

THE JUSTICE BOAT

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WRITER'S DRAFT
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Inspired by true events.

TEASER

INT. SAO PAULO STATE PRISON - YARD - DAY

DRIZZLE. VISITORS and INMATES mill under dark wet clouds.

FAMILY MEMBERS together with their loved ones. Chatting. Laughing. A moment to savor and forget about where they are.

NATALIA, 31, clever with a devil-may-care edge. She sits with a MAN on a bench. The plastic bag opened between them. Apples, bananas, and crackers inside.

The man is Natalia's FATHER -- CARLOS. Late 50s, clean cut. Carlos would look like a Forbes 500 CEO if not for the beige pants and white t-shirt uniform.

He finishes a banana. Natalia smokes.

CARLOS

I'm sorry you had to register again.

NATALIA

Bureaucracy is a bitch. I'm glad the transfer worked out.

CARLOS

Yeah. Same but different.

NATALIA

What do you mean? I thought they would put you in your own cell.

CARLOS

They did.

NATALIA

Hey, that's good isn't it?

Natalia leans closer.

NATALIA (CONT'D)

It's further away, but I'll still come and check on you. Don't worry, okay? Little secret... I've managed to -- you know -- arrange a few things already... for you.

She smiles, and discreetly pulls out a small vodka bottle from her jacket pocket. She hides it inside the plastic bag with fruits.

Carlos watches her and scans the yard.

NATALIA (CONT'D)
We'll get everything you need in
here, okay? I promise.

Natalia has a sincere, charming smile on her face.

INT. NATALIA'S FIAT - DAY

Natalia RACES through the busy highway. The old windshield wipers working hard against the steady light rain.

She sucks on her cigarette then throws the butt out the window.

She floors it -- speedometer at its limit on the dashboard --

Natalia SCREAMS in agony, in pain. In anger --

INT. SAO PAULO STATE PRISON - YARD - DAY

Natalia shifts closer and pats her father's shoulder --

CARLOS
(flinch)
Oh -- careful there.

Carlos takes her hand away.

NATALIA
What's wrong? What happened?

CARLOS
It's nothing. Hurt it this morning
during my workout. No big deal.

Natalia senses bullshit. She quickly pulls his shirt and spots a NASTY BRUISE on Carlos' shoulder.

NATALIA
Dad, what's going on? What the fuck
is this? Are you in danger?

CARLOS
Sweetheart, It's nothing. You know
how it works. I'm the new guy.

NATALIA
Fuck this. They can't --

CARLOS
 (whispering)
 Listen to me. Forget about this.
 There's something else.

Carlos looks up at her... something troubles his mind.
 He opens and lights a cigarette.

EXT. CEMETERY - SAO PAULO - DAY

MOVING past Natalia's FIAT parked halfway on the curbside --
 A GREEN and FLOWERY FIELD with --
 Row after row of HEADSTONES...
 Natalia comes into view, walking FAST and HARD --
 She holds a SHOVEL --

INT. SAO PAULO STATE PRISON - YARD - DAY

Carlos drags his cigarette like its a shot of valium.

CARLOS
 Natalia -- hey -- you're not
 listening. This guy -- he comes up
 to me -- and, and --

NATALIA
 And what? Is he threatening you?

Natalia is all tensed up. Agitated.

CARLOS
 He tells me he knows who I am...
 that he's the guy who helped my
 wife disappear.

NATALIA
 I don't get it.

CARLOS
 I don't get it either. I'm sorry to
 throw this at you, but --
 everything is coming back -- our
 life -- the accident --

EXT. CEMETERY - SAO PAULO - DAY

CLOSE ON Natalia, her face red and sweaty.

She digs a GRAVE in front of her, and a CASKET emerges.

She stares at it for a beat. Hesitates to --

Natalia pry opens the coffin, but we DON'T SEE what's inside.

She leans closer to inspect and jumps straight back --

Nerviness -- her hands goes to her face, covering her mouth --

She closes to a fist and begins to bite into it.

INT. SAO PAULO STATE PRISON - YARD - DAY

Natalia's worked up. She paces in front of Carlos on the bench.

NATALIA

This guy doesn't know what the fuck
he's talking about.

CARLOS

He seemed so sure -- I -- I --
maybe you can look into it?

NATALIA

Look into what exactly?

CARLOS

I don't know... your mother's case.
What if she... you know...

NATALIA

(sarcastic)
What? If she's what? Living in a
penthouse in Panama City?

Natalia can't help but giggle at the thought.

CARLOS

I'm serious. What if this guy knows
something we don't? You need to
help me get out of here.

Off Natalia, mulling it over.

EXT. CEMETERY - SAO PAULO - DAY

Natalia stands in front of the grave she just unearthed. The mess she did jumps out compared to the neatly graves around.

Blankness on her face as she holds the shovel and stares at --

The headstone in front of her: ESTHER CAMPOS * 1955 + 1999

And like a baseball bat, Natalia swings the shovel at us --

SMASH CUT TO:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE**EXT. AMAZON DELTA - DAWN**

The majestic AMAZON DELTA looks like an open sea. It's the largest river delta on the planet -- more than ten times the amount of water carried by the Mississippi River.

There are no roads, no bridges, and no airports around here.

There's only the river...

Caption: AMAZON DELTA -- SIX MONTHS LATER.

INT./EXT. SCHOOL - ITAMATUBA - DAY

Probably the largest STILT HOUSE in the village. The extended porch welcomes people of all ages to come inside. A crowd of PARENTS and KIDS chat and slowly make their way into --

THE MAIN CLASSROOM

Rearranged for today's activities, the room chairs have been put away, tables set in a few rows, and service stands built on the opposite corners.

BEHIND A TEACHER'S DESK

We meet ANA, 54, short dark hair and brainy type eyeglasses. She distributes new SCHOOL UNIFORMS, old MAGAZINES, and COMIC BOOKS to kids and their parents.

Next to her, the lean and tough bailiff MARTA, 35, helps sort out the material.

Ana gives careful attention to every kid and parent as they collect their pieces, starting with JOSÉ, a shy eight-year-old. He holds his mother, VALERIA'S, hand.

JUDGE ANA

Good morning, José! Your mama told me you're collecting good grades at school. Is that true?

José shyly nods.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

Good job!

Ana randomly picks one of the comics from the pile on the table. It's an old copy of the FANTASTIC FOUR.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)
Invisible Woman! My favorite!

José takes the comic book.

VALERIA
(to José)
What do you say to Judge Ana?

JOSÉ
Thank you, your honor.

JUDGE ANA
You're welcome, sweetheart.

VALERIA
(to José)
Why don't you go outside and play
with your friends?

The mother kisses her boy, and he runs outside.

JUDGE ANA
Are you okay, Valeria? I didn't see
you yesterday.

VALERIA
Yes, your honor. I had to organize
my sister's visit.

JUDGE ANA
Oh. Great! Is she in town?

VALERIA
Yes. Thank God!

JUDGE ANA
Wonderful. José seems so much
better since the last visit. Did
his father contact you?

VALERIA
No, your honor. He's a wild man but
pays much respect for the law.

JUDGE ANA
That's good.

VALERIA
The one-hundred meters rule has
worked so far.

JUDGE ANA

Let's keep it that way. At least until the next hearing. It's either this, or he'll face a prison sentence.

VALERIA

I just want to finish this divorce and my family's case, your honor. Start over again. I pray to god, everyday.

The mother nods, almost in tears. The Judge embraces her from across the table.

JUDGE ANA

It's all right, my dear. You've been doing a terrific job with your son. You're a great mother and he loves you dearly. That's what matters.

The Judge grabs one of the uniforms from the stack on the desk. She checks the size of the tag.

And very much like a shopkeeper, she opens one of the navy blue school shirts in front of her eyes, studies it. Then lays out a boy's shorts on the table.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

Medium. What do you say? I think that's José's size --

Judge Ana hands the uniform to Valeria. She lightens up.

VALERIA

Yes. It will fit. Thank you, your honor.

JUDGE ANA

You're welcome.

(to Marta)

Marta, can you take over for a minute?

(then to Valeria)

We'll talk again this afternoon, okay?

They kiss goodbye.

Off Valeria, studying her boy's new school uniform.

INT. SCHOOL - ROOM - DAY

An improvised prep-ready dental unit. A line of people stands in the room. Some are in better shape than others. A MAN wears a cast on his arm. A LITTLE GIRL on her MOTHER'S lap coughs and sneezes.

AN ELDERLY WOMAN, 75, sits on a school chair with her mouth open and a cuspidor next to her. Next to her on a stool --

DR. OLIVEIRA, early 40s, and in charge. He's the only dentist available within a 200km radius. Around here, he's known as the doctor. He explores the woman's mouth cavities.

DR. OLIVEIRA
You're doing excellent, Ms. Neusa.
I've never seen anyone hold still
like this. Are you into meditation?

Using the forceps, Dr. Oliveira extracts a rotten tooth.

He places the extracted tooth in a waste container, and we glimpse dozens of other rotten teeth -- different shapes, sizes, colors, and patients.

DR. OLIVEIRA (CONT'D)
Here we go.

He offers the Woman a plastic cup with water, then snaps off his gloves, and pulls down his face mask.

Dr. Oliveira grabs a pack of painkillers from a drawer.

DR. OLIVEIRA (CONT'D)
Take these twice a day and stay at
home. Do not eat anything hot and
rest. Understood?

Judge Ana pops into the room.

JUDGE ANA
(to Dr. Oliveira)
We need to talk.

EXT. SCHOOL - BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hidden from view, Dr. Oliveira leans against the wall and smokes a cigarette as Judge Ana points fingers at him.

JUDGE ANA
Where the hell is the ambulance?

DR. OLIVEIRA

I don't know. I called them
yesterday. You know it takes time
to get here --

JUDGE ANA

The boy doesn't have time. If
anything happens to that kid --

DR. OLIVEIRA

What? I'm doing the best I can,
here!

JUDGE ANA

Maybe you should try a little
harder then. The best isn't
working.

DR. OLIVEIRA

Do you think I don't care? Is that
what this is all about?

JUDGE ANA

I know you care. The question is,
do you care enough? Get that boy
out of here. Today.

Judge Ana walks away.

Off Dr Oliveira, sucking on his cigarette. Reeling.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTORBOAT - ON THE RIVER - DAY

A small, banged-up MOTORBOAT glides through the wide estuary.
A few PASSENGERS inside. Mostly native residents from the
sparsely populated settlements along the river banks.

A MAN, 40ish, at the tiller. Confident, and definitely knows
what he's doing. On the opposite side, one passenger sits
alone. It's Natalia. A large BACKPACK in front of her. She
stares in wonder at the stunning landscape: dense, lush
rainforest on the shores.

Natalia turns to the Man.

NATALIA

How long until we arrive?

MAN

Can't tell. But you'll be the last
one, ma'am.

NATALIA

Are you sure they'll still be there?

MAN

The Justice Boat crew are hard working people. I can tell you that.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - ENGINE ROOM - DAY

Two faces, very close, swinging in a HAMMOCK. The man is PAULO, 20s, strong build and the boat skipper.

His focus is on a piece of paper in his hand. He jots something down on it... then crosses it out. Next to him, LAURA, 19, black, pierced nose, sleeps with a calm face.

PAULO

What are you doing?

She gently moves her foot up onto Paulo's legs. He can't control the sexual tension between their warm, half-naked bodies, and embraces her.

He wraps his legs around her hips like a deadly snake and kisses her neck passionately. She moans silently as the hammock picks up its swinging rhythm, tossing the piece of paper and his pen on the floor.

We MOVE CLOSER to REVEAL; it's a TO-DO LIST.

A few items ~~CROSSED~~: ~~"Macedônia crew"~~; ~~"Rodolfo food and drinks"~~; ~~"balleons, deco, disco"~~... *"William party announcement"...*

EXT. MOTORBOAT - DOCK - DAY

CLOSE on a woman's hand counting CASH.

NATALIA

One hundred, as we've agreed.

It's Natalia, and she's paying for her boat trip. The Man takes the bills. The boat behind him is now empty.

MAN

Thank you, ma'am.

The Man looks down at the money, probably has never seen so much of it.

MAN (CONT'D)

Welcome to Itamatuba! I can stay
and wait if you want.

NATALIA

That's kind of you, but it won't be
needed.

MAN

We're quite far. There's nothing
around here. If you need anything --

Natalia takes more cash from her pocket.

NATALIA

Here is another twenty. Go back and
get some water and food for your
family. Thank you for the ride.

The Man nods and smiles in appreciation.

MAN

As you wish. Thank you, ma'am.

He unties the boat and jumps back inside. Natalia watches him
leave with an over-stuffed backpack slung over her shoulder.

She turns around and sees the large TWIN DECK CONVERTED STEAM
BOAT -- a printed sign hangs outside its main deck:

"THE JUSTICE BOAT - AMAZON ITINERANT JUSTICE".

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - ENGINE ROOM - DAY

Laura straddles Paulo in the hammock. She wants to scream,
but as much as Paulo wants that to happen, he shushes her.

A VOICE breaks their intimate moment.

NATALIA (O.S.)

Hello? Anyone here?

Paulo covers her mouth.

NATALIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hello?

The couple HEARS FOOTSTEPS upstairs --

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - DAY

It's from Natalia's dirty boots as she walks the main deck.

Hammocks rolled and folded on the ceiling. Stacks of documents and files on top of improvised plastic tables and chairs. A line of empty benches across the deck.

An old printer and scanner on one of the tables. We're talking early 2000's ancient technology here.

Judicial documents, stamps, forms, everything you would find in a civil office, you'll probably find inside this boat.

The steamboat has been converted into a courtroom. And Natalia explores every inch of it.

NATALIA

Anyone here?

INT./EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - ENGINE ROOM - DAY

Paulo silently helps his lover sneak out of the engine room.

They tiptoe to the outside of the LOWER DECK, and he throws a ROPE LADDER down to the river below.

PAULO

You coming tonight, right?

LAURA

Happy birthday, captain.

She smiles and kisses him, then climbs down using the rope.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - DAY

Natalia studies a large tattered AMAZON MAP glued to a wooden panel. She runs her fingers across, when --

BRANDÃO (O.S.)

May I help you?

BRANDÃO, 47, caucasian, slightly overweight, and not much hair left. He emerges behind Natalia with a stack of files under his arm.

He's sweating like a gringo would in a tropical country. In fact, he looks like a gringo.

NATALIA

Oh, hi.

BRANDÃO

Do you need anything?

NATALIA
What about justice?

BRANDÃO
Excuse-me?

PAULO (O.S.)
She's funny!

A LAUGH shifts their attention -- it's Paulo. Flip flops, surfer shades. The skipper's daily garb.

BRANDÃO
(surprised)
Paulo -- what are you doing here?

PAULO
I heard voices.

BRANDÃO
You're supposed to be helping at school. Or better, helping me.

PAULO
I had some things here that needed taking care of.

BRANDÃO
What things?

PAULO
The generator. We don't want to go on tour without electricity, right?

BRANDÃO
We don't. We also don't want the public prosecutor to set up the courtroom by himself.

Brandão walks around the room and throws the files on the Judge's desk.

BRANDÃO (CONT'D)
(to Paulo)
I had to clean, put the tables, sort the files, get the printer --

PAULO
I get it. Next time, okay?

Brandão glares at Paulo.

BRANDÃO
Right... next time...
(irritated)
I gotta get back to work.

He climbs up to the UPPER DECK, stops midway --

BRANDÃO (CONT'D)
(to Natalia)
The courtroom opens in two hours.

Brandão is finally gone. Paulo turns to Natalia.

NATALIA
He seems to be having a bad day.

PAULO
Nah... that's just Brandão.

NATALIA
I heard stories about a miraculous
Judge. Tough like a bull, but fair
and real. I need to find her.

PAULO
You're not from the North, are you?

NATALIA
Is that a problem for the Judge?

PAULO
No. Just curious. I'll be honest.
It gets jam-packed in here.

NATALIA
I just have to discuss my case.
Shouldn't take too long. In and
out. Won't even get time for yellow
fever.

PAULO
I wouldn't be too sure. Most people
wait for months to talk with her.

NATALIA
What exactly is your job here?

PAULO
I'm the captain.

Natalia gazes around...

NATALIA

Well, captain... It seems like
we're going nowhere, so...

She drops her backpack on the desk, accidentally knocking
folders and files on the floor.

NATALIA (CONT'D)

...I'll take my chances and wait
for the deadly mosquitos here then.

