

OUR DIRTY LAUNDRY

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

MIA SANDERS (20s), a tough girl with a slight New York accent, pulls her keys out of her black apron as an old fashioned flip phone is pressed to her ear.

MIA

God, Billy. No fucking way is he coming. No, no, no. There's a reason we don't talk.

She kicks open the door with her non-slip, black work shoes.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Mia throws her purse on the bed and unties her apron.

MIA

Because I said so. That's why.

She empties the contents of her apron on her bed and tosses the apron into an overflowing laundry basket near the door. She counts out five quarters.

MIA (CONT'D)

I'm home. Talk later, k?

She lets out a huge groan as pockets the phone, picks up the basket, and nudges open the door with a free finger.

EXT. STUDIO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Mia hips the basket as she shuts the door. She trudges around the side of the building and lets out her annoyance with every step.

EXT. BACK OF BUILDING - LAUNDRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A tiny laundry room hides at the back of the building. Mia pulls open the gated door.

INT. BACK OF BUILDING - LAUNDRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A small laundry room with one washer and dryer, probably from the 80's.

Mia stops in her tracks as she notices a bearded man, DAVON WALLACE (late 30s), slightly dirty clothes with a few holes, sitting on the floor against the wall. An army green bag stuffed with his belongings sits on the floor next to him.

MIA  
What the fuck?

Davon gives her a slight wave with his hand and a tiny smile. Mia throws down the laundry basket in a SLAM on the washer, pulls out her cell phone to her ear, and dials 9-1-1.

DAVON  
No, wait. Please.

MIA  
It's ringing.

DAVON  
I just needed a quiet place--

MIA  
You are not supposed to be in here.  
(into the phone)  
Yes, hi. I'd like to report a  
trespasser--

Davon stands slowly and holds his hand out toward her, begging her. Mia takes a step back defensively.

DAVON  
Just one night, Ma'am. Then, I'll  
be gone.

MIA  
We pay our rent in this building.  
(into phone)  
Yes. It's 6617 Victory Blvd.

Mia stares at him as she listens into the phone. He looks toward the floor and furrows his brow. After a moment, he looks at her, pleading with his eyes.

MIA (CONT'D)  
Um, you know what? I made a  
mistake. No, we're fine here.  
Thanks for...doing whatever it is  
that you do.

Mia hangs up her phone quickly. She looks him up and down.

MIA (CONT'D)  
If you turn out to be a killer, I'm  
fucked.

Davon cracks a slight smile.

DAVON

I'm not.

Mia scoffs. She grabs the basket.

He takes a step back to let her pass toward the washer. Mia dumps her mixed up pile of various types of clothes into the machine. She slams the lid and puts five quarters into the slot.

She pushes the slot forward - no movement from the washer.

MIA

Come on! Every time...

She pushes the slot again - Nothing. She pounds on the lid.

MIA (CONT'D)

I hate this fucking thing!

She digs deep in her pockets and finds three quarters.

MIA (CONT'D)

Shiiiiit.

She turns. Davon pulls out his prized possession - a small leather pouch. He takes out two quarters and holds them toward her.

MIA (CONT'D)

I don't need your money.

DAVON

It's just two quarters.

Davon again gestures with his palm toward her. She sighs and swipes the quarters. She puts all five in the machine - it starts.

MIA

(mumbling)

I'll pay you back.

Davon looks at his filthy clothes and looks at the machine.

MIA (CONT'D)

So, how often do you stay in here?  
If our landlord finds out, the  
police would be the least of your  
worries.

DAVON

Off and on. Usually, no one comes  
in this late.

MIA

Yea, well, I have the late shift at  
the bar. Sucks.

Davon nods in agreement - life sucks.

MIA (CONT'D)

You better not steal my clothes.

DAVON

I don't think they'd fit, Ma'am.

Mia cracks a smile - the first one.

DAVON (CONT'D)

Besides, I don't steal anymore.

MIA

So, you just beg for money? That's  
way better. On behalf of society,  
thank you for contributing to this  
laundry room.

Davon looks toward the floor. He is used to the sentiment.

DAVON

I don't want your money, Ma'am.

MIA

I'm not a "Ma'am". How old do I  
look? And what do you want? Food?

DAVON

I'll never turn down food.

MIA

Hang on.

Mia drags her feet out the door.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia opens her fridge: a sugar-free energy drink, a  
frappuccino bottle, and a three week old apple. Mia frowns.

She opens the cabinet: a half eaten bag of chips, a banana,  
and a Noodle cup. She stuffs the food in a target bag.

INT. BACK OF BUILDING - LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Davon unfolds a blanket. He presses out the wrinkles so that it lays perfectly on the floor. He takes off his jacket and folds it into a square pillow.

Mia enters with the target bag and balances a full cup of hot Noodles, fork and all. She holds it out to Davon and he grabs it eagerly.

DAVON  
Much appreciated.

MIA  
May I join you?

He motions for her to sit on the blanket. Mia pulls out the bag of chips and plops down. Davon takes a big bite of noodles. He closes his eyes and smiles.

MIA (CONT'D)  
You know, I see homeless people getting jobs and shit all the time on the news.

DAVON  
The news is for suckers. People who don't want to know the truth watch the news.

MIA  
I want to know the truth.

DAVON  
Seems like we only see news people when they just want to show that we're some menace to society.

MIA  
Well...

Davon shoots her a look.

MIA (CONT'D)  
Life fucking sucks, but you don't see me complaining. I work a shitty job and live in a decrepit apartment, but I survive. Jobs are out there if you look hard enough.

DAVON  
No one would want me.

MIA

Just go to the goodwill or some  
shit and get some new clothes.

Davon sucks up a group of noodles. Pause.

DAVON

Thank you for the noodles, Ma'am.

MIA

Well, I owed you two quarters.

They look at each other. Mia cracks another smile.

DAVON

You know, these, uh, noodles remind  
me my time at NYU. I majored in  
Psychology. Haven't though of those  
years in a long time.

MIA

So, do you have me all figured out?  
What's my 'profile'?

DAVON

I didn't graduate.

MIA

Too bad. I kinda wanted to know.

DAVON

I just wanted to understand my  
past.

MIA

Yeah, I tried that therapy shit.  
Doesn't work. And don't even get me  
started on a fuckin' group. Hearing  
people go on and on about their  
problems. No, thank you. Well, I  
better get to bed. You want a  
pillow or something?

DAVON

Fine, Ma'am. Oh, hey. Happy Easter.

MIA

Oh, that's Sunday, isn't it? Gotta  
call my Ma. She'll just get onto me  
for not going to church.

DAVON

You're not going?

MIA

Nah. I don't do that shit anymore.  
(sarcastically) Are you?

DAVON

I tried once. Everyone just...  
whispered and stared. Finally, the  
pastor flat out asked me to leave.  
Like I was a monster interrupting  
their perfect little lives. I just  
wanted to feel God. Even for a  
moment.

MIA

Self righteous bitches. All of  
them.

DAVON

No. They just don't understand.

He sips the hot liquid from the cup.

MIA

What did you do? Before you  
were... this?

DAVON

Navy. Wanted to travel the world.  
Never made it out of D.C.

He stares into his cup of noodles, searching for answers.

MIA

Well, thank you for your service.

He laughs.

MIA (CONT'D)

No, I mean it. My Dad was in the  
Navy. The bastard. But, it is  
important work. Hey, I wouldn't  
last a day.

Davon nods to her. Mia stands.

MIA (CONT'D)

Night, uh... what's your name?

DAVON

Davon.

Mia holds out her hand.

MIA

Mia.

Davon reaches out to shake it - it's a gentle, electric handshake. Mia walks out the room and shuts the iron gate behind her.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Mia stirs, in full uniform, and jumps out of bed. She grabs a box of cereal sitting on the floor.

INT. BACK OF BUILDING - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Mia peeks open the door. She holds up the box of cereal.

MIA

Rise and shine.

She looks around, but no one is there. Her laundry is clean and perfectly folded on top of the dryer.

EXT. BACK OF BUILDING - STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia fumbles with her keys and holds her cell phone with her shoulder.

MIA

You did what? Why the hell would you call him? God, Billy. I'm not going. Yes, to my own fucking wedding. Not if he's gonna be there.

Mia punches the side of the stucco building.

MIA (CONT'D)

FUCK!

She shakes out her hand in pain. Mia closes the flip phone and throws it against the building. It shatters.

She grabs her keys and walks around the side of the building.

INT. BACK OF BUILDING LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Mia swings open the iron door and walks inside. She lets out a sigh of relief when she sees Davon there eating from the bag of chips.

Davon holds up his hands in surrender.

DAVON  
Don't call the police.

MIA  
I can't. I threw my phone against  
the building and it broke.

DAVON  
Did it... have one of those  
indestructible case thingys?

MIA  
(whiny)  
No.

DAVON  
That'll do it.

Mia sits next to him on the ground.

MIA  
Thanks for the laundry, by the way.  
That was... sweet. My fiance won't  
even fold my laundry.

DAVON  
What did the phone do to deserve  
such a flogging?

MIA  
My stupid fiance invited my fucking  
father to our wedding. The bastard.  
Better taking it out on a phone  
than a person.

DAVON  
So, the phone saved me from your  
wrath?

MIA  
No. I was... kind of... hoping  
you'd be here.

They look at each other for a moment. Mia smiles bigger.

DAVON  
Me too.

Beat.

MIA  
I wish he were dead. My father.

Davon nods and takes a deep breath..

DAVON

I understand. Hating someone that much.

He stares straight ahead.

DAVON (CONT'D)

Things... happened to me. In the Navy.

MIA

I can't imagine what war is like.

DAVON

Never went to war. Had a different kind of battle.

MIA

Oh.

DAVON

I can't get past it. Never could. I try to ignore it, but it follows me. Like horrible shadows that will never leave me no matter how hard I wish them to.

MIA

Everyone has shadows.

DAVON

But now one cares about me. I know what they see. I just feel so alone. I pray to God that he will keep the darkness away, but they are close. So close I can feel them in my gut.

MIA

I understand that. I have shadows, too.

Davon's eyes swell with tears.

MIA (CONT'D)

You're not alone.

Davon looks at her. She stares into his eyes. He puts on a tough face. After a long pause--

DAVON

My captain. He... made me do stuff. With him. I was a kid. 18 years old, didn't have a home to go back to, so couldn't leave. One night, I finally did stand up to him. I saved a razor blade and when he came at me, I slashed his cheek with it. (pause). He had me dishonorably discharged for indecent behavior.

Davon laughs at the irony.

DAVON (CONT'D)

Isn't that fucked up?

Davon shakes his head. He wipes a lone tear from his cheek.

DAVON (CONT'D)

I just couldn't get past it after that. Tried to kill myself a few times. But, I guess God wants me alive for something.

He looks at Mia. Tears fall down her cheeks.

DAVON (CONT'D)

God, I shouldn't have told you all this? I'm sorry--

MIA

No--

DAVON

I don't need your pity--

MIA

It's not that--

DAVON

I'm upsetting you--

MIA

What's your captain's name?

Davon pauses as if the words hurt as they come out.

DAVON

Birch Sanders.

Mia takes a deep breath.

MIA  
That's my father.

Davon stares at her in disbelief.

DAVON  
Fuck.

Davon places his head in his hands. Mia reaches up and grabs his hand. She squeezes it tightly.

EXT. FRONT OF CHURCH - NIGHT

Mia and Davon stand and stare at a church in front of them. A large white cross sits at the top.

Davon is wearing clothes from goodwill - clean clothes at that. They don't fit perfectly, but they work. They look at each other and smile with a deep pain hiding behind it.

Mia walks toward the front door. It swings open. Davon hesitates. ANGELO HILL (30s), a muscular man with joy exuding from all pores, greets them with a smile.

ANGELO  
Good evening.

MIA  
We heard there was a... recovery group or something?

ANGELO  
Yes! Come on in.

Angelo holds the door open wider. Mia walks in a step but looks back at Davon. Davon steps forward toward the door.

Angelo extends his hand - Davon shakes it.

ANGELO (CONT'D)  
Welcome.

Angelo smiles at Davon. Davon gives a slight smile, takes a deep breath and walks through the door.

FADE TO BLACK.