. P: How? She ain't got no clothes. I threw em away, remember?

Doolittle: I can't take her home naked as a jay bird.

Higg: Buy her some more clothes, then. You her Daddy, ain't you?

Doolittle: I guess so. That's what her mother says. [thinks for a minute] Now, I don't know why my baby's over here with no clothes on. She must have had some when she came here. But if I can get a hundred from you, I might just forget the whole thing.

Higg: A hundred dollars? You couldn't pay me a hundred to keep her.

Doolittle: Come on, now. We're both respectable men.

Higg: Respectable!?! Cuzzo you should go.

Mrs. P: Ok... time to go. [she leaves]

Pick: It's your show now, Mr. D.

Doolittle: Look, I'ma tell you the truth: Liza don't mean a thing to me. I can't even remember when her birthday is. But you want her, right? I don't care what you want her for, but I'm her Daddy. Shouldn't I get a little piece of the deal for bringing her into this world? I mean, you want to fix her up so she can fit in and make it on her own. Who do you think messed her up, so she'd need fixing?

Pick: You want to get paid for messing her up?

Doolittle: It's a dog eat dog world out there. Nobody gets anything thing for free. I'm not asking for a handout, but I messed that child up for real. I provided a service, so I ought to be able to charge you for it. It's a recession on. What's a hundred dollars anyhow?

Higg: So you sayin' you would sell your daughter for \$100?

Doolittle: Not like how your makin' it seem, no.

Pick: Where are your morals?

Doolittle: They left with my wife. Now I'm trying to be a decent man and take responsibility for my child.

Higg: Pick, I don't know what to do. I feel bad for him

Doolittle: Just feel what's in a father's heart, please?

Pick: I don't know the feelin', but this don't seem right.

Doolittle: Look at it this way. I can stand here talking all day. If you don't like my story, I can make a new one up right on the spot. I'll say anything you want me to say, and I don't care if you believe me, cause I don't believe my own self. But if you give me a hundred bucks, I'm gone and you won't hear another word.

Higg: [to Pick] We could give him a few lessons and he could be the mayor of DC. [laughs]

Pick: How 'bout that Mr. D?

Doolittle: Naw, son. I keep my business on the up and up. I don't go for that shady stuff.

Higg: I'll give you fifty.

Pick: He might waste it.

Doolittle: Naw, imma take all the grandkids out to McDonalds. Plus, I believe we were talking about a hundred.

Higg: [laughs, pulls out a hundred] You better get outta here fore you make me look bad.

Doolittle: [snatches the money] I'm pleased to do business with you, sir.

Pick: That's a sho' nuff hustla there. You just got played at your own game.

Doolittle: Ya'll take care, now. Have a nice day, etc. [gets up to leave as Liza walks in dressed completely different. He bumps into Liza] 'Scuse me, young lady.

Young lady: Daddy! Seriously? You don't recognize me?

Doolittle: {saying at one time} Oh my gosh. Lizzy!

Higg: {saying at one time} What the-

Pick: {saying at one time} Well, ok then!

Liza: Do I look crazy?

Higg: What?!

Mrs. P: Don't get her all big headed, Henry.

Higg: Oh... You right. Yeah, you look a hot mess.

[Liza fans herself with her hand]

Mrs. P: Come on, man.

Higg: Sorry. You look real crazy.

Liza: Maybe I'll look better in these glasses. [puts them on]

Higg: [sarcastically] Uh oh, new girl in town.

Doolittle: Looks a little like me when you fix her up, don't she?

Liza: It wasn't easy. Cold water, no hot water at all, towels with holes, rough washrags, and cheap soap... Ugh, now I see why people live in MD!

Higg: [sarcastically and offended] Glad you liked it! Got anything else to say Mr. D, like good luck or something?

Doolittle: No, I'm not really one for luck. If you want her to learn, you gotta be stern is what I say. [he turns to go]

Higg: You gotta come by and visit every now and then, right? Now that you're taking responsibility. [laughs slightly]

Doolittle: Ok, I'll come by, just not right away. I gotta work. But later on you can count on it.

Liza: Yeah, right.

Pick: Who cares anyway, Liz?

Liza: You're not gonna call me Liza anymore?

Pick: Oops my bad, Liza.

Liza: That's alright, it's just a name. It seemed fitting, though. It made me want to go ride my bike uptown and show those girls who's in town. But I'd act like I don't see them. [giggles]

Pick: Slow your roll, girl. Not til we hook you up with some real clothes.

Higg: I mean you shouldn't dump your old friends because you got a new attitude. That's what we call fake...

Liza: They're not friends at all. They made fun of me every chance they got. Now I want vengeance. But I might as well wait until I get my new clothes. Ooh, I can't wait!

Mrs. P: Your clothes are here, girl.

Liza: OOOOO!!! [squealing, runs out]

Mrs. P: Girl, chill.

Higg: Pick, we got work to do.

Pick: Yes... we... do.

Higg: Now, tell me where you stay at.

Liza: You know where I live. It's your house, isn't it?

Higg: Where? [angrily]

Pick: Come on, girl. Say Soufeas. Dang, you'll get it one of these days.

Liza: Okay. Southeast.

Higg: No! This is ridiculous. Didn't they teach you anything out in Mur-linn?

Liza: [almost in tears] What do you want from me? South-eeeeeast. I can't.

Higg: Stop... Say I'on een know.

Liza: I don't even know.

Higg: Relax your mind. Let your words slur. Now say I'on.

Liza: i-i-I I can't... i-i-on

ACT III

Mrs. Higgins: Boy! Why you here? It's my day off and you stamped you wasn't going to come here.

Higg: Wha?

Mrs. Higgins: Leave now. I mean it. I got company coming.

Higg: [Kissing her] I know, Ma, I know. But I need you.

Mrs. Higgins: You can't. Son, I love you to death but you embarrass me in front of all my friends. They see you and they won't be trying to cool with me no more.

Higg: Ma, stop. I know I don't have much to say about old geezer topics, but today they won't care.

Mrs. Higgins: Baby, we don't talk geezer, we just talk. We have a good time, and you always mess it up. Just go.

Higg: Come on, Ma. I have to stay. I have a job for you. A... rhetorical job.

Mrs. Higgins: No means no.

Higg: Well, it's not like it's a rhetorical job, Ma.

Mrs. Higgins: You just said that it was.

Higg: Not your part, ma. See, I picked up this girl.

Mrs. Higgins: So... are you and this girl...a thing?

Higg: Naw. Oh no. Oh heck, no.

Mrs. Higgins: Too bad. It would've been nice to see some wifey material on your arm for once, instead of just these video chicks.

Higg: I can't be wasting my time on girls. I got more important things on my mind. Anyhow, they all loafin'.

Mrs. Higgins: If you really loved ya Ma, do you know what you'd do?

Higg: Iono. Go to college? Get a real job?

Mrs. Higgins: Nope. Quit texting while I'm trying to talk!! [He puts his phone away] Now what's she like?

Higg: She wants to see you.

Mrs. Higgins: Oh, what about?

Higg: She's a...a Montgomery County chick who just doesn't fit in.

Mrs. Higgins: She don't fit in, but you brought her to my house with my friends?

Higg: Oh, it'll be fine. I taught her how to talk ghetto—at least some. And I told her to stick to only two topics: music and food. You know, “Li'l Wayne be killin' it” or “Hong Kong got tha bomb chicken wings and mambo sauce.” She'll stick to the important stuff.

Mrs. Higgins: Music and food? Have you ever talked to a regular person? What in God's name is the matter with you, boy?

Higg: [Losing his patience] Well, she can't just sit here and look stupid! [Regains his composure and sits] She'll...be good, Ma. Don't even worry. Pick is in on it too. We kinda sorta bet that I could pass her off as a Soufside girl after three months of lessons. We started up a couple weeks ago.

Mrs. Higgins: That's...really nice, son. [unencouraging tone]

Higg: Well... it kinda is and it kinda ain't.

Mrs. Higgins: I'm sorry. What?

Higg: You see, she's got no experience in the hood. She knows what to say, but not really what it means. Like, she can say “stamp” all right, but she doesn't really know when to say it...

First Child: [Stomps in] Mrs. Hill and her daughter Cierra at the door.

Higg: Oh God.

Mrs. Hill: Wassup?

Ms. Cierra: Sup. [rudely]

Mrs. Higgins: And this is my boy Henry.

Mrs. Hill: That's him? I always wanted to meet you. “Little Henry!” [obnoxious laugh]

Cierra: You must be loaded! My name is Cierra Hill. How are youuu?

[Higg does not respond and Cierra grimaces]

Cierra: I said HI!

Higg: Do I know you?

Mrs. Higgins: Don't pay him no mind. I don't know what his problem is.

Mrs. Hill: I didn't pay him no mind.

Higgins: My bad. Was I rude? Didn't mean it.

Second Child: Mr. Ice Pick.

Pick: How are you, Ms. H?

Mrs. Higgins: I'm real glad you're here. Do you know the Hill family?

Pick: Did Henry tell you what the deal is?

Higg: Almost. I didn't get to finish.

Mrs. Hill: Does someone have a problem?

Mrs. Higgins: No, no, no. It's all good. We want you to meet a li'l friend of ours.

Higg: Hot dang. We just need a coupla homies. It's perfect.

First Child: Freddy Hill.

Higg: Aw mane, not another one.

Freddy: Hallo?

Mrs. Higgins: Nice to see ya. This is Pick.

Freddy: Ha-loo?

Mrs. Higgins: And I don't think you've met my son, Henry.

Freddy: Hallo?

Higg: I swear I know you from somewhere. Where?

Freddy: I doubt it.

Higg: Doesn't really matter anyways. Have a seat. So, everybody's here! Now what are we gonna talk about 'til Liza comes?

Mrs. Higgins: Henry, you know everything about everything. But sometimes you can be a little...bo-ring.

Higg: Really? My bad. I get like that when I'm around boring people.

Mrs. Higgins: Boy, what'd I just tell you? You're on my last nerve, now.

Second Child: Ms. Doolittle.

Higg: Here she is. [Liza looks super, and everyone is a bit dazed and stands]

Liza: Wassup?

Mrs. Higgins: Thanks for coming. This is Mrs. Hill.

Liza: Wassup?

Mrs. Higgins: Her daughter, Cierra.

Liza: Wassup?

Mrs. Hill: She looks familiar. I never forget a face.

Mrs. Higgins: Her son, Freddy.

Liza: Sup?

Higg: I remember. U Street in the rain. Shoot!

Mrs. Higgins: Henry, watch your mouth.

Higg: I said shoot! [Long pause]

Mrs. Higgins: Soooo. Has anyone heard the new joint by Rihanna? That joint be crankin'.

Liza: Girl, please! Rihanna's tight and all that, but she shouldn't let Chris Breezy get anywhere near her after what he did. Everyone knows that domestic violence is a serious issue that has to be confronted. And fans shouldn't spend they money on any artist who uses violence to sell records. [pauses] Stamp!

Freddy: Ha, ha! Church! But seriously...

Liza: What's your problem? I said everything I'm s'posed to.

Mrs. Higgins: [Long pause] So Liza, what's your favorite thing to eat?

Liza: No doubt, it's sushi. Raw fish is crucial. You know, California rolls are supposed to be stuffed with crab, but I've been to low-life restaurants where they use an imitation!

Mrs. Hill: What tha?!

Liza: Oh yes. One time my soccer team had a party at a sushi place. We ordered octopus, eel, and sea urchin. The miso soup was tight. The seaweed salad was aight. And you gotta figure in a joint like that the California rolls would be full of crab, but naw. I was blown!

Cierra: That's nasty. You eat raw fish?

Liza: Well, of course.

Higg: Oh, that's the new thang. That's in. Everybody's going to be swallowing raw fish in the hood.

Liza: The Japanese have been eating it for a thousand years. [To Freddy, who is in convulsions of suppressed laughter] What's so funny?

Freddy: The new way to eat. Girl, you lurching.

Liza: That's what I said, so why are you laughing at me? [To Mrs. Higgins] Did I mess up?

Mrs. Higgins: Naw, girl. You good.

Liza: What a relief. I was about to say that...

Higg: [Rising and looking at his watch] Okay!

Liza: [Looking around at him; taking the hint; and rising] Well: I'm outta here. [They all rise.] Deuces. [She bumps fists with Mrs. Higgins] Deuces. [She bumps fists with Mrs. Hill] Deuces all! [She waves]

Freddy: Are you catching the A6? Cause I...

Liza: Boy, no. I've got a limo waiting. [Liza leaves]

Mrs. Hill: Wow, you youngens with ya new styles!

Cierra: See? We can never try anything new, you're so old school.

Mrs. Hill: Girl, I am old school. But seriously, raw fish makes me sick. What do you say, Pick?

Pick: Don't ask me. I'm from Hot-lanta where all we eat is bar-b-que'd ribs and fried fish.

Cierra: [Joking] She's cramping my style, Mrs. H. There's no wrong in it. I like trying new things.

Mrs. Hill: I think we'd better leave.

Cierra: Oh, right. We got a cookout and two birthday parties to go to. Deuces, Mrs. H. Deuces, Pick. Deuces, Higg.

Higg: Later. Don't forget to ask for some raw fish! It's better than birthday cake.

Cierra: Aiight. Deuces. That old school stuff is ji boring.

Higg: You know it, girl!

Cierra: I'm guh. I hate being bored!

Mrs. Hill: Cierra!

Cierra: Leave me alone, Ma! [Cierra leaves]

Freddy: Well... I oughtta go too, I guess.

Mrs. Higgins: Freddy, you wanna to see Liza again sometime?

Freddy: Oh yeah! Definitely.

Mrs. Higgins: Then come by here on my day off. I'm sure she'll be back.

Freddy: Right! I will. Thanks! Bye everyone.

Higg: Tootles. [Freddy leaves]

Mrs. Hill: I will never eat raw fish.

Pick: That's okay, you'll be better off without it.

Mrs. Hill: Yeah. [To Mrs. H] Well, don't pay no mind to Cierra. She don't know how to act. I don't know what her problem is. But my boy Freddy's cool, right?

Mrs. Higgins: Yeah, he's alright. He can stop by anytime.

Mrs. Hill: Thanks. Tootles! [Mrs. Hill leaves]

Higg: Well Ma, what do you think of Liza?

Mrs. Higgins: She's good people, and looking good, too. But Lord, every time she opens her mouth it's obvious she's not from around here. She can talk the talk, but she ain't got the walk.

