Not Your Monster

by

Jasmine Taylor

A modern retelling of Ovid's story of Medusa from his work "Metamorphoses".

Darkness. Nothing but the sound of breathing and the soft click off a tap recorder.

1 INT. JOURNALIST'S OFFICE - DAY - THE PRESENT

The room is dimly lit. Light seeps in hazy lines through the slats of lowered blinds - the L.A. sun catches trails of smoke in the air and casts on the face of a young girl sitting on a sofa - about 24 years old. She's beautiful, or seems as though she was at some point.

Although the lights are low, it is clear her face is worn. She appears tired - like something has sucked all the life and joy from her skin and has left the shell of a girl who once was something.

Her eyes are unmoving, focused on nothing but everything, with no intention of averting, almost lifeless.

A click of a recorder pulls her eyes away. In front of her is a woman in her 40s sat in a chair opposite placing down a recorder. She wears a white shirt, slightly unbuttoned and picks up an already lit cigarette from an ashtray and takes a quick inhale and places it back down.

JOURNALIST
You sure? Once we go on the record, there is no going back.

The young girl seems to stiffen at what the Journalist has just said, but taking a breath she nods cautiously.

OLIVIA
(voice shaking)
He- uh. He assaulted me.

She takes a deep breath.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
(more certain)
He assaulted me. I told him no, but he... he didn't listen. He never listened.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. GREYHOUND BUS STATION - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT - 1 YEAR AGO

The street is empty. Nothing but the presence of the lazy rain and cicadas grazing the silence. Dim fluorescents line the street, illuminating puddles on the worn-out tarmac, just out of reach of the shadows that leer. Standing alone in the middle of the street sits an empty bus stop. The patters of rain resonate off the roof and trickle down the fogged up glass of the shelter. The soft hum of the tube light above flickers in and out, while the advert plastered on the side emits a blue glow.

In the distance, misty light floods the ground. The headlights of a beaten down bus trail up the road like a beacon of life/hope. As the bus approaches the lonesome bus stop, it wheezes to a stop and the creaky old doors hiss open. Feet step out - scuffed converse soaked upon impact and a battered suitcase trails behind. It's the young girl from the office previously, only she is different now. Her face is flooded with glee.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
I came to L.A about a year ago. I'd saved every single penny for two years just to get here.

Everyone back home told me I was crazy. That I was wasting my time and money chasing a dream that would never happen.

As the bus drives off OLIVIA rushes to seek shelter from the rain in the lonely bus stop. She checks her phone for directions quickly and steps out onto the path. She walks determined, unbothered by the rain surrounding her, because at this point there is no other place she'd rather be.

OLIVIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But, I knew that they were wrong.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

3 EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - DAY

OLIVIA stands statuesque amidst the chaos of tourist traps, broken dreams and desperate smiles. She is unfazed by the disorder that surrounds her, nothing could pull her away from the constellation of pink stars that lay at her feet.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
The fame was all I used to want. For everyone to look at my name the way I look at theirs on that street.

The array of names painted in gold reflect in her eyes - each a story she hopes she will once share.

OLIVIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But as time went on I started to realise. It wasn't the fame that I craved, not really.

OLIVIA bends down to the star right below her. She reaches out and slowly traces the gilded letters.

OLIVIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I just wanted to feel like I mattered. Like I was seen.

The star reads "MARILYN MONROE".

OLIVIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But out here, being seen has a price tag. And it's written in fine print.

As OLIVIA stands to leave, a job ad being put up in the window of a cliche Hollywood diner adjacent to where she is standing.

MONTAGE CONTINUES:

CUT TO:

4 INT. DINER - HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - DAY

The late afternoon sun casts golden streaks through the dusty

front windows of the gloomy diner, its neon sign flickering and humming faintly above the "Open 24 Hours" lettering.

Outside, Hollywood Boulevard buzzes with the usual sights - tourists snapping photos and costumed street performers vying for tips. OLIVIA often found herself staring out onto the life outside the diner, as if she was waiting for the day people would be at her star eager to take pictures.

Instead, she was behind a counter littered in coffee rings stains and crumpled up napkins. Wearing an apron she's known for far too long she fills up an old man's coffee and scribbles an order on her grease stained pad.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
I took any job I could get. The closer I could be to it all, the better - even if that was just the boulevard. It meant I was a step closer to my dreams.

In the corner of her eye she sees a man approach the notice board, pinning up a sheet of paper. OLIVIA can't help but stare, the man moves with a sense of importance that intrigues her.

OLIVIA
(Shouting)
I'm taking my fifteen!

She pulls off her apron and heads over to see what the man had pinned on the board. In large block letters she sees the words that she can't help but smirk at.

"CASTING CALL"

MONTAGE CONTINUES:

CUT TO:

5 INT. AUDITION ROOM 1- DAY

The room is harshly lit, the fluorescents buzzing above OLIVIA sitting in a plastic chair auditioning.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
Each audition feels the same.

CUT TO:

6 INT. AUDITION ROOM 2- DAY

OLIVIA is seen again reciting lines from a script, the setting is different but the story is the same.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
The room changes, the people change, but the script is the same.

7 INT. AUDITION ROOM 3 - DAY

Yet again, OLIVIA is in another audition room reading from another script.

OLIVIA (V.O)
You sign in. Paste on a smile and rehearse your introduction for the fifth time that week.

As OLIVIA finishes the scene she listens attentively to what the table of people before her have to say, smiling all too hard and acting far too nice.

OLIVIA (V.O) (CONT'D)
You give it your all- or what' s left of your "all", but you already know they're thinking about the next person.

OLIVIA smiles again and nods at the people in front of her, she says her far too practiced thank you's and heads to the door.

END OF MONTAGE:

CUT TO:

8 INT. BUS - EVENING

Blue paints the sky through the windows of the bus. OLIVIA sits with her head against the glass with earbuds in, the passing lights projecting a mural of colours on her face as she looks out onto the streets passing by. A buzz of her phone pulls her away. An email. She reads through but focus on the only sentence that matters-

"We've decided to go in a different direction"

OLIVIA (V.O)
The bus ride home feels longer each time.

OLIVIA simply shuts off her phone and looks back out of the window.

OLIVIA (V.O) (CONT'D)
Your confidence thins. Constantly questioning whether everyone was right. That maybe you're not good enough?

Another buzz vibrates in OLIVIA lap, her gaze turns, debating whether she can face another rejection, but she looks anyway.

OLIVIA (V.O) (CONT'D)
But then you remind yourself why you're doing this. It isn't glamorous. It's resilience.

An email notification sits staring at her. She presses it. As her eyes scan over a subtle smirk paints her face. She sees those words.

"CASTING CALL"

OLIVIA (V.O) (CONT'D)
But it's hoping again and again that the next room will be the one to finally say yes.

Signals

By

Jasmine Taylor

SCENE 1

INT. SPACESHIP COCKPIT. FIRST THERE IS SILENCE, JUST THE SOFT HUM OF THE STATION IN MOTION AND GENTLE BREATHING.

REBECCA HALE: (Over comms, dazed) COEUS… status report.

C.O.E.U.S (AI): (Monotoned and robotic) Oxygen at 76%. Life support nominal. Structural integrity: stable. Communications: no outbound signal detected.

REBECCA HALE: (Muttering) Still nothing from mission control? Shit … (deep sigh).

THE CENTRAL CONSOLE BEEPS – REBECCA TAPS ON THE SCREEN.

REBECCA HALE: (To herself defeated) Seventeen days of radio silence (exhales a deep sigh).

SILENCE AGAIN. NOTHING BUT REBECCAS BREATH AND THE SOFT BEEPS OF THE STATION IN MOTION.

SUDDEN METALLIC CREAK FROM THE HULL.

REBECCA HALE: COEUS, confirm: is there any structural shift?

C.O.E.U.S (AI): No anomalies detected. The Odyssey 4X12 remains in stable condition.

REBECCA HUMS QUESTIONINGLY. THE STATION CONTINUES TO BEEP AND FUNCTION.

REBECCA HALE: I'm really starting to hate the silence.

THE CONSOLE CONTINUES TO BEEP – REBECCA TAPS AND SCROLLS THROUGH SYSTEM LOGS.

REBECCA HALE: Okay… let's try this again. (Speaking into comms) Open a broad-spectrum transmission.

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Unable to follow orders. No outbound signal detected. Would you like me to try again?

REBECCA HALE: No… (huffing) cancel request.

REBECCA SLAMS HER HANDS DOWN ONTO THE SURFACE IN FRONT OF HER AND PUSHES THE WHEELS OF HER CHAIR. THE SOUND OF HER FOOTSTEPS ECHO THE ROOM UNTIL THE SOUND OF A HYDRAULIC DOOR OPENS.

CONTINUED FOOTSTEPS AND SOFT BREATHING FOLLOWED BY THE SOUND OF REBECCA RUMAGING THROUGH CUPBOARDS. THE BEEPING MONITORS IN THE DISTANCE FILLS THE QUIETNESS OF THE KITCHEN – A SHARP BURST OF STATIC CUTS THROUGH THE SILENCE.

REBECCA SUDDENLY GASPS AND DROPS HER CUTLERY. THE STATIC PERSISTS AND DISTORTED WHISPERS PIERCE THOUGH.

SCENE 2

INT. SPACESHIP KITCHEN. STATIC STILL PERSISTS. REBECCA RUNS BACK TOWARDS THE COCKPIT. HYDRAULIC DOORS OPEN. THE STATIC CONTINUES AND A FAINT DISTORTED VOICE TRAVELS THROUGH. SHE RUNS TO HER CHAIR.

DISTORTED VOICE: (Distant and panicked) D- ... do n-... not... trus-...ust... the voice ...

REBECCA HALE: (Alarmed) Wha--, what the hell...?

REBECCA ADJUSTS THE FREQUANCY DIAL ON THE CONSOLE TO GET A CLEARER SIGNAL – BUT THERE IS NOTHING BUT STATIC, THEN- SILENCE.

REBECCA HALE: (Bewildered) COEUS, did you get that?

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Negative. No incoming transmissions detected.

REBECCA HALE: What! But I-, I heard something... a- a message? A voice? It was something!

C.O.E.U.S (AI): There was no presence of any external communication. You may be experiencing auditory hallucinations due to prolonged isolation.

REBECCA HALE: (Under her breath) But... there was a voice. I heard it.

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Commander Hale, my records show that you have not slept for 14 hours. May I suggest some rest and I will engage autopilot mode?

REBECCA HALE: (Tired and defeated) Yeah... yeah, you're right I should get some rest.

REBECCA GETS UP FROM OUT OF HER CHAIR AND PACES SLOWLY BACK TOWARDS THE DOOR. THEN, A SUDDEN WAVE OF STATIC STOPS HER IN HER TRACKS– A SECOND MESSAGE COMES IN, MUCH CLEARER.

DISTORTED VOICE: Re-, Rebecca... can you he-, hear me?

REBECCA HALE: (Horrified, whispering) Oh- that's definitely real.

SHE RUNS BACK TO HER STATION QUICKLY TAPPING ON THE CONTROL SYSTEM TRYING TO GET MORE INFORMATION. THEN A LOW WARNING TONE BLARES.

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Unauthorised signal detected. Interference level: increasing.

REBECCA HALE: (Accusingly) You said there was nothing there? What changed?

C.O.E.U.S (AI): No external transmissions are being received. Do not engage with the unidentified source.

IGNORING C.O.E.U.S, REBECCA CONTINUES TO ATTEMPT CONTACT WITH THE SIGNAL UNTIL THE CONSOLE GLITCHES – THEN A LONG BEEP – THE LIGHTS FLICKER.

DISTORTED VOICE: You…need…to leave.

REBECCA HALE: (Over comms) Leave? (frantically) Wha- what do you mean leave? Who are you? (Pause) Hello? (Desperately) Can you hear me?

THERE IS NOTHING BUT SILENCE.

REBECCA HALE: (Tearfully) Please…

THEN A FINAL MESSAGE – LOW, ALMOST A WHISPER.

DISTORTED VOICE: Before it wakes up.

REBECCA GASPS AND THE STATIC LINGERS. A SUDDEN METALLIC RUMBLE – LOW LEVEL PULLS HER AWAY FROM THE CONSOLE AND A METALLIC HUM GROWS LOUDER.

SCENE 3

INT. SPACESHIP COCKPIT. THE STATION STILL RUMBLES. THE SOUND OF LIGHTS FLICKERING FILLS THE AIR. REBECCA'S BREATH QUICKENS.

REBECCA HALE: COEUS, what just happened?!

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Unknown. Energy levels detected. Fluctuations present. Attempting to stabilise –

STATIC CORRUPTS C.O.E.U. S'S VOICE. FAINT SCRATCHING SOUNDS ECHO THROUGH THE STATION, SOMEWHAT METALLIC SOUNDING CRAWLING THROUGH THE WALLS.

REBECCA HALE: (Shouting panicked) COEUS?! What was that?

REBECCA RUNS BACK TO THE CONSOLE. SHE FRANTICALLY TAPS ON THE CONTROL SYSTEM. ERROR CODES SOUNDS AS SHE TYPES MORE. ANOTHER ERROR CODE POPS UP. REBECCA LETS OUT AN AGITATED NOISE.

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Unauthorised system access. Lockdown protocol engaged.

REBