

SEPTEMBER 2ND, 2020: CHARLIE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

SHEYLA NICHOLAS is sitting in a chair adjacent to CHARLIE in her office. The office is dimly lit - blinds are slightly open.

Sheyla (Mid-forties) is wearing a black three-piece pants suit. She has her dreads in a ponytail with a pen and notebook in hand.

Charlie (early-twenties) is slumped in his chair, looking uninterested. He has bandages on his right forearm.

SHEYLA

What's going on today, Charlie?  
You're usually full of energy.

Charlie looks up slightly and shakes his head in the "No" motion.

SHEYLA (CONT'D)

You usually tell me everything,  
Charlie. You have been making great  
progress.

Charlie puts his head down and is smirking.

SHEYLA (CONT'D)

I can see you smiling. Boy, you are  
not fooling anybody.

Charlie looks up and is full of energy.

CHARLIE

My fault. You know I can't keep a  
straight face. It's good -  
seriously.

Charlie looks down and has his right hand in the palm of his left with his left thumb in the palm of his right.

SHEYLA

Do you always hide what you're  
feeling?

Charlie looks off to side with a disgusted look.

CHARLIE

Not this again.

SHEYLA

It's my job, Charlie. I am here to help you. I can't help if you hide from me.

Charlie stares at Sheyla.

SHEYLA (CONT'D)

Let's talk about the meeting last night.

Sheyla briefly looks through her notes. Charlie looks down once more.

SHEYLA (CONT'D)

You mentioned briefly that you were looking forward to something.

CHARLIE

Nah.

SHEYLA

Yes. Charlie, I want you to repeat what you said.

Charlie gives Sheyla an angry look.

SHEYLA (CONT'D)

That little gang you ran with isn't here Charlie, speak up.

CHARLIE

(Whispers)

I know.

SHEYLA

Say again?

CHARLIE

I know.

SHEYLA

Repeat what you said.

CHARLIE

Dying.

Charlie eyes start to water.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I said I wanted to die.

SHEYLA

Why Charlie?

CHARLIE  
I'm alone and I deserve to be.

SHEYLA  
Why?

CHARLIE  
I don't have to explain myself to you, my n-

SHEYLA  
Eh - you are not going use that language in this space. Charlie, I am trying to help you, but if you keep joking around and avoiding the problem, you will never get better. You know that, right?

Charlie looks out to his left towards the window.

SHEYLA (CONT'D)  
Why do you feel alone? You have been making friends here, haven't you?

CHARLIE  
It won't last... It never does.

SHEYLA  
Some people you meet won't always be your friend charlie.

CHARLIE  
I know, but it don't hurt any less.

SHEYLA  
I know.

CHARLIE  
I try and I try, but nothing seems to work. I don't know. Maybe it's my past coming back to haunt me.

Charlie is making facial gestures, trying to hold back his tears.

SHEYLA  
You let them go, Charlie -it's just us.

CHARLIE  
A man ain't suppose to cry or feel anything, but I feel everything. I don't know why.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Killing myself is the only answer I got to all this. And I don't want anybody to pity me, man- I just want somebody to talk to me.

SHEYLA

I'm talking to you, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Cause that's your job bro. It's a job.

SHEYLA

I know-

CHARLIE

I've hurt people-

SHEYLA

That wasn't your fault.

CHARLIE

This is my punishment. I'm a criminal.

SHEYLA

You're a human being just like me.

CHARLIE

I'm a monster-

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Flashback.

A group of men dressed in blue is standing outside of a van-like car.

GANG MEMBER #1

Yo Steven! Let the little nigga do it.

GANG MEMBER #2

Yeah, it's time for little cuz to step up.

Charlie (9 years old) is standing within the group.

CHARLIE

My name is Charles.

GANG MEMBER #2

Steve, you really let shorty name  
your son that?

The whole group is laughing.

CHARLIE

Shut up!

His father STEVEN is leaning on the car.

STEVEN

You want them to acknowledge you?

CHARLIE

Yes, sir.

Steven pulls out a gun from his back pocket and gives it to  
Charlie.

STEVEN

You eat.

Charlie is shocked and drops the gun on the ground.

Steven smacks him and forces him to pick the gun back up.

CHARLIE

Daddy, please.

STEVEN

Man the fuck up. We don't cry  
little nigga.

Steven points towards the store.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Go eat up! Now!

Charlie has tears rolling down his face. Gun behind his back  
in his right hand, He walks up to a RANDOM OLD MAN.

RANDOM OLD MAN

How can I help you, young man?

Tearful, Charlie shows the gun to the man.

CHARLIE

They want me to use this.

The Random Old Man walks away as fast as he can.

GANG

Don't let him get away!

A shot goes off, and the Random Old Man falls to the ground.

Charlie is standing still in shock. Sound deafens, and all is silent.

Charlie looks down at the gun and smoke is coming from it.

GANG (CONT'D)

Yeah! Let's go!

Steven runs up to his son with a giant smile on his face.

CHARLIE

I killed him.

STEVEN

Nah, you had to survive son. We don't play with our food.

INT. HOSPITAL - PRESENT

Tears run down Charlie's face.

CHARLIE

- And I feel like everyone knows it.

SHEYLA

Your'e not, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I feel like I'm screaming at the top of my lungs and no can hear me.

EXT. JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER - DAY

Flashback.

Charlie is 14 years old and in a Juvenile Detention Center.

Charlie is wearing an all beige detention suit. He lays curled up in a ball on the ground next to the bed, by himself, tossing and turning. He has bruises all over him, a black eye, and a busted lip. His clothes have a spot of his blood.

He screams, but yet no one can hear. He cries, but no one comes to his aid.

CHARLIE

Help me! Please! Someone! Talk to me! I'm sorry! Please! Oh God!

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Charlie is 15 years old and still in the Juvenile Detention Center.

He is sitting at the table full of others around his age. His tray is full of white bread, corn, moist beans. He doesn't eat his food and instead stares at it.

The others notice.

RANDOM TEEN

What you not hungry or something?

Charlie doesn't acknowledge him.

RANDOM TEEN (CONT'D)

Yo! I said, what you not hungry or something?

Charlie is still looking down staring at his food.

CHARLIE

You can have it if you want.

The RANDOM TEEN laughs and the others around him start to laugh as well.

RANDOM TEEN

(Laughing)

Nah, bro. I'm good. You been here a long time haven't you?

Charlie looks up him.

CHARLIE

Yeah.

RANDOM TEEN

What you in here for?

CHARLIE

It doesn't matter.

RANDOM TEEN

Nah, bro. It does. I'm tryna start a conversation and you don't seem interested. You know what... I'll start.

The Random Teen takes his napkin and unfolds it gently. He takes it and tucks it into the neck of his beige jumpsuit.

RANDOM TEEN (CONT'D)  
I'm in here for trying to jack a  
hummer.

Laughing bursts out among the group of teens at the table.

TEEN IN BACKGROUND  
A hummer?

RANDOM TEEN  
Yeah, a hummer. It looks like one  
of those army trucks and I really  
wanted one. I took it and now I'm  
here.

Charlie gives a little smirk.

RANDOM TEEN (CONT'D)  
Since, you wanna laugh. What you in  
here for?

CHARLIE  
I sold drugs.

RANDOM TEEN  
Type?

CHARLIE  
Cocaine.

The Random Teen starts to tense up.

RANDOM TEEN  
Oh yeah?

Charlie perks up a little and is showing excitement. His  
voice becomes a little higher, and posture improves.

CHARLIE  
Yeah, we made a lot of money.

Few of the teens start staring at him.

RANDOM TEEN  
Deadass?

Charlie smiles

CHARLIE  
Yeah.

RANDOM TEEN  
How you much you made, bro?

CHARLIE  
We must've made a hundred thousand  
a week, maybe more.

RANDOM TEEN  
Brownsville?

CHARLIE  
Yeah...

The Random Teen smiles with a menacing look on his face.

RANDOM TEEN  
Interesting.

The teens at the table stand up all at once. The Random Teen is still sitting.

Charlie face goes pale. His eyes get watery as he slowly gets up from the table.

CHARLIE  
I'm sorry.

The Random Teen stands up and smiles and throws up a rival gang sign.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
Please... No.

The group of teens grab and drag Charlie into the cell and beat him.

The group is stopped by the guards. Charlie lays on the ground, curled up in a ball, where he was just beaten, crying, screaming, but no one hears.

INT. HOSPITAL -PRESENT DAY

Charlie hangs his head down.

CHARLIE  
I'm just tired.

SHEYLA  
This is a safe space, Charlie. No one can hurt you here.

CHARLIE  
Except me, right?

SHEYLA

That doesn't have to be the case.  
You can overcome this.

Charlie eyes are red from crying as he lifts his head.

CHARLIE

I don't want to no more.

Charlie gets up and goes to the corner of the room. He lays and curls up into a ball and breaks down, crying. Sheyla goes over to comfort him.

SHEYLA

Stop it! I hear you, Charlie! I  
hear you!

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Flashback

Charlie is sitting at the table with his father. It is morning, and they are having breakfast, eggs and toast. Charlie pushes around his eggs with his fork.

CHARLIE

I don't want to do this anymore.

Charlie's eyes start to water. Steven gives him a stern look. He throws his plate of food at charlie. Charlie falls to the ground. He is shaking, crying, and curls up into a ball.

Steven stands up.

STEVEN

Nigga, you a man now! Act like it!

Steven goes over and kicks Charlie with his right foot.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Keep acting like that and you gonna  
be alone for the rest of your life!  
You're mother ain't here to help  
you this time.

Charlie, still in a ball, cries, but no one can hear him not even his father.

FADE OUT.