Pick: What can we do?

Mrs. Higgins: Get her away from my son. He can teach a girl to talk ghetto, but he can't teach her how to be ghetto.

Higg: Awww...

Mrs. Higgins: Pick, would you please tell me what's really going on down Brandywine?

Pick: Well, Higg and I have been living there, and Liza stays there...

Mrs. Higgins: So you see my problem.

Pick: No, no. It's not like that.

Mrs. Higgins: What is it like? Is she the cook? Is she fixing your cable?

Higg: She's everything! She's on my mind all the time. How she talks, how she moves, what she says, what she wears.

Mrs. Higgins: You're like little kids playing. But Liza's no game.

Higg: No she sure isn't. She's a job and a half. But it's really cool to take some nerd like her and turn her into a whole new person, from her tracks to her pedicure. We're getting to the bottom of what makes them different from us.

Pick: And we got it all on DVD. She's changing bit by bit, and we've got the camera going the whole time. It's like Real World Southeast.

Higgins: I'm really into this, Ma. It's my biggest project ever!

Pick: Plus, we're helping Liza.

Higg: Yeah. It's all about Liza.

Pick: Teaching her.

Higg: And putting new clothes on her.

Mrs. Higgins: Stop!

Higg: I mean, making whole new Lizas.

[In the following two lines, Higg & Pick are talking over each other]

Higg: She learns fast. She's nowhere near as dumb as she looks!

Pick: I swear, Mrs. H., that girl is really smart. She can mix beats like a dj. We buy her ten new songs, and by the time we get home, she's re-mixed them all, and she's freestyling over the beat. It's like she's Niki Minaj or something!

Mrs. Higgins: [Puts fingers in her ears] Shut-the-heck-up!

Pick: Excuse me.

Higg: Sorry, when Pick gets started there's just no stopping him.

Mrs. Higgins: Quiet, boy. Don't you understand that when you brought Liza into your house, you brought in a big problem?

Pick: Yeah, her daddy. But Higg got him out of the way.

Mrs. Higgins: Stupid men! The problem is, what happens to her when you're finished changing her into a ghetto girl.

Higg: Oh, doesn't matter. She can do what she wants.

Mrs. Higgins: What do you mean, she can do what she wants? What's she gonna do? Work at Popeyes? That girl could have gone to college, but you've got her turned all backwards so she can fit in. You're gonna turn her into a loser, just like you.

Higg: She'll be fine. Don't worry.

Pick: Yeah, we'll find her something. There are plenty of jobs. Aren't there?

Higg: [As Higg and Pick leave] Let's take her to the open mic at Busboys. She'll be goin' on that crowd the whole way home.

Pick: That'll be tight. [They exit]

Mrs. Higgins: Stupid, fool men. Why didn't I have a girl?

ACT IV

Higgins: Aye, Pick, lock the door. I'm not trying to go out—not tonight, anyway.

Pick: I gotchu. Should I tell Pea to go to bed? We don't need nothing else, do we?

Higgins: Naw, we good.

(Liza comes in tired and unhappy, but H and P barely notice her.)

Pick: Now, you... Pea will Kirk out on us if we roll out with this house looking a hot mess.

Higgins: Man, don't worry 'bout it, just put it all in the living room and Pea can clean it up in the morning. She'll think we was hype on energy drinks.

Pick: We are kinda bouncing off the wall. Any mail?

Higgins: I ain't look son... where are my Nike flip flops?

[Pick. Comes back with mail]

Pick: Only junk mail... Ooo credit card... Open it!

Higg: Ugh... Bank of America {tosses it with junk mail}

[Liza comes in disgusted and tosses the flip flops]

Higg: [yawning] Man! What a night! [starts to unlace shoe and "notices" the flip flops] Oh... here they are... like magic.

Pick: Well I'm tired as a mug...long day my manz...the cookout, pool party, and the CFE! Man that's a good summer jam type thing. But you won the bet. Z did good. They was all on her today.

Higg: I'm just glad it's history.

Pick: Wasn't you nervous at the cookout? I was, son. Z ain't seem like it.

Higg: Nah man, she wasn't nervous. I knew she was good for it. I'm just stressing about having to actually goin' thru with what I wanted to do. It was cool at first, but after a few weeks I was done for real. If I wasn't pressed for dat gwap I swear I woulda dropped her 2 months ago. It was a crazy idea for real, almost a dead mission to me.

Pick: Come on! The cookout was like dat. I was so hype!

Higg: Yeah, for a minute. But when I saw we had this in the bag, I felt like a monkey, just hangin' around doing nothing. The food sucked: sitting there wit' flies buzzin' round the burnt burgers—ugh. And the buttaface kept tryna talk to me, yung. Pick, neva again no more, yo. Fake DC joints. This whole thing was extra dumb.

Pick: You just haven't been round the way like you used to. I like the craziness that goes on. Makes me realize where I come from. Any-waaays...winning! Z was doin' so good I thought she was gonna forget somethin'. And people believed her just cuz she looked like them and stuff.

Higg: That's what gets me guh—how stupid people can be. But wateva. I'm gone to bed. It's over with. Ain't gotta worry 'bout it tomorrow.

[Liza gets an evil look in her eye]

Pick: Yea son, imma dip out. Just remember...WINNING! [laughs] Aiight, deuces son. [he leaves]

Higg: [follows him] Aiight. Aye Z! Hit the light, 'n tell Pea don't make breakfast—I'm goin to IHOP.

[Liza gets angry, but controls herself long enough to turn the lights out and then has a fit.]

Higg: Man, where are my flip flops!?

Liza: [throws them one by one at hig.] Here's your precious flipflops. I hope you step on glass in them.

Higg: What the heck? What's wrong, Z? Talk to me.

Liza: Nothing's wrong—with you. You won your bet; because of me, right? Other than that I ain't nothing to you. Right?

Higg: YOU? YOU won MY bet? Whateva. I won my own bet. I did the work... So why you want to take it out on my flip flops?

Liza: I was hopin' they would knock your head off. I oughtta smoke your sorry butt, you selfish little boy! Why you ain't just leave me back on U Street where you found me? You're so glad it's all over so you can just throw me back to the streets, aintcha'?

Higg: [in a somewhat comedic yoda voice] Ahh, nervous is Z?

Liza: [screams into her hands, and starts to claw at his face]

Higg: [catches her wrists] Tsk tsk, bad kitty, bad. Showing me your Hulk side, are ya? Sit down, chill out.

Liza: Wat am I gonna do now? Wat?

Higg: How am I s'posed to know? What's the big deal?

Liza: You don't even give a frog, I know you don't. If I up and died, you wouldn't make a t-shirt for me. I'm worthless to you—you care more about those sandals.

Higg: [shouting] NIKE! FLIP F-L-O-P-S!

Liza: Nike flip flops. What difference does it make anymore?

Higg: Why you being like this? You ain't like the way I treat you?

Liza: That's not the point.

Higg: Anybody treat you wrong? Pick, Pea? Any of the boys?

Liza: Uh-uh.

Higg: Good, maybe you just wore out. Want some kool-aid?

Liza: No, thank you. I mean, naw.

Higg: Cool, I get it. You been stressin' the last few days, but we through it now. So chill. [pats her shoulder]

Liza: You mean you're through it... Ugh. I might as well kill myself.

Higg: [shocked] What for? You don't mean it. You be trippin' for real, girl. No bull.

Liza: [mockingly] I'on get it. I'm too ignant now.

Higg: All this stress is messing up your head. Ain't nun wrong witchu. You're just a little depressed. [hands her a game controller] Play the game for a while, watch a little tv. You'll be good before you know it.

Liza: I don't need to play your x-box. I can already see what happens: Game Over.

Higg: So what? Now you can do whatever you want.

Liza: What do you mean? Where am I gonna go? What am I supposed to do? What? What!

Higg: Oh that's what you trippin' 'bout? It's no big deal. If I were you, the way I see it, you shouldn't have a problem fittin' in somewhere. But I ain't know you was tryna leave here. You might get a boyfriend or something. See, Z, not all dudes are as cool and laid back like me and Pick. But there's plenty of bait out there for you. You jy cute—I mean not now wit you cryin' and all, but when you got it together you're actually fine—that is to those who tryna get at you. I'm just sayin. Go a good night's sleep, and maybe in the morning you won't feel so down.

Higg: Actually, I bet my cousin Pea could find somebody for you.

Liza: I thought I was above that at 14th and U.

Higg: Watchu talkin' 'bout?

Liza: I sold Bath and Booty works, not myself. Now that I fit in, I'm not finna sell anything else. How's that gonna look? I wish you woulda just left me alone.

Higg: Jeez Lizzy, why you gotta go off about selling yourself? Nobody said you gotta marry dude.

Liza: Then what?

Higg: Well, there's a rack of things you could do. Didn't you wanna open up a store to sell your fragrances? New name of course, but I can get Pick to set it up—he gots bank and he good for it. But come on man, I'm jy tired. Dag, what did I come down here for?

Liza: Your flip flops.

Higg: Yea, yea... those. You threw 'em at me.

Liza: Hey, wait a minute.

Higg: What's up?

Liza: Do my new clothes belong to me or Pick, since he bought 'em.

Higg: What he gonna do wit em? Wear em? [laughs]

Liza: He might want em for the next girl y'all bring home.

Higg: That's how you feel?

Liza: I don't wanna talk about it. I just asked, seeing as though mine were thrown away.

Higg: Who cares? Especially now, when we 'bout to go sleep?

Liza: I don't want you to think I robbed you.

Higg: Robbed? Nah that's crazy. You think you could get away with it?

Liza: My bad. I'm still a lil new to the concept. So it was a gift, right? Cool! No feelings involved, right? Please just tell me what I can and can't keep.

Higg: Take the whole house if you want. Except the electronics—I ain't paid em off yet. Is that enough?

Liza: Never mind. [hands him the camera] Maybe you should keep this with you. I don't want it to come up missing.

Higg: Man, give it here! I gave this one to you even though I ain't pay it off, and you give it back... ingrate!

Liza: [pulls out cell phone] Here. You paid this off, but I don't want it now. [Hig. smashes the phone and looks at her with clenched fists] You gonna hit me now?

Higg: Hit you? Like I wanna get locked up again? That was an insult.

Liza: {silently excited} Well... good.

Higg: Girl, you fakin' for real, though. I don't even kirk out like that. Look, I don't wanna talk about this no more. I'm gone to sleep.

Liza: [sarcastically] Well you betta leave your own note for Pea 'bout that breakfast, cuz I aint tellin her.

Higg: Forget Pea, forget the breakfast, and forget you. Forget the fact I wasted my time on a stuck-up Moco bamma like you! [walks upstairs and slams door]

Liza: [goes to pick up the pieces of the phone, sees that its completely destroyed and runs upstairs in tears]

Freddy: Night, boo-boo!

[Comes running out of the house and bumps into Freddy, who has been staring up at her window.]

Liza: What tha? Whatchu doin out here?

Freddy: It's not like I'm stalkin' you. I just like being around here. Don't judge me Miss Z.
[laughs]

Liza: Hey it's Liza to you, you hear me? [grabs Freddy by the shoulders] You don't think I'm a stuck up bamma, do you?

Freddy: No, babe. Why would you even ask me that? You are the cutest, sweetest- [He starts to kiss her in public, when a police officer comes around the corner.]

Police: Hey! Break it up!

Freddy: My bad, officer. She just said she'd be my girl.

[They run away; the cop shrugs his shoulders.]

Liza: [out of breath] He ain't scare me, but that was a good one you came up with.

Freddy: I ain't make you go out yo way, did I? Where you headed?

Liza: G-town cliff.

Freddy: Why?

Liza: I'm gonna jump off it.

Freddy: WHOA! Liza, why? What's wrong?

Liza: Don't worry about it. It don't matta... just me and you now, right?

Freddy: Yeah, boo. [they kiss again]

Police 2: Hey! Get a room, you two! Get out of here with that mess.

Freddy: All right. Slow ya roll, man.

[they leave again]

Freddy: Jeeze it's like they after us tonight. The boys are thick out here.

Liza: They just makin' sure the streets are safe.

Freddy: Well we gotta think of somewhere to go. I ain't tryna get caught up...

Liza: I'll go anywhere with you. Just name your spot.

Freddy: Awww boo-boo. {they kiss again}

Cab driver: Where y'all tryna go tonight?

Liza: Wow, Freddy, look! A cab...perfect!

Freddy: Naw, I'm broke... dang.

Liza: I got it...Pick said never go nowhere without a few dollars in your pocket. Look, we can hang out at the club til Higgins' Mom wakes up and see what she says to do. I'll tell you the whole story on the way, and the cops won't be after us.

Freddy: Aiight, cool. [to the cab driver] Gallery Place. [They drive off.]

ACT V

[At Mrs. Higgins' house]

First Child: Mr. Henry is downstairs with his friend Pick, coolin'.

Mrs. Higgins: Oh, go get 'em for me.

First Child: They on the phone wit the feds, I think. I know, right? Dat's dat hot stuff.

Mrs. Higgins: On who?

First Child: Mr. Henry is going through it. I'm just getting you hipped.

Mrs. Higgins: Oh yeah, he 'bout to get me guh. But anyway, tell 'em to come see me when they done bein' hot. He probably lost his iPod again.

First Child: K

Higg: Mommy I'm guh!

Mrs. Higgins: What's goin' on?

Higg: Liza just chopped.

Mrs. Higgins: You must a got her guh.

Higg: Got her guh? She got me guh. She's skipped. Pea let her in and she got all her stuff while I was still 'sleep.

Mrs. Higgins: Well, she's got the right to leave if she wants, whether you agree with her leaving or not. Get over it.

Higg: But my crib is a mess cause with her gone. I couldn't find my watch on my wrist in there.

Pick: Wassup, Mrs. H? Did Higg get you in?

Higg: What did that lame police say? And what will you give?

Mrs. Higgins: Wait. You're not bein' hot on Liza, are you?

Higg: I surely am. If that's what you want to call it. Besides, there's not much I could do about it. She's a missing person.

Pick: The inspector gave us a hard way to go. Now that I think about it, they might suspect something fishy.

Mrs. Higgins: Well duh! Any fed in their right mind would, once you put Liza on their radar like some type of snitch.

Higg: At least we'll find her this way.

Pick: Yeah, 'n we not bouta go out like this.

Mrs. Higgins: Why don't you both run off and inform the Crips and Bloods while you're on that same train of thought. It sh—

Second Child: Aye, Henry. This dude here to see you. He said he got pull around the hood.

Higg: Girl, bong! I'm not even in the mood. His pull around the hood does not interest me around these parts.

Second Child: Well, his name is Doolittle.

Pick: Doolittle? Doolittle who thinks he slick?

Second Child: Naw, he looks sort of high-class to me.

Higg: He's probably some of Liza's kin. She's probably been staying with him. Tell him to come on in.

Second Child: Okay.

Higg: This should be interesting.

Mrs. Higgins: You heard about any of her folks?

Pick: The pops. I told you about him.

Second Child: Here he is. Mr. Doolittle.

Doolittle: [Doolittle enters, he is brilliantly dressed] Look what you done did.

Higg: What are you accusing me of?

Doolittle: Get into my hat. Get into my coat.

Pick: Liza been gettin' you fly?

Doolittle: Liza! Try again. A little harder maybe.

Mrs. Higgins: Wassup, Mr. Doolittle. Take a seat, kick back.

Doolittle: Skip!

Higg: What's goin' on witcha?

Doolittle: What's the use? This is a cruel world. Just know that I blame you, Higg.

Higg: You seen Liza around?

Doolittle: I'm assuming you haven't.

Higg: You assume right.

Doolittle: You a gifted man. You have skills. And no, I haven't found her, but because of you, I'll be seeing her soon. All thanks to you.

Mrs. Higgins: What has my son done now, sir?

Doolittle: Got me guh! To say the least. He has completely screwed me over. He fashioned me a feast for middle class obscurity. The jaws and teeth of middle class.

Higg: You lunchin'. Fall back. Don't try to play me. You been MIA.

Doolittle: Oh yeah. So that must mean you can do anything. Remember when you was textin' your old partner up New York who was trying to set up a charter school with a brand new spin?

Higg: What? Like who do you mean? Roscoe Rockefeller? Old news. Dead news.

Doolittle: Oh yes! But didn't you in-box him before he died? And didn't you say that a lowlife named Alfred Doolittle was the smartest entrepreneur in the city?

Higg: Maybe I did say something like that while sleepwalking.

Doolittle: Well you might have been sleepwalking, but he heard you. And he put in his Will that I'm sposed to get a half million bucks a year on the condition that I run a righteous charter school somewhere near MLK.

Higg: Dang! So what's the problem?

Doolittle: So I opened the Doolittle Do-A-Lot Academy. Got me 300 students and a whole rack of new teachers. Teaching entrepreneurial skills. Seriously, I don't mind the young'ns. Well, some of 'em are blowers. What hurts me is, now I've got to act all cleaned up. I can't run the streets. I can't get drunk. I can't do nothing fun no more. And all my family, they act like I hit the lottery. Always hitting me up for money. I got to give it up, and I don't even like them. Don't you worry about Liza. When she needs some cash there's no doubt she'll get in line for some of mine.

Mrs. Higgins: But Doolittle, no one can make you take the money.

Doolittle: True, but that just makes it worse. What kind of lame would say no to half a million? Just thinking about giving it up now makes me sick. So I'm doomed to living a middle class life, and giving up the good life I used to have. That's what your son has done to me.

Mrs. Higgins: Well, that solves the problem of Liza's future. You can take her now.

Higg: Never! She doesn't belong to him. I paid him 5 bucks for her fair and square.

Mrs. Higgins: Don't be absurd, son. If you really want to know where Liza is, she's upstairs.

Higg: Upstairs! I'll go get her.

Mrs. Higgins: Boy, be quiet and sit down.

Higg: But...

Mrs. Higgins: Now listen to me. Liza came here and told me how you two treated her last night. That's messed up.

Higg: What?

Pick: No ma'am. We ain't do nothing to her last night. We ain't even hardly say nothing before I went to sleep. Higg, did you mess with her later on?

Higg: No way. Matter of fact, she threw my flip flops at me. She kirked out, but it sure wasn't my fault. And she need to watch what she say out her mouth.

Pick: What's up with that?

Mrs. Higgins: You so stupid. Liza worked her butt off for you, and when the big test finally came, she aced it. She didn't make not one mistake. But you lames ain't give her no credit. You didn't even say thank you. Naw, you talked about how boring it all was and how hyped you were that it was over. Of course she threw your flip flops at you. I woulda thrown a frying pan.

Higg: Oh, she knew she did good. We didn't have to fuss all over her.

Pick: Hmm. I guess we were jerks. Is she mad?

Mrs. Higgins: Well, don't expect her to come home with you. But she might be willing to talk.

Higg: What! Who does she think she is?

Mrs. Higgins: Only if you know how to act. Try not to act a fool.

Higg: All right. Pick, you behave yourself now.

Mrs. Higgins: Mr. Doolittle, would you please step out on the porch for a moment? I don't want Liza to freak out about your news until she's talked to these two. Okay?