Natalia pulls up a chair and sits down with her leg up on the
table. She lights a cigarette. A name plate on the desk reads
"Judge Ana Clara".

The whole thing makes Paulo uncomfortable.

PAULO

I tell you this. I know a place
where they may have repellent.

He smiles at Natalia charmingly.

INT. SCHOOL - MAIN CLASSROOM - DAY

PEOPLE of all ages listen to Judge Ana. Some locals stand in
the back, others sit on improvised student chairs and
classroom tables.

The Judge avoids speaking in law jargon or technical terms --
especially in this corner of the world.

JUDGE ANA

Brazil has one of the highest tax
rates in the world. As a Judge, I
must pay four months of my salary
to the state per year. It is our
duty and our right to demand
something in return. Don't you all
agree with me?

People react with enthusiasm.

The Judge picks up WHITE CHALK and writes on the BLACKBOARD
behind her. The room goes quiet as she finishes, turning to
them and reading the words aloud --

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

Justice and civil rights.

Judge Ana is just getting started. She has the crowd's full
attention -- eyes and hearts glow with hope.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

Paulo and Natalia walk along the dock. It's the direct access and only "road" into the village.

Natalia takes in the new environment: wooden stilt houses on both sides, clothes hanging on the porches, tall trees --

PAULO

I didn't know the Judge was so famous.

NATALIA

Me neither. How do you become famous in the middle of nowhere?

Paulo stops -- doesn't like Natalia's comment.

PAULO

She's the only one fighting for them. She brought teachers, doctors, social workers and justice. Before she started this, no one cared about the riverside communities. Can you imagine living your life like you didn't even exist? No documents, no government support... nothing.

(a beat)

Reading wouldn't help you either.

He walks out and Natalia follows closely.

NATALIA

(guilty)

I didn't mean it like that.

PAULO

Have you ever helped anyone in the big city? Or you're too busy making money to spend on shopping?

NATALIA

Okay. I got your point. It's just -- that -- I -- I'm not used to places like this.

PAULO

Well... if you want to talk to the Judge, I'd suggest you start getting used to it.

NATALIA

I'm a fast learner.

Paulo stops again.

PAULO

Are you? So what about your first lesson: Don't say stuff like this around her. She'll skin you alive and throw you in the river for the piranhas.

(points at the school behind Natalia)

They won't teach you this over there.

Natalia turns around and sees the school's facade.

PAULO (CONT'D)

The Judge is probably inside. Good luck.

NATALIA

Why don't you come with me? It would be easier if could you introduced me to her --

PAULO

I have a party to plan... you should come over tonight. Maybe you'll learn something else.

NATALIA

(not a bad idea)

Yeah... maybe...

Natalia smiles to herself as Paulo strides away...

INT. SCHOOL - MAIN CLASSROOM - DAY

The Judge stands at the center and addresses the crowd.

JUDGE ANA

Legal support. Welfare state. Pension and health services. It's time for the Brazilian state to recognize you as part of our society.

Natalia slips into the back, and blends in with the locals, unnoticed. She observes Judge Ana as if she's staring at a ghost.

CLOSE on the Judge's DETAILS: how her lips move, the way she gestures her arms, the curly dark hair, her smile, large brown eyes...

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter if you live in Copacabana or in the Amazon. The rules apply to everyone, everywhere.

The Judge's voice echoes in the room.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

I know. Sometimes it's difficult. There are people who don't want this to happen. But after twenty years here --

Natalia's heart slows down. Her blood pressure drops, she clutches her head, eyes roll --

She gasps for air --

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

You can be sure of one thing... I'm not going anywhere until you all get what you deserve --

A THUMPING SOUND shifts everyone's attention --

In the back of the room, Natalia's body COLLAPSES, slamming her head on a DESK before hitting the floor. She knocks down chairs and tables on her way down. It doesn't look good.

Off Natalia, unconscious. Surrounded by strangers' faces.

EXT. ETAPA SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - SAO PAULO - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The private school is located in a well-protected open area. It's the evening pick up, and luxury cars arrive and drive away every minute.

ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD NATALIA plays with FRIENDS in the gated parking lot. She wears a school uniform and has a girly backpack on.

The SCHOOL GUARD tries to keep things organized as the place is bubbling with energetic ten-year-olds. Some charge towards their PARENTS; others ignore them completely.

Natalia says goodbye to her friends, one by one. She sits on the bench and waits patiently for a parent --

TIME-CUT --

The parking lot becomes QUIETER and EMPTIER until there's NO ONE left, except for Natalia and the School Guard.

He approaches Natalia and sits next to her.

SCHOOL GUARD
Is mummy late again?

Natalia nods.

SCHOOL GUARD (CONT'D)
Guess what I have with me?

The School Guard grabs a deck of cards from his pocket.

SCHOOL GUARD (CONT'D)
Are you good with memory games?

MOMENTS LATER --

Natalia holds a few cards in her hands; some are face down on the bench. She and the School Guard look at each other --

A BLACK CAR with tinted windows arrives. Natalia recognizes it. She places the cards on the bench, grabs her backpack and runs towards the vehicle --

A man opens the driver's door and steps outside. It's Natalia's FATHER, MUCH YOUNGER than when we first met him. An anxious and tense gaze on his face as he kneels down and opens his arms.

The Guard on the bench smiles at them as father and daughter hold a tight embrace.

INT. HEALTH CLINIC - NURSERY ROOM - ITAMATUBA - DAY (PRESENT)

Natalia rests unconsciously on the examination table. It's a small nursery room with two nursery beds. Next to Natalia, a THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOY sleeps. A BANDAGE wrapped around his calf, and IV FLUIDS in his arm.

Judge Ana and Dr. Oliveira surround Natalia's bed.

DR. OLIVEIRA
Blood pressure is back to normal --

JUDGE ANA
No concussion?

DR. OLIVEIRA
I don't think so. She hit her head pretty hard, but she'll be fine.

The Judge is hypnotized by a small GOLDEN CHARM around Natalia's neck.

DR. OLIVEIRA (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

JUDGE ANA
I'm fine.

DR. OLIVEIRA
I have to head back to the school.
Do you need me for anything?

JUDGE ANA
No. Just make sure she doesn't go
anywhere when she wakes up. I want
her in the boat to Registro with
the boy.

Dr. Oliveira glances at the Judge. It's better than asking why. The Doctor picks up medical files and walks out.

TIME-CUT --

The Judge looks up from Natalia's body and spots a BACKPACK on the chair. She turns her head -- no one around, except for the sleeping Boy.

Judge Ana fumbles through Natalia's bag and finds an INVESTIGATOR BADGE and a FOLDER with FILES.

Her gaze falls on the name ESTHER CAMPOS. She looks troubled.

She reads through the pages. There are PROFILE PHOTOS and copies of private DOCUMENTS from Esther Campos. But something is unsettling about these photos...

We recognize that Judge Ana and Esther Campos is the SAME PERSON.

The Judge pulls out a DEATH CERTIFICATE. Her finger runs over the document --

INSERT

NAME: ESTHER CAMPOS

DATE AND TIME OF DEATH: TWENTY SIX OF MAY, 1999 -- 10:05AM

CAUSE OF DEATH: CAR ACCIDENT

PLACE OF DEATH: SÃO PAULO HOSPITAL

The Judge freezes. A tense beat. Reading it burns. Bad.

She knows the potential danger of these documents and holds on to the files.

She quickly closes Natalia's backpack, then places it back on the chair -- like no one ever touched it.

She turns around and --

Sees the Boy is now AWAKE.

He watches the Judge from his bed.

The Judge puts a finger to her lips: shhh.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. RADIO STATION - DAY**

Thick LIPS on a MICROPHONE. MUSIC fades out in the b.g. --

WILLIAM

Welcome back. I'm William, and this
is the Will Show.

WILLIAM, 23, dark skin and thin bones, wearing a headphone larger than his head, and speaking into a microphone in front of him. A hip-hop flair.

He sits in a small wooden cabin that has been converted into a community radio-broadcast studio -- outdated EQUIPMENT and CABLES are scattered everywhere.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

And today we're chatting with the
birthday boy --

Paulo sits next to him -- all fired up. He also wears headphones and has a microphone already set up for him.

They are BROADCASTING LIVE.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Dude... tell me. I heard you
invited everyone to this party. I
mean everyone, for real. Massive.
Why?

PAULO

(laughing)
Because I can --

William drums his fingers on the desk. Excitement rising --

PAULO (CONT'D)

No. For real. To get back to the
tour now --

WILLIAM

Yes -- the tour...

PAULO

Macedônia, Sagrado, Carneiro
Grande, Andiroba, Piuval, Taquari,
Figueira, Santa Rita, Santinho,
Castelo, Ilha Verde -- We're coming
for you!

WILLIAM
 You heard the man, folks! Get your
 calendar ready and write that shit
 down. Justice is coming.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - SESSION AREA - DAY

Brandão rises from his chair. An OLD MAN with a COWBOY HAT
 across his desk glares at him.

BRANDÃO
 Excuse me for a second.

Brandão paces towards the water dispenser. He's sweating.

He grabs a plastic cup from the dispenser and fills it with
 water. Drinks from it. He looks at his watch.

Then, from his POV: PARENTS, KIDS, ELDERLY. A full boat.
 Every age and gender present, waiting for their turn to be
 heard.

BRANDÃO (CONT'D)
 Fuck.

Brandão throws the water cup in the bin and heads to the --

EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Marta works, ushering people inside. She sees Brandão coming.

BRANDÃO
 Where is she?

MARTA
 I don't know.

BRANDÃO
 She was supposed to be here
 already.

MARTA
 Maybe she's at the clinic.

BRANDÃO
 Clinic? What the fuck happened? Is
 Ana okay?

MARTA
 She's fine. Some girl fainted.

BRANDÃO

People are waiting here. I can't handle all of this by myself.

MARTA

I'll see if I can find her.

BRANDÃO

Good. Get her to hurry up.

He turns around and sees the Cowboy at the other side, staring right back at him. Brandão wipes the sweat from his forehead and smiles politely.

INT. HEALTH CLINIC - NURSERY ROOM - DAY

A worried MOTHER holds her son's hand on the bed. He's awake, the FATHER stands next to them.

Across from the family, Natalia sits at the examination table as Dr. Oliveira approaches. She scratches her eyes, and painfully touches her head.

NATALIA

Look, doc -- thanks for the help. You have other patients. The boy seems to be in worse shape than me, so I'll keep this super short. I'm looking for the Judge. She seems like a very busy woman around here and hard to get.

Dr. Oliveira listens to Natalia's lungs and heart with a stethoscope.

NATALIA (CONT'D)

But I need to talk to her.

DR. OLIVEIRA

Can you stay still for a second?

NATALIA

Long story short, I'm trying to get my health insurance to pay --

DR. OLIVEIRA

Can you move your legs and arms for me?

She moves her legs and her arms. He measures her pulse.

NATALIA
I'm also going through a mean
divorce. I know, life comes at you
all at once, right?

DR. OLIVEIRA
Please cover your right eye and
look straight at me.

The Doctor slowly moves his index finger from left to right
in front of Natalia to check her field of vision.

DR. OLIVEIRA (CONT'D)
Tell me when you see my finger.

NATALIA
I'm fine, doc --

He points a flashlight directly into her pupil.

NATALIA (CONT'D)
Hey -- what are you doing -- stop --

Natalia covers her eyes and jumps out of the examination bed.

NATALIA (CONT'D)
I said I'm fine. Can you tell me
where I can find the judge, now?

DR. OLIVEIRA
I'm not done yet.

Dr. Oliveira writes on his files, then looks up at Natalia.

DR. OLIVEIRA (CONT'D)
We think fainting is not a big
deal, but sometimes it can be
caused by a heart or brain
disorder.

Natalia doesn't pay any attention to him. She looks into her
backpack.

NATALIA
What -- wait -- where is it?

DR. OLIVEIRA
I'd really recommend you see a
specialist in Registro to run the
proper exams.

She searches through her backpack.

NATALIA
They were here.

DR. OLIVEIRA
Are you in pain? It's totally
normal to be a little confused
after a head trauma --

NATALIA
I'm not fucking confused. I had
important files! They're gone.

DR. OLIVEIRA
If there is one person who can help
sort out your documents it's the
Judge.

Natalia punches him with her eyes -- can you just shut up?

The doctor looks up from his file and finds Natalia rushing
out the door --

DR. OLIVEIRA (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Hey! Wait --
(to himself)
Fuck!

INT. RADIO STATION - DAY

William opens two beer cans and passes one to Paulo. The
broadcast session is over.

PAULO
Do you need help setting up
tonight?

WILLIAM
I'm good. It's not like I have a
ton of equipment --

PAULO
Anything I should know in advance?

WILLIAM
(confused)
Like what?

PAULO
I don't know. Just want to be
prepared.

WILLIAM

Yeah. Prepared to get drunk. We're staring now.

They laugh and raise their beers, when --

A KNOCK on the door --

Paulo glances at William -- not expecting any visitors.

Paulo stands up and goes for the door. He finds --

JUDGE ANA standing outside. A serious look on her face.

JUDGE ANA

You both need to do me a favor.

She walks past Paulo, straight inside --

TIME-CUT

William studies a piece of paper on his desk -- his broadcast gear ready. Headphone and microphone in position.

Paulo and Judge Ana surround William.

PAULO

Why do we have to do this?

JUDGE ANA

I'm sorry, okay? But we have to tell the people.

PAULO

We just invited everyone! I don't understand...

JUDGE ANA

There's nothing to understand. William just has to read it: The justice boat must leave tonight. It's a simple announcement.

PAULO

I've been planning this for weeks. I organized the food, the drinks -- everything! I have friends coming from all over the place. They rented speedboats -- even bought new clothes -- People are waiting for this. We can't just cancel the party without a good reason.

JUDGE ANA
I have decided on the reasons. And
we're cancelling. Am I clear?

The Judge gives William a pat of comfort on his shoulder. She looks up at Paulo -- his eyes scream desperation.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)
We'll organize a new party in the
next village. I promise.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

Marta carries a PAD and sees Judge Ana at the far end of the deck. She walks up to her.

MARTA
Where the hell were you?

JUDGE ANA
I'm sorry. I know I'm late.

MARTA
Brandão is about to have a heart
attack.

Marta senses something is wrong.

MARTA (CONT'D)
Is the girl okay?

JUDGE ANA
She's fine. We're leaving tonight.

MARTA
Tonight? I thought --

JUDGE ANA
We'll celebrate Paulo's birthday
another day. Already made the
arrangements.

The Judge scurries off towards the boat. Marta follows.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)
Let's concentrate on today's
sessions, okay?

EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Judge Ana hesitates before going inside.

JUDGE ANA

Can I see your list with today's names?

Marta doesn't understand what this' all about. She hands her pad to the Judge... who takes a pen out of her pocket and WRITES on the list. The Judge hands back the pad to Marta.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

The name I just wrote is not allowed to come inside. Do you understand?

MARTA

You got it, your honor.

Off Marta, looking down at the list to read NATALIA CAMPOS.

INT. RADIO STATION - DAY

Paulo moves like an angry cat around the room as William sits holding his head. They moan their displeasure like children sent to bed.

PAULO

We need a fucking plan. This is nonsense.

WILLIAM

What do you mean by "we"? I'm only the messenger here.

PAULO

You're my friend. We have to think of something.

WILLIAM

The Judge seemed very clear on what she wanted.

PAULO

Are you scared now? It's just a party. What's the worst that can happen?

WILLIAM

Well... probably a thousand things can go wrong --

Paulo thinks... a devilish thought cooking...

PAULO
You're right. We should just
announce it's over.

WILLIAM
See. That's what growing old is all
about. Responsibilities.

William shifts in his chair and puts his headphone on.

PAULO
What are you doing?

WILLIAM
(confused)
What? I'm announcing.

PAULO
No, you're not.
(a beat)
I should do it. It's my party.

William thinks about it. That seems fair.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - DESK - DAY

Judge Ana and Brandão sit behind their desk in the crowded
boat. They pay close attention.

VALERIA (O.S.)
I lost my mother when I was eight.
My father stabbed her to death.

Valeria sits across the Judge. Next to her is her sister,
JAQUELINE, 45. You can spot their resemblance.

VALERIA (CONT'D)
After that, we moved states and the
siblings were divided between
family members.

JUDGE ANA
So you and your sister were
together this time?

