

The Weight of Freedom  
by  
Joe Murkijanian)

Name Joe Murkijanian

Phone 323-253-6402  
7/7/25

FADE IN:

EXT. HAITIAN COASTLINE - SUNRISE - ESTABLISHING

AERIAL SHOT - from high above the Caribbean, we glide toward the northern coast of Haiti.

The sea is a deep, bruised indigo. Waves crash against jagged coral cliffs. Fishing boats dot the surf like specks of resistance.

We pass over rusting shipwrecks, bleached-white bones of the past.

We move inland - across sugarcane fields, then abandoned factories, then tent cities sprawling over hillsides. Plastic tarps shimmer like scales in the rising light.

The sounds of morning creep in - distant roosters, church bells, and the pop-pop-pop of gunfire echoing from deeper in the capital.

EXT. PORT-AU-PRINCE - SKYLINE - CONTINUOUS

From a distance, the city looks peaceful. Mist rolls off the mountains. Sunlight hits the Presidential Palace, now surrounded by razor wire and burned-out cars.

A black plume of smoke rises in the south.

Beneath it, a girl's voice speaks.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
"They told us we were free. But  
they never stopped charging us for  
it."

CONTINUED - SCREENPLAY: THE WEIGHT OF FREEDOM

EXT. VARIOUS HISTORICAL LOCATIONS - INTERCUT - FLASHBACKS - DAY/NIGHT

ELSIE (V.O.)  
(soft, deliberate)  
"Saint-Domingue. 1791.  
(MORE)

ELSIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The richest colony on earth...  
built on sugar... and shackles."

— FLASH:

INT. SUGAR PLANTATION - 1790s - NIGHT

Enslaved Africans haul wagons under lash. A teenage boy collapses - a WHIP cracks. A French overseer screams in slurred Creole.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
"Half the world's sugar... came  
from here."

— FLASH:

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - 1804 - DAY

Toussaint Louverture's army charges in tattered uniforms. A white flag drops. Blood in the soil. The Haitian flag is stitched from a torn French banner.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
"We became the first free Black  
republic... and the most punished."

— FLASH:

INT. PARIS BANK OFFICE - 1825 - DAY

A Haitian diplomat signs a document with shaking hands. A French official smiles. Golden coins are shoveled into crates.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
"We were forced to pay for our  
freedom... to the people who  
enslaved us."

— FLASH:

EXT. PORT-AU-PRINCE - 1915 - DAY

U.S. Marines land on the beach. Haitian protesters throw stones. A rifle fires. A man drops.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
"Then came the boots. The banks.  
The bullets."

EXT. PORT-AU-PRINCE - FOOD LINE - PRESENT DAY - MORNING

RACKET.

A bottle shatters. Screams.

Dozens of Haitians shove against metal barricades. Women scream for water. Children cry.

Soldiers in mismatched uniforms - some police, some private contractors - push back with shields.

ELSIE JEAN-BAPTISTE (28)  
Camera bag slung across her chest,  
a microphone clipped to her shirt.  
Dust in her curls, fire in her  
eyes.

She records into a handheld recorder, ducking behind a wall as shots fire in the air.

ELSIE (INTO RECORDER)  
Day forty-six. The government  
promised rice. It's been three  
days.

A woman screams nearby. A man punches another for a bag of flour. A child is trampled and pulled away by a grandmother.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
"They keep asking us to wait. For  
food. For safety. For leadership.  
But history taught us one thing..."

Her eyes rise toward a distant wall tagged with a mural of Toussaint Louverture, mouth sewn shut.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
"No one is coming."

Elsie uploading the podcast, lets do some character development i want to know who she whats her back ground family ect

INT. ELSIE'S APARTMENT - PORT-AU-PRINCE - NIGHT

Electricity flickers. The ceiling fan barely spins. Rain taps the corrugated rooftop.

A modest one-room apartment - walls lined with books, old family photos, hand-stitched maps of Haiti. A battered laptop glows on a wooden table.

CLOSE ON - SCREEN

Audio editing software. Track title: How Did We Get Here - Ep. 3: The Price of Independence.

Elsie sits cross-legged on the floor. Headphones on. Editing.

She's calm, focused - her face lit by the screen, exhaustion in her posture, but fire in her eyes.

ELSIE (V.O.)

"If you want to understand what's happening now... you have to know who profited from our pain."

On her desk:

- \* A framed photo of her father in a police uniform
- \* A Catholic prayer candle, half-melted
- \* A mug with the words: 'Pressé, mais pas cassé' (Pressed, but not broken)

FLASHBACK - INT. RADIO STATION - ELSIE AGE 10 - DAY

Young Elsie, in uniform, sits behind a mic at a community station. Her father, COMMANDER JEAN-BAPTISTE, coaches her from behind the glass.

She reads nervously from a script. He nods, proud.

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. ELSIE'S APARTMENT

She uploads the episode. A progress bar crawls. The Wi-Fi stutters.

ELSIE (SOFTLY)

C'mon... don't die on me now.

A knock at the door. Three sharp raps.

She tenses. Pauses the upload.

Peeks out the curtain.

It's her uncle, JOACHIM (50s) - wiry, scarred, a former journalist turned community activist.

She opens the door quickly. He steps in with urgency and a soaked jacket.

JOACHIM

You need to stop talking about the banks.

ELSIE

Then who will?

JOACHIM

You think they won't come for you?  
You're your father's daughter – but this is different.

ELSIE

He died trying to protect this city. I'm just trying to protect the truth.

They share a quiet beat.

He sees the audio bar: 86%.

He puts a tattered envelope on the desk.

JOACHIM (SOFTLY)

From your mother. Found it cleaning the old place.

She hesitates. Opens it. A letter – faded and delicate.

Inside: A photo of her mother, pregnant, smiling in front of a church. Behind her: a young Jean-Baptiste in uniform.

FLASHBACK – EXT. CHURCH STEPS – 1997 – DAY

Elsie's parents, hand in hand, talking with parish leaders about hosting a literacy program in the courtyard.

We glimpse idealism in their eyes – and the seeds of Elsie's mission.

BACK TO PRESENT

The upload completes.

Elsie presses publish.

ONSCREEN:

Episode Released: "The Price of Independence – LIVE"

ELSIE (V.O.)

"We inherited this land. And the scars. And maybe... the chance to heal it."

She looks at the candle. Lights it.

The flame flickers... steady.

EXT. CITADELLE MARKET - DOWNTOWN SLUM - NIGHT

A maze of crumbling concrete, graffiti, and sweat. Vendors sleep beneath plastic tarps. Rats dart past buckets of spoiled rice.

RICO (15) runs barefoot across a rooftop. A small, wiry boy - too thin, too fast, too clever. His face is streaked with dirt and rage.

In his hand: a burner phone and a plastic pouch filled with cash and blue tablets.

He leaps down into an alley.

INT. ABANDONED BARBERSHOP - NIGHT

Rico bursts in. A gang of teens with machine pistols turn to him.

BIG MARC (19), the one they all fear, stands near a flickering TV showing UN convoys.

BIG MARC

What you got?

Rico tosses the pouch to him. Catches his breath.

RICO

Three streets. Two dead drop boxes.  
No cops. No tails.

Marc inspects it. Grunts.

BIG MARC

You late.

Rico's eyes flash.

RICO

I had to move. There's a journalist digging around on Dantor Street.

Marc tenses.

BIG MARC  
You talk to her?

RICO  
Nah. I saw her. That press girl.  
The one who does radio.  
(beat)  
She's not afraid of us.

Marc leans in.

BIG MARC  
She should be.

He presses a folded paper into Rico's chest.

BIG MARC (CONT'D)  
New job. Big one. Night drop.  
Presidential road.

Rico opens the note. Sees coordinates.

BIG MARC (CONT'D)  
This ain't kiddie runs no more. You  
flinch - I bury you.

Marc's smile never touches his eyes.

EXT. RICO'S HOME - ROOFTOP - LATER

Rico climbs into a corrugated metal shack - his "room."

He opens a hidden box.

Inside:

\* An old photo of his mother - young, beautiful, smiling in a nurse's uniform.

\* A school ID with his name: FRÉDÉRIC DANTOR

\* A comic book, worn and weathered: Superman in the City of Fire

He turns on a cracked radio.

A woman's voice - Elsie's voice - comes through.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
"...it began with a price. A debt no  
free people should ever owe."

Rico stares at the ceiling.

He says nothing. But the story is already working inside him.

INT. JOACHIM'S KITCHEN - SAME NIGHT

Joachim drinks from a chipped tin cup. He listens to the same broadcast.

He turns to a faded photo pinned to his wall - himself, his brother (Elsie's father), and their childhood friend, Armand Dantor - Rico's grandfather.

Three boys in Catholic school uniforms. Smiling. Whole.

JOACHIM (TO PHOTO)  
We tried. You and me both.

EXT. HILLSIDE ENCAMPMENT - ABOVE PORT-AU-PRINCE - MORNING

Mist clings to the earth like breath.

Tarps ripple in the wind. The camp stretches in tiers - blue tents, salvaged doors, cracked bathtubs used for washing.

CLOSE ON:

SOLÈNE DORVAL (33)  
A strong face shaped by fatigue and grace. Her skin is weathered by sun and ash. Her long braids are bound in a faded scarf the color of rust. Her eyes - clear, intelligent, and far older than her years.

She squats over a charcoal stove, cooking watery cornmeal in a dented pot. Her eight-year-old daughter, MYA, sleeps curled under a woven sheet behind her.

Solène wears a long cotton skirt, patched at the hem, and a T-shirt that reads: "Pa gen fanmi san fanm" - There is no family without women.

Around her:

- \* A plastic jerrycan she fills at dawn
- \* A copy of Haitian Creole proverbs, spine cracked
- \* A handmade chalkboard where she teaches local children in the afternoons

She hums softly – a lullaby that's half-prayer, half-memory.

INT. MAKESHIFT CLASSROOM – LATER

Children gather around her. Solène writes on the board with chalk:

"Konesans se limyè."

(Knowledge is light.)

She turns, smiles faintly at her students. Mya watches her from the side, proud.

EXT. CAMP FOOD DISTRIBUTION ZONE – DAY

Solène waits in a line of hundreds, bucket in hand. The sun is brutal.

Tension ripples down the queue. A fight breaks out ahead – a woman screams. A guard with a baton strikes wildly.

A man yells:

MAN  
No food today! They gave it to the minister's convoy!

Chaos erupts.

Solène grabs Mya's hand and runs.

EXT. BACKSIDE OF THE CAMP – MOMENTS LATER

She crouches behind a crumbling cinder block wall. Mya pants beside her.

Solène peeks out – and freezes.

A black SUV screeches around a bend. Armed men spill out, shouting orders. One carries a radio. The insignia on his vest is governmental.

A man in a gray suit argues with a uniformed guard – suddenly, he's shot in the chest.

Solène covers Mya's eyes.

Through the crack in the wall, she sees one of the men recording the body with a phone – then wiping blood off his hands and walking away.

She's just witnessed a political assassination.

EXT. SOLENE'S TENT - NIGHT

She writes by candlelight on scrap paper:

"Today I saw what they do in the dark.

If you find this, let it be proof."

She folds the paper, wraps it in plastic, and hides it under a floorboard.

Then she pulls her daughter into her lap, rocking her slowly.

FLASHBACK - EXT. SCHOOL COURTYARD - PORT-AU-PRINCE - 2008 - LATE AFTERNOON

Sunlight glows golden through banana leaves.

Children in uniform chase each other between white-painted benches. Their laughter fills the air.

At the chalkboard, SOLENE (early 20s) stands with a lesson plan pinned to the wall:

"Konbyen tan kounye a?" (What time is it?)

She gestures to a wooden clock she made from recycled bottle caps.

A boy gets it wrong. She smiles warmly, kneels beside him, and whispers encouragement.

INT. TEACHERS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Piles of notebooks. Open windows. The smell of fried plantain from a nearby street.

Solène walks in, wiping chalk off her skirt.

Inside is EMMANUEL DORVAL (30s) - her husband. Tall, warm eyes, a social studies teacher with ink-stained fingers and a homemade guitar leaning beside his desk.

He's drawing a map of the Caribbean with colored pencils. The lines are meticulous.

SOLENE  
Still tracing the future?

EMMANUEL (GRINNING)  
 I'm just reminding them who we  
 are... before someone else redraws  
 it for them.

He gets up, kisses her cheek.

EMMANUEL (CONT'D)  
 Did you hear? They approved our  
 radio program. We start next week.

She lights up.

SOLÈNE  
 You're serious?

He pulls a flyer from his folder:

"LIMYÈ LAKAY - Radio for the People. Sundays at 6."

She takes his hand, squeezing it. For a moment, the world feels light.

EXT. SCHOOL ROOFTOP - DUSK

The two of them sit watching the sun sink behind the city. Emmanuel strums the guitar softly.

The sounds of life below: honking, vendors, roosters, music - the heartbeat of a living city.

SOLÈNE  
 You think we'll stay here forever?

EMMANUEL  
 Forever is a big word.  
 (beat)  
 But I think this is where we'll  
 plant something worth remembering.

BACK TO PRESENT - EXT. ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Solène blinks awake beside Mya. Her hand instinctively reaches for the folded letter hidden beneath the tarp - the flyer from the past, still faintly visible.

She presses it to her chest.

Then she whispers to Mya, asleep:

SOLÈNE  
 We'll find a place to plant again.

## CONTINUED - SCREENPLAY: THE WEIGHT OF FREEDOM

EXT. NATIONAL SQUARE - PORT-AU-PRINCE - MIDDAY

A makeshift press podium has been erected in front of a hollowed-out government building. The Haitian flag, tattered and sun-bleached, droops beside a UN banner.

A crowd gathers, tense and hungry. Mothers. Veterans. Youths with empty bowls. Armed guards form a loose perimeter.

CAMERAS ROLL.

At the microphone steps MINISTER ALAIN VERRET (50s) - polished, rehearsed. His suit crisp, his voice deliberate.

Behind him stands a stoic UN Colonel, two U.S. Embassy officials, and a private security firm rep in sunglasses.

MINISTER VERRET

(to cameras, in French)

The international community stands with Haiti.

(beat, in Creole)

A new humanitarian corridor will open tomorrow morning - Route Nationale #1. A convoy of food, medicine, and supplies will arrive at the docks by 10 A.M.

Scattered applause. Most people don't cheer. They squint in distrust.

VERRET

This will be a new chapter. A moment of unity. We ask all citizens to remain calm and organized.

INTERCUT:

INT. ELSIE'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Elsie watches the speech on a cracked TV, recording on her phone.

ELSIE (TO RECORDER)

And just like that... the theater begins.

Convoy means coverage.

Coverage means spin.

Spin means... somebody's stealing.

She zooms in on a private contractor behind the Minister. He's familiar - she saw him at the site of the assassination.

EXT. SLUM BALCONY - SAME TIME

Rico watches the broadcast through a neighbor's window.

Beside him, Big Marc loads a duffel bag of ammunition.

BIG MARC  
Ten bucks says that convoy never  
makes it to the people.

He tosses Rico a small packet.

BIG MARC (CONT'D)  
Tomorrow, we own Route #1.

Rico looks away - something in him turning.

EXT. ENCAMPMENT HILLSIDE - SAME TIME

Solène and Mya sit near a crackling radio with several other families.

The voice crackles:

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
...a convoy from Cap-Haitien to Port-  
au-Prince. Food, medicine, and  
emergency aid...

Solène doesn't move.

A neighbor claps excitedly.

NEIGHBOR  
Maybe it's real this time.