Doolittle: Surely, ma'am.

Mrs. Higgins: Ashley, go tell Liza to come downstairs.

Third Child: Why it always gotta be me?

Higg: [A pause] Where the heck she at? We can't sit around here all day.

Mrs. Higgins & Pick simultaneously: Now hush!

Liza: [Enters happily] Wassup Higg, Wassup Pick. My manz!

Higg: Don't try to con me. I taught you that talk. Now come on home with us and stop acting stupid.

Mrs. Higgins: Nice one, boy. Who could say no to that sweet talk?

Higg: Let her say it, Ma. She won't even know what to say without me telling her how to say it.
Liza. Liza. [Higg's trying to get her attention but she ignores him] I made you, and I can break you if I want to.

Pick: Aw, Lizzy. I'm real sorry that we didn't give you the appreciation you deserved last night. Or ever, really, best friend.

Liza: Thank you, Pick. You're all right. Fact is, it's no big deal to teach somebody ghetto slang. It's a hundred dudes in Congress Heights alone could have done that. You're the one who taught me how to fit in and get along anywhere I go.

Pick: How's that?

Liza: Self-respect. You always treated me like I was one of your crew. In a hundred different ways, you taught that what people really want is straight talk and a little bit of respect. What goes around comes around. If I give, then I get. That's the way the world is, here in Southside, or Birkettsville, or in L.A., even.

Pick: That's sweet. Please don't hate on Higg because he's a bum. That's just what he do.

Liza: Yeah, I know.

Mrs. Higgins: It's not healthy to grind your teeth, son.

Liza: But I got a problem. I'm a real hood chick now. Got the tats, got the weave. There's no going back. But also, I can't go back to Brandywine with you. Where can I call home?

Liza: [Doolittle walks up behind her and touches here on the shoulder] What tha?!

Doolittle: Don't look at your daddy like that, girl. It ain't my fault. I got some money is all.

Liza: You must have robbed a bank.

Doolittle: Feels like it. Fact is I'm all dressed up for church. Your stepmother and me are getting married.

Liza: Why? What'd you do?

Doolittle: [sadly] I pretty much have to do it. This money changed my whole life. I'm supposed to be a role model now. Liza, will you come to the ceremony?

Liza: I guess so. Sure.

Doolittle: And you, Pick?

Pick: No problem.

Mrs. Higgins: Me too?

Doolittle: Bet.

Mrs. Higgins: Pick, you go on ahead with Doolittle. I'll get myself fixed up and I'll come over with Liza in a minute. [She leaves]

Doolittle: Bye all. [He leaves]

Pick: Later. [He leaves]

Higg: [Pause as Higg and Liza realize they're alone] Well girl, you got me back pretty good. Have you had enough? Are you coming back with us, or what?

Liza: You only want me back to fetch the remote and put up with your bad moods.

Higg: That's just how I do, no matter who I'm hangin' with. You like that Pick treats you the way he treats his friends. I do too! I shout at you exactly the same way I shout at Pick, and everybody else.

Liza: You can shout at me all you want. But I won't be ignored. I can do just fine without you—don't think I can't.

Higg: I know you can. And I can do without you. But I don't want to. I miss you, Liza.

Liza: What would I come back for?

Higg: For the fun of it!

Liza: But what about love? You know that Freddy Hill, poor boy, he loves me to death.

Higg: He's not good enough for you.

Liza: I'm not sure. He's got a good heart. Is anything more important?

Higg: Lizzy, you're crazy. You could go with a rap star or a football player. Hey, the Mayor's a bachelor.

Liza: I won't sell myself off to some rich dude who doesn't know anything about how to treat people. If I can't have kindness, I'll have independence.

Higg: Independence? What are you going to do for a job?

Liza: I could be an actress, or a dancer. Or I could give lessons, like you gave me.

Higgins: For money? For real, though?

Liza: I can take care of myself. I'll work at Popeye's, if I have to.

Higg: Now that takes bravery. I salute you for that.

Mrs. Higgins: [Enters] Are you ready to go, Liza?

Liza: Totally. Is Higg coming with us?

Mrs. Higgins: No way, Jose. He don't know how to act in church.

Liza: Then that's it, Higg. This is goodbye.

Mrs. Higgins: Bye-bye, son.

Higg: Tootles, ma. [He is about to kiss her, when he remembers something] Oh, by the way, Liza, pick up some Sprite and a pack of Pringles, will you? And buy me a couple of Polo's on the Internet. You choose the colors.

Liza: Buy them yourself. You got two bags of chips in the cabinet, and Pick likes Sierra Mist better. You can't even tell the difference. [Liza leaves]

Mrs. Higgins: You're incorrigible, boy. But if Liza doesn't buy you that shirt, I will.

Higg: Oh, don't worry. She'll buy it all right. Tootles. [Mrs. Higgins leaves and Higg remains, with an optimistic expression on his face.]

END