VALERIA
No, no. I ended up alone with my
aunt in Pernambuco.

JUDGE ANA
That's pretty far. And you stayed
with your aunt for how long?

VALERIA

Around five years. She kicked me out of the house. She was a crazy woman. I think she did drugs.

JUDGE ANA

And where did you go?

VALERIA

I lived on the streets until the orphanage found me.

JUDGE ANA

And why didn't they try to locate your family members?

VALERIA

They did. But I had no documents. I lost everything when I was homeless. I only knew my name.

JUDGE ANA

Valeria Silva. But now you're registered as Fabiana Nunes...

VALERIA

Yes. When I was adopted, my new family gave me a new name: Fabiana.

JUDGE ANA

And when did you find your sister?

VALERIA

After my first son was born, I decided to look for my real family.

Judge Ana holds Valeria's hand.

VALERIA (CONT'D)

You taught me so much, your honor. José is a good kid thanks to you... your advice through all these years -- it made me think about my real family history --

The Judge stares at Valeria's eyes and sees herself in them.

VALERIA (CONT'D)

I wanted my son to meet his aunts and cousins. I missed them so much. I'm so thankful for everyone who helped me find my siblings. It took years.

(MORE)

VALERIA (CONT'D)

You have no idea how many civil offices I had to go to -- until someone could find this document.

The Judge reads Valeria's birth certificate.

JUDGE ANA

I know. Trust me.

(reading)

Valeria Silva, born on the nineteenth of August, 1959 at 10am in Itamatuba, Amapa State.

Valeria turns to Jacqueline and kisses her. Emotional. The Judge smiles at them, touched by the sisters' reunion.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

And today, you would like to change your name from Fabiana Ramos to Valeria Silva, is that correct?

VALERIA

Yes, your honor. I want my family name back. I want my history.

The judge nods confidently at the sisters: Let's do it.

EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - DAY

PACKED. People of all ages form a long queue outside. Bailiff Marta stands in front of the boat with a list of names. She checks the ID card from a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN.

MARTA

Thank you, Ms. Rita. Please go inside and find yourself a seat. They'll call your name.

(yells)

Please, let her get through. Open some space. Come on.

We spot Natalia among the agitated crowd. Anxious, she wades through the locals.

NATALIA

Excuse me. Sorry. Excuse me. Thank you. Excuse me.

She makes it to the entrance and faces Marta.

MARTA

ID, please.

Natalia fishes her ID from inside her bag and hands it to Marta

NATALIA

Just so you know -- I don't think my name will be on your list, no tricks here. It's kind of a last-minute thing --

Marta looks at the ID, then stares at Natalia.

MARTA

It is on the list.

NATALIA

(surprised)
Oh, great then.

MARTA

I'm sorry. But you can't go in.

Marta gives Natalia her ID back.

NATALIA

You just said my name is on the list.

MARTA

I know what I just said.

NATALIA

I need to get inside. I must speak to the Judge.

MARTA

Everyone here needs to get inside and speak to the Judge.

NATALIA

You're not listening --

MARTA

I sure am. Why don't you go for a walk, or sit under a tree? Make sure you drink some water. We don't want you to pass out again.

NATALIA

(insulted)
Excuse me?

MARTA

(smiling)
It's a small village, honey.

Natalia pushes harder with her body. Marta blocks her way.

MARTA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. But I have explicit orders from the Judge to not let you come inside the boat. Do I have to call security?

Natalia can't believe this is happening. She pulls up her INVESTIGATOR BADGE and holds it against Marta's face.

NATALIA

Federal Agent. I'd suggest you step aside, ma'am. I don't care what you, the Judge, or the goddamn Pope decided, but I'm going inside. Now.

MARTA

Do you think you're the first person to try this trick on me? A guy once showed me a cheap FBI badge to stop the Judge from talking to his wife. She wanted the divorce papers and to sue his ass for not paying court-ordered alimonies. Crazy, right?

Natalia stares at her nervously for a beat.

MARTA (CONT'D)

(yelling inside the boat)
Robson! Get your ass --

And just like that, when Marta calls for security, Natalia bursts inside in a split second. Too fast. Marta trails.

MARTA (CONT'D)

Hey!
(yelling)
Robson!

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - GUARD CORNER - DAY

An EARPIECE plugged in a hairy flesh-toned surface -- we hear COMPRESSED MUSIC coming out of the white spot.

The earpiece trails a white cord. We follow down the cord to find a POCKET RADIO. It's from ROBSON', 61, the boat's guard.

He sits in the corner of the deck, listening to his battery radio and probably thinking about his retirement plan.

Robson HEARS his name but is not so sure. He hears it again. He turns the RADIO OFF and stands up, correcting his belt.

Robson meanders out of his daydreaming. He scans the main deck and finds Natalia and Marta charging towards the Judge's desk.

ROBSON
(to himself)
Shit.

He walks back and disappears from our view as --

Natalia and Marta dart through the crowd.

NATALIA
I asked you politely, and you didn't listen. Now, get the fuck out of my way.

MARTA
Please stop. Do you hear me? You're not getting away with this --

Out of nowhere, Robson emerges in front of their eyes, forcing them to stop abruptly.

ROBSON
Is there a problem here?

MARTA
(to Robson)
Here you are! This woman thinks she can just walk onto our boat and talk to the Judge whenever she wants.

ROBSON
(to Natalia)
Is that right?

NATALIA
Yes, officer, that's right. Federal agent, Natalia Campos.
(shows him her badge)
I'm here on an investigation.

Robson studies the badge.

ROBSON
(to both of them)
Stay here.

NATALIA

Fuck. Great.

Robson gives Natalia a warning look then calmly walks back towards the Judge's desk.

WE STAY with Marta and Natalia and observe him from a distance. Robson discreetly leans over and whispers something into the Judge's ear.

Judge Ana looks up at him... then at Natalia. She freezes for a beat. Her piercing eyes lock with Natalia's.

Then, the Judge nods to Robson, and he moves away... back towards Natalia --

ROBSON

(to Natalia)

Come with me.

Natalia glares at Marta: "I told you, bitch" type of look.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - CONTINUOUS

Robson and Natalia approach the Judge's desk. Brandão recognizes her.

BRANDÃO

(scornfully)

Oh, it's you again.

JUDGE ANA

I see you're feeling much better.

(to Valeria and

Jacqueline)

I'm sorry about this.

Valeria and Jacqueline sit in confusion.

NATALIA

(to Judge)

We need to talk.

JUDGE ANA

Do I look like I have the time now?

(a beat)

Robson, please show her to the waiting area.

Robson touches Natalia's shoulder --

NATALIA

Don't fucking touch me.

Judge Ana stands up. Stares directly into Natalia's eyes.

BRANDÃO

Lady, watch your tone. This is a courtroom. And you can't stay here. We're in the middle of a session.

JUDGE ANA

(to Natalia)
He's right.

NATALIA

I don't care who is right. I'm not going anywhere.

Tension rises quickly. For one... two... beats then --

JUDGE ANA

(to Valeria)
Are you okay with this? Do you allow this woman to be present during your session?

Valeria looks up at Natalia and the Judge. She has no idea what's going on. The Judge leans closer.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

(to Valeria)
You don't have to agree to this.

Valeria nods.

VALERIA

It's okay. She can stay.

NATALIA

(to Valeria)
Thank you.

Natalia pulls up a chair and sits next to them. Not too close, but not too far either.

JUDGE ANA

Thank you, Robson. You can go now.
(to everyone)
All right, let's resume the session.

Off Judge Ana, looking up from her desk and glancing at Natalia -- their eyes lock.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**INT. RADIO STATION - AFTERNOON**

William's FINGERS. It's a COUNTDOWN: 3... 2... 1...

Paulo exhales deeply -- a GREEN LIGHT glows on the radio equipment. He's LIVE:

PAULO (RADIO BROADCAST)
I bring news that some of you may
not like...
(a beat)
The boat party tonight -- it's --
it's -- starting EARLIER!

William desperately glances at Paulo in shock. It's too late now -- there's nothing he can do. The damage is done.

And as the duo broadcast the news live, we INTERCUT with a series of shots from locals. All listening to the RADIO.

We hear Paulo's VOICE and begin the MONTAGE with:

THE BAR -- The Cowboy and other LOCALS play pool and drink --

PAULO (RADIO BROADCAST) (CONT'D)
You heard me right. Hurry up and
get ready for a long night of
celebration.

SHALLOW CREEK -- Laura and WATER BUFFALOS cross the water --

PAULO (RADIO BROADCAST) (CONT'D)
You know where to find us. The
loudest boat in Itamatuba!

SOCCER FIELD -- On the field side, THREE DUDES hang around and watch to a game --

PAULO (RADIO BROADCAST) (CONT'D)
Let's get in the mood, shall we?
William... spit some rhymes ---

William slides knobs on a mixing console -- MUSIC FADES IN.

Off William, embracing the anarchic spirit...

CUT TO:

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - AFTERNOON

Judge Ana and Brandão at their desk, working Valeria's case. Natalia's presence is almost imperceptible.

JUDGE ANA

Do you understand what that means?

Valeria and her Sister nod at the Judge from across the table.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

I can't stress this enough. This is a very important legal argument. Your registration as Fabiana is false because it was issued to someone who already had a birth certificate.

VALERIA

But I lost all my documents.

JUDGE ANA

When you were born, your parents registered you as Valeria. Even if you lose all your documents, their validity doesn't rule out.

VALERIA

So Fabiana doesn't exist?

JUDGE ANA

Legally, no. It's forbidden by law to register a person with two different names.

VALERIA

But I want my family name back!

JUDGE ANA

I understand. But, as I said, you have to be aware of your choices. You can keep Fabiana and live your life as if you were never registered before. Just like you have been doing for the past forty years. Or, you can cancel the current registration as Fabiana and use your original name, Valeria.

The Judge shifts in her chair.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

But... if you choose this option, you'll be obliged to modify all of your documents and the documents of your children. It'll be a long, tedious, bureaucratic task, but at the end of it, you'll get your family name back. Do you understand?

VALERIA

Oh, God!

JUDGE ANA

I suggest you talk to your sister and think about this. Regardless of your decision, we can organize the paperwork for the next justice tour.

Valeria is too stunned to do much more than look at Jacqueline. The sisters exhale deeply.

Next to them, quiet like a ghost, Natalia glances at the Judge --

PRE-LAP: The recognizable shrill of a SIREN WAILING --

INT. AMBULANCE SPEEDBOAT - ON RIVER - AFTERNOON

An AMBULANCE SPEEDBOAT in the distance. It barrels towards the Justice Boat. The BOAT DRIVER and TWO PARAMEDICS are onboard. They bring cardboard boxes with medical supplies and medicines

EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - OUTSIDE MAIN DECK - AFTERNOON

The curious crowd HEARS the ambulance and rushes outside. They point and watch the speedboat approaching... FAST --

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - DESK - AFTERNOON

Judge Ana and Brandão also hear the sirens. They notice the bustling crowd.

JUDGE ANA

Thank god. It's them.

The Judge rises from her chair. She addresses Valeria and her sister across the desk.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

I hope you and your sister think about what we just discussed. You can always come back to me for questions. And don't worry. Regardless of your decision, I'll stand behind you and help as much as I can. The session is adjourned.
(then)
Brandão, come with me.

Brandão rises from his chair. He and the Judge shake Valeria's and Jacqueline's hands.

VALERIA

Thank you for everything, your honor.

The Judge glares at Natalia.

JUDGE ANA

(to Natalia)
You stay here.

Judge Ana and Brandão head outside.

Natalia stays put. She turns to Valeria and her sister, who are getting ready to leave --

NATALIA

Wait.
(a beat)
I'm sorry about everything. What you went through all these years... no one deserves that. I just wanted to say one thing... the fact that you're here today with your sister already shows you've made up your mind...

Natalia takes Valeria's hand.

NATALIA (CONT'D)

No matter what happens in life, we only have one family.

Natalia paints a Mona Lisa smile at Valeria and her sister.

EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - AFTERNOON

Judge Ana and Brandão make their way through the crowd. Judge's POV: as seen from the outdoor deck, the ambulance speedboat docks next to their boat.

JUDGE ANA

Brandão, get Robson and find people
to help them with the boxes.

BRANDÃO

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE ANA

And get everyone off my boat.

BRANDÃO

Your honor, but --

JUDGE ANA

Just do what I'm telling you. Go!

BRANDÃO

(to crowd)

Listen, everyone out, NOW! Let's
go. I need volunteers. Come one!

Brandão steers the crowd out while the Judge watches the
Paramedics carry a folded GURNEY and FIRST AID backpacks.

EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK/INT. ENGINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Judge walks past locals watching the speedboat outside.

She moves quickly to the -- LOWER DECK --

Judge Ana peeks around the corner of the deck. She doesn't
want to be seen sneaking inside the --

ENGINE ROOM -- Empty, stuffy, and poorly lit.

Paulo's hammock extended across two pillars in front of the
machinery. She flicks on the light and a dangling bulb
BUZZES. QUICK SHOTS as the Judge --

Opens a wooden panel behind the generator --

Hid in the false bottom, we find Natalia's folder with files
on Esther Campos and a SCHOOL BAG.

She opens the bag. It's filled with cash wrapped in plastic
paper. She takes some of the money out and tucks it back
inside the false bottom. She closes the bag with the
remaining cash and places the wooden panel back in its
original position.

The Judge carries the school bag with her. She pauses at the
door to peek out. No witnesses. And she's out of there.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Natalia seems to be the only person inside. She shifts in her chair -- her patience reaching its limit.

Judge Ana emerges with the school bag on her shoulder. She's sweating, breathing heavily, erratic.

JUDGE ANA
Come one. Let's talk.

Natalia doesn't budge.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)
Okay, you want to do it in here?

The Judge sits across from Natalia like she's about to start a new session. She places the school bag under the table.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)
No problem. Let's do it here. This will be a short one. How can I help you?

NATALIA
I know you took my files.

JUDGE ANA
What files?

Natalia sneers at the Judge's coldness.

NATALIA
After you left, I couldn't invite my school friends over because they would ask where my mother was.

JUDGE ANA
I don't know what you're talking about.

NATALIA
You fucking know what I'm talking about.

JUDGE ANA
I think you've mistaken me for someone else.

NATALIA
Do you know how it feels to read a death certificate with your mother's name written on it --

JUDGE ANA

What do you want from me?

NATALIA

I was twelve for fuck's sake.

JUDGE ANA

I had no choice.

NATALIA

What's that supposed to mean?

JUDGE ANA

What difference does it make now?

NATALIA

What difference does it make? I cried at your funeral. I mourn your fucking death. Why? Why would you do that? Why did you leave me?

JUDGE ANA

Natalia, listen to me. I had no choice. I have a life here now.

Judge Ana slides the school bag towards Natalia, using her feet under the table.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

There's five thousand under this table. I want you to take it. The ambulance outside is going back to Registro. I want you to leave with them. And I don't want to see or hear from you ever again.

NATALIA

Why are you doing this?

A SILENT beat.

JUDGE ANA

It's the best I can do.

Natalia stares at her, but the Judge avoids her fierce eyes.

NATALIA

You're serious, aren't you? You can't even look at me.

Natalia suddenly rises from her chair in anger.

NATALIA (CONT'D)

You're fucking serious. I can't believe this -- You know what? You're right. It doesn't make any fucking difference now. You're already dead, and I'm dying, so --

Judge Ana's expression suddenly changes. She looks up at Natalia --

NATALIA (CONT'D)

Let's keep it that way. We'll see each other in hell.

Natalia furiously grabs the school bag under the table and straps her backpack. She storms out with the school bag in hand -- Brandão crosses her -- unaware of what just happened.

BRANDÃO

Is she okay?

JUDGE ANA

Tell Marta and Robson the courtroom is closed.

BRANDÃO

On it.

Brandão drops files on their desk and walks out.

Off Judge Ana, holding her head on the table. She's in pain.

Real. Emotional. Pain.

EXT. DOCK - AFTERNOON

The Boy lies flat on the gurney as the Mother holds his hands. The Boy's Father grips the rope tied to the boat and tries to keep it steady.

The Paramedics and Dr. Oliveira work as a team.

DR. OLIVEIRA

Okay, move on three. Hold it steady. One, two, three.

They lift the gurney and move the Boy safely into the vessel in a synchronized effort. The Mother follows and sits next to her son.

DR. OLIVEIRA (CONT'D)

(to Paramedics)
Go before it gets dark.

The Father takes the Doctor's hand in appreciation.

FATHER
Thank you, Doctor. Thank you.

The Boy smiles and timidly waves at the Doctor.

DR. OLIVEIRA
(to Paramedics)
Go before it gets too dark.

PARAMEDIC #1
What about her?

The Paramedic points to Dr. Oliveira. Surprised, the Doctor turns around to find Natalia -- frozen.

Expressionless gaze. Natalia has her backpack and carries the school bag.

DR. OLIVEIRA
Come, let me help you.

The Doctor extends a hand and helps Natalia jump inside.

DR. OLIVEIRA (CONT'D)
Okay... easy... watch your steps.

She sits across from the Boy's family.

DR. OLIVEIRA (CONT'D)
Are you good?

Natalia nods at Dr. Oliveira. She then looks down at the Boy, lying in front of her. He stares back -- innocent eyes.

WE STAY WITH the Doctor, standing by the shore as faint SIRENS WAIL in the distance, and the speedboat disappears from view.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - AFTERNOON

Brandão collects files and folders. He locks printers and computers in the cabinet.

BRANDÃO
You have to see it. I'm not joking.

Marta puts tables and chairs away.

MARTA
Yes, right. Why would a Cowboy do that --

Robson sweeps the floors --

And as they clean the courtroom, Paulo pops inside --

PAULO
Where's Ana?

BRANDÃO
Oh, look who decided to show up.

PAULO
I need to speak with her.

MARTA
She was here a minute ago.

BRANDÃO
Why don't you give us a hand?

PAULO
I will. We have to get this ready
for the party.

They look at each other in confusion.

MARTA
But there is no party --

ROBSON
(excited)
Sweet.

Robson uses the broom as a dancing partner to show off.

PAULO
That's why I need to speak with
her.

Paulo sprints out of the main deck. Robson shrugs. He hums a melody and performs choreography moves with his broom.

Off Brandão and Marta, jealous of Robson's skills.

EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - UPPER DECK - CONTINUOUS

Paulo finds Judge Ana alone, overlooking the river. Sad and tearful eyes watching the sun sink on the horizon.

PAULO
Ana?

Paulo gets closer. He pats her shoulder, and Judge Ana turns around to embrace him.

PAULO (CONT'D)

Hey, hey... what's going on? Are you okay?

He looks at the Judge. Wipes her tears away.

PAULO (CONT'D)

What happened?

JUDGE ANA

I'm fine... it's nothing.

PAULO

Why are you crying? Why are you here alone?

JUDGE ANA

I love this view. No, it's nothing. Don't worry about it.

PAULO

Of course, I worry.

JUDGE ANA

It was just a case I heard today. Work... it's nothing.

PAULO

Your work is your life. It's everything.

JUDGE ANA

A woman with her sister. Her story... touched me, that's all.

PAULO

Come here...

Paulo embraces her.

PAULO (CONT'D)

Everyone here loves you. You should be proud, not sad. They share their stories because they know you care! They know who you are! You're a mother to all of them!

He side-hugs her, and they both admire the glowing river.

PAULO (CONT'D)

You think a city judge is crying now because of a case? I know something that will cheer you up.

(MORE)

PAULO (CONT'D)

(a beat)

What about a party tonight?

Paulo smiles at her, a true charmer. How can the Judge be mad at him? Impossible.

Ana chuckles... stares at his dark eyes...

...kisses his forehead.

JUDGE ANA

Happy birthday, son.

That's right. The Judge is Paulo's mother.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**EXT. AMBULANCE SPEEDBOAT - ON THE RIVER - DUSK**

The passengers have lost sight of the village.

As the speedboat moves upstream, they encounter a series of SMALL VESSELS traveling in the opposite direction -- some of them have COLORFUL BALLOONS tied to them.

Canoes, kayaks, fishing boats, and small motorboats with passengers inside. FAMILIES, YOUNG and OLD. They've brought large plates of food and crates of drinks onboard.

Natalia finds beauty in this odd encounter.

She sees a CANOE at the riverbank with THREE DUDES -- we've met them before at the football field. They load BEER CRATES into their boat.

Natalia glances at the family in front of her. The Boy's Mother mutters words to a God. Hands in prayer.

The Father holds his wife's shoulder, trying to calm her heart, when --

NATALIA

Please, stop. I need to get out.

Everyone turns to Natalia, surprised.

PARAMEDIC #1

Ma'am, we can't stop here.

NATALIA

I have to get out.

(points at the riverbank)

There, look. You see that boat?

Natalia's POV: Dudes drink and load beer into their canoe.

PARAMEDIC #1

It's getting dark. Fast --

Natalia and the Boy's Father look at each other for a beat.

NATALIA

I'm sorry. But I must go back.

EXT. AMBULANCE SPEEDBOAT - RIVER BANK - CONTINUOUS

The speedboat stops at the shore. Natalia gives the school bag to the Boy's Father.

NATALIA

Take this and help your son. Thank you.

She straps her backpack and jumps into shallow water. The speedboat quickly drives off.

Natalia walks up to the Dudes with the canoe. One of them fires up a joint while his friends drink beer and load the crates.

DUDE #1

Want a puff?

Natalia grabs the spliff from his hand and takes a hit.

NATALIA

Are you guys heading to the party?

DUDE #1

Damm right, we are.

NATALIA

Mind if I join the crew?

The dude blows smoke at her. The other guys look at Natalia.

CUT TO:

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - NIGHT

The interior looks terrific. Bottles of wine and beer on ice; flowers; balloons hanging from the ceiling. The whole thing.

The boat crew and locals eat, drink, and chat to the sound of Brazilian music. People wear their best clothes for this. A cheap disco ball glints off the deck.

It's corny. It's popular. But it's crowded.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - DJ AREA - NIGHT

An improvised corner for William -- the DJ in charge of keeping everyone dancing. Paulo pours two shots into glasses.

PAULO

Here we go! Cheers!

WILLIAM

I can't believe it worked, dude.

PAULO

I told you. Gotta trust the captain.

WILLIAM

How did she not get mad at you?

PAULO

Mothers never get mad, only tired.

They break into a laugh when a BLACK GODESS approach their corner. But we've met her before.

WILLIAM

Hey babe, have a drink with us.

(to Paulo)

Pour another one.

Paulo pours another shot. It's an awkward situation because --

It's Laura. And she's William's girlfriend.

LAURA

Hey. Happy birthday.

PAULO

(to Laura)

Hi.

LAURA

Cheers!

Laura raises her glass.

PAULO/WILLIAM

Cheers!

They down the hard liquor, and Paulo glances at Laura.

EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - UPPER DECK - NIGHT

Guests drink under the moonlight and watch new vessels dock at the village. Some boats ILLUMINATE their way with FLASHLIGHTS, others GLOW with LANTERNS -- it's captivating, and the guests enjoy it.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - NIGHT

CLOSE on Judge Ana's beaming face. Her eyes sparkle joy and pride. She looks stunning. The most elegant dress in the party and a shiny pearl necklace. All this for her son.

She stands in the middle of the room, surrounded by the guests. All attention is on her. But she's used to it.

JUDGE ANA

We wouldn't have a party tonight if
it wasn't for him... for his
courage... and disobedience.

The room breaks into a chorus of whoops and whistles. Paulo stands next to his mother, grinning from ear to ear.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

But today, we do not only celebrate
the birth of my beautiful boy. We
celebrate the beginning of another
justice tour! You're the reason
we're here today. This party is for
you! For all of you who don't have
a legal name, who can't put your
children in school because you were
never registered. Who need help
from family and friends to read a
letter. You deserve to be seen. You
deserve to exist. And tonight, we
drink to that.

The crowd goes crazy. Hands rise for a toast.

PAULO

Cheers, everyone!

Paulo embraces his mother and kisses her.

QUICK PAN TO THE DJ AREA --

William turns the right knobs on his DJ TURNTABLE and MUSIC
BLAST through the speakers, plunging us into --

THE BOTTOM OF A WHISKY GLASS covering --

Natalia's face, enjoying strong alcohol. Especially after
hearing her mother's speech.

She stands in a corner, hidden from the spotlight.

Natalia's eyes fixate on the Judge.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - BAR AREA - NIGHT

Judge Ana welcomes locals, guests mill around, some of them stop for a quick chat, like Valeria who:

VALERIA

I've lost her again? Can you believe it?

JUDGE ANA

Watch out for the youngster. They usually hang around on the upper deck. They may have hijacked your sister.

The Judge and Valeria laugh.

VALERIA

Your honor... I just wanted to thank you again. I don't want to talk about work now --

JUDGE ANA

It's not my party. We're free to talk about anything.

VALERIA

You know... after all you said -- When I met my sister again after twenty-one years -- I knew -- I knew this was a sign for giving my family history and my life a second chance. I want my name back. And if that means cancelling my children's documents and my own... so be it.

The Judge smiles at Valeria. Gets emotional.

JUDGE ANA

I'm happy for you. It's the right choice.

NATALIA (O.S.)

Is it, your honor?

Natalia enters the conversation. Clearly tipsy at this point.

She leans in --

NATALIA (CONT'D)

(whispering to Valeria)

She's lying. It is not the right choice. Trust me. I know a thing or two about fucked up families.

Valeria and Judge Ana react surprised.

JUDGE ANA
 (half-smile)
 I'm sorry, I better take care of
 this one before she joins your
 sister upstairs --

The Judge takes Natalia's hand and pulls her aside.

Valeria politely nods as Judge Ana drags her daughter away --

EXT. DOCK - LATER

Natalia sits under a tree with a drink. Judge Ana stands in front of her.

NATALIA
 Why am I not allowed to have a
 drink with my dead mother?

JUDGE ANA
 What did you mean when you said
 you're dying?

NATALIA
 What? I never said that.

JUDGE ANA
 You did. You said that in the
 courtroom.

NATALIA
 Was that after or before you gave
 me money to fuck off?

JUDGE ANA
 What's going on? Are you sick?

NATALIA
 What do you care?

JUDGE ANA
 Is the fainting related?

NATALIA
 I'm not one of your cases. So... if
 you would excuse me...

Natalia stands up and bows mockingly --

NATALIA (CONT'D)
 Your honor...

She walks back towards the boat.

JUDGE ANA

You must go back to Registro,
Natalia. Are you listening to me?
They have doctors there that can
help you. There's nothing here for
you.

Natalia stops and turns.

NATALIA

No worries. You've already made
that clear.

Off Judge Ana, worried. Angry. Helpless.

EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - UPPER DECK - NIGHT

Paulo and his friends have a good time, overlooking the dark
river.

Shots are being passed around --

The Dudes smoke another joint --

William makes out with Laura --

Paulo and Natalia stare at the young couple kissing.

NATALIA

She's way out of his league.

PAULO

(guilty)
He's a good guy.

NATALIA

Girls don't like good guys.

PAULO

Oh, really?

NATALIA

They're boring.

PAULO

Am I boring you?

They laugh. Natalia gets closer. Maybe too close.

She takes out her gold necklace and puts her arms around
Paulo's neck. She locks the lucky charm in place.

PAULO (CONT'D)
What is this?

NATALIA
Your gift, dumbass.

PAULO
But what is it?

She touches the pendant for a beat. Looks down at it. How can such a small thing carry such a heavy load of memories?

NATALIA
It doesn't matter. It's yours now.

Natalia leans back. Paulo takes the necklace and studies.

MUSIC from the main deck seeps through the wooden floors and reverberates through the warm night --

PAULO
Do you hear that?

Natalia is not sure what he's talking about.

PAULO (CONT'D)
Come here. It's time.

He grabs her waist and pulls Natalia's body against his.

NATALIA
What?! -- Hey! --

Paulo stretches their arms, looks at her.

Natalia knows what's coming now... they smile then --

They gently spin around the floor as we --

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - MAIN DECK - NIGHT

COUPLES DANCING -- the boat has been turned into a ball --

Valeria and Marta act clumsy but charming --

Robson smoothly glides with Valeria. These two know how to move! A masterclass in folk-Brazilian dancing.

Brandão sweats. He has his arms around Judge Ana. Probably the first time we've seen him laugh --

WE MOVE PAST the pros and the party crowd --

CROSSING the dance floor and reaching the empty side of the room where --

Dr. Oliveira is working.

A STRANGER points a FLASHLIGHT at the PATIENT'S mouth while the Doctor carefully inspects its interior.

Dr. Oliveira pauses. Rests. Breath.

He picks up a DRINK from the chair next to him. Sips from it.

CUT TO:

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - ON THE RIVER - MAIN DECK - MORNING

A SILENT and peaceful morning. SOUNDS of birds chirping and the river flowing could quickly put anyone to sleep.

A row of COLORFUL HAMMOCKS are open on the main deck, swinging gently as the boat moves upstream.

We peek inside a few of them --

Marta sleeps, still wearing makeup from last night.

HEAVY BREATHING and SNORTING in the neighboring hammock. It's Brandão with his mouth open and body oily.

CURLED UP in the next hammock rests Dr. Oliveira, fully covered like a blanket. We can barely see his shut eyes.

Lastly comes the Judge's hammock. She lies AWAKE.

A small PROFILE PHOTO in her hand. The kind we usually use for IDs or passports.

It's an old picture of herself and eleven-year-old Natalia together, staring at the camera, making faces and laughing.

The Judge rises from the hammock with her casual sleeping clothes. She pockets the photograph and folds the hammock several times, then hangs it safely on the ceiling.

She steps carefully around the deck to avoid waking up someone from the crew.

We follow Judge Ana with a SERIES OF SHOTS as she starts her daily routine.

We begin in the --

SUITCASE AREA

A cabinet on the main deck where the crew's suitcases are kept. Ana opens her traveling bag and takes out a toiletry case.

BATHROOM

A small, claustrophobic, communal cabin that's well sanitized. Ana pees, washes her face, and brushes her teeth.

BACK AT SUITCASE AREA

She places her toiletry case back in the bag and chooses her clothing. She moves to the corner and undresses. Her beige bra and underwear stay. She puts on a clean blouse and casual blue jeans. Ana grabs a small black case from her suitcase and walks back to --

THE BATHROOM

CLOSE on her lips. The muted lipstick color is barely noticeable. She does her eyes, all very subtle, then stares at herself in the mirror for a beat -- likes what she sees.

The Judge is ready for another day of work.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - ON THE RIVER - WHEELHOUSE - MORNING

Black surfer shades and a shirtless Paulo steers the boat. Judge Ana emerges from behind and wraps her arms around him.

JUDGE ANA

How does it feel to be older?

She kisses his cheeks.

PAULO

You're already up. It's too early.

JUDGE ANA

Couldn't sleep.

A shiny reflection on Paulo's neck draws Ana's attention.

JUDGE ANA (CONT'D)

What is this?

She touches the necklace, and squints, suspiciously.

PAULO

Do you like it? It's real gold.

JUDGE ANA
Who gave you this?

PAULO
Got it yesterday. It was a gift
from a friend. She's cool.
Beautiful. You're gonna like her --

JUDGE ANA
What?

PAULO
I didn't know she was going to work
with us --

Judge Ana becomes really desperate.

JUDGE ANA
What are you talking about?

PAULO
Our new social worker!

JUDGE ANA
Where is she?

PAULO
I don't know. Sleeping?

Judge Ana rushes out, leaving Paulo puzzled.

INT. JUSTICE BOAT - ON THE RIVER - ENGINE ROOM - MORNING

The Judge bursts inside and finds no one.

TWO EMPTY HAMMOCKS suspended across the damped room.

Judge Ana recognizes Natalia's backpack on the floor --

EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - ON THE RIVER - MORNING

WE FLY over the river following the Justice Boat as it glides
through the far-flung corners of the snake-shaped Amazon
river.

A TINY HUMAN FIGURE stands outside on the upper deck.

WE MOVE CLOSER to find --

EXT. JUSTICE BOAT - UPPER DECK - CONTINUOUS

Natalia smokes a cigarette, lost in thought. She watches the small waves on the river leave a foaming wake as the boat speeds upstream.

She throws the cigarette in the water and grabs an old flip cellphone from her pocket. She dials and waits for a beat.

NATALIA (INTO PHONE)

Dad?

(a beat)

I found her.

She listens to her father in SILENCE for a beat.

Natalia hangs up the call and turns as --

Judge Ana climbs onto the upper deck --

Their eyes meet, and they stand... FROZEN --

On opposite corners of the frame --

Staring at each other... for a long, long, tense beat.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE