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10018
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KENDRA

For initial auditions, please prepare the first two sides.

For callbacks, please prepare the whole packet.

*****Please bring a hard copy of your headshot and resume*****

1/17

KENDRA - SIDE 1

This moment of the play is very important as it must convey an immediate sense of Kendra's anxiety and frustration. I would discourage any pre-show music and might even have her waiting onstage the entire time the audience is filing in.

When the play begins (whether at lights up, or house lights down) Kendra Ellis-Connor is in a police station waiting room. A clock on the wall shows that it's just after 4:00 AM.

There should be occasional lightening and thunder throughout the play, but it should be subtle and unobtrusive, suggesting a distant storm.

Once the lights shift to start the show allow Kendra to wait alone for a beat or two longer than it seems like the audience can possibly stand it. Then she grabs her cellphone and sends a text. (We hear a "whoosh" sound from her phone to indicate this).

Another beat as she waits for a response. None comes. Kendra then dials her cellphone.

START
└─┘

KENDRA

Jamal-- goddamnit, where are you. I've sent you four or five texts now and I'm tired of leaving messages. Call me.

She hangs up. Several beats. She calls again.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

Honey, it's me again. I'm sorry I... I didn't mean to get angry. Listen-- where are you? Call me please.

She hangs up. Another few beats. She dials again.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

Baby-- it's me again. Please just... call me or... I'm getting really worried. Just...

(MORE)

2/17

KENDRA (CONT'D)

you don't even have to say anything. Just... text me an emotee or.. happy face... whatever you call it. Something... Just so I know you're alright. OK? Listen-- no questions asked, baby. I promise.

A few beats. She dials again.

Larkin enters.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

Hey baby, I-- (seeing Larkin) Call you back.

She puts the phone down.

OFFICER LARKIN

Hi.

KENDRA

Hi.

OFFICER LARKIN

So... I checked... like you asked and the car does show up.

KENDRA

Yeah...?

OFFICER LARKIN

It shows up in the system. That's all we really know right now.

KENDRA

Shows up. Shows up how?

OFFICER LARKIN

Just shows up as... you know...

KENDRA

I mean what's the-- how does it end up coming to the attention of... you know...

OFFICER LARKIN

It just-- was logged in somehow. From... an incident. Coulda been ticketed... coulda been towed... I mean...

KENDRA

But Jamal-- my son-- he was driving it.

OFFICER LARKIN

OK-- I thought you told me he you weren't really sure / whether or not...

3/17

KENDRA

OK-- yeah. Yes. I didn't see him drive away in it. I did not actually see him get in the car. Correct. But the car's not in our driveway. And he's been gone since eight o'clock last night. Going on eight, nine hours. He said he'd be home by midnight.

OFFICER LARKIN

Right...

KENDRA

He never came home. And when I called the police they said something happened to the car and... and--

OFFICER LARKIN

OK-- I thought you told me they said that--

KENDRA

Hold on-- I wrote it down (checking a scrap of paper in her purse). "...identified in an incident." That's what she said "identified in an incident."

OFFICER LARKIN

I understand, but... (Beat). Listen, I'm really sorry, but... I'm sure he's gonna turn up. And you've already said you're not the registered owner of the vehicle, so... I mean... I told you I'd verify the vehicle information anyway, OK? And I did that, so...

Beat. He turns to go.

KENDRA

He has work.

OFFICER LARKIN

Sorry?

KENDRA

He has... Well-- a-- a-- An internship. Jamal has a very prestigious--- He's got someplace to be this morning.

OFFICER LARKIN

Sure.

KENDRA

I'm sayin'-- this isn't like him.

OFFICER LARKIN

Ma'am...

4/17

KENDRA

Look, can't you just... Can't you do a missing persons report... something?

OFFICER LARKIN

Not for forty-eight hours, no. Or if there's evidence of, y'know...

KENDRA

Foul play?

OFFICER LARKIN

We don't really use that term. That's the movies.

KENDRA

"Something bad." Whatever.

OFFICER LARKIN

Right.

KENDRA

He hasn't come home. He's a responsible kid. His car coulda been stolen.

OFFICER LARKIN

We don't know that.

KENDRA

He's missing.

OFFICER LARKIN

OK--

KENDRA

Isn't that enough?

Beat.

OFFICER LARKIN

Look... he's sixteen... seventeen...?

KENDRA

Just turned eighteen.

OFFICER LARKIN

Oh. So he just graduated from high school a few weeks ago?

KENDRA

Yeah...

OFFICER LARKIN

Well...

5/17

KENDRA

Well?

OFFICER LARKIN

He's probably out on South Beach. Or (and I know you probably don't wanna hear it) but hooking up with some girl... Doing what teenage boys do...

KENDRA

Yeah. Yeah.

Larkin turns to go.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry...

OFFICER LARKIN

Yes?

KENDRA

No I just... I'd still appreciate if y'all would...

OFFICER LARKIN

Ma'am-- we will.

KENDRA

But... you said that before, and you're leaving, and I'd really like to know what's going on.

OFFICER LARKIN

Look-- I told you: As soon as the AM liaison officer gets here...

KENDRA

No-- I mean now.

STOP

OFFICER LARKIN

Sorry?

KENDRA

Now. I wanna know now.

OFFICER LARKIN

I'll be happy to walk you back out to reception and you / can check with

KENDRA

I was just at reception.

OFFICER LARKIN

Uh-huh?

6/17

KENDRA - SIDE 2

55.

SCOTT

Dammit, Kendra.

KENDRA

You're so goddamned nice to him, it's making me sick.

SCOTT

Well, I mean... "Shoot Cops"? For Christ's sake.

KENDRA

That's why you're kissing this man's ass?

SCOTT

I-- I-- I'm ready to put my fist through the wall.

START

KENDRA

Listen, put yourself in Jamal's place for just a minute.

SCOTT

Oh, give me a break.

KENDRA

No, no, no. For just one minute. Put yourself in your son's place. He's the only Black person most of those little Liberal White kids at his school know, OK? Most of 'em... only Black people they've ever exchanged two words with are the Jamaican hospice woman who wipes Bubbie's ass, and the people at some Habitat for Humanity house they helped build with their mother's Junior League chapter so they had something to put on their application to Cornell, OK?

SCOTT

Listen, / I get that

KENDRA

You have to understand, Scott. For Black people, a lot of life is... performance. Theatre. OK?

SCOTT

KENDRA

It means putting on for other people.

SCOTT

And...?

7/17

KENDRA

And? AND Eric Garner. AND Walter Scott. AND Tamir Rice. And Black men getting gunned down in the streets. When these shootings happen, Jamal's friends all think he represents the entire race. They think he's the spokesman for Black people. It's not like if he were at a school with other Black kids. He's the one they look to. There's immense pressure on him to be-- well I'll tell you what he calls it: "The Face of the Race." That's what he says: "I feel like I'm the Face of the Race."

SCOTT

He's told you this?

KENDRA

Of course.

SCOTT

Well he's never said anything like that to me.

KENDRA

Baby... look at you... and look at me... and reckon why that might be? (Beat) That bumper sticker was... was...

SCOTT

"Theatre"?

KENDRA

Yes. It was his way of signaling something to his friends. To the world. About who he is.

Beat.

SCOTT

Well... I'm glad you have that connection with him.

KENDRA

Oh, Scott...

SCOTT

No-- no, I mean that. I really do. But he still shoulda known better. He shoulda known this kinda stupidity could lead to this.

KENDRA

To what? Us being here right now?

SCOTT

Yeah.

8/17

KENDRA
Because of a bumper sticker?

SCOTT
Yes.

KENDRA
Wait a minute. You think that's why we're here?

SCOTT
It sure didn't help.

KENDRA
A bumper sticker?

SCOTT
No. What I'm saying is, if I'm a cop rolling down a street at two AM and it's a close call on probable cause...

KENDRA
The bumper sticker would push you over the edge?

SCOTT
Of course. Especially if after I make a warning stop I get some uppity asshole / lecturing me on his rights.

KENDRA
Son of a bitch.

SCOTT
What?

KENDRA
"Uppity"?

SCOTT
Oh, come on, Kendra.

KENDRA
Is that what you just said?

SCOTT
Jesus Christ.

KENDRA
Unbelievable.

SCOTT
Please don't.

9/17

KENDRA
From you?

SCOTT
Kendra...

KENDRA
I... I... I don't know what to say.

SCOTT
Oh for the love of Christ, please. Goddammit, don't make this about how I accidentally slipped on some coded word fossil.

KENDRA

SCOTT
I can't have our son lapsing into a life where he makes excuses for himself all the time. I won't.

KENDRA
And I won't have him walk around apologizing for who he is.

SCOTT
No one's asking him to do that.

KENDRA
Oh yes they are. "Keep your hands on the wheel, boy. Look straight ahead and don't make any sudden moves. Wouldn't wanna make the man with the gun and bullet proof vest feel nervous. Make sure he feels at ease when he walks up to your window with a Glock pointed at your head." Your father ever tell you that?

SCOTT
He never had to.

KENDRA
Your goddamned right he didn't.

L
STOP

Beat.

SCOTT
Look-- I'm as eager to sort this out as you are. He's my son too. But your lectures on African-American history aren't helping. Try catching flies with honey for once in your life.

10/17

KENDRA - CALLBACK SIDE

39.

KENDRA

I thought we weren't gonna rehash our whole relationship.

SCOTT

OK. OK, fine.

KENDRA

Fine.

START
└─┘

SCOTT

It's just... I mean I hate to keep harping on this, but the kid is going to West Point in like a month. / It's just not acceptable that he

KENDRA

(Oh here we go)

SCOTT

It's not-- Kenny-- The last few times he's stayed at my place, he's looked like a goddamned gangster.

KENDRA

A "gangster"?

SCOTT

Yes. A "gangsta." I said it. OK?

KENDRA

Why? 'Cause he's not wearing Brooks Brothers?

SCOTT

The baggy pants, the cornrows. That stupid, loping, surly walk he's suddenly developed.

KENDRA

He's a teenage boy, OK...

SCOTT

A second ago he was a "grown man."

KENDRA

... he's just trying to figure out who he is.

SCOTT

"Figure out who he is"?

KENDRA

Explore his own identity.

SCOTT

Oh, Christ almighty.

11/17

KENDRA

His world is not your world, Scott.

SCOTT

Oh yes it is. It most certainly is. Look-- I completely appreciate how you had to grow up. OK? The hard streets of Liberty City. Interstate cutting through. Redlining. All o' that. I admire it. I always have. It's one of the many reasons I [love you]...

Long beat.

KENDRA

You what? (Beat) You what?

SCOTT

His world is not that world. But his world is definitely my world. You and I both worked hard to make it my world. We spent almost a quarter of a million dollars putting that kid through the best private schools in the city. He grew up in Coral Gables, for Chrissake. He's had every possible advantage. I simply will not accept him regressing into...

KENDRA

Into what? (Beat) Just say it, Scott.

SCOTT

That young man has no excuse for getting himself into this situation.

KENDRA

What situation? We don't even know what happened yet.

SCOTT

Obviously something happened. And I can take a pretty good guess what.

KENDRA

Why are you automatically gonna blame him before you even know anything?

SCOTT

He was in a Lexus with two other Black kids. (Beat). Don't look at me like that. Please-- don't.

KENDRA

Are you kidding me?

12/17

SCOTT

No-- stop. Look-- it's just you and me in here, so stop the performance art, OK.

KENDRA

Seriously? Seriously?

SCOTT

Kenny, c'mon.

KENDRA

No really. Really. He was with two other Black kids? That's the big issue here? I mean what's the big-- (long beat) Wait... how do you know who he was with?

SCOTT

(referring to Officer Larkin)

This guy told me.

KENDRA

This cop?

SCOTT

Yeah.

KENDRA

When?

SCOTT

When I walked in.

KENDRA

Whoa, whoa, whoa, hold up. So the whole hour I'm here he didn't know a thing. The minute you walk in the door he's fulla answers.

SCOTT

I wouldn't necessarily say "full of answers," but...

KENDRA

But he told you Jamal was in a car with two other kids?

SCOTT

They were stopped, yeah.

KENDRA

Two other Black kids.

SCOTT

Yeah.

13
/17

KENDRA

Well he never told me any of that. Wonder why that might be?

SCOTT

Right now, I don't care. I just wanna know who he was with.

KENDRA

Didn't your new buddy there tell you?

SCOTT

No. (Beat). Well I think you'll agree-- this is a problem.

KENDRA

No. Not necessarily.

SCOTT

Not-- Really?

KENDRA

He's got a right to be in a car with his friends without getting dragged downtown at three AM.

SCOTT

Nobody's saying he / doesn't have the

KENDRA

Even if he's in a car with his Black friends.

SCOTT

What Black friends?

KENDRA

What do you--? / Scott, c'mon, can't you see what you're saying?

SCOTT

This is what I'm saying. What Black friends? Listen to me. Listen-- Was he with Jeff? Was he out with Nate or Manny? Kids we know and trust? 'Cause that'd be one thing...

KENDRA

I... I told you, I don't know...

SCOTT

No. And he certainly wasn't with Al.

KENDRA

Al's in Europe with his family on vacation.

14/17

SCOTT

And Al's the only Black kid he hangs out with.
Which is exactly my point.

KENDRA

Funny. That's exactly my point.

SCOTT

OK, look... / I appreciate your desire to...

KENDRA

You think our bougie son has no right to
associate with other Black boys without
stamping a presumption of guilt all over
himself.

SCOTT

No-- I think our half-White, half-Black, who-
gives-a-shit-what-race-he-is son-- the one who
got a 2200 on his SAT and aced AP Physics--
knows better'n to commit unforced errors in
life by taking stupid risks. Especially when
he's on the cusp of doing great things. I
think he understands that-- like it or not--
the way you present yourself in life has
consequences. Wear pants halfway down your
ass, and ghetto hair and...

KENDRA

... and you got no right to complain when you
walk by and a White lady clutches her purse?

SCOTT

You got no right to complain when you walk by
and any lady clutches her purse.

KENDRA

I see. I see. And just associating with
other Black kids is "taking a risk"? That's
what you're saying.

SCOTT

Aw, c'mon, Kenny. You know that's not what
I'm saying.

KENDRA

Lemme ask you something... (re: Officer
Larkin). If this little asshole had told you
Jamal was out in a car with two White boys he
barely knew, would you be blaming him then?
Would that be an "unforced error"?

Beat.

15/17

KENDRA (CONT'D)

No matter how many privileges he's got, the world still looks at him like it looks at me... not you. That fact hangs round his neck like a noose you know nothing about.

SCOTT

Boy, I'll tell ya... I can see exactly what's been happening. I'm outta the house a few months, and-- no doubt-- you've been pumping his mind full of victimhood psychobabble.

KENDRA

What is that supposed to mean?

SCOTT

You know exactly what it means.

KENDRA

I've done nothing of the sort.

SCOTT

Yeah.

KENDRA

Instead of pointing the finger at me, maybe you outta be looking in the mirror.

SCOTT

Maybe you outta pick one metaphor at a time.

KENDRA

Go to hell, Scott. You're gonna stand there and blame me for this? You're the one who disappeared at the pivotal moment in our son's life.

SCOTT

Excuse me?

KENDRA

You know exactly what I'm saying.

SCOTT

I coached his baseball team for ten years. I went to every one of his chess tournaments. Have I ever missed a banquet or game / or event or meet

KENDRA

That's not... that's not what I'm talking about.

16/17

SCOTT
Then what are you talking about?

KENDRA
You walked out on him.

Beat.

SCOTT
I did not.

KENDRA
Oh yes you did.

SCOTT
Bullshit.

KENDRA
You did.

SCOTT
No I didn't.

KENDRA
I'm sorry, / but that's exactly what you

SCOTT
You know...

KENDRA
You did.

SCOTT
Kendra--

KENDRA
You up and walked out on him.

SCOTT
I didn't walk out him. I walked out on you.

L
STOP

Long beat.

KENDRA
Oh.

SCOTT
Look... this has nothing to do with us. It has everything to do with him. He's a month from being a commissioned officer at one of the most elite educational institutions on earth. My job is done. He's a man now. (Beat) A man I'm so... so proud of...

17/17