

THE CHARLY BOY MOVIE

Written by

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Based on true events

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EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

CAPTION: NIGERIA

CHILDREN play ball near the huts. This includes YOUNG CHARLY who is around ten years old.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)

A wise man once said, 'The Nigerian youths must be strong, fearless, to retrieve their stolen future- this is your mission. Who said that? Well... I did.

BOY #1

Charly! Pass the ball!

Young Charly throws the ball towards Boy #1 and misses.

BOY #2

What was that?

The two laugh, but Young Charly rolls his eyes.

Then pauses. Looks toward the sky.

BOY #1

What are you thinking about?

BOY #2

Always daydreaming, I swear.

YOUNG CHARLY

No. Do you not hear that?

BOY #2

Hear what?

Suddenly, we hear the sound of planes.

YOUNG CHARLY

We need to get inside now!

The two boys do not move. It is almost as if they are hypnotized by the planes. The planes fly over their heads and...

BOOM!

A bomb hits a hut in the village.

The three boys scream along with several VILLAGERS.

Another bomb hits the ground, Young Charly falls to the ground.

The world becomes gray and brown as the dirt rises, making it almost impossible to see anything. Young Charly cannot even see his friends.

The screams and cries continue, but we barely hear it now. There is a ringing from the bombing sound.

Young Charly stands still and watches as his village on fire.

MOTHERS, CHILDREN, and MEN run to take cover.

YOUNG CHARLY (CONT'D)

Hey.

He looks around.

YOUNG CHARLY (CONT'D)

Where did you two go?

He crawls and looks for them.

YOUNG CHARLY (CONT'D)

Hello?

Suddenly, the head of Boy #2 rolls towards him.

Young Charly sits shocked. A tear falls from his eyes.

YOUNG CHARLY (CONT'D)

My God.

The planes fly away.

A voice of a young woman is heard. It is MARGARET OPUTA.

MARGARET (O.S.)

Charly! Charly! Charly where are you?

He stands and tries to look around, even though he's blinded by the sand and dirt.

YOUNG CHARLY

Ma?

MARGARET (O.S.)

Charly!

YOUNG CHARLY

Ma!

He runs in the direction of her voice.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A pregnant Margaret works at the hospital with papers in her hand. She stops at a CHILD PATIENT'S room.

CAPTION: 11 YEARS EARLIER

MARGARET

Ah, Musa, how is my favorite patient doing?

PATIENT

Better.

MARGARET

Good. You might be able to go home soon.

PATIENT

But what if I don't want to go home?

MARGARET

Why would you not want to go home?

PATIENT

School. The kids at school make fun of me because I'm shorter than the rest of them.

MARGARET

Oh no. Well that's not nice.

PATIENT

I don't know what to do.

MARGARET

I'm going to let you in on a little secret, Musa. You ready?

The patient nods.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Most people do not know what they are doing. You just need to keep your head up and one day, you'll show those kids how amazing you are.

PATIENT

Really?

MARGARET

Really. Just pray and remember...

MARGARET (CONT'D)

To always be kind.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)

To always be kind.

Margaret smiles, but suddenly frowns.

PATIENT

Are you okay, nurse Oputa?

Margaret water breaks.

MARGARET

I... I have to go.

She exits.

EXT. VILLAGE - COMMON AREA - DAY

CAPTION: PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

On a stage is the CHIEF in full tribal clothing. Next to him is CHUKWUDIFU OPUTA, 30, his wife Margaret Oputa, BABY CHARLY, sister CHARLOTTE and brother MIKE.

A crowd of villagers stand in front of the small stage. They talk and dance, until Chief raises his hand to notify everyone to be quiet.

CHIEF

Ladies and gentlemen. It is my proudest honor, as Chief, to introduce you to my grandson Charles Chukwuemeka Oputa. Son of my son, a teacher turned lawyer that practiced in London and gave those colonizers a fight. Then, made his way back home, Chukwudifu Oputa.

Chukwudifu looks at the crowd. A COWORKER smiles at him flirtatiously. Chukwudifu smiles back.

His gaze lingers.

Margaret's eyes dart back and forth between the two before they snap back to the Chief.

CHIEF (CONT'D)
And his wife, the nurse, helping
the men, women and children of our
village, Margaret Oputa.

Margaret puts on a smile as the Chief approaches Baby Charly.

CHIEF (CONT'D)
Welcome, young Charles, to the
family. May God bless you.

The crowd claps.

Chukwudifu kisses his wife's cheek.

INT. OPUTA HOME - DAY

Charly's siblings run around the house and play tag.

Margaret breastfeeds Baby Charly.

MARGARET
Stop playing in the house before
you break something!

Chukwudifu reads the newspaper and listens to the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Conflict increase between North and
South Nigeria for political power
after the conference was held in
Ibadan...

MARGARET
Chukwudifu! Can you turn that off?
It's stressing me out.

CHUKWUDIFU
Yes, my love.

Chukwudifu turns off the radio and puts down his paper. He
gets up and kisses Margaret.

CHUKWUDIFU (CONT'D)
Here.

Chukwudifu takes baby Charly.

CHUKWUDIFU (CONT'D)
You need some rest. Get some sleep.

Margaret nods and then lays down.

Chukwudifu walks Baby Charly to the crib and tells him...

CHUKWUDIFU (CONT'D)

My boy. You are going to grow up big and strong one day. The world is a big and scary place. You need to be strong enough to fight back. No matter what. Do not let any- whether it's your friends or the media- brainwash you. Okay?

He puts Charly down.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)

Sometimes I wonder who am I. If I am all that this world says that I am. Good or bad.

EXT. BY THE WATER - DAY

Young Charly stands in a lake with his friends (from earlier). They play.

BOY #1

Hey! Watch this!

Boy #1 tries to skip a rock on the water, but fails.

Boy #2 laughs.

BOY #2

You did it wrong. Here, let me try.

Boy #2 tries and fails.

BOY #2 (CONT'D)

Your turn, Charly!

Charly picks up a pretty, shiny rock. Too beautiful to throw.

YOUNG CHARLY

No, I won't be able to do it anyway.

BOY #2

Oh, come on.

YOUNG CHARLY

I said no.

Young Charly puts it in his pocket.

BOY #1
You're no fun.

Boy #1 and Boy #2 leaves.

YOUNG CHARLY
Hey! Wait for me!

Young Charly runs up to them. They walk to the Oputa's home where the BABYSITTER (19) is about to walk in.

BABYSITTER
Hello, Charly.

She smiles a bit too flirtatiously before she walks inside.

BOY #1
She is very attractive.

BOY #2
I wish she would babysit me. She wants you bad.

YOUNG CHARLY
No, I don't see her like that.

BOY #1
Come on, Charly. Be a man.

They nudge him.

INT./EXT. OPUTA HOME - DAY

Chukwudifu opens the door to his house and let's in MS. OLUWATUNDE (30s) in business attire.

Her hand lingers on his chest as she steps through the threshold.

CHUKWUDIFU
Thank you for joining me on such short notice, Ms. Oluwatunde. I need your experienced eyes on some of these court documents.

MS. OLUWATUNDE
Of course, anything for an old colleague.

After she takes off her shoes, Chukwudifu gestures for her to follow him deeper into the house towards his office.

EXT. VILLAGE PATH - CONTINUOUS

Margaret and Young Charly, with his school uniform and lunch pail in tow, stroll side by side.

YOUNG CHARLY

I wrote out a song for fada, and I wanted to sing it to him for his birthday. Do you think he'll like it?

MARGARET

You are his son, my love. Of course he will.

YOUNG CHARLY

And what did you plan for him?

MARGARET

Well, I've got a few gifts for him. And you know I got off early to surprise him and make his favorite meal. But I'll take forever by myself. Will you help me?

YOUNG CHARLY

Of course!

Excited, Young Charly picks up the pace and speeds ahead of his mother.

INT. OPUTA HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Chukwudifu sits behind a desk covered in papers while Ms. Oluwatunde peers over his shoulder.

CHUKWUDIFU

I just couldn't make sense of what my client was trying to explain.

Ms. Oluwatunde rests her chest on his back and leans down to his ear.

MS. OLUWATUNDE

Did you really need me to go over your court documents, Chuk?

She rubs his shoulders.

CHUKWUDIFU

Ms. Oluwatunde, I told my wife that you and I were done.

She begins to strip.

CHUKWUDIFU (CONT'D)

For God's sake, woman... We are in
my familial home!

MS. OLUWATUNDE

If you really cared about that, you
wouldn't have invited me here.

She unlatches her bra. It falls to the floor.

A beat passes.

And then another.

He snatches her to him and they kiss while she reaches for
his belt buckle.

They hear a JIGGLE of the doorknob and freeze. Young Charly
bursts in.

YOUNG CHARLY

Happy Birthday, fad-

He stops dead and looks at this strange woman, her hand down
his father's pants. He then looks at his father, face smeared
with lipstick.

We hear FOOSTEPS and labored BREATHING nearby.

MARGARET (O.S.)

Son, you should be an athlete.

She makes it to the threshold of the office, the three still
stiff as statues.

The moment Ms. Oluwatunde sees Margaret, she springs into
action and gathers her clothes to cover her naked chest.
Margaret pays her no mind as she scampers out the door.

CHUKWUDIFU

My darling, I can explain.

She ignores him and leans down to look at Young Charly.

MARGARET

Charly, go outside and play with
your friends.

YOUNG CHARLY

But, Ma, who was that woman?

MARGARET

Do not argue with me, child. Go.
Now.

He looks to his father.

YOUNG CHARLY

Fada, who was that woman?

CHUKWUDIFU

Obey your mother, Charly.

He storms out of the house with tears streaming down his face.

EXT. OPUTA HOME - NIGHT

Charly Boy sobs against the side of his home. The sheer VOLUME of his parents arguing can be heard from outside.

He unzips his school bag and reaches for a piece of paper. On it are lyrics to a song. His father's birthday gift. A beautiful, clear voice RINGS OUT of him as tears streak down his face.

CAPTAIN (30s) sees him while on patrol, unbeknownst to Young Charly.

He doesn't stop singing until his tears stop falling.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Captain sits across from Young Charly. They eat as Chukwudifu socializes outside the restaurant with other villagers.

YOUNG CHARLY

Do you think I'm weak?

CAPTAIN

Why would I think that?

YOUNG CHARLY

I think my friends think I'm weak.
My family, too.

CAPTAIN

That's not true.

YOUNG CHARLY

Really? I think so.

Beat.

YOUNG CHARLY (CONT'D)
I want to be like you. Will you
teach me how to hold a gun?

CAPTAIN
No. You are too young.

YOUNG CHARLY
Well, that's not fair. I want to be
strong and brave.
(beat)
I want to be a *real* man.

CAPTAIN
You sound like your father.

YOUNG CHARLY
I don't want to be like my father.
I want to be like you. A solider.

CAPTAIN
Is that really what you want, my
boy? Or is that what everyone tells
you?

Young Charly shakes his head, confused.

YOUNG CHARLY
I don't understand what you mean.

CAPTAIN
You have so much love, passion, and
talent. You are more special than
you realize.

YOUNG CHARLY
Nah uh.

CAPTAIN
Uh huh. I heard you singing that
night. You're good.

Young Charly looks down at his food and shovels bites down,
at a loss for words.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
But for right now, embrace your
youth. And don't worry about being
like me. Or being like you father.
Be like you.

Young Charly silences at that.

INT./EXT. OPUTA HOME - DAY

Young Charly does his homework in his room.

There is a KNOCK on his door. It is the babysitter.

BABYSITTER
What are you up to?

YOUNG CHARLY
Just some homework.

BABYSITTER
Do you mind if I help?

Young Charly shakes his head.

BABYSITTER (CONT'D)
Good.

The babysitter wraps her arms around him.

BABYSITTER (CONT'D)
Hmm, math. Huh?

YOUNG CHARLY
Yeah.

BABYSITTER
I've never been great at math, but
I am very good at science.

YOUNG CHARLY
Really?

BABYSITTER
Mhm. Biology. Chemistry. Things
big, strong men know how to do. Do
you want to learn something?

Young Charly nods.

BABYSITTER (CONT'D)
Good.

TIME CUT:

Margaret walks into the house to a sound.

MARGARET
Charly. Is that you?

No response. She goes to his room, opens the door, then
screams.

In full mama bear mode, she grabs the babysitter by the hair and drags her out the house.

Then runs to Charly's bedroom. She cries and holds him.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Are you okay, baby?

YOUNG CHARLY
I think... I think I'm bleeding.

MARGARET
Oh, baby! Let's get you to the hospital, okay?

YOUNG CHARLY
Okay. I'm sorry, I just wanted to know what it felt like to be grown up.

MARGARET
Baby, you'll grow up soon. I promise, but right now, can you just be my little boy. For me?

Young Charly nods.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Now, come on.

EXT. OPUTA HOME - DAY

Margaret rushes them out of the door. A fleet of planes streak over them.

YOUNG CHARLY
Ma, what is happening?

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Bombs explode. BOOM!

The empty eyes of Boy #2's decapitated head stare at nothing.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. OPUTA HOME - PRESENT DAY

The planes overhead disappear as soon as they came.

MARGARET
It's okay, baby. It's nothing.

They rush down the village pathway.

INT. OPUTA HOME - DAY

Chukwudifu looks through files.

Margaret comes up and hands him a glass of water.

MARGARET
Congratulations, Supreme Court
Judge.

CHUKWUDIFU
I like the sound of that.

They stare at one another for an awkward moment.

Margaret clears her throat.

MARGARET
I'm late for work. I'll be back in
the evening.

CHUKWUDIFU
Alright, have a good day.

She slips into her shoes with her back to him. He stares at her.

CHUKWUDIFU (CONT'D)
I love you, Margaret.

She partially turns her head towards him, but turns away before she catches his eye. Instead, she leaves.

TEENAGE CHARLY and his siblings watch their cold interaction from a distance.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)
When things became hard, like when
I thought about my parents or the
friends that I'd lost as a boy, I
went back to music.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLY'S ROOM - DAY

Teenage Charly sits against the wall, his notepad in hand as he scribbles down on it.

He hums and taps a beat with the end of his pencil. He closes his eyes as the world melts away around him.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)
Well, it was either that or...
girls.

INT. CHARLY'S ROOM - MONTAGE

Teenage Charly bursts through the door. He makes out and falls to the bed with:

- A model-like TEENAGE GIRL with short hair;
- A short curvy CLASSMATE with hair down to her back;
- A voluptuous MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN;
- And a scantily-dressed TWENTY-SOMETHING

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)
I did as any young man would do and
sowed my oats.

END OF MONTAGE.

Sounds of giggling from his female companion cause his hushes to follow.

INT./EXT. - OPUTA HOME - NIGHT

Teenage Charly slips into his house, so he's sure not to wake anyone. He taps the door closed and slides out of his shoes.

Chukwudifu CLEARS his throat.

Teenage Charly snaps to face the direction it came from to see his father with his arms crossed.

Teenage Charly puts his head down.

TEENAGE CHARLY
I'm sorry for coming in late.

CHUKWUDIFU
You disrespect my house. You
disrespect my rules.
(MORE)

CHUKWUDIFU (CONT'D)

You disrespect the bodies of the
young girls you defile!

TEENAGE CHARLY

Fada! I was just out with friends.

Chukwudifu strides towards him and grabs his shirt. Lipstick
stains cover its collar.

CHUKWUDIFU

Do you think me a fool! How many
young girls do you have to use for
your pleasure? How many broken
hearts?

TEENAGE CHARLY

What can I say? I guess I'm just
like my father.

Beat.

CHUKWUDIFU

How dare you?

TEENAGE CHARLY

I'm sorry. That was too far. If you
could just let me explain-

CHUKWUDIFU

I can't even look at you.

(beat)

I want you to leave this village
when you are done with school. I do
not want to see your face. Words
cannot even describe how
disappointed I am.

Both look at each other with hatred.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Fine. I don't want to be here
anyway.

Teenage Charly leaves and slams the door.

Chukwudifu sheds a tear and wipes it away.

INT. OPUTA HOME - NIGHT

Chukwudifu, Margaret and Teenage Charly sit awkwardly quiet
as they eat their dinner.

MARGARET

Did everyone have a good day?

No one speaks.

There is another KNOCK on the door. Chukwudifu goes to open the door to see STELLA (16). Chukwudifu looks angry. Teenage Charly looks confused at the girl and looks at his father almost signaling, "I have no idea who this girl is. I promise."

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Is that Stella!

Margaret gets up and greets Stella.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Charly, I want you to meet Stella.
Isn't she pretty?

Teenage Charly still looks very confused. Chukwudifu looks almost equally confused.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Well, say something.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Hello?

Margaret pulls up a chair.

MARGARET

(to Stella)

Come, come. Sit.

Stella sits down.

STELLA

It is very nice to meet you. And
it's an honor to be in the presence
of you, Mr. Oputa.

MARGARET

Oh, so polite. Isn't she, Charly?

TEENAGE CHARLY

Yeah, sure.

MARGARET

I was telling Stella how much of a
good husband you would make.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Ma!

MARGARET

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Margaret fixes a plate for Stella and they all eat.

It is still very quiet. Until...

STELLA

So, Charly. Your mother was telling me you are about to graduate. What are you plans?

Teenage Charly looks at Chukwudifu again, then back to Stella.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I don't know. I want to go to university and get a degree in communication. I'm planning on studying abroad.

Margaret coughs, she's surprised.

CHUKWUDIFU

That sounds great, son.

MARGARET

This is the first time I'm hearing of this.

STELLA

That's amazing. I can't imagine leaving my country. Are you thinking England or America?

TEENAGE CHARLY

Leaning towards America.

MARGARET

No. No! Absolutely not. You need to stop with this traveling business. You need to settle down. Like your siblings! With a nice girl. Like Stella.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I'm sure Stella is amazing, but-

MARGARET

No!

CHUKWUDIFU

I think it's a great idea.

Beat.

MARGARET
Will you excuse us?

Margaret gets up and leaves. Chukwudifu follows her. Stella and Charly sit there in silence.

STELLA
Are they always like this?

TEENAGE CHARLY
They are both very passionate people.

STELLA
I'm sorry for the intrusion. I thought you knew I was coming over.

TEENAGE CHARLY
It's fine.

STELLA
Don't tell your mom, but I think going to America is a great idea.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Really.

STELLA
Sounds like an exciting adventure. If my family could afford it, I wouldn't think twice about leaving, especially with the war going on. There has to be more to this world, right? I think you are being very brave.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Thank you, Stella.

Beat.

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)
Knowing my mother, she'll get what she wants. She always does.

They continue to eat in silence.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Stella and Teenage Charly stand on the alter. Stella wear a beautiful cultural wedding gown.

Neither one of them seem thrilled, but Margaret's smile is wide. Chukwudifu does not smile but holds Margaret.

Adult Charlotte and Mike stand next to him with full support. There is crowd excited in the aisles. Women fan themselves due to the warm weather.

A PASTOR with a Bible in hand looks says...

PASTOR

You may kiss the bride.

They kiss.

The crowd cheers.

Charly's brother excitedly shakes his brother.

MIKE

You did it, brother! You did it.
You have a bright and beautiful
future ahead of you.

FLASH. FLASH. FLASH.

INT. STELLA AND CHARLY HOME - DAY

FLASH.

Teenage Charly and Stella sit down at a table. They eat mutely. Charly stares at the wall right behind Stella.

STELLA

Charly! Charly! I was trying to ask
you a question. You are always in a
different world, I swear.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Sorry, umm. How was your day?

STELLA

It was fine. How was yours?

TEENAGE CHARLY

The usual.

They continue to eat their meal in deafening silence.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)

Truthfully, I was still just a boy,
playing dress up as the man the
world told me to be.

He pauses chewing and looks down at his meal. He fidgets with his wedding ring. Then he plucks at his top, suddenly too tight around his neck. Finally, he gets up at once.

STELLA
Is something wrong?

TEENAGE CHARLY
I don't think I can live like this.

STELLA
What are you talking about?

He strides towards her and gets on one knee to hold her hand.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Stella, you deserve a good husband,
who wants more than anything to be
by your side. I don't think I can
be that for you.

Charly puts his wedding band on the table.

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)
I don't want to hurt you anymore by
wasting your time.
(beat)
And I don't want to be like my
father.

He begins to walk towards the door.

STELLA
Charly! Where are you going?

TEENAGE CHARLY
I'm doing what I should've done as
soon as I graduated.

STELLA
What? You can't just leave!

TEENAGE CHARLY
You'll find someone that treats you
well, I promise. You're a fine
young woman.

He leaves and slams the door. Stella cries.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)
My father was right. In my younger
years, I did break many hearts.
Carelessly. But only when I came to
America did I find my queen.

INT. AIRPORT/TRAIN/TAXI/DORM - MONTAGE

-- Teenage Charly goes to the airport with just one luggage bag and hears:

AIRPORT WORKER (O.S.)
Now boarding for flight to New York
City, New York, United States of
America.

-- He steps onto the plane.

-- Flight leaves.

-- Flight lands in New York city. Where AMERICANS are all over the place. Mostly white Americans. He accidentally walks into one white American.

WHITE MAN #1
Hey! Watch it, boy!

TEENAGE CHARLY
Sorry! Sorry!

-- He looks at a map to find a train.

-- He gets onto the train. Sits down. Falls asleep.

-- He wakes up to:

TRAIN WORKER
Next stop. South Station, Boston
Massachusetts.

-- He steps off the train.

-- He tosses his luggage onto a dormitory bed. Then lays down. He takes a breath of relief.

END OF MONTAGE.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Teenage Charly sits bored in his seat on the front row. He looks around. There's one white PROFESSOR by his chalk board with "INTRO TO MUSICALS IN THEATRE" and he writes "First Pl...". The class (18-25) is large and filled with majority WHITE MALES. There's one more BLACK STUDENT, who hides in the back. Then, MARY, female who wears a David Bowie shirt and has long shiny earrings.

Most of the students write on their notebooks. A few of the white men laugh in the back.

One of the white men throws a ball of paper at Charly. He looks back annoyed.

The professor finishes. The board says "First Play."

PROFESSOR
(monotone)
Who can tell me where the first
play was located?

No one raises their hand except Teenage Charly.

The professor ignores him.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
Anyone?

Nothing. Only Charly raises his hand.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
Fine. Name?

TEENAGE CHARLY
Charles.

There are laughs from the back.

WHITE MAN #1
You guys hear that? That monkey
just said Charles. What's your real
name? King Kong?

WHITE MAN #2
Go back to your country!

WHITE MAN #1
Go back to your master, boy.

Teenage Charly ignores them.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Theatre of Dionysus-

PROFESSOR
That is correct.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Which was in Athens.

WHITE MAN #1
Shut up, nigger!

Another ball of paper hits his head. Teenage Charly stands up.

TEENAGE CHARLY
What did you just call me?

PROFESSOR
If you don't sit down, Charles,
there will be consequences.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Me?

WHITE MAN #1
You heard him, boy!

WHITE MAN #2
(imitates a monkey)
Ooh! Ah-ah! Ooh oh, ah-ah!

The girl throws a pencil at one of the white boys.

MARY
Shut up! You're being rude!

WHITE MAN #2
Hey babe, I wasn't talking to you.
Now be a good girl and talk when
you're spoken to.

MARY
Umm, excuse me. Who do you-

WHITE MAN #2
You're excused.

WHITE MAN #1
Yo, why are you dressed like a
circus freak?

MARY
Why are you dressed like a little
bitch?

WHITE MAN #1
What the fuck did you just say?

PROFESSOR
Alright class. Just settle down.
Settle down. Now let's continue...

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Mary walks with her very 70s patterned backpack and a few
books in her hand.

Teenage Charly comes out and runs towards her.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Hey! Wait up!

He catches up to her.

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)

I just want to say thanks.

MARY

Well someone needed to do something
and the professor wasn't.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I guess. Is it always like this in
America?

MARY

Seems like it. Well, I heard it's
worse down South. I can't imagine
what they put you guys through down
there.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Wow.

MARY

You and I are nothing. Black men
and women. Colleges are just trying
to look like they care about
integration. Keeps them from
getting in trouble with the big bad
government.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I see. Are there any black women
that go here or just-

He gestures to her with an open hand.

MARY

You know... I never noticed it,
but, no. I don't think there are.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Oh.

(beat)

I really like your earrings. And
your whole outfit for that matter.

MARY

Thank you. You're probably not used
to these crazy American looks.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Ah yes. My country is very poor. I have never seen such shiny jewelry and abundance of water.

MARY

That must be so hard-

TEENAGE CHARLY

I'm kidding! Believe it or not, Nigeria is very with the times. We are so... groovy. There's just the damn Civil War that's pretty tough, but it seems to be slowing down I think.

MARY

I'm sorry. Did you just say groovy?

She laughs.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I am curious about the... man... on your shirt.

MARY

Oh. David Bowie?

TEENAGE CHARLY

David Bowie. Why is he dressed like that?

MARY

Umm... I don't know. Makes him happy?

TEENAGE CHARLY

Is he...
(whispers)
Gay?

MARY

I don't know. Does it matter?

TEENAGE CHARLY

Yes. No. I don't know. It's not legal where I'm from.

MARY

Technically, it's not legal here too, but it's slowly becoming more accepted. What's it like back home?

TEENAGE CHARLY

I don't know any gay people, sorry.

MARY

No, silly! I mean for anybody. Like what's life like for women back home.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Well, they work. My ma is a nurse. Back home, the women's priority is to become a wife and mother.

MARY

Sometimes it feels like that here. My mom has always been a stay at home mom. So are her friends. So are some of my friends.

(beat)

Your English is very good.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Thank you. I've been learning it all my life. My dad went to school in London. He thought English was important to know since that's where the money is.

MARY

London, huh? I've never been.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Neither have I. I mostly just stayed in my village.

MARY

Hey, wanna come over to my dorm tonight? My roommate, Connie, will also be there. We can listen to some David Bowie.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I'd like that.

MARY

Cool.

Mary takes out a pen and writes on Teenage Charly's hand.

MARY (CONT'D)

This is my dorm.

She puts the pen back up.

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh, warning, Connie is a bit
direct... and odd. So be prepared
for that.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Wait, wait! What's your name?

MARY
Mary.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Nice to meet you, Mary.

INT. DORM/STORE/DORM - DAY

Teenage Charly lays in bed and stares at the ceiling. He
looks at his closet and gets up.

MONTAGE

-- Teenage Charly goes through all his clothes. Even dark
clothes get thrown out.

-- He gets in front of the mirror and poses.

-- Another outfit. Poses.

-- Another one. Very feminine.

-- He gets a needle and forces it threw his ears. He bleeds
and cleans himself.

-- He runs to a store and buys earrings. Then right before he
checks up, goes to the music aisle and gets pop-rock tapes.

-- He puts earrings in his very red and swollen ears.

-- He puts on an androgynous outfit.

-- ROOMMATE, who is white, comes in.

ROOMMATE
Hell no. I'm not rooming with a
queer negro.

END OF MONTAGE.

INT. BROWN'S BARBERSHOP - SUNSET

Teenage Charly enters. He sees BARBERS working in the back
but no one behind the front desk.

BARBER #1

Diane! Will you come from back there? We got a customer.

A beautiful brown skin girl with a perfectly manicured afro, DIANE (20), walks through the door.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)

I remember the first time I saw her. I'd known many beautiful women, but this was the first one to leave me speechless.

DIANE

Sorry for the wait. Welcome to Brown's. How can we service you today.

A beat.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Umm... I was wondering...

BARBER #2

The boy's been honey-trapped and he's never even tasted the honey!

The other barbers break out into fits of laughter.

DIANE

Ernest, hush! Don't mind them. Whatcha need?

TEENAGE CHARLY

I don't have an appointment, but I was wondering if something can be done about my hair.

DIANE

It *is* almost closing time.

Teenage Charly sighs.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Oh, sorry for wasting your time, then. Thanks anyway.

DIANE

Wait, wait. What would you like done?

TEENAGE CHARLY

New hair. I don't know what yet.

DIANE
I have an idea.

She looks at his ears.

DIANE (CONT'D)
We'll also get those ears cleaned
up for you.

He beams at her.

INT. BROWN'S BARBERSHOP - LATER

Diane spins Teenage Charly's chair around to face the mirror.
He looks at his now short dreadlocks and grins.

DIANE
I take it you like it.

TEENAGE CHARLY
No, I love it!

DIANE
Well, I'm glad.

Their eyes linger on each other in the mirror. Diane chuckles
to break the silence.

DIANE (CONT'D)
I guess I better ring you up and
get you outta here.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Wait, what do you do?

DIANE
Hair, obviously.

TEENAGE CHARLY
No, I meant for fun. Like, what do
you do for fun?

DIANE
I don't know. Guess I like to go
out dancing with my girlfriends on
the weekend. But the shop's always
busy, so I don't even have much
time for that.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Well, if you're free, would it be
alright if I took you out dancing?
(MORE)

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)

Wherever it is you wanna go, that is. I'm new here. But I'm sure you can tell by my accent.

DIANE

I noticed that, but I didn't want to be rude and ask.

TEENAGE CHARLY

That's alright. I'm from Nigeria. I wouldn't have been offended. I get a lot worse things said to me these days.

He looks down at his feet and rubs his neck.

DIANE

God, I'm sorry. It must be tough, adjusting to all the bullshit here. I've been here all my life, and it can still be jarring.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Yeah, I was talking to a classmate earlier, but I don't think she fully understood.

DIANE

I see. Well, if you ever want someone to talk to or someone to go out dancing with, I'd love to be that person.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Really?

DIANE

Of course.

She writes her number down on a slip of paper and gives it to him.

EXT/INT. MARY'S DORM - NIGHT

Teenage Charly takes a deep breath before he enters.

He knocks on a dorm room and Mary answers. As soon as the door opens, we can hear blaring rock and roll.

MARY

Hey! You made it! Come in, come in!

They both go into the room.

CONNIE, who wears all black and has dark makeup on, sits on Mary's bed. She pops her gum continuous.

MARY (CONT'D)

Connie! This is Charles. He's Nigerian!

TEENAGE CHARLY

Please, please. Call me Charly.

MARY

Charly and I met in my musical class today.

CONNIE

What got you into musicals?

TEENAGE CHARLY

Oh, I'm not into musicals. I just saw the class available and thought "why not?"

MARY

Oh, so what are you interested in?

Connie rolls her eyes.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I don't know. I grew up wanting to be a singer, but I grew out of that. My major is in communications. So I could really do anything. Maybe a lawyer like my dad?

CONNIE

Blah, blah, blah. Not interesting. You know what is interesting? Your look. I like your look, Charly. Especially the hair.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Thank you. The hair's thanks to my stylist.

CONNIE

You a queer?

MARY

Oh Connie. Knock it off.

TEENAGE CHARLY

...No?

CONNIE

That sounded like a question. You look like a queer.

MARY

You're gonna scare him off!

TEENAGE CHARLY

No. I'm not. The question just caught me off guard.

CONNIE

Calm down, baby. I'm queer too.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I'm not queer! I'm not gay. I just really like this look. Is that okay?

Connie eyes him up and down.

CONNIE

Yeah, that's cool. You look sexy. Like someone is going to kick your ass, but sexy.

TEENAGE CHARLY

... Thank you?

CONNIE

Loosen up, Nigeria. You are welcomed here with me. Come on. Now, let me put some makeup on you.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Why? I just said-

CONNIE

Yeah, yeah. I know. You're a boring hetero. You just have a good face. A strong face. Come, come, sit.

Teenage Charly looks at Mary.

TEENAGE CHARLY

She scares me.

MARY

Yeah, she scares me too sometimes.

CONNIE

Come on, Nigeria.

Charly sits down in front of Connie. Connie does an excited clap.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Let's start with some lipstick.
Then we'll do something about those
ears of yours.

(to Mary)

Hey, Mary! Turn that shit up!

Mary turns up the volume.

LATER.

Connie finishes up the look.

MARY

So, you have a girlfriend?

TEENAGE CHARLY

I actually have a wife. Well, ex-wife.

CONNIE

How old are ya?

TEENAGE CHARLY

Nineteen.

MARY

You got to be careful with those divorces. My Aunt Patty got a divorce ten years ago, and now she's on her third marriage. My mama said marriage is like dominos. It falls once, it'll keep falling.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I think I'll be just fine, thank you.

Charly goes to the bathroom. Then looks in the mirror.

CONNIE

Well. What do you think?

TEENAGE CHARLY

Honestly... I feel pretty.

CONNIE

My work here is done, then.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

It's the next day. Connie, Mary, and Teenage Charly are inseparable.

There are students and STAFF everywhere. Some eat. Some serve. Some study. Some just socialize.

Connie, Mary and Teenage Charly (with his brand new look) laugh as they put their meals on their tray.

One SERVER looks at Teenage Charly.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Fruit salad, please.

The server looks at Connie and Mary.

SERVER
Are you two safe?

CONNIE
We're perfectly fine. Just give the man his fruit salad.

SERVER
Back in my day, you wouldn't have been able to step into this building.

TEENAGE CHARLY
I see you're having a bad day. I do not need the fruit salad. Thank you.

SERVER
Wait. Here ya go.

She scoops up some fruit. Spits in it. Then gives it to him.

MARY
You did not!

CONNIE
Congratulations. This is the last day you'll be working here. Come on, Charly.

Connie takes the fruit salad and throws it on the server.

Then she grabs Teenage Charly, and the three walk away.

INT. BROWN'S BARBERSHOP - NIGHT

Teenage Charly sits in an empty barber's chair while Diane sweeps up loose hair.

DIANE

I'm sorry you went through that.

TEENAGE CHARLY

No, it's fine. People back at home would always get harassed by white folks.

DIANE

Is it though? Just because it's normalized doesn't mean it's okay.

TEENAGE CHARLY

You're right.

DIANE

Anyway, I always thought it was just us over there. Didn't know that there were white folks. Can't get away from 'em.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Well, we call them colonizers. They brought a lot of violence. Some of my childhood friends died because of it. I don't know why I expected the United States to be different.

DIANE

Yup. The so-called Land of the Free, ain't so free at all...

(beat)

I'm really sorry about your friends, Charly. I can't imagine what that would do to a kid.

TEENAGE CHARLY

It's alright. I don't really talk about them much. Not to anyone. Not even my family.

Another one of those lingering moments passes between them.

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)

Except, I can talk about them with you, now. My new friend.

Diane smirks at him.

DIANE

Yeah, you can. Now quit being sappy
and help me with this place.

She grabs a broom and chucks it towards his chest.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Ow! You American women are brutal!

She chuckles and goes to the desk where the radio is and
turns it on.

Diane squeals and turns the volume dial up as Michael
Jackson's *Rock with You* fills the barbershop.

Diane does a poor rendition of Michael Jackson's moves as she
grooves to the beat.

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)

Who's this guy?

She freezes mid-move.

DIANE

Don't tell me you don't know MJ?

He stares back at her.

DIANE (CONT'D)

The Jacksons?

He again, gazes back at her.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Sorry to disappoint.

DIANE

Yeah, we really gotta go dancing.

His face lights up.

TEENAGE CHARLY

You really like this guy's music?

DIANE

Michael's the best. The best since
James Brown. At least that's what I
think.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Then, when we go dancing. I'll be
sure to let them know to play your
Michael Jackson. And James Brown.

DIANE
Oh, I'll hold you to it.

They continue to sweep in harmony.

INT. UNDERGROUND CLUB - NIGHT

Diane is dressed up in a blood red dress. Charly wears a sequined shirt with a tie. They both have on makeup.

There are disco lights to light up the club.

There are so many PARTIERS (18 and over). Different races, different heights, different styles, men and women. They all dance and have fun.

MONTAGE

The two dance close, but not too close to one another.

They break away and Diane dances with some other partygoers as does Teenage Charly.

They all take shots. The world becomes blurry.

A slower song comes on. The two, now braver with alcohol, press against one another as they sway.

The song ends and Teenage Charly breaks away to go to the stage and whispers into the DJ's ear.

END OF MONTAGE.

A HOST comes out and stops the music.

HOST
Ok, party people. It's midnight!
You know what that means.

PARTIERS
Karaoke!

HOST
We had an early request for Diane!

Everyone cheers.

Diane looks very confused.

DIANE
No he didn't.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Oh, I did.

She pushes him to the stage.

Teenage Charly scampers up on the stage.

PARTIERS

Charly! Charly! Charly!

TEENAGE CHARLY

I want everyone to know I've only
ever sung to myself, so don't make
fun of me.

Everyone laughs.

Rock With You by Michael Jackson begins to play. Everyone
dances.

And like an angel, he sings...

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)

*Girl, close your eyes/ Let that
rhythm get into you/ Don't try to
fight it/ There ain't nothing that
you can do/ Relax your mind/ Lay
back and groove with mine/ You gotta
feel that heat/ And we can ride the
boogie/ Share that beat of love/ I
wanna rock with you. All night
Dance you into day, sunlight.
I wanna rock with you, all night.
We're gonna rock the night away!*

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

The pair laugh as they walk their way to Diane's apartment.

DIANE

You did not tell me you could sing
like that!

TEENAGE CHARLY

I don't know if I'm all that.

DIANE

Are you kidding? You could make a
career out of it.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Nah. I've never been into music like that.

DIANE

Come on. The only thing you do is listen to music.

TEENAGE CHARLY

It's cool and all, but I don't think I have what it takes.

DIANE

I guess you going into a boring career has it's perks.

He scoffs.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Like you playing in hair is any better.

She halts.

DIANE

Excuse me?

TEENAGE CHARLY

You talk about what I'm doing in college, like you don't sweep up hair every night.

DIANE

Boy, spare me. As if you're the second coming of Einstein.

TEENAGE CHARLY

At least I'm smart enough to get in college. Can't say that for you.

DIANE

Go to hell. If it weren't for me listening to your little third world sob stories every night when I *sweep up hair* your ass would've been on the next flight back home weeks ago!

TEENAGE CHARLY

Fuck you!

DIANE

Fuck you!

Their breath mists up in the cool night air.

DIANE (CONT'D)

I don't think I need you to walk me home.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Diane, wait. It's not safe.

DIANE

No. I can make it alone. I'm smart enough for that much.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Diane, I'm sorry. Please!

She turns on her heel and rounds the corner, out of sight.

He stands there alone. He grumbles under his breath

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)

(muttering)

So damn dumb. Great job, man.

A SCREAM pierces through the air from the area that Diane went.

He bolts towards her.

EXT. STREET CORNER - CONTINUOUS

He rounds the corner and sees a DRUNK WHITE MAN pressing Diane up against a tree.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Diane! Get the hell off her! Now!

DRUNK WHITE MAN

Is that your little boyfriend,
black bitch?

Teenage Charly finally reaches him and flings him off her, and the man crashes into a dumpster, head first.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Diane, I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have let you go by yourself. Did he-

DIANE

-No. Almost. You distracted him long enough.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Okay, good. Let's get you home.

He gives her his jacket to cover over her own, and she hikes down her dress and smoothes it out.

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)

You alright?

DIANE

Yeah, let's g-

A brick WHIZZES through the air and hits Teenage Charly square on the jaw. He falls to his knees.

The man stumbles over nothing several feet away from them, still intoxicated and now with a concussion.

DRUNK WHITE MAN

Get your own bitch, monkey. Think 'cause you both niggers, I can't have her?

Diane drops to her knees to try and help a woozy Charly up.

DIANE

Fuck off, cracker.

DRUNK WHITE MAN

The fuck you say to me, bitch?

The man sways his way to them, and she grabs the brick beside Teenage Charly.

TEENAGE CHARLY

(muffled and painful)

Diane, no.

Before he could attempt to stop her, Diane shoots up just as the man reaches them, brick in hand, and strikes him against his temple.

He passes out cold. The pair stare down at his crumpled form.

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)

Wow. You American women are brutal.

She lets out an airy chuckle.

DIANE

Come on, let's get you home.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Home?

DIANE

You're not leaving my sight
tonight. And I'm not leaving yours.

They throw an arm around each other, leaning against the other as they walk towards Diane's apartment.

INT. VILLAGE IN WHITE - DREAM SEQUENCE

Captain and Chukwudifu appear.

CHUKWUDIFU

I don't remember raising such a
weak boy.

CAPTAIN

Chukwudifu, be nice. Be nice. It's
my fault. I didn't teach him how to
fight when he was younger. He's a
lover, not a fighter.

CHUKWUDIFU

He's even less than a woman. He had
to be saved by one! Just weak and
useless.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I'm not weak!

CAPTAIN

Sweet Charly, you have never been
strong. Strong ideas and passions,
but never strong.

TEENAGE CHARLY

You said I was brave!

CAPTAIN

And you were. Ten year old you.
Until the incident with your
babysitter. Then you became this..

CHUKWUDIFU

Lover. Not a fighter. Too weak to
stay true to your wife. Does your
little American whore know you had
a wife?

TEENAGE CHARLY

Don't you dare call her that! And
you think you're the prime example
for a father! For a husband! You
did this to me!

CHUKWUDIFU
No, Charly. You did this to you.
Take responsibilities like a man.
Fight!

CAPTAIN
Fight!

CHUKWUDIFU
Fight!

TEENAGE CHARLY
You want me to go back there and
fight that white man, sure! I'll
kill them. I'll kill them with my
bare hands if that's what you want.

MARGARET (O.S.)
No!

There is a silhouette of a nurse. She has Margaret's voice.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Baby, I'm sorry this happened to
you, but killing is never the
answer. You need to...

TEENAGE CHARLY
Always be kind. You see where it
gets me? I was trying to be civil!
Clearly they only listen to my
fists.

CHUKWUDIFU
Fight.

CAPTAIN
Fight.

CHUKWUDIFU
Fight.

MARGARET
There are other ways to fight, my
son. As soon as you wake up, give
me a call and I'll tell you.

The silhouette becomes clear. And clearer. Chukwudifu and
Captain disappear.

Then the silhouette of the nurse becomes more apparent.

Then...

END OF DREAM
SEQUENCE.

INT. UNIVERSITY - DAY

Teenage Charly has bruises all over his face. He is on the phone.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Hey, maami.

MARGARET (O.S.)
(over the phone)
Omo, I was getting worried. I have barely heard from you. How are you? How's America? How are your studies?

TEENAGE CHARLY
I'm good, ma. I'm great. Everything is going well.

MARGARET (O.S.)
I'm so happy to hear that. I miss you so much.

TEENAGE CHARLY
I miss you, too.

MARGARET (O.S.)
I want to let you know that your father and I are very proud of you. Will you be coming home soon to visit?

TEENAGE CHARLY
I will soon.

Beat.

Suddenly, Charly begins to cry.

MARGARET (O.S.)
What's wrong, omo?

TEENAGE CHARLY
Maami, I lied. It's so hard. America is so foreign. Different.

MARGARET (O.S.)

Different can be good. You are so smart, my son. Meant for great and beautiful things.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Am I?

MARGARET (O.S.)

Are you doubting yourself? Omo, you are the bravest boy I've ever met. Always have been. Have you made any friends?

TEENAGE CHARLY

I have.

MARGARET (O.S.)

That's good. That's very good.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I'm struggling with the people here. I don't know what to do... Do I do nothing?

MARGARET (O.S.)

Never do nothing, my son. There is always different ways to fight back.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Such as?

MARGARET (O.S.)

With the power of words and kindness.

TEENAGE CHARLY

You think kindness will save me from having my ass beat?

MARGARET (O.S.)

Language, omo!

TEENAGE CHARLY

Sorry.

MARGARET (O.S.)

I think there are better ways to solve problems than with their fists. I don't understand men. Everything is all war with them. All violence.

TEENAGE CHARLY

You remember hearing about Martin Luther King Jr on the radio?

MARGARET (O.S.)

Ah, yes. One of the few good peaceful men.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Until he got shot.

MARGARET (O.S.)

Well, here's some advice. Don't get shot. Ever. I'll say a prayer. Anyway, I'm not asking you to be the next Gandhi or Martin. I'm asking you to use your words. Use the kindness I taught you. Be the man I know you can be.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Thanks, mama. That helped a lot.

MARGARET (O.S.)

Of course, my son. I love you so much.

TEENAGE CHARLY

I love you, too. I'll be back home soon. I will make you proud.

MARGARET (O.S.)

I'm already proud.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Bye, maami.

MARGARET (O.S.)

Bye, omo.

TEENAGE CHARLY

Wait!

MARGARET (O.S.)

Yes.

TEENAGE CHARLY

How's Charlotte and Mike?

(beat)

And Stella?

MARGARET (O.S.)

They are okay. You should give them a call.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Maybe. Bye-bye.

He hangs up.

There is a knock on the door.

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)
Come in.

Diane enters. She's covered from head to toe. Her usual smile absent.

TEENAGE CHARLY (CONT'D)
Hey.

DIANE
Hey.

TEENAGE CHARLY
How are you?

DIANE
I've been better.

TEENAGE CHARLY
Yeah?

DIANE
Yeah.

She sits down.

DIANE (CONT'D)
I wanted to thank you.

TEENAGE CHARLY
For what?

DIANE
For protecting me.

TEENAGE CHARLY
I didn't really do a good job, did I? You saved you. You saved us both. Not to mention, if I hadn't gotten so mad, you wouldn't have stormed off in the first place.

DIANE
We both were arguing. So it's on me too, and if you hadn't come as soon as you did...

She shutters. He goes to grab her hand. She looks down at them.

DIANE (CONT'D)
I didn't mean what I said. About
you opening up to me.

TEENAGE CHARLY
But you were right. I don't know
what I'd do without you.

DIANE
I don't know what I'd do without
you, either.

They embrace each other. They sink into one another.

They pull apart and look at one another for a moment. For a lifetime. Until finally, their lips meet.

The two fall to his bed.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

CAPTION: 3 years later.

CHARLY, now a young adult and with longer dreadlocks, is in graduation wear along with Mary and Connie.

The room is filled on students in cap and gowns. An AUDIENCE of friends and family.

CONNIE
Say cheese!

Mary and Charly pose.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
Perfect!

She takes the picture.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
I hate to say it, but I think I'm
nervous.

MARY
You? Nervous? I can't believe it.

CONNIE
I can't believe it either. I need
to go to the ladies room. I'll be
right back.

She leaves.

MARY

This is it, Charly. Today is the day.

She gives him a big kiss on the cheek.

MARY (CONT'D)

I have something to tell you.

CHARLY

What is it?

MARY

I'm so excited! Oh my god. How do I say this?

CHARLY

Did the internship pan out?
Whatever it is, just take a deep breath. You got this.

She takes a deep breath.

MARY

I love you.

CHARLY

And... I... love you.

MARY

No, I'm in love with you.

CHARLY

What?

MARY

We've been friends for years, and this is the last chapter of our lives, so I thought I should tell you.

CHARLY

You know I'm with Diane.

MARY

I know. But I just couldn't live with myself if I didn't tell you.

CHARLY

I get it. Maybe in another life. But I have who I want. And I'm sure you'll find your Mr. Right, too.

(MORE)

CHARLY (CONT'D)

You have a whole life ahead for
you.

She tears up, but blinks them away before they fall.

MARY

You're right. And I really am happy
for you two. Just promise you won't
be a stranger after today, alright?

CHARLY

Of course.

Connie comes back and sets the camera down on a table to take
a picture of all three of them.

TIME LAPSE.

All the students sit in their seats. The DEAN goes to the
microphone and says...

DEAN

Every year, I stand in this very
spot. It is bittersweet. I have to
say goodbye once again to these
incredible students, but I know
they have a bright future ahead of
them. It is my honor to present
this graduating class. Before, we
get started, I wanted to say thank
you students and congratulations.

Applause.

TIME LAPSE.

Connie takes a polaroid picture of Mary getting her degree.

TIME LAPSE.

Connie gets on stage. Shakes the DEAN's hand. Gets her
degree. And takes a polaroid selfie of herself.

TIME LAPSE.

Charly gets on stage. Shakes the Dean's hand. He smiles as
Connie takes a polaroid.

EXT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Charly looks around searching for someone, a cigarette in his
mouth.

DIANE
Can I have one?

Charly turns around to see Diane.

CHARLY
Baby, I've been looking for you
everywhere.

DIANE
You looked amazing up there,
Charly.

CHARLY
Well, I do have the best hair
stylist in the world.

He kisses Diane on the forehead and gives her a cigarette.
Then lights it for her.

She inhales. Coughs a little bit. Makes Charly laugh.

DIANE
You know, I actually hate these.

CHARLY
'Course I do. But I can never say
no to you.

He takes another hit.

CHARLY (CONT'D)
Are you sure you don't want to come
back home with me on Wednesday?

DIANE
Charly...

CHARLY
I know. I just don't know what I'll
do without you. And for a whole
year.

DIANE
Just to help my parents out with
the shop. You know that.

CHARLY
No, I get it. It's still hard...
I wrote a song about you.

DIANE
You didn't?! My very own MJ! I told
you you had what it takes.

CHARLY
I'll sing it to you when we get
back.

DIANE
Looking forward to it, baby.

She grabs his hand, and they walk together. Away from here
and towards home.

INT. DIANE'S ROOM - NIGHT

DIANE
Alright, MJ. Show me this song of
yours.

Charly reaches for the banged up but faithful guitar in the
corner.

CHARLY
Wait a minute. Let me make sure
it's in tune.

She sticks out her tongue at him.

DIANE
You're just stalling.

CHARLY
Oh please, woman.

Finally, he strums out a resonant, tuned chord. It silences
her and she doesn't take her eyes off him.

He opens his mouth, and throughout the room rings out a story
of the day he first saw her. The moment he fell in love with
her. The time of their first kiss. The memory of their first
time.

A tear streaks down her face.

EXT. DIANE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DIANE'S MOMMA (50s) listens. She pauses for a moment and then
walks away.

INT. BROWN'S BARBERSHOP - DAY

A litany of luggage rest in the corner as Charly and Diane
embrace. Charly wipes away her tears.

CHARLY
It's just one year, my love.

DIANE
It'll feel like an eternity.

CHARLY
I'll send you letters every week.

DIANE
So will I.

Diane's Momma walks up to them.

DIANE'S MOMMA
Maybe you won't have to.

DIANE
Momma, what are you talking about?

They break away from each other to face her.

DIANE'S MOM
I know I said I needed the extra hands with the economy being so tough. But your brother decided he was gonna move back home. Cost of living's too high out west. Plus, he's capable of doing the job.

DIANE
You're kidding?

DIANE'S MOM
Serious as a heart attack, sugar.

Diane squeals and hugs her mother, and then she pulls Charly over to join them both. A family.

INT. OPUTA HOME - NIGHT

Back in Nigeria.

Margaret cooks and dances.

There is a knock on the door.

MARGARET
He's back! He's back!

She runs to the door and opens it.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Son!

She gives him a large bear hug. She hugs him tightly.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I miss you so much.

CHARLY

I've missed you, too.

MARGARET

Look at you... you look so...
American.

This refers to two things:

He's a bit bigger than before.

His outfits are still androgynous.

CHARLY

I guess I've changed a bit.

He enters. He sees his dad.

With less emotion.

CHARLY (CONT'D)

Father.

CHUKWUDIFU

Son. Welcome back home.

CHARLY

Ma. Father. I brought someone I
want you to meet.

Diane enters the household.

Margaret is less than enthused.

CHARLY (CONT'D)

This is Diane.

MARGARET

Hello, Diane.

DIANE

Hello. Nice to meet you, Mr and Mrs
Oputa.

MARGARET
I didn't cook enough food.

TIME CUT:

The four sit quietly at the table.
Chukwudifu and Charly seem fine.
Margaret is clearly not very happy.
They eat Fufu.

DIANE
Wow, Mrs. Oputa. This is so
delicious. What is it?

MARGARET
Fufu.

DIANE
Fufu. I could die in it.

MARGARET
Where are you from, child?

DIANE
South Carolina, ma'am.

MARGARET
Ma'am, she says.

CHARLY
Maami. Be nice, please.

MARGARET
I am being nice. I'm just getting
to know her.

CHUKWUDIFU
Did you two meet at university?

DIANE
No, I actually do hair.

Margaret chokes.

MARGARET
Is that a passion of yours?

DIANE
Yes, actually. It's a family
business. But I enjoy the arts, in
general.

MARGARET

Ah, so that's why Charly looks like a... what do you call it? The painter. With all the colors and shapes. Pika? Paso? Chukwudifu, help me find the name.

CHUKWUDIFU

Picasso. Honey.

MARGARET

Yes! A Picasso. So colorful and... different.

Diane giggles.

DIANE

Actually, he was like this when I met him.

MARGARET

And when was this?

DIANE

Um, three or four years ago.

MARGARET

I don't remember hearing about you.

CHARLY

Ma!

MARGARET

How long have you two been together?

DIANE

A few years.

MARGARET

Years! And you never told us, Charly?!

CHARLY

Ma!

CHUKWUDIFU

So that is why you bring her over here.

DIANE

What can I say? I'm always up for a bit of adventure.

(MORE)

DIANE (CONT'D)

I didn't know I was coming up until the last minute.

MARGARET

You do know he's been married?

CHARLY

Ma, can you please stop?

DIANE

I actually did. He tells me all about his life when I'm doing his hair.

Silence again.

CHUKWUDIFU

Charles. What are your plans now that you have graduated?

CHARLY

I don't know yet.

CHUKWUDIFU

You don't know? Do you know how much money I've spent to get you into that school.

CHARLY

I'll figure it out.

CHUKWUDIFU

Four years. You have been in America for four years! What have you been doing? Huh. Nothing?

CHARLY

I've been studying my ass off.

MARGARET

Language!

CHARLY

I'm sorry if that answer wasn't to your liking, but I'm here. I will succeed at whatever I decide to do.

CHUKWUDIFU

No.

CHARLY

No?

CHUKWUDIFU

You have taken too long. You need to start making money. I know a few positions-

CHARLY

Iba.

CHUKWUDIFU

I'm serious, child. I can put a good word about you at one of the local firms.

CHARLY

I'm not a lawyer.

CHUKWUDIFU

You can be.

CHARLY

I don't want to be! I don't want to be you!

Chukwudifu takes a bite calmly.

CHUKWUDIFU

Charles. You are already half me.

Charly stays silent for a bit.

CHARLY

You're right, Ibo. I need to get a job.

CHUKWUDIFU

Great. I'll start making some calls-

CHARLY

I'm going to be a singer.

Margaret and Chukwudifu choke on their food.

CHUKWUDIFU

That's not funny.

CHARLY

You're right. It's not. It's what I'm going to do.

CHUKWUDIFU

America made you crazy. I should've sent you to London.

DIANE

He does have a lovely voice. He even wrote a song for me. It was-

CHUKWUDIFU

-Respectfully, Diane, this conversation has nothing to do with you.

CHARLY

Ibo, don't speak to her that way, and I already made my decision!

CHUKWUDIFU

So you have decided to waste your education and our money to anger me?

CHARLY

That might be part of the reason.

MARGARET

Charly. Respect your father.

CHARLY

Not until he respects me.

CHUKWUDIFU

(to Margaret)

Look what America did to him. Look at his outfit, Margaret! He brings an American woman home and talks about being a singer! He has lost his damn mind.

(to Charly)

You will take the job I give you. That's final.

CHARLY

(to Margaret)

Ma?

MARGARET

I'm sorry, omo, but I agree with him.

Silence.

CHARLY

Fuck this!

MARGARET

Charles Chukwudifu Oputa!

CHARLY

I've been shit on my entire life.
By you too, ibo. My the people of
this village. By white people
thinking they are better than me
because of the color of their skin!
I've been beaten and spat on. And
fuck it! I've wanted to give up
multiple times. I hate this world.
And sometimes, father, I hate you
too! So if I want to be a singer. I
will be a singer.

CHUKWUDIFU

You're willing to ruin your life
just to anger me?

Chukwudifu takes another bite. Calmly.

CHUKWUDIFU (CONT'D)

Disrespectful. Just like an
American.

Charly laughs hysterically.

CHARLY

Fuck you! Come on, Diane. Let's go.

CHUKWUDIFU

Where are you going to go? You have
no money. No house.

CHARLY

We'll figure it out. Without you.

INT. CAR - DAY

Diane and Charly sit in the car awkwardly.

DIANE

Did you mean what you said? About
being a singer?

CHARLY

Yeah, do you still believe in me?

She cups his cheek.

DIANE

Of course I do, Charly. I have
since the beginning.

CHARLY
Well that settles it, I'm going to
be singer-song writer.

DIANE
Song writer?

CHARLY
I want to be one of a kind.

DIANE
Alright big shot, give me another
song. Right now. Your first one was
for my ears only.

CHARLY
Hmm.

He begins to hum Obodo GiriGiri.

DIANE
Oh, I like that.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Diane and Charly drive and end up in...

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Lagos, Nigeria, 1982

Charly goes into a studio. There is FRONT DESK WORKER.

CHARLY
Hello. I would like to use a
studio.

FRONT DESK WORKER
Ah, that will be no problem, sir.
Do you have a day and time?

CHARLY
Every day Monday through Friday.
9am. For an hour.

FRONT DESK WORKER
Sir, that's quite a bit.

Charly gives him a look.

FRONT DESK WORKER (CONT'D)
That's no problem, sit. We'll get
that set up.

EXT/INT. SMALL APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is not necessarily in a good neighbor. It is
loud. Drug filled. Surrounded by POLICE.

CHARLY
Here it is.

DIANE
Oh.

CHARLY
I know this isn't exactly what you
were expecting when you moved with
me. I get it if you want to move
back to America.

DIANE
No. No. It's okay. We'll be okay.

CHARLY
We're going to be hungry. All our
money will go into bills and the
studio.

DIANE
We will survive. We will succeed.
I'll keep doing hair on the side.

CHARLY
I think I might love you.

DIANE
Oh really?

He gives her a big passionate kiss.

CHARLY
You are my queen. Absolutely
perfect.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)
She is my queen.

DIANE
Stop it with that fibbing.

CHARLY
No fibbing. I worship the ground
you walk on.

He bows.

DIANE
Our castle awaits us.

She giggles and enters.

The inside is not great either. Covered in bugs and junkies.

DIANE (CONT'D)
I've been in worse.

CHARLY
Have you really?

DIANE
No, I just wanted to make you feel
better. It's all going to work. I
promise.

She gives him a small kiss.

INT. STUDIO ROOM - DAY

Charly writes in a notebook and hums.

CHARLY
Umm, maybe? How about-

He hums again but in a higher pinch.

CHARLY (CONT'D)
This is going to take a while,
isn't?

EXT. SMALL APARTMENT - DAY

Caption: a few years later.

Diane now has a wedding ring on her finger and is pregnant.
She looks tired. Skinny.

She dances to the radio.

CHARLY
Onyeka Onwenu, again?

DIANE

I absolutely adore her. She gives me hope.

CHARLY

Onyeka is surely inspiring. I love the sparkle she brings in your eyes.

DIANE

Well?

CHARLY

I'm going to be a star. I mean it. I have songs in my head. Written down. I just need to perfect them.

DIANE

I know you are baby. Two weeks. I was supposed to be here two weeks and now look where we are.

Charly gives her a kiss on the cheek.

INT. STUDIO ROOM - DAY

Charly is in the studio room.

CHARLY

Okay, Charly Boy. Focus. You got this.

He hums a bit. The same hum from earlier.

CHARLY (CONT'D)

Okay.

Figuring it out, he puts together "Obodo GiriGiri".

So he begins to sing...

EXT. STREETS OF LAGOS - DAY

A bunch of the PEOPLE OF LAGOS hum and sing Obodo GiriGiri.

PERSON #1

Turn that up!

PERSON #2

I love this song.

PERSON #3
Charly Boy is so good!

On the radio:

RADIO ANNOUNCER
You hear that? That is the sound of
the new artist of Nigeria. Charly
Boy!

INT. CHARLY AND DIANE'S HOME - NIGHT

Diane and Charly dance to Obodo GiriGiri in their kitchen.
They laugh.

The phone rings.

Charly walks up to the phone and answers.

CHARLY
Hello?

Beat.

CHARLY (CONT'D)
Maami. Hey! Did you hear me on the
radio? They like me, ma! They like
me!

INT. POLYGRAM NIGERIA - DAY

Charly walks into an office, colorful as ever. His style has
blossomed over the years.

In the office is TON SEYSENER.

TON
Charly Boy! How have you been,
friend?

Charly and Ton shake hands.

CHARLY
I'm actually surprised you called
me.

TON
I talked it over with my staff.
They love you and they love your
look. It's very Western. Potential
to start a trend.

CHARLY

Thank you. So get to it, Ton. What do you want?

TON

We want to sign you.

Charly smiles but tries to hide it.

CHARLY

Is that right?

TON

Yes. We want to give you your own album! We have never heard a voice like yours before. So futuristic. People are calling you the Nigerian "Prince."

CHARLY

Prince?

TON

Yes, the American. The singer. The one with all the colors and the hair.

CHARLY

Ah, I see.

TON

So what do you say?

CHARLY

Let me think about it.

TON

Think about it? What's there to think about?

CHARLY

Maybe Polygram is not right for me.

TON

I can assure you, it's the perfect place for you. If you sign with us, we'll give you benefits.

CHARLY

What type of benefits?

INT. CHARLY AND DIANE'S HOME - NIGHT

CLING.

Charly and Diane toast.

She takes a sip.

DIANE
Congratulations, my love.

CHARLY
Thank you, my dear.

They drink.

Diane feels her tummy.

DIANE
I think the baby kicked.

Charly gets down on his knees and kisses her tummy.

CHARLY
He's excited. Just like us.

He gets back up and kisses Diane.

DIANE
So. Obodo GiriGiri was a hit.
What's next?

CHARLY
I don't know yet.

EXT. STREETS OF LAGOS - DAY

Charly has sunglasses and walks the busy streets. He passes a young mixed woman, TYNA, who runs up to him. She has a cigarette in her hand.

TYNA
Charles Oputa?

He pauses and looks at her.

CHARLY
I'm very busy. I don't have time
for an autograph.

TYNA
No, no. That's not it at all. I
want to help you grow.
(MORE)

TYNA (CONT'D)

My name is Tyna Onwudiwe. I'm a newsreader and reporter for NTA.

CHARLY

Tyna? I've heard that name before.

TYNA

I'm a musician like you.

CHARLY

Ah, yes. Walk with me.

The walk together as the pass many people.

CHARLY (CONT'D)

How do you think you can help me?

TYNA

I think I'm unique just like you. I think I have the skills to make you an international star.

CHARLY

How do you expect to do that?

TYNA

Well, I want to maybe manage you. Style you.

CHARLY

Thank you, but I think my wife can style me well enough.

TYNA

If you could just give me a chance. You won't regret it. I swear.

CHARLY

Darling, I already have a hit single and I've been signed. What else do I need?

TYNA

Sir, respectfully, if you think that's all you need then you definitely need my help. You have half fame. Half fortune. You are just a one hit wonder. I can take you all the way.

CHARLY

You're cocky.

TYNA
You're arrogant.

CHARLY
I like your fire. Fine. Show me
what you can do.

TYNA
Baby, I'm going to give you the
biggest concert of your life. In
six months time. Just you wait.

CHARLY
I'm waiting.

He begins to walk away from her.

CHARLY (CONT'D)
Oh, and Tyna, don't call me baby.
Lady Di has all my love.

TYNA
Friends and business partners.
That's all I ask. I'm going to make
you a very rich man, Charly Boy!

He nods and leaves her.

As he walks away, she takes another cigarette out of her
pocket and smokes it.

EXT. ON STAGE - NIGHT

There is a large AUDIENCE. All chant:

AUDIENCE
Charly Boy! Charly Boy! Charly Boy!

Diane with son CHARLES JR. She's pregnant again. Tyna is
right next to her.

DIANE
(to Tyna)
He looks really good.

TYNA
Really? That means so much coming
from you. You're such a style icon.

DIANE
I'm too American. I know I am.

TYNA

Maybe I can help with that. Mix your style with a bit of Nigeria. Would you like that?

DIANE

That's very sweet of you, Tyna.

TYNA

It's a pleasure, honestly. You two are amazing. I want to help as much as I possibly can. Not just for him, but for all of you.

DIANE

Tyna, do you have many friends?

TYNA

Is it that obvious that I don't?

DIANE

Sweet girl, Charly and I will always be there for you. Thank you for everything you've done.

TYNA

I have a question. Does the friendship between him and I bother you at all? I heard that back in the day he was a womanizer.

DIANE

So far only seven and a half.

Tyna is visibly shocked.

TYNA

My, my, you must be very fertile.

DIANE

They aren't all mine, dear. Charly and I have been through a lot together. I trust him with my soul. If he trusts you. I trust you.

TYNA

Oh.

Charly walks on the stage. The crowd roars. His style is different, sorta. It's more cultural, but still as wild as it always is. A lovely mix of Nigerian and American culture together in a big colorful mix.

CHARLY

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for
coming. My fans, my lovely wife-
Lady Di- you mean everything to me.
So let's make this night special,
huh?

The crowd cheers more.

Charles Jr. claps as Diane smiles.

The music for *Nwata Miss* plays. Everyone starts to dance.

CHARLY (CONT'D)

(sings)

Kei fe ya asogbueome.

AUDIENCE

(sings)

Nwata Miss O.

CHARLY

Kei fe ya asogbueome.

AUDIENCE

Nwata Miss O.

The song continues...

CUT TO:

INT. OPUTA HOME - NIGHT

The concert is only on television.

Margaret dances and sings along.

MARGARET

(sings)

*Kei fe ya asogbueome/ Nwata Miss o/
Kei fe ya asogbueome oyioma.*

Chukwudifu sits on the couch and watches her.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(speaks)

Come on, my love. Dance with me.

Reluctantly, Chukwudifu stands up. Picks Margaret up and spins her around.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I forgive you, you know. For all
those years ago.

CHUKWUDIFU
You do?

MARGARET
I do.

She kisses him firmly, and they break away to laugh and
sing...

MARGARET (CONT'D)	CHUKWUDIFU
<i>Ibu oyioma o/ Ibu oymioma/</i>	<i>Ibu oyioma o/ Ibu oymioma/</i>
<i>Ibu oyioma o/ Ibu oyioma/ Ibu</i>	<i>Ibu oyioma o/ Ibu oyioma/ Ibu</i>
<i>oyioma o...</i>	<i>oyioma o...</i>

BACK TO:

EXT. ON STAGE - NIGHT

CHARLY
Kei fe ya asogbueome/Nwata Miss O..

The song continues until it finishes.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Zoom into the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
You just heard Charly Boy's hit
live, *Nwata Miss O!* Going up in the
charts as we speak! Charly Boy's
new album has been getting a lot of
attention, because of its many
references to the Nigerian
government.

(beat)
Which brings me to breaking news,
violence broke out in Northern
Nigeria as the fight for religious
freedom goes on. Riots have broken
out leaving many to pass away.

(MORE)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

General Babangida announced Nigeria will remain a secular state to reduce tension, however, it seems to be doing more bad than good as the human rights movement continues. This comes 18 years after the civil war ended.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)

As much as I loved singing, writing and producing. It became more of a hobby to me. I probably should have learned my passion much earlier, but I'm glad I got there eventually.

INT. CHARLY AND DIANE'S HOME - DAY

The family has moved into a newer, nicer home.

Diane turns up the volume of the television as she holds BABY ADAEZE.

DIANE

Charly! Charly, come here! Look at this!

On the television, is live footage of the September 13, 1990 coup.

Charly comes into the room and watches.

TELEVISION ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

There is said to be a total of sixty-nine executions.

DIANE

There was another coup. Oh Charly, this is just horrible. All this violence. It just never ends.

CHARLY

I'm going to do something about this.

DIANE

What can you do?

CHARLY

I'll figure it out. I always do.

She hugs him.

TIME CUT:

Diana and the kids are asleep. Charly is still awake.

He picks up his landline and dials.

CHARLY (CONT'D)

Tyna?

TYNA (O.S.)

Charly, do you have any idea what time it is?

CHARLY

I couldn't sleep.

TYNA

Hold on a minute. I need a cigarette.

Beat.

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

What's bothering you?

CHARLY

You always seem to have the answer to everything. So I have to ask. What is the best way to get into politics without ruining my music career. I don't think my album is enough.

TYNA (O.S.)

Charly, this could not wait until the morning?

CHARLY

No. It couldn't. It's been eating me up all day.

TYNA (O.S.)

I think you should do whatever feels right.

CHARLY

If I do what feels right, then I'll be arrested. I can't do that to my family.

TYNA (O.S.)
I hate to tell you this, Charly,
but all the greats have done in
jail. Gandhi. Martin Luther King
Jr. Wole Soyinka.

CHARLY
The poet?

TYNA (O.S.)
The artist of Nigerian civil
rights.

CHARLY
So what do I do?

TYNA (O.S.)
What do you want to do?

CHARLY
Protest. Do marches with my people.
Fight for peace.

TYNA (O.S.)
Then why not do that?

CHARLY
You're right, but there has to be
something else I can do. Right? I
have a name for myself. What can I
do that will make people listen?

TYNA (O.S.)
There's only one thing I can think
of.

CHARLY
What is it?

TYNA (O.S.)
Television.

CHARLY
Like an interview or something?

TYNA (O.S.)
Or something. I have to go, Charly.
Sleep well.

CHARLY
Goodnight, Tyna.

He hangs up and sits on the couch.

He sighs and turns on the television again. It blares!

He turns down the volume immediately and looks around to see if anyone woke up.

He turns back towards to the tv. *Samanja*, the comedy show is on.

CHARLY (CONT'D)
Or something, she says. What the hell does that even mean?

INT. OPUTA HOME - DAY

Margaret and Chukwudifu are home.

Chukwudifu looks through files as Margaret cooks.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

Margaret dances.

MARGARET
They're here! They're here!

CHUKWUDIFU
Woman, get a hold of yourself.

She gives him a kiss then walks to the door.

Pregnant Diane, Charly, CHILD CHARLES JR and TODDLER ADAEZE are at the door and enter.

The two children run into the home.

CHARLY
Stop running!

MARGARET
They can run all they like. I got them new toys!

CHILD CHARLES JR
New toys!

MARGARET
They are by the television.

CHARLY
Maami, you are spoiling them!

MARGARET

Nonsense! I'm a grandmother, it's my job to spoil them! I miss having children around. My Charles Jr, Adaeze and baby...

She looks at Diane's pregnant belly.

DIANE

Dominique.

MARGARET

Dominique. Beautiful name.

Margaret hugs Diane.

Chukwudifu walks up to Charly. There is an awkward silence, but Chukwudifu hugs him.

CHUKWUDIFU

I still hate how you dress.

TIME CUT:

They are all at the dinner table. They eat Peppersoup.

DIANE

Maggie, I swear you make the best pepper soup there is.

MARGARET

Stop, I know you're just trying to make me blush.

(beat)

Actually, keep going.

They all laugh.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Charly, your album is beautiful. Your father and I have been listening to it nonstop.

CHARLY

Really?

CHUKWUDIFU

It's... good.

MARGARET

Good he says. Tell him the truth, my love. We dance to *Nwata Miss O* every night.

(sings)

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

*Kei fe ya asogbueome/ Nwata Miss o/
Kei fe ya asogbueome oyioma*

(speaks)

Chukwudifu, sing with me.

CHUKWUDIFU

I would rather not.

They all laugh.

MARGARET

He's being so serious right now,
but when we're alone he sings with
me. Loud and proud.

CHARLY

I'll have to see it to believe it.

MARGARET

The entire village won't stop
talking about you. Every time we go
to church, everyone comes up to us
and tells us how great you are, but
I already knew that.

(beat)

I know I didn't always agree with
your lifestyle, but look at you
now. Thriving. This is every
mother's dream.

CHARLY

Thank you, maami.

CHUKWUDIFU

So what's next for Charly Boy, huh?

CHARLY

I actually think you'll like this,
baba. I'm going to have a show.

MARGARET

A show?

DIANE

Called the Charly Boy Show!

CHARLY

It's comedic, but political. I want
to teach the youth. I want to help
create peace in our nation. I want
the youth to say no to all negative
things-CULTISM, aids, violence. I
want them to focus on having
courage.

MARGARET
That's incredible.

CHARLY
I guess you can say that I'm
finally getting into politics,
baba.

Chukwudifu smiles just a little bit.

CHUKWUDIFU
Good for you, omo. Good for you.

CHARLY
I think this is something I always
needed to do. To fight, but yet
to..

MARGARET
Always be kind.

DIANE
Always be kind.

CHARLY
I don't say this enough, but I love
you two. I know I wasn't the
easiest kid or adult, until
recently.

MARGARET
I love you, too.

Silence.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Chukwudifu!

Chukwudifu puts his hand on Charly's hand.

CHUKWUDIFU
The world will be watching. Be
careful.

CHARLY
Well, the Charly Boy Show isn't all
about politics. Just mostly. I'll
have skits and interviews. I know
the government will be watching and
waiting to punish me, but I won't
back down.

CHUKWUDIFU
Maybe you should not say it's a
political show.

CHARLY
But it kinda is.

CHUKWUDIFU
Let them find that out on their
own. What station?

CHARLY
Next week I have an appointment
with Nigerian Television Authority.
My friend, Tyna, has been working
there for some time. Apparently
they are eager to have me.

CHUKWUDIFU
The NTA, huh? They do enjoy being
controversial. Then the government
will definitely watch. Watch your
words, son.

Toddler Adaeze somehow manages to spill her bowl all over the
table.

DIANE
Adaeze!

EXT. NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY BUILDING - DAY

Cars and bikes parked in the parking lot. Charly drives in on
a motorcycle. He parks and takes his helmet off. He goes
inside...

CONTINUOUS:

INT. NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY BUILDING - DAY

Tyna waits inside as Charly enters.

CHARLY
How do I look?

TYNA
Amazing, as always. Are you ready?

CHARLY
No.

TYNA
Well it's too late now.

A young man, TERRY, approaches Charly.

TERRY

Charly Boy! It's an honor to meet you. I'm Terry Okon. I work here at the Nigerian Television Authority Building of the Federal Government's broadcast corporation. Please follow me.

The three walk together as they pass chaos amongst WORKERS.

TERRY (CONT'D)

We will have the Charly Boy Show on channel 15. Does that work for you?

CHARLY

Yes, that works.

They stop at a door. Terry opens it with a key.

TERRY

This here is where you'll be filming.

Charly enters the room in awe. It's perfect.

TERRY (CONT'D)

I must say, I'm a big fan of yours. I think it's incredible and risky what you are doing here.

CHARLY

Terry, the Nigerian government is both a friend and a foe. Like family, we have our conflicts but we grow together.

TERRY

Well said, sir. We will start filming in a few hours. I already sent out the scripts. You will meet everyone soon.

CHARLY

Thank you.

Terry exits.

TYNA

(quotes Charly)

Like family, we have our conflicts but we grow together. How poetic.

CHARLY

Well, I am a writer.

TYNA

Are you sure about this?

CHARLY

You can't back out now, friend.

TYNA

Wouldn't dream of it. I'm just worried all of a sudden. It feels so real. What if-

CHARLY

I've been bullied and used my entire life, Tyna. I've been beaten so bad I ended up in the hospital. I've survived the Civil War. I have survived America. The Nigerian government can bully me and torture me as much as they want, but I won't back down. Not ever.

TYNA

Watch out, Charly Boy. Politics looks good on you.

CHARLY

It does, doesn't it?

They laugh.

Charly sits in his spiny chair.

CHARLY (CONT'D)

This feels good. It feels right.

TYNA

I'm happy for you, my friend.

CHARLY

Could not have done this without you.

He spins around and around and...

TIME CUT:

We are live. There is a small CREW. They film Charly.

CHARLY (CONT'D)

Hello, my friends. Welcome to the first episode of The Charly Boy Show. It's hot outside, isn't it? I'm sweating so much. I can't tell if it's the heat or the pressure from the Nigerian coup to fall in line.

(beat)

Okay, okay. Maybe that was too forward. We're not here to talk politics, right? We are here to sing it! Ladies and gentleman, please welcome my friend, Fela Kuti!

FELA KUTI, an older skinny man, walks in and sits next to Charly.

FELA KUTI

How are you?

CHARLY

Better than ever.

FELA KUTI

The spotlight looks good on you.

CHARLY

Oh, I know.

Back to the cameras.

CHARLY (CONT'D)

I don't you don't know who Fela Kuti is, but if you don't, I'm proud to announce this talented artist. He is one of my heroes. Twenty years of music to combat the Nigerian rain.

FELA KUTI

Okay, instead of bragging about me. Why don't you play some of the music?

CHARLY

Your wish is my command. We will play your top hits: Pansa Pansa!

The song *Pansa Pansa* plays.

When it ends...

CHARLY (CONT'D)
You want to explain what the song means?

FELA KUTI
Nope.

They laugh.

FELA KUTI (CONT'D)
All my music means something. It is why I was arrested back in 84. Have you ever been arrested, Charly Boy?

CHARLY
You mean, did I lie on my resume to get this show?
(a very sarcastic)
No. Of course not.

They laugh again.

FELA KUTI
But this show is not about politics, correct?

CHARLY
Fela Kuti, what would I have against the Nigerian government? I don't want to make my father and mother disappointed, huh?
(beat)
Which brings me to my new sketch!
Mama and Papa Nothing Spoil!

[A clip from *Mama and Papa Nothing Spoil* plays.]

INT. CHARLY AND DIANE'S HOME - NIGHT

The family laughs as Diane brings out a plate of food.

DIANE
You are on fire, my love. How do you feel?

CHARLY
Amazing.

CHILD CHARLES JR
Baba, look what I made at school today!

Child Charles Jr runs off into his room as Diane shouts...

DIANE
Show him after your meal!

She sighs.

DIANE (CONT'D)
That boy is all over the place.
Reminds me of you.

CHARLY
If he's anything like me, he's
nothing but trouble.

He gets quiet.

DIANE
What's wrong, my love?

CHARLY
Nothing feels like enough. What if
what I'm doing is hopeless?
Forgotten?

DIANE
Are you scared of being forgotten?

CHARLY
Maybe a little bit.

DIANE
I hate to say this, love, but what
you are doing is bigger than you.
You are part of a movement. You
have a voice people will listen to.

CHARLY
I know. I know that, but what is
the point if the government isn't
listening.

DIANE
You are on television. How could
they not be listening?

CHARLY
You're right, as always, my queen.
Maybe I could make another show. A
children's show.

DIANE
Charly Boy's Kiddie Show?

CHARLY
I like the sound of that.

Diane gives him a kiss on the cheek.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

DIANE
Who could that be at this hour?

CHARLY
I don't know.

He walks to the door.

CHARLY (CONT'D)
Who is it?

POLICE #1 (O.S.)
Police.

Charly looks at his wife. Reluctantly, he opens the door.
There are TWO OFFICE OFFICERS.

POLICE #1 (CONT'D)
Charles Oputa?

CHARLY
Yes?

DIANE
What for?

POLICE #2
Step back, woman. This has nothing
to do with you.

DIANE
Excuse you!

POLICE #2
(whispers to Police #1)
Fucking Americans.

DIANE
Say that to my face, you pig!

CHARLY
Please, Diane, it's okay.

Charly shows his wrist. The police put on the handcuffs and
takes him away.

INT/EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

The car stops at a light. A HOMELESS MAN walks to the side of the car. He holds a sign: "Ex-Military. Anything Helps."

POLICE #2
Look at this fucker.

POLICE #1
Get a job!

The officers laugh and drive off.

Charly looks back at the homeless man. The man falls to his knees and cries.

Charly can only watch.

INT. POLICE STATION CELL - NIGHT

CRIMINALS surround the cell. Charly is in the corner. He mostly keeps his head down. He looks up just once.

CRIMINAL #1
What are you looking at, faggot?

Charly lowers his head again.

CRIMINAL #1 (CONT'D)
Yeah, keep your head down. Little bitch.

CRIMINAL #2
Relax, man. Don't you know who that is? It's Charly Boy! The singer.

CRIMINAL #1
I don't care who the fuck it is.
Look at him. Doesn't deserve to be called a man.

It is subtle, but Charly rolls his eyes.

CRIMINAL #1 (CONT'D)
Did you just fucking roll your eyes at me?

He stands up and walks to Charly.

Police officers see this happen and do nothing.

CRIMINAL #1 (CONT'D)

Get up. Fight me like a man if you are one.

CHARLY

I'd rather not. Thank you.

CRIMINAL #1

(mockingly)

I'd rather not. Thank you.

(normal)

You think because you talk fancy and famous that you're better than the rest of us.

CHARLY

Not at all.

CRIMINAL #2

Relax, man.

CRIMINAL #1

Shut up or I'll kick your ass, too.

Criminal #2 stays quiet.

CRIMINAL #1 (CONT'D)

Get up, faggot.

Charly shakes his head.

Criminal #1 laughs before he punches Charly right in the gut. Then in the face. When Charly falls out of the seat, the criminal keeps punching and kicking.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)

Moments like these, I think to myself, "Are these the people I work so hard for? Is it worth it?" And the answer is always yes. This man- along with the others- is worth fight for. I'll never regret that.

Criminal #1 slams Charly's head on the wall. It goes pitch black.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Diane runs up to Charly. She kisses his face.

DIANE

Oh, my sweet husband. Are you okay?

CHARLY

I'm okay. They just wanted to question me about a skit.

Tyna rides a motorcycle to the station. The officers outside whisper.

TYNA

Thought you might want this.

She throws Charly the keys. She takes out a cigarette.

DIANE

Tyna, he needs to get looked out.

TYNA

He looks okay.

DIANE

He looks awful!
(to Charly)
No offense.

CHARLY

I'm okay. I'll drive to the hospital. You follow me in the car.

He puts on his helmet and gets on the bike.

RANDOM OFFICER

(mutters to another officer)
Of course, he's Okada.

CHARLY

Well, come on.

EXT. DURING THE RIDE - DAY - LATER

The same homeless guy is on the side of the road and holds a pipe. He looks at Charly on his motorcycle.

Then suddenly, the man collapses. Dies. Right there.

INT. STAGE - DAY - WEEKS LATER

Charly still has some stitches on his face.

There is a INTERVIEWER on stage next to him.

Backstage is Tyna.

INTERVIEWER

Charly Boy, it seems like you've been through hell.

CHARLY

That's an understatement.

INTERVIEWER

I just want to know. What are you fighting for?

CHARLY

Is it not obvious? The people.

INTERVIEWER

But it seems like you're pro-military.

CHARLY

Is the military not working class?

INTERVIEWER

I guess it is.

CHARLY

The military works hard. Don't they deserve pensions? I just think everyone should be treated fairly in this great country. Recently, I saw a beggar begging. He suddenly collapsed right in front of me. I will never forget that. These were men who fought for Nigeria during the civil war. They fought that the country may survive. They were injured in the line of duty. They were regarded as medically unfit. Why then were they not paid their deserved pensions so that they can retire to a peaceful life after the trauma of the war? A millionaire question it turned out to be, as these men turned into beggars while waiting to know what their situation would become. Many of them died during the wait. Many had their illnesses worsened by their poor way of living. I am a big supporter of Code Red.

INTERVIEWER

That is powerful. I heard that you call the government a friend and foe.

CHARLY

Well, isn't it? I don't know if the government wants us to grow, but it is capable of helping the average Nigerian. From drugs, from crime, from anything and everything holding us back as a nation.

INTERVIEWER

You lead a group called 'Save Nigeria from Nigeria'.

CHARLY

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

Some might call you controversial.

CHARLY

I think everyone calls me controversial, but I'm okay with that.

INTERVIEWER

You're content?

CHARLY

I'm grateful. I am an artist. An entertainer. An advocate. People know my name.

INTERVIEWER

Is that what's important to you? People knowing your name?

CHARLY

No. What is important is that they know my message.

INTERVIEWER

Let's talk about The Charly Boy Show.

CHARLY

Okay.

INTERVIEWER

Ratings are doing really well.

CHARLY

They are.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think people enjoy the comedy aspect more or the political aspect more?

CHARLY

What are you talking about? The Charly Boy Show is not political.

They laugh.

INTERVIEWER

Of course not. Do you think the government will respond to your not-political show.

CHARLY

They already have. They'll come back. I'll be ready next time.

INTERVIEWER

I hear you're making a children's show.

CHARLY

Maybe. Maybe not.

INTERVIEWER

So vague. I thought you were an honest man.

CHARLY

You'll be the first one to know when things are confirmed.

INTERVIEWER

One last question, is it true you are associated with the Okada? We know that the Okada riders play a prominent role for Code Red. It is no secret you have a motorbike.

CHARLY

Yes. My drive is to support them in every way.

INTERVIEWER

Tell me, what is there to support for Code Red and the Okada bikers?

CHARLY

Our job is to inspire the youth.
Become more self-reliant. Help the
people receive human rights. Help
with education. And to make a
peaceful Nigeria.

INTERVIEWER

In other words, save Nigeria from
Nigeria.

CHARLY

Correct.

INTERVIEWER

I admire your bravery.
Well that's all the time we have
left for today. It's been a
pleasure meeting you, Charly Boy.
You are meant for great things.

CHARLY

Thank you.

Charly walks off the stage.

CHARLY (CONT'D)

How was that?

TYNA

Absolutely amazing.

CHARLY

Come on, we have a mission to do.

INT. CHARLY AND DIANE'S HOME - TV - NIGHT

Static. Static.

Focus strictly on the tv.

[The full clip of Pig Out on the Charly Boy show plays. Then
there are years worth of small clips that play from The
Charly Boy Show]

TEENAGER ADAEZE laughs with Young Dominique (about 10 years
old).

Static. Static.

A CROWD of a studio audience cheer.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)
 Breaking news. Multichoice Nigeria Limited is suing the Nigerian Television Authority. Senator Ben Murray-Bruce claims that there is a copyright violation of the Charly Boy Show. Charles Oputa allegedly intends to receive his infringed works.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY (40-mid 60s) comes up from behind the couch.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
 Turn that off.

CHARLY TEENAGER ADAEZE
 What were they talking about, baba?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
 Turn it off. Please.

Charles Junior turns off the television.

Charly sits on the floor and look up to his children.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY (CONT'D)
 Listen to me. Listen good.
 Sometimes the world will try to
 take things away from you. All you
 can do is fight back.

Adaeze looks at her fists.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY (CONT'D)
 No, no. Not that type of fight. Nne
 Nne Margaret, my mother, always
 told me to fight but always be
 kind. There is a lot of shit in
 this world. All you have to do is
 not become shit yourself. You stay
 true to your authentic self.
 Remember ACT. Authenticity,
 Consistency, Tenaciously.

DOMINIQUE
 Shit. Shit, shit, shit.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
 Don't say that.

TEENAGER ADAEZE
 You're in the news, but not the
 good type.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
I know. I will fix, but for now you
two go to sleep.

CHARLY TEENAGER ADAEZE
No.

DOMINIQUE
Shit.

DIANE (O.S.)
Charles! What the hell did my baby
just say?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Nothing, my dear.
(to the kids)
Go. Shoo shoo.

The kids go to their rooms.

The phone rings. Charly answers.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY (CONT'D)
Hello.

A woman speaks:

ONYEKA (O.S.)
My name is Onyeka Onwena.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Holy shit.
(shouts)
Diane!

ONYEKA (O.S.)
Hello?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
I'm here, just-

MIDDLE-AGED DIANE comes in.

MIDDLE-AGED DIANE
What is it?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
(to the phone)
Sorry, Miss Onyeka Onwenu.

Middle-aged Diane mouths "WHAT"

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY (CONT'D)
It is a pleasure to hear from you.

ONYEKA (O.S.)
I saw you on the news.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
None of it is true.

ONYEKA (O.S.)
I know. Multichoice is doing the same to me.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
That's ridiculous.

ONYEKA (O.S.)
It is. You are a very honest and open man. What do you suggest we do.

INT. NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY BUILDING - DAY

Terry walks through the office and Charly follows him.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Just hear me out.

TERRY
A hunger strike? It's a bad idea. Can we do another strike or something.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Nothing sends a better message than hunger strikes.

TERRY
It's not a good idea.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
I think it's a great idea.

TERRY
There is nothing you can do. Ben made his choice and he's not going to back down.

TERRY (CONT'D)
You are unique, aren't you? Fine. Have it your way.

Insert info on the hunger strike. How he lost the lawsuit.

EXT. STREETS OF LAGOS - DAY

Charly drives down the street on his motorcycle. Suddenly, other OKADA MEMBERS ride beside him. Eventually there is over a hundred.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)

But it wasn't all fun on the show. For 11 odd years I ran that show on an empty tank. It was the most popular program yet no sponsors were forth coming. So many times out of frustration I had considered quitting, but I realized that the Charly Boy Show was the only thing in my life that held my sanity. I had taken a break from music, because the reward was so discouraging. Is the system going to again drive me away from TV? At that point, I decided I wasn't going to let frustration drive me away from the job that gave me so much joy. I got all the 'who is who?' in the entertainment world to endorse the show and solicit for sponsorship on my behalf. My brother what didn't I do to stay afloat and keep the show running? I often used the little 'chop money' in the house to see that the show didn't fail.

It was then I started to realize how unfair the system had been to creative people. In fact, because of the uninspiring, recycled, uncreative leadership problem we have had for years, it became obvious that this country was still a long way to affecting the desired change we desperately need. But I was determined not to give up, not to fail, not to hide my tail between my legs.

What kept me going was the encouragement I got on the streets, my children and my family and from time to time, people who would call and warn me never to stop. After 8 years or so of doing The Charly Boy Show, I needed another show that was going to show the other side of Charly Boy.

(MORE)

CHARLY BOY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I had a show for Mr. Charles Oputa and it was Christened ZOOM TIME. With Zoomtime, I further confused some already confused Nigerians by exposing my intellect, that was when they started listening to the Gospel of Charlyboyism, that was when they started to appreciate the Charly Boy philosophy. And through all these years, I have remained ever faithful to the person that brought me this far, CHARLY BOY....

Police ends up shooting at the bikers.....

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)

But my story isn't over. You thought the film was done? No. I still have a few minutes with you, my dear audience.

INT. STAGE - DAY

The same interviewer from before sits on the stage. He coughs briefly. Middle-aged Charly sits on the seat next to him.

INTERVIEWER

It has been a while you've been on the show.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

It's been eleven years, but it feels like almost ten minutes ago.

Middle-aged Charly breaks the fourth wall and looks at the camera. (Clearly, referencing the fact that he was being interviewed just a few pages ago.)

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)

But that's how biopics go. So much information in such little time. If you want more information about the Charly Boy Show, well, it is the 21st century. I am sure you can find it online. Now let's get back to The Charly Boy Movie.

Movie returns back to normal.

INTERVIEWER

A lot has happened in the past few months.

(MORE)

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

When you were first interviewed, we talked about the brand new Charly Boy Show. Now it is over. Can you tell me more about that?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

I'm sure you read in all in the newspaper and seen it all through television.

INTERVIEWER

I have, but I would like to hear your perspective.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

I loved my show. I really did. I like to think that I created my own Hollywood here in Nigeria. I gave a lot of people opportunities. I worked with a lot of talented acts. Creative people inspire me, truly.

INTERVIEWER

I agree with you completely, but what about the lawsuit.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

I simply was robbed. So was Onyeka Onwenu and my dearest friend, Tyna Onwudiwe. We both pushed the limit and it made the government upset. Multichoice clearly works with the people I'm fighting against. They painted me as the enemy. They said that I was the troublemaker. It is all lies. I hope my real fans see and know the truth.

INTERVIEWER

When you say 'the people I'm fighting against' and 'they painted you as the enemy', you are referring to Senator Ben Murray-Bruce.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

Listen, I do not want to name names but...

Middle-aged Charly gives the camera the middle finger (blurred out of course).

INTERVIEWER

Sorry everyone for the vulgar language. Now Charly Boy, now what? Are you giving up?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

I will never give up, but for now I will take a backseat. Multichoice was hurting the Nigerian Television Authority. They threatened the whole establishment. They had to make a deal. The deal was simply to let me go.

INTERVIEWER

So now what?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

What do you mean 'now what'? The show might have ended, but I have not. I will continue fighting for peace. For justice. I will continue singing and writing.

INTERVIEWER

Even though you were recently shot at? It's a miracle you weren't hit.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

It was all a misunderstanding. They saw the Okada riders and I as a threat. I need all of Nigeria to know, we are not a threat.

INTERVIEWER

Do you have an album coming up?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

Maybe. Maybe I don't.

INTERVIEWER

Here we go again.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

You'll be the first to know.

INTERVIEWER

But you have a song that you've been working on recently?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

I do.

INTERVIEWER
Anything you would like to sing for
the audience?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Not yet. You will all have to be
patient.

INTERVIEWER
Well, it has been an honor to have
you on the show.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Thank you.

INTERVIEWER
Next up, Onyeka Onwenu shares her
story with the NTA.

A DIRECTOR yells.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Cut!

Middle-aged Charly shakes the interviewer's hand before he
walks off.

He gives a hug to Onyeka

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Good luck my friend.

He walks back stage. Tyna waits for him.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY (CONT'D)
How was I?

TYNA
Amazing as always.

She fakes a smile. Tears fall down her eyes.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
What is wrong, Tyna?

TYNA
Nothing!

Beat.

TYNA (CONT'D)
I got a call this morning. I have
some bad news.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
What is it?

TYNA
I'm sick. I'm really sick. Lung cancer.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Oh, Tyna!

He hugs her and kisses her cheek.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY (CONT'D)
How bad is it?

TYNA
Really bad, Charly. Stage four. The doctor said I'll be lucky if I make it to the end of the year.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Oh my god. I'm so sorry.

TYNA
I'm not ready to die.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Sh, ssh, it's okay. It's going to be okay. How do you feel?

TYNA
Like I need a fucking cigarette.

They do a sad laugh which ends up with her coughing.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Let's get you home.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Charly, Diane, and Dominique sit on Tyna's bedside, who is bald and sickly.

DOMINIQUE
Are you okay, auntie?

TYNA
I'm good, little one.

Dominique climbs in the bed with Tyna and gives her a hug.

DOMINIQUE
Do you want me to sing to you?

TYNA
I would love that.

Dominique begins to sing Tyna's *Masterplan*.

DOMINIQUE
Nighttime. Daytime. Sunshine and
moonshine/

The sound continues to play as...

EXT. CEMENTRY - RAINY DAY

On the gravestone, it says "Tyna Adaora Onwudiwe."

A group of people including NTA WORKERS, FRIENDS, Diane, Middle-Aged Charly, ADULT CHARLES JUNIOR, Dominique and teenager Adaeze.

MIDDLE-AGED DIANE
Her birthday was only a few days
ago. How can someone be here one
day and gone the next?

Middle-aged Charly cannot seem to say a word.

Diane grabs her children and they walk away. Charly stays behind. As other's leave he whispers...

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
I'm going to help people like you.

SONG *MASTERPLAN*
FADES OUT.

INT. CHARLY AND DIANE'S HOME - NIGHT

Middle-aged Diane and Charly lay in bed. Diane is asleep. Charly's eyes are wide open. He twists and turns before he gets up. He grabs a handheld 2000s camera. Then walks to the living room.

He rests the camera on the kitchen table and records himself.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Today, my closest friend of twenty
years passed away. You all might
know her, Tyna Onwudiwe. I know
there have been fundraisers in her
name. Fundraisers I am... was...
happy to be a part of.
(MORE)

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY (CONT'D)

I want to let you all know that just because her journey is over, doesn't mean the fight against cancer is. I encourage you all to keep fundraising. Keep spreading awareness. And... to hug your loved ones.

He begins to cry.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY (CONT'D)

I would not be where I am without Tyna. She saw potential in me and never gave up on me. She would even answer my late night calls when I couldn't sleep. Now, I guess now I'll talk to you. The public.

(beat)

Just... take care of yourself.
Goodnight.

He stops the recording.

Middle-aged Diane walks in and hugs him.

MIDDLE-AGED DIANE

Come back to bed.

He gets up and follows her to the bedroom.

EXT. STREETS OF LAGOS - DAY

A woman takes out a cigarette as she watches looks a television inside a store.

NEWS REPORTER

That was Charly Boy's message to the public...

The news reporter's voice fades. She throws the cigarette in the trash.

INT. OPUTA HOME - NIGHT

Caption: 2014

ELDERLY MARGARET and ELDERLY CHUKWUDIFA sit at the table. Elderly Chukwudifa is practically silent as Middle-aged Diane, Middle-aged Charly and Elderly Margaret talk.

They all enjoy Peppersoup.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
I have a new album coming up. I
think you two will really like it.

ELDERLY MARGARET
I'm sure we will. You are so
talented my son. I am so proud of
you. With everything you have
accomplished. You have always been
unstoppable.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Thank you, mama.

MIDDLE-AGED DIANE
Tell her the thing!

ELDERLY MARGARET
What thing?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
I have a song dedicated to you.

ELDERLY MARGARET
Me?

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Yes. You.

He laughs.

ELDERLY MARGARET
Well, what are you waiting for?
Sing it!

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Now?

ELDERLY MARGARET
Yes right now!

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
You don't want to wait for the
album?

ELDERLY MARGARET
Charles. Look at me and your
father. We might not make it to
your next album.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY
Don't say that.

ELDERLY MARGARET

It's true. We are old man. We can't keep up with you. I run out of breath cooking. Your dad has his cane and is always in pain.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

Is that true, baba?

Elderly Chukwudifa shrugs.

ELDERLY MARGARET

You were not an easy child to take care of. All I am asking, is that you sing. Right here. Right now.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

You have always been dramatic.

ELDERLY MARGARET

Watch it! I might be old, but I can still whoop your black ass.

She chuckles.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

Okay. Okay.

He begins to sing *Mama*:

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY (CONT'D)

She takes hand when Im weeping/ She takes my sorrows and my troubles/ She gives me love, understanding/ Wu-wu-wu. How sweet it is/She takes hand when I'm weeping/ She takes my sorrows and my troubles/She gives me love, understanding/ Wu-wu-wu. How sweet it is. Mama, mama-mame-o. Mama/ So full of faith/She gives me hope/My sweet mama/ You're sweet mother/ You're sweet mother/ Mama, mama-mame-o. Mama, mama-mame-o. Mama, mama-mame-o...

TIME LAPSE.

Elderly Margaret and Middle-aged Diane laugh on the cough.

Middle-aged Charly does the dishes.

ELDERLY CHUKWUDIFA

Sit down, next to me.

Charly does.

ELDERLY CHUKWUDIFA (CONT'D)

I guess I have never done a good job expressing my feelings. That's just not what men do. At least in my generation, but I want to talk to you. Openly. You are a lot like me. More than I would like to admit.

(beat)

I can stay 24 hours in my chambers willing because I enjoy what I do. You are like that too. If you are involved with a project, you can shut everybody and everything else out. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's not too good, especially when you have a family. You have borrowed a lot from me. The good aspects. You're creative, philosophical, dedicated, hardworking.

(beat)

I spent 40 years in legal practice. Once upon a time, I wanted you to be just like me. Now you are succeeding in your own chosen field. I am so proud of you.

Middle-aged Charly does not know what to say, so after a moment.

Charly hugs his father tightly.

ELDERLY CHUKWUDIFA (CONT'D)

Watch it. I'm old and fragile.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY

Sorry. Sorry.

He loosens his grip.

MIDDLE-AGED CHARLY (CONT'D)

I love you, baba.

ELDERLY CHUKWUDIFA

I love you, too.

Elderly Chukwudifa plants a kiss on Charly's forehead.

CHARLY BOY (V.O.)

Sometimes It's good, sometimes It's not too good, especially when you have a family. I used to think that my father was weak. He has held very important and sensitive positions, yet he never took advantage of such positions to ask for favors from his bosses. He taught me the art of contentment; how to be happy in whatever position and situation God puts one in. I was brought up on a heavy dose of morality, integrity, principles, values and character. I have come to respect him as a strong man of character and we have.... had mutual respect for each other. Being Charly Boy was easy because I had the support of all members of my family. Even when they did not quite understand the outlandish image that is Charly Boy at that time, they still supported it, believing in my judgement. Can you beat that?

OUTRO MUSIC
PLAYS *LIFE NO
BALANCE'*.

INT. STAGE - DAY

Caption: Now.

THE CHARLY BOY (who has been doing the voiceovers) is on stage with the interviewer. Next to him is THE DIANE.

Behind the camera is the director, himself of The Charly Boy Movie, MIKE STYLES along with CREW.

CHARLY BOY

Okay. Enough with the voiceovers.
Let's talk.

[THIS IS A REAL INTERVIEW]

INTERVIEWER

And we are back with THE Charly Boy. The one and only. A movie was made about you.

(MORE)

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

Behind the camera is the real producer, director and all the crew that got this together. How does that feel?

CHARLY BOY

[insert his interview answer]

INTERVIEWER

So this is a real interview that will be at the end of the movie, unique isn't?

CHARLY BOY/DIANE

[insert interview answer]

INTERVIEWER

This script ends in the year 2014. It is now [insert year]. You are still active. Making music. Even have a new The Charly Boy Show. How do you keep coming up with more content? What are you currently up to? Creatively and politically? Everything.

CHARLY BOY

[insert interview answer]

INTERVIEWER

You have been President of the Performing Musicians of Nigeria. What does that job entail?

CHARLY BOY

[insert interview answer]

INTERVIEWER

We briefly went over your love life and your children. Would you like to expand on that?

CHARLY BOY

[insert interview answer]

INTERVIEWER

We briefly got the chance to talk about your fundraisers with lung cancer, but we did not get the chance to talk about the work you've done with HIV/AIDS. Can you go into more detail about what you've done?

CHARLY BOY/DIANE

[insert interview answer]

INTERVIEWER

Tell me, what do you want to achieve? What is your mission?

CHARLY BOY/DIANE

[insert interview answer]

INTERVIEWER

Do you think you'll ever stop being controversial?

CHARLY BOY/DIANE

[insert interview answer]

INTERVIEWER

This is a biopic, so not everything is 100% factual. Tell me, who is Charly Boy?

CHARLY BOY/DIANE

[insert interview answer]

INTERVIEWER

Oh. We have one more question left. Then the movie is official over.

The interviewer grabs a piece of paper and looks over it.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

Well, this is interesting. This one says 'cut out of film if negative response.' How strange. It says 'The scriptwriter wants to let you know she tried really hard on this script. She would like to know if you enjoyed reading it and watching it come to life?'

CHARLY BOY/DIANE

[insert interview answer]

INTERVIEWER

Well, that's all the time we have. Thanks for watching.

MIKE STYLES

And cut!

FADE TO BLACK.