Solène stares out over the city, skeptical.

SOLÈNE  
Or maybe it's bait.

She pulls Mya close.

INT. JOACHIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joachim paces as he makes a satellite phone call.

JOACHIM

(to phone)

If she goes after the convoy story,  
she'll be in the blast zone. You  
know how these things end.

He opens an old drawer. Inside: his press badge from 1986...  
and a locked pistol.

EXT. NATIONAL SQUARE - LATER

As the crowd disperses, a banner unfurls from a nearby  
building - spray-painted overnight.

"WE REMEMBER THE LAST CONVOY."

Below it: a mural of a mother holding an empty pot -  
surrounded by barbed wire.

ELSIE (V.O.)

They promise rice, but deliver  
smoke.

They call it aid. We call it firewood for the next lie.

Still... we go. Because hunger always shows up to the meeting.

INT. ELSIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The room is dim, lit by a single desk lamp and the dull glow  
of a laptop screen.

Elsie types rapidly, surrounded by voice recorders,  
notebooks, and a map of Port-au-Prince littered with pins and  
red yarn. She has screenshots from the assassination video  
(blurred but chilling).

On screen:

"BREAKING: Anonymous Tip - Minister Elie Morte Assassinated"

She pauses the footage - zooms in on a figure stepping away  
from the body.

It's one of the men who stood behind Minister Verret at the  
convoy press conference.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
Same man. Two scenes. One death.

She overlays the two images.

BAM – it matches.

INT. COMMUNITY NEWSROOM – NIGHT

Elsie enters an old building with a sign: "Radio Limyè Lakay – Truth Before Power"

Inside: dusty equipment, a corkboard full of flyers, and Uncle Joachim, hunched over an analog radio transmitter.

JOACHIM  
(low, cautious)  
You ever consider going easier on  
your enemies?

ELSIE  
Only when they're dead.

She drops the photo composite in front of him.

ELSIE (CONT'D)  
That's the same man. He was at the  
minister's murder scene, and again  
at the convoy press op. Who is he?

Joachim sighs. Pulls a faded manila folder from a drawer.

JOACHIM  
I've seen him before. Worked for  
the security ministry under  
Martelly. Disappeared after '18.  
He's a ghost now. Black ops,  
private contracts.

He hands her the file:

"NOLAN LECOURT – Strategic Security Solutions"

ELSIE  
Private contractor?

JOACHIM  
French-trained. Canadian passport.  
Paid to make things disappear – and  
people, too.  
(beat)  
If this guy's back...  
(MORE)

JOACHIM (CONT'D)  
it means the real government isn't  
the one with flags.

INT. ELSIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

She uploads a new podcast teaser:

"What if the people guarding the food... were also the ones  
burning the granaries?"

"Tomorrow I'll follow the convoy. I'll name names. Stay with  
me, Lakay."

She saves the file:

"EP 4 - Black Gloves, White Rice"

As it renders, she opens an email from a foreign journalist  
contact:

Subject: "Confirmation: LeCourt tied to 2004 coup team."

Attachment: U.S. State Dept. redacted doc.

She exhales - the rabbit hole just got deeper.

NEXT MORNING:

Elsie packs her recorder, press badge, and a small pistol.  
She pulls a photograph of her father from the wall and folds  
it into her notebook.

Joachim watches from the doorway, silent. He's seen this  
before - a journalist walking toward fire.

JOACHIM  
You'll need more than a microphone  
this time.

Elsie meets his eyes.

ELSIE  
No.  
(pause)  
They'll need more silence.

She walks out.

CONTINUED - SCREENPLAY: THE WEIGHT OF FREEDOM

EXT. ENCAMPMENT TRAIL - JUST BEFORE SUNRISE

Thick fog. The sky bruises with first light.

Solène adjusts the straps of her old canvas bag. She carries a water jug, some cassava, a strip of cloth for Mya to rest under.

Mya (8) walks silently beside her, clutching a doll made of rags.

They pass neighbors still sleeping in tarps. One elderly woman opens an eye.

ELDERLY WOMAN

You sure they'll give it out this time?

Solène looks down the path.

SOLÈNE

No. But I'm sure she's hungry.

They continue down the ridge. Toward the city. Toward the unknown.

INT. ABANDONED POOL HALL - RICO'S HIDEOUT - SAME TIME

Rico tightens the strap of a satchel across his shoulder. Inside: wires, signal scrambler, burner phone, a smoke bomb.

Big Marc paces in front of six other boys, each armed. They chant - loud, aggressive, proud.

BIG MARC

Route One is ours.

Say it again.

BOYS

ROUTE ONE IS OURS!

But Rico doesn't yell. He watches the satellite map on a stolen tablet.

RICO (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF)

Not if they burn it before we get there.

He slips the old photo of his mother into his pocket, eyes darting toward the city.

A boy hands him a cracked earpiece.

BOY

They say a reporter's gonna be  
there too.

Maybe even the American press.

Rico blinks. He knows who they mean.

EXT. UN LOADING ZONE - DOCKS - MORNING

Steel doors groan open.

Rows of white trucks lined with blue UN flags sit gleaming under the rising sun.

Armed troops patrol. The lead truck has a mounted gun turret. Private contractors in sunglasses run comms with UN officers.

Nearby: stacks of rice bags, water tanks, pallets of antibiotics... all labeled USAID, UNHCR, WFP.

We hear radio chatter:

CONTRACTOR (O.S.)

Convoy movement authorized. Route  
One cleared to checkpoint Bravo.

Behind the convoys: a TV van, a drone team, and several international journalists loading gear.

One of them speaks quietly:

JOURNALIST

They're calling it the "Corridor of  
Compassion."

Another scoffs.

CAMERAWOMAN

They called Fallujah a "stability  
zone," too.

INTERCUT - MONTAGE

\* Solène and Mya walking barefoot on cracked pavement.

\* Rico, gripping a small phone with GPS coordinates.

\* Convoy trucks, one by one, roaring to life. Engines like tanks.

EXT. HILLSIDE OUTLOOK - SIMULTANEOUS

From a ridge, Elsie watches it all through a long lens - convoy, city, civilians, shadows.

She speaks into her recorder:

ELSIE (V.O.)  
And so it begins...

One road.

Three armies.

No guarantees of arrival.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD:

DAY ONE - THE CORRIDOR

EXT. ROUTE NATIONALE #1 - HAITIAN HIGHWAY - LATE MORNING

The sun is cruel now. Heat bakes the road. Dust hangs like fog.

Solène and Mya walk along the edge of the highway. Trucks rumble in the far distance. But this road - now eerily quiet.

They pass abandoned buildings, burned-out tires, and a white sign tagged with red spray paint:

"NO PROMISES BEYOND THIS POINT"

Mya's legs wobble.

Solène stops. Kneels. Soaks a cloth with water and gently presses it to her daughter's face.

SOLÈNE  
We're halfway. You're strong, okay?

Mya nods, though her eyes are glassy.

EXT. ABANDONED TOLL BOOTH - HIDDEN RIDGELINE - SAME TIME

Rico and the gang crouch behind crates. Big Marc reviews the plan:

- \* Smoke bombs here.
- \* Signal scrambler planted at the underpass.
- \* Sniper nest behind billboard.

BIG MARC

We don't stop the front truck. We  
blind it. Then cut through the  
second.

He slaps Rico's chest.

BIG MARC (CONT'D)

You run comms. One call - just one.  
They go boom.

Rico nods but looks over the ridge... where a familiar figure is walking the road below.

Solène. Holding Mya's hand.

His face changes.

FLASHBACK - INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - YEARS EARLIER

A younger Solène, in a nurse's apron, bandages Rico's skinned knee. He's maybe 9. Scared. Angry.

She touches his face.

SOLÈNE (GENTLY)

You run fast. You fall fast. But  
you get up faster, Frédéric.

Back to:

EXT. RIDGELINE - PRESENT

Rico turns to Marc.

RICO

There's civilians on the road.

Marc shrugs.

BIG MARC  
Then they picked the wrong day to  
walk.

INT. ELSIE'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Joachim helps Elsie tighten the strap on her flak vest.

JOACHIM  
Promise me you won't be brave  
today.

She laughs softly. Takes a breath.

ELSIE  
No promises.

He presses something into her hand - a folded note.

JOACHIM (QUIET)  
Your father wrote that before the  
'94 riots. I never showed you.

She unfolds it.

"The truth doesn't make us safe. But it makes us worthy of  
surviving."

She looks up, holding back emotion.

ELSIE  
I'll come back.

Joachim nods - but doesn't believe her.

EXT. ROUTE NATIONALE #1 - MOMENTS LATER

Solène and Mya reach a turn in the road - just as the convoy  
appears in the distance, a dust cloud rising.

Rico watches them through binoculars.

The signal jammer is activated.

The first convoy truck approaches... unaware that two wires  
now wait to be triggered.

Elsie's voice comes through a hidden earpiece.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
And just like that... history steps  
out from the shadows, dressed as  
hope.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT I

This section sets up:

INT. LEAD CONVOY TRUCK - MOVING - LATE MORNING

A dusty windshield. A mounted GPS flickers.

Inside, COMMANDER DE KLERK (55) - South African UN logistics veteran - drives with quiet precision. Next to him: PRIVATE JAMESON (22), a young Canadian soldier on his first foreign deployment.

Between them: maps, radios, and a sealed envelope marked "AUTHORIZED HANDS ONLY."

De Klerk scans the road ahead.

JAMESON  
So... this is it? The big food  
drop?

De Klerk chuckles darkly.

DE KLERK  
Depends who you ask.  
(beat)  
To the ministers, it's a photo op.

To the NGOs, a PR bandage.

To the gangs - a buffet.

And to the people?

(pause)

A question with no answer.

Jameson shifts in his seat.

JAMESON  
It just seems like... they've been  
sending aid here for years. Why is  
it still this bad?

De Klerk exhales – a long, burdened breath.

DE KLERK  
Because most of it doesn't get  
here.

He opens the sealed envelope. Inside: an inventory log and a secondary manifest – half the contents “re-routed” to a private address in Pétion-Ville.

Jameson stares.

JAMESON  
That's not a depot.

DE KLERK  
It's the Prime Minister's brother's  
compound.

Jameson looks sick.

INT. MEDIA VAN – MID-CONVOY – SAME TIME

TARA WEXLER (30s), a freelance American journalist, flips through a confidential folder while her Haitian fixer, MARCO (40s), watches nervously.

Inside: scans of U.S. and French aid contracts, showing massive transfers of funds to shell NGOs – most operated by foreign board members.

TARA  
These were supposed to be schools.

She points to the photos – empty concrete foundations, half-built hospitals, fenced-off food warehouses.

Marco shrugs.

MARCO  
They built them. Took pictures.  
Then sold the concrete.  
(beat)  
Next contract. Same scam.

Tara shakes her head, frustrated.

TARA  
This place had a slave revolt that  
defeated Napoleon.

She looks out the window – sees children barefoot in the trash.

TARA (CONT'D)  
And they've been paying for it ever  
since.

INT. ARMORED UN ESCORT TRUCK - REAR OF CONVOY

In the back, soldiers ride in silence. Sweat clings to them. Their guns are polished; their eyes are tired.

One soldier holds a book - The Black Jacobins by CLR James. It's dog-eared.

Another watches a WhatsApp video - gang members dancing in stolen UN vests.

A third - Haitian-born SERGEANT MAURICE (40s) - closes his eyes.

YOUNG SOLDIER  
You okay, Sarge?

Maurice speaks slowly.

MAURICE  
My father fought for the army  
before the Duvaliers came. Thought  
we were protecting the people.  
(beat)  
Then they made us protect the money  
instead.

He looks out through the grate as the hills roll by.

INTERCUT: INT. ELSIE'S VEHICLE - AHEAD ON THE HILLSIDE

Elsie, following in a battered Jeep, listens to her recorder and reads the leaked memo.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
In 2004, Aristide asked for  
reparations from France.

Within months, he was gone.

They called it "democracy restoration."

She looks ahead: white trucks, armed guards, and the illusion of progress.

## EXT. ROUTE NATIONALE #1 - SAME TIME

The convoy rounds the bend toward the ambush site.

Rico stands above the ridge, fingers trembling over the detonator.

Below: Solène and Mya approach the road... still unaware.

The trucks draw closer.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
History doesn't repeat in Haiti...  
it reloads.

FADE TO BLACK.

## EXT. ROUTE NATIONALE #1 - RIDGELINE ABOVE CONVOY - SECONDS BEFORE

Rico crouches behind a tangle of overgrowth, overlooking the convoy as it snakes toward the kill zone. His thumb hovers over the detonator switch.

Big Marc crackles in his earpiece.

BIG MARC (V.O.)  
Five seconds. We light the lead and  
eat the rest.

Rico's binoculars drift - and then freeze.

Down below, Solène helps Mya out of a ditch. The child limps, trying to keep up.

Rico's throat tightens. Sweat beads on his upper lip.

## FLASHBACK - INT. SCHOOL YARD - YEARS EARLIER

Solène, laughing, teaches a group of children how to plant beans in reused water jugs. A younger Rico, dirt-smudged, watches her from the edge.

She notices. Offers him a smile. Hands him a small seed.

SOLÈNE  
Even weeds grow if no one stops  
them.

But a seed - that's a choice.

BACK TO PRESENT

The convoy enters the blast radius.

Rico's finger trembles. Mya stumbles – falls in the path of a low-sweeping drone camera.

A nearby soldier on the convoy spots them and shouts – panic builds.

Rico makes a decision.

He throws down the detonator and scrambles down the rocky ridge.

EXT. ROADWAY BELOW – CONTINUOUS

Solène hears him sliding behind them.

She turns, shielding Mya.

Rico bursts through the trees, panting, eyes wide.

SOLENE

You–?

Rico doesn't speak. He grabs Solène's hand.

RICO

Come with me now. Run. No time!

EXT. RIDGELINE – MOMENTS LATER

Big Marc, confused, yells into his comms.

BIG MARC

Rico! Where's my switch!?

EXT. UNDERPASS – SAME TIME

Rico drags Solène and Mya into a cement tunnel just beneath the convoy route.

They duck behind a pillar.

Above them, the first truck passes. Then the second.

Then the third.

BAM – the road explodes.

Screams. Gunfire. Tires screeching.

Dust rains down into the tunnel as the sky ignites.

Solène holds Mya tight. Rico breathes hard.

SOLÈNE  
What did you do?

Rico meets her eyes – for the first time, vulnerable.

RICO  
Something I never did before.  
(beat)  
I stopped.

EXT. CONVOY ROUTE – ABOVE – CHAOS

The convoy burns.

Elsie's Jeep jerks to a halt. She grabs her recorder and scrambles out.

Cameras fly. Soldiers return fire into smoke.

The illusion of aid – reduced to rubble.

INT. ABANDONED FACTORY – LATER THAT NIGHT

Big Marc paces under broken fluorescent lights, rage simmering beneath his silence.

His crew surrounds him – dirty, shaken, confused. Smoke still clings to their clothes.

He holds the detonator Rico left behind.

GANG MEMBER  
Maybe he got hit in the blast–

Marc slams him against the wall.

BIG MARC  
No. He walked away.  
(pause)  
I gave that boy everything. His gun. His name. His place.

He nods to another boy.

BIG MARC (CONT'D)  
Find him. Burn him out.

And the woman too. Teacher's bitch cost us the whole op.

Camera lingers on Marc's face – less rage now, more wounded pride. He's not just hunting Rico. He's hunting humiliation.

INT. HIDDEN CELLAR – NEAR THE CANAL – NIGHT

A flickering candle. Concrete walls. Rats skitter in corners.

Rico, Solène, and Mya huddle together, still catching their breath. Mya's curled in Solène's lap, asleep.

Solène cradles the child but keeps her eyes locked on Rico.

SOLÈNE

You ran with Marc for three years.

(pause)

How many times have you done this?

Rico doesn't answer.

SOLÈNE (CONT'D)

How many people didn't have a Rico  
to stop it?

He swallows hard.

RICO

Too many.

(beat)

I thought I was helping her.  
Feeding her. Protecting her. But  
you... you were feeding minds. And  
I burned that too.

She studies him. Still unsure if she can trust him. But she softens slightly.

SOLÈNE

You saved her today. That counts.

(beat)

But it doesn't erase.

Rico nods. Guilty. But changed.

EXT. BLAST SITE – NIGHT – SAME TIME

Searchlights cut through smoke. Ambulances haul away bodies. Aid bags lie torn open, soaked in diesel.

Elsie, in a press vest, stands in front of her tripod-mounted phone, streaming live to her growing audience.

She speaks directly to camera – unfiltered.

ELSIE

This is not a failed food drop.

This was a spectacle – designed to pacify, not to nourish.

(beat)

We've traced the rice bags to shell NGOs linked to three politicians.

The people were right. The convoy was never meant to reach them.

She turns the phone to the chaos behind her: looted trucks, a child covered in ash, dazed soldiers.

ELSIE (CONT'D)

But something else happened here tonight.

The lie was interrupted. The illusion shattered.

(pause)

We don't need more handouts.

We need memory. Justice. Infrastructure.

And the courage to name names.

She steps closer to the lens.

ELSIE (CONT'D)

To the international community – look at this.

And then look at your ledgers.

Thousands are watching. Her feed floods with comments. Likes. Alerts. A surge of digital resistance begins.

Behind her, the mural of Toussaint Louverture has been tagged anew.

Under his image: "Nou pap konn dòmi ankò."

We will not sleep again.

CONTINUED – SCREENPLAY: THE WEIGHT OF FREEDOM

INT. INTERNATIONAL NEWSROOM - NEW YORK - MORNING AFTER

Clean. Cold. Glass walls. High-tech monitors. The CNN-style set buzzes with urgency.

Anchor RACHEL MAHER (40s) sits poised in front of a green screen showing Haiti's smoldering highway.

Her makeup is flawless. Her tone - calm, concerned, and entirely sanitized.

RACHEL (ON AIR)

This morning, tragedy in Port-au-Prince, where a humanitarian convoy was attacked en route to deliver food and medical supplies.

(beat)

Initial reports suggest local gangs were responsible. No claims have been made.

Footage rolls: UN soldiers firing into smoke. A drone shot of chaos. No sign of civilians, Solène, or Rico.

Cut to a graphic of the Haitian flag, overlaid with the headline:

"Aid Convoy Sabotaged - Unrest in the Region Escalates"

INT. NEWSROOM CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Producers watch multiple feeds. One monitor shows Elsie's livestream gaining traction.

Producer 1 shakes her head.

PRODUCER 1

She's got half a million views and climbing. That's going viral.

Producer 2 taps a tablet.

PRODUCER 2

State Department just flagged her feed. They want to know who leaked the procurement documents.

INT. ON-AIR DESK - CONTINUOUS

Rachel continues. The screen now shows stock footage of looters - not from Haiti, but generic protest clips.

RACHEL

The U.N. and Haitian government officials have condemned the violence and pledged to investigate what they're calling "an attack on international goodwill."

(pause)

A State Department spokesperson released a statement just moments ago—

She reads off a prompter:

RACHEL (CONT'D)

"Haiti's challenges require stable partnerships, not chaos. The U.S. remains committed to supporting aid efforts in a secure and lawful manner."

INT. GREEN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Off-air now, Rachel removes her mic. She sighs.

RACHEL (TO ASSISTANT)

God, how many times have we done this story?

ASSISTANT

Change the country, change the year, keep the script.

They share a bitter smile.

INTERCUT - INT. ELSIE'S HIDEOUT - SAME TIME

Elsie watches the broadcast from her laptop, in a dark safehouse with Solène and Rico. Mya sleeps nearby.

She slams the lid shut.

ELSIE

They're going to bury it. Again.

Solène gently touches her shoulder.

SOLÈNE

Then we dig louder.

CONTINUED - SCREENPLAY: THE WEIGHT OF FREEDOM

EXT. PORT-AU-PRINCE - DOWNTOWN DISTRICT - NIGHT

Aerial shot over the city: generators hum. Fires glow across rooftops.

Gunfire crackles in the distance.

This is Marc's world now.

INT. NIGHTCLUB BASEMENT - SAME NIGHT

Big Marc sits beneath flashing lights and blaring music.

A radio scanner, a list of safehouses, and a blood-streaked phone sit on the table in front of him.

A corrupt police officer, CAPTAIN DELMAS, paces nearby.

DELMAS

No sightings. But if he's with the teacher, I know where she used to run clinics.

BIG MARC

Find them. Anyone helping them - make it public.

Hang 'em from the bridges. Let the streets do the rest.

He slams a machete into the table.

BIG MARC (CONT'D)

I made that boy from scratch.

He bleeds, I want to smell it.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NEAR THE MARKET - LATER

Marc's soldiers ransack stalls, shake down vendors, smash phones.

They kick over food crates, light piles of trash.

One gang member holds up a charcoal sketch of Rico, rough but accurate.

GANG MEMBER

You seen this face?

An old woman nods subtly toward a corner alley.

The thug rushes off, but by the time he gets there-

Just shadows and rats.

INT. UNDERGROUND SAFEHOUSE - SAME TIME

Rico, pacing. Twitching. Breathing hard.

Solène stitches a tear in Mya's sleeve. Calm. Focused.

RICO  
He'll find me. He always finds me.

SOLÈNE  
Then don't be you. Be something new.

Rico doesn't get it.

SOLÈNE (CONT'D)  
Marc raised a weapon.

But I've seen what's under the trigger finger.

(beat)

You saved her. That wasn't reflex. That was soul.

Rico sinks to the floor. Breaks.

EXT. PORT-AU-PRINCE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE

\* Marc's men interrogate a priest who once fed Solène.

\* A community radio station is burned - they aired Elsie's voice.

\* Flyers with Rico's face are stapled to walls.

\* Marc speaks with a government advisor, who offers him access to satellite maps in exchange for "deniability."

INT. GOVT. OPERATIONS ROOM - SAME TIME

The advisor hands Marc a data stick.

GOVT. OFFICIAL  
I don't care what you do.

Just don't let her go live again. Or him.

BIG MARC  
They're ghosts by morning.

EXT. HIGHWAY MURAL WALL - NEXT DAY

Marc walks past the Toussaint Louverture mural - now freshly painted with Elsie's face beside his.

Beneath it, someone has written in chalk:

"Nou se nasyon memwa."

We are a nation of memory.

Marc stares at it.

Spits.

Then turns, stone-faced.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

A single lantern burns on a wooden crate.

Rain taps the metal roof above.

Elsie, Solène, Rico, and Marco (the fixer) sit close, exhausted. Mya sleeps nearby, wrapped in blankets.

A printed map of Haiti is spread out between them, marked with red Xs and burn zones.

Elsie scrolls through comments on her livestream replay - thousands of views, messages from France, Nigeria, Brazil, Canada.

She exhales. Heavy.

ELSIE  
They're watching now.

But do they even understand?

Marco sips water from a tin mug.

MARCO  
Maybe not yet.

Rico glances between them.

RICO  
You mean the gangs? The hunger?

ELSIE  
I mean everything.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

ELSIE (CONT'D)  
France made us pay 150 million  
francs – for the crime of breaking  
our chains.

It took us 122 years to pay it off.

We borrowed the money – from French banks.

(beat)

That's like asking a man to pay rent for the house he burned down to escape slavery.

Marco leans forward.

MARCO  
Then came America. The occupation.  
The Marines.

They rewrote our constitution, gave our land to corporations – then left us in the hands of dictators they funded.

Solène, quietly:

SOLENE  
Papa Doc.

My cousin died in Fort Dimanche. For a poem.

Elsie's gaze burns.

ELSIE  
They say reparations are  
impossible.

But the theft was possible.

The loans. The occupations. The rigged elections – those were possible.

Rico shakes his head.

RICO  
They won't give back what they  
took.

ELSIE  
Maybe not.  
(beat)  
But if the world can trace a  
bitcoin across ten servers, it can  
trace where \$13 billion in quake  
aid disappeared.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

ELSIE (CONT'D)  
And if France can pay Holocaust  
survivors,

and the U.S. can pay Japanese internment victims,  
then Haiti deserves to be seen. Counted. Paid.

Solène places her hand over the map.

SOLENE  
Not to our politicians.

ELSIE  
To our communities. Our schools.

To every child eating salt and clay for dinner.

(beat)

Reparations isn't about charity.

It's about stopping the robbery that never ended.

A long silence.

Then Rico – voice soft.

RICO  
You think your little podcast can  
do all that?

Elsie looks up – not cocky, but calm.

ELSIE  
No.  
(beat)  
But it can start the asking.

CONTINUED - SCREENPLAY: THE WEIGHT OF FREEDOM

INT. BURNED LIBRARY RUINS - DAY

Elsie wanders through the scorched shell of the National Archives, camcorder in hand. Dust hangs in the sunlight like ghosts.

She steps over charred pages, camera rolling.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
They burned our history.

Not to erase it.

To keep us from tracing it.

She lifts a blackened book spine – the cover flakes off:

"La Dette de l'Indépendance – 1825."

Suddenly—

FLASH-COLLAGE – STYLIZED HISTORICAL EXPOSE

- \* A FRENCH WARSHIP off Haiti's coast, 1825. Cannons gleaming.
- \* SLAVES shaking hands with plantation owners in faux treaties.
- \* A French bank ledger, payments flowing out of Port-au-Prince.
- \* U.S. MARINES storming ashore, 1915.
- \* PAPA DOC in dark glasses, raising his arms to cheering crowds – then turning to secret police beatings.
- \* BILL CLINTON and U.N. troops – smiling photo ops, overlaid with images of collapsing hospitals.

These clips are grainy, projected against crumbling walls as if memory itself is trying to speak.

INT. ARCHIVE – BACK TO SCENE

Elsie stares directly into her handheld camera.

ELSIE  
If history was a wound,

Haiti never got the stitches.

Just more knives.

INT. BIG MARC'S HIDEOUT – NIGHT

Marc sits alone. A storm rattles the tin roof.

He watches a video of Rico's betrayal on a cracked phone screen.

Then – silence. The power dies.

In the dark, a sound: a faint creaking... a memory.

FLASHBACK - INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - NIGHT - CIRCA 2004 COUP

Young Marc (age 9) hides under a bed.

Outside, men yell in Creole. Gunshots. A scream.

His father's boots are the last thing he sees - dragging out a man, another revolutionary, into the street.

Marc curls tighter into shadow, his eyes wide.

Outside, the radio crackles:

RADIO (V.O.)  
Aristide has fled... U.S. involvement  
suspected...

Then-

BOOM - the house explodes in light.

INT. PRESENT - HIDEOUT

Marc jolts awake. Breath ragged. He's not angry.

He's shattered.

He lifts a rusted revolver, places it gently on the table beside a child's crayon drawing - found in a looted church.

Big Marc is haunted. Not just hunting.

EXT. MAKESHIFT SQUARE - DAY

Solène, Rico, Elsie, and Marco stand before a circle of neighbors.

Women. Teenagers. Old men with radios.

A faded chalkboard has been set up. Solène draws a triangle.

SOLENE  
The gang took our food.

The government took our voice.

The world took our truth.

But no one can take our bodies.

Or our children.

People nod. Some cry.

A mother raises her hand – they want to help.

INT. RADIO STATION – LATER

Marco and Elsie connect a makeshift transmitter to a solar rig. Rico guards the door with a machete.

Solène brings in children with painted signs:

“Nou se memwa.” – We are memory.

ELSIE (INTO MIC)  
You were never crazy.

You were never lazy.

You were robbed.

(beat)

So if you can hear this –

Start counting. Start remembering. Start organizing.

MONTAGE – RISING MOVEMENT (STYLIZED)

- \* Tents outside French embassies from Accra to Toronto: signs reading “Cancel the Haitian Debt.”
- \* Protesters in Paris chant “150 Million. Return It.”
- \* College students in Boston re-air Elsie’s stream in a lecture hall.
- \* African journalists interview former U.N. contractors.
- \* A BBC headline reads: “Haitian Podcast Ignites Global Reckoning.”

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM – UNITED NATIONS – NIGHT

A heated debate. Foreign officials argue.

One delegate – a Haitian woman in her 30s – stands.

DELEGATE  
Reparations will not be given.

They must be demanded, documented, and won.

She raises her fist.

Others follow.

EXT. PORT-AU-PRINCE - SUNSET

Elsie, Solène, Rico, and Mya stand on a hill overlooking the city.

Generators hum faintly. Kids play soccer.

A new mural rises: Toussaint holding a microphone, surrounded by real names and faces.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
We don't get a happy ending.  
(beat)  
But we get to end the silence.

FADE OUT.

EXT. CENTRAL PLAZA - PORT-AU-PRINCE - DAY

Thousands gather in the heart of the city - no government banners, no foreign flags.

Only handmade signs, Creole chants, painted murals rising from rubble.

A makeshift stage.

A banner stretches overhead:

"Nou Pap Bliye - We Will Not Forget."

INT. BIG MARC'S SAFEHOUSE - SAME TIME

Marc, alone. Watching the gathering on a cracked tablet.

Outside, his men are gone - many defected.

Footsteps approach.

Rico enters, machete on his back, but hands empty.

Behind him: community members - teachers, farmers, even former gang boys.

They've come not with guns, but presence.

RICO  
It's over.

Marc stands. Broken. Doesn't resist.

BIG MARC  
They'll forget you, too. All of  
you.

Rico steps forward.

RICO  
Not this time.

Marc drops his weapon. Sinks to his knees.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - WEEKS LATER

Rubble cleared. Gardens planted. Laughter.

A new school painted in bright blues and yellows.

Children run beneath banners that read:

"Sante, Sekirite, Lespwa"

(Health, Safety, Hope)

Elsie interviews a local mayor, elected from the neighborhood council.

MAYOR  
We don't wait anymore.

We do. We vote. We plant.

One brick at a time.

INT. RADIO STUDIO - NIGHT

Elsie broadcasts from a professional mic, wearing headphones.

Behind her - Rico, now a mentor to young boys.

Solène teaches outside a glass window. Mya helps paint signs.

ELSIE (INTO MIC)  
The world asked:

Can Haiti rise?

We were never on the ground.

We were beneath your boot.

Now we walk. Together.

(beat)

Reparations didn't build this.

We did.

EXT. COASTAL ROAD - DUSK

A long aerial shot: kids playing soccer, trucks delivering water,

new murals rising over old bullet holes.

Toussaint. Dessalines. Solène. Rico. Mya.

Then: a massive wheat field where a UN depot once stood.

Solar panels line the hills.

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE CARDS:

"In 1825, Haiti was forced to pay France over \$21 billion in today's dollars for its independence."

"In 2010, over \$13 billion in aid was pledged to Haiti after the earthquake. Less than 2% reached Haitian organizations."

"Today, Haitian civil groups continue to demand transparency, accountability, and global recognition of their stolen wealth."

"Their movement is growing."

FINAL SHOT:

Elsie's voice, calm and sure:

ELSIE (V.O.)  
We are not the poorest country in  
the Western Hemisphere.

We are the most robbed.

And we remember.

SCENE 39

EXT. COASTAL VILLAGE - SUNRISE

Waves crash softly along the shoreline. Fishermen haul in empty nets. Children with pale eyes play with sticks in the sand.

A small crowd gathers in front of an old mission church, now turned into a relief center.

SOLÈNE steps onto a crate, holding a whiteboard map. Beside her, Mya, now bolder, hands out chalk.

SOLÈNE

This is not just food.

It's information. Roads. Patrols. Safe zones.

A few women nod. One man raises his hand.

VILLAGER

And the gangs?

SOLÈNE

They live off silence. We speak.  
They shrink.

SCENE 40

INT. SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY

A rebuilt classroom. Walls still scarred by bullet holes - but now covered in hand-painted alphabets and maps.

RICO sits on a low desk, surrounded by teen boys, many of whom were once affiliated with Marc.

RICO

Big Marc raised me. Fed me when I had nothing.

(beat)

But he didn't teach me how to build.

Only how to take.

The boys listen, unsure. One raises his hand.

BOY

Are we builders now?

Rico hands him a hammer.

RICO  
Start with the roof.

SCENE 41

INT. TEMPORARY RADIO STUDIO - NIGHT

ELSIE preps for a live international interview via satellite - a laptop camera, solar rig humming.

Behind her: photos of past Haitian leaders - Toussaint, Dessalines, Charlemagne Peralte - taped to the wall.

A VOICE comes through her headset: BBC INTERVIEWER.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)  
Elsie, some say your message is  
radical.

She leans closer to the mic.

ELSIE  
It's not radical to ask for  
justice.

It's radical to pretend we don't deserve it.

SCENE 42

INT. MAKESHIFT COURTROOM - DAY

Tables set up in a school gym. Local tribunals - not armed, but led by community elders.

BIG MARC, in cuffs, sits across from Solène, Rico, and others.

A mural behind him reads: "No peace without truth."

A young woman reads charges. Rico steps forward.

RICO  
He hurt many of us.

But today - we show him what he never showed us.

(beat)

A chance.

Marc looks up, surprised. Solène nods – she supports it.

ELDER  
He works the fields. Builds homes.  
One year. Then another hearing.

No prisons. No executions. Just the work of repair.

SCENE 43

EXT. MOUNTAININSIDE – LATE AFTERNOON

Joachim (Elsie's father) sits with her beneath a mango tree.

He shows her an old journal – yellowed pages, handwritten dates, lists of crops, debts, letters.

JOACHIM  
My father wrote this when they came  
in '15.

U.S. Marines. Took the banks. Took the land.

He places the journal in her hands.

JOACHIM (CONT'D)  
Keep this. Not for history books.

For your daughter, one day.

SCENE 44

INT. UNESCO CONFERENCE HALL – PARIS – NIGHT

An elegant, echoing chamber. Marble walls. Flags from around the world.

ELSIE, mid-30s, polished but proud, steps onto stage. A packed audience of delegates, press, and students await.

Projected behind her:

"THE WEIGHT OF FREEDOM – Haiti's Future in Her Own Words"

She breathes in. No notes.

ELSIE  
In 1804, we gave the world the  
blueprint for Black liberation.

They repaid us with debt.

(beat)

But we don't want pity.

We want you to stop pretending you didn't help break us.

Some in the audience shift uncomfortably.

ELSIE (CONT'D)  
Justice is not a gift.

It's a bill. And it's due.

Thunderous silence. Then applause – hesitant, then swelling.

#### SCENE 45

EXT. MOUNTAIN VILLAGE SCHOOL – MORNING

Children arrive in mismatched shoes and uniforms. Solène opens the gate with Mya beside her.

A handmade sign reads:

"Timoun se lavni – The children are the future."

Inside the classroom:

\* A world map made of cloth.

\* Chalkboard timelines: Haitian Independence, 1915 Invasion, Cholera Crisis.

\* Bilingual reading posters: Creole and French.

SOLÈNE points to a picture of a sugar plantation.

SOLÈNE  
This is how we got rich.

And how we lost it.

A 9-year-old boy raises his hand.

BOY  
Why didn't they teach us this before?

SOLÈNE  
Because truth scares power.

## SCENE 46

INT. COMMUNITY TOWN HALL - NIGHT

RICO sits on a panel - sweat-stained shirt, nervous. A crowd of citizens and former gang members pack the space.

Someone yells:

MAN (O.S.)  
You helped Marc run guns!

Another voice:

WOMAN  
And you saved my brother's life.

Rico stands. Voice steady.

RICO  
Both are true.

I helped him destroy.

Now I help build.

(beat)

You don't owe me forgiveness.

But I owe you truth.

Silence. Then - applause. Muted, but real.

## SCENE 47

EXT. LOWLANDS - NIGHT

Storm clouds churn. Wind whips banana trees. Thunder cracks.

Mya and Rico lash down tarps.

Solène radios in to Elsie on a hilltop comm tower.

SOLÈNE (INTO RADIO)  
Flood warnings confirmed.  
Evacuating Zone 3.

Elsie's voice cuts in:

ELSIE (V.O.)  
We're moving food from Cap-Haïtien.  
Hang tight.

Water surges through narrow alleyways — the drainage canal fails. Chaos.

Rico runs door to door, pulling kids out, screaming through the wind.

Suddenly — the ground gives. A mudslide barrels downhill.

Rico grabs a girl, dives for cover behind a brick wall. It holds. Just barely.

SCENE 48

EXT. POST-STORM — SUNRISE

The aftermath. Flooded streets. Mud-streaked walls.

But people are already rebuilding.

Elsie arrives with relief trucks.

She climbs onto a truck bed.

ELSIE  
We are not waiting anymore.  
(beat)  
This time — we save ourselves.

SCENE 49

INT. UNITED NATIONS POLICY CHAMBER — NEW YORK — DAY

Diplomats speak over one another in multiple languages.

Slides flicker: "Haiti — Reparations Debate."

A skeptical U.S. delegate leans back.

U.S. DELEGATE

It's not our job to fix what happened centuries ago.

KENYAN DELEGATE  
Then let us speak plainly.

If it were Europe, this chamber would have already passed five resolutions.

Murmurs. Silence. Then—

FRENCH DELEGATE (40s, female), takes the floor. Tense.

FRENCH DELEGATE  
We are prepared... to acknowledge the historical debt.

Gasps ripple through the room.

SCENE 50

EXT. MIAMI AIRPORT - DAY

A young Haitian-American tech worker, LENNY CHARLES (26), steps off a plane, wearing a backpack, camera strapped to his chest.

He scans the arrivals, spots a hand-painted sign:

"Welcome Home, Lenny!"

Held by his aunt and cousins.

SCENE 51

INT. TAP-TAP (COLORFUL BUS) - MOVING - DAY

Lenny stares out at Port-au-Prince – crumbled buildings beside new gardens. Solar panels glint. Graffiti reads:

"REPARASYON PA FÈ WONT" (REPARATIONS AREN'T SHAMEFUL)

His aunt laughs.

AUNT  
Not what you expected?

LENNY  
I thought it'd be worse.

AUNT  
Was. Now? You're just in time.

SCENE 52

EXT. REBUILDING ZONE - DAYS AFTER STORM

Rico leads a team of former gang boys, now in safety vests. They're clearing debris and laying bricks.

Solène and Mya direct foot traffic, organizing tents and water stations.

Lenny films the process for a livestream.

He pans across: kids distributing food, men pouring concrete, elders leading prayer circles.

LENNY (INTO CAMERA)  
What they said on the news - it's  
not this.

This is revolution. Quiet. Patient. Beautiful.

SCENE 53

INT. MAKESHIFT TENT - NIGHT

Rico sits, bandaged hand. A young boy draws beside him.

Big Marc, now gaunt, enters with a bucket of water and nails.

They lock eyes.

BIG MARC  
They let me work here. Said you  
vouched for me.

Rico nods.

RICO  
It's not about what you deserve.

It's about what we're building.

Marc kneels beside him.

For the first time - they hammer in silence. Together.

SCENE 54

INT. SCHOOLHOUSE - DAWN

Solène writes on the chalkboard:

"Today's Lesson: The Price of Silence"

The children settle in. Mya hands out pencils.

On the wall is a new portrait: Solène holding a book in one hand and rice in the other.

SCENE 55

INT. INTERNATIONAL PRESS ROOM - DAY

A screen lights up: ELSIE, via satellite from her new media studio in Cap-Haïtien.

She addresses global media:

ELSIE  
We aren't a failed state.

We are a tested one.

(beat)

And we've passed your worst tests.

Now it's your turn.

SCENE 56

INT. COWORKING SPACE - CAP-HAÏTIEN - NIGHT

A solar-powered café filled with laptops and activists.

LENNY sits in front of dual screens, scrolling through digitized French colonial records and IMF loan files. A local coder, MARISE (30s, sharp), sits beside him.

On screen:

- \* "Banque Nationale d'Haïti - 1825 to 1911 transactions"
- \* Followed by: "Loan restructuring 1986-2004: Duvalier era"

LENNY  
Wait - these weren't canceled?

MARISE  
Rolled over. Then sold.

She types quickly. Pulls up a spreadsheet.

MARISE (CONT'D)  
BNP Paribas. Société Générale.

Even Citibank.

LENNY  
They're still profiting off slavery-era debt?

Marise nods grimly.

MARISE  
Off our independence. Literally.

SCENE 57

INT. ELSIE'S MEDIA STUDIO - LATER THAT NIGHT

Lenny plays the video of their findings for Elsie and her producer.

She listens in stunned silence. Then:

ELSIE  
Send me everything.

LENNY  
We'll get sued.

ELSIE  
Good. That means it's real.

She spins toward the mic. Begins recording.

SCENE 58

MONTAGE - "DEBT IS A WEAPON" REPORT GOES VIRAL

\* Elsie's voiceover plays over split-screens of news anchors reacting around the world.

\* Hashtags trend: #CancelHaitiDebt #ModernChains #BanqueDeLaHonte

\* College students in Paris march with signs:

"France Must Pay Back"

\* A Haitian senator holds the report in front of the UN.

SCENE 59

INT. CORPORATE BOARDROOM - FRANCE - DAY

Société Générale executives sit around a table.

They're watching Lenny's video on a projector.

A stern CEO, M. DUVAL, snaps off the screen.

DUVAL

We need lawyers. And a PR team.

A nervous aide raises a hand.

AIDE

What if... we just pay?

Dead silence.

SCENE 60

INT. RICO'S SHELTER - NIGHT

Rico and Solène watch the video from Lenny's feed.

She wipes away tears.

SOLÈNE

I taught about this.

But I didn't know they were still collecting.

RICO

They don't want us to know.

That's why we tell everyone.

SCENE 61

INT. THE HAGUE - INTERNATIONAL COURTROOM - DAY

A banner above the dais reads:

"Special Tribunal on Colonial-Era Economic Crimes"

Elsie sits behind a microphone. Lenny records. A panel of international judges watches.

Across the aisle, corporate lawyers sweat. Translations echo.  
Elsie leans forward, measured.

ELSIE  
This isn't about vengeance.

It's about balance.

If debt can be inherited – so can responsibility.

A hush. Then murmured agreement. One judge nods.

SCENE 62

EXT. CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS – PARIS – DAY

Crowds gather. Cameras flash.

A bank CEO, escorted by guards, walks to a podium. He holds up a statement.

CEO  
Effective immediately... Société Générale will cancel all Haitian debt holdings and fund a \$1 billion restorative education trust in Cap-Haïtien.

Gasps. Then cheering. Reporters rush forward.

SCENE 63

INT. FAMILY DINNER – MIAMI – NIGHT

Lenny sits at a polished table with his upper-middle-class family.

His mother, father, and siblings eat roast chicken and drink wine.

A TV in the background airs Elsie's tribunal testimony.

LENNY'S FATHER  
You really think this changes anything?

LENNY  
Yeah. I do.

He stands, emotional.

LENNY (CONT'D)  
We grew up thinking we escaped.

But we just looked away.

His sister looks down. His mother wipes a tear.

SCENE 64

EXT. PORT-AU-PRINCE - CELEBRATION - DAY

Banners wave:

"NOUS NE SOMMES PAS MENDIANTS - WE ARE NOT BEGGARS"

Music blares. Dancers flood the square. A giant digital screen plays a clip from Lenny's video, ending with:

"THE WORLD OWES HAITI. PAY WHAT YOU STOLE."

Rico hands out tools to young boys. Solène and Mya lead a new school band. Elsie hugs Joachim as children chant her name.

SCENE 65

INT. NEW MEDIA STUDIO - NIGHT

Elsie records her final podcast.

Projected behind her: a map of Haiti with lights glowing from dozens of reopened clinics, schools, and farms.

ELSIE  
The truth wasn't what saved us.  
(beat)  
It was what we did with it.

She clicks off the mic. Silence. Peace.

SCENE 66

INT. NEWLY BUILT SCHOOL - 3 YEARS LATER - DAY

A modern campus in Cap-Haïtien. Solar-powered. Green rooftops. Kids pour out at recess.

A mural wraps across the wall - Toussaint, Solène, and Mya side by side.

Mya, now 15, teaches a younger class.

On the blackboard: "Debt ? Destiny."

Solène, slightly grayer, smiles from the doorway.

SCENE 67

INT. COMMUNITY STUDIO - EVENING

Rico, now lean and confident, hosts a youth broadcast.

On screen: students debating climate resilience and policy.

He throws to a field reporter:

RICO  
Over to Anel in Port-Salut. Tell us  
how you rebuilt the irrigation  
system.

A beaming 12-year-old appears on screen. Rico smiles - proud.

SCENE 68

INT. HAITIAN DIASPORA SUMMIT - TORONTO - DAY

Lenny, now working with a global truth and reparations nonprofit, gives a keynote.

Behind him:

"DIGITAL JUSTICE IN THE POST-COLONIAL ERA"

He pulls up a screen showing donations to over 200 Haitian cooperatives.

LENNY  
We are not digital nomads.

We are digital returners.

Applause. His voice cracks slightly.

SCENE 69

INT. ELSIE'S PODCAST ARCHIVE - NIGHT

A young woman - KETIA, 18 - scrolls through old episodes.

She presses PLAY on Episode 1: "How Did We Get Here?"

Elsie's younger voice fills the air.

ELSIE (V.O.)  
They stole our labor. Our land. Our  
breath.

Ketia closes her eyes and listens.

SCENE 70

EXT. CITADELLE LAFERRIÈRE - SUNRISE

A mass gathering climbs the stone fortress - Haitians from all walks of life.

They stand atop the historic Citadel, overlooking the nation their ancestors fought to free.

Drums echo.

On flags, signs, and shirts:

"THE WEIGHT OF FREEDOM IS OURS TO LIFT."

SCENE 71

INT. GLOBAL CLASSROOM - UNKNOWN COUNTRY - DAY

An international history class.

A student reads aloud from a digital textbook:

STUDENT  
"Haiti - the first Black republic,  
and the first to force the world to  
remember..."

The teacher clicks to the next slide:

"The Reparations Movement - Sparked by Journalism"

Elsie's face appears in a photo. Younger. Defiant.

SCENE 72 - FINAL IMAGE

EXT. SPACE - EARTH VIEW - NIGHT

We see Haiti glowing, no longer dark on the satellite map.  
Roads lit. Cities alive.

A new energy pulses through the Caribbean basin.

Over this, Elsie's final podcast recording:

ELSIE (V.O.)  
We were never broken.

We were buried.

(beat)

Now - we rise.

FADE OUT.

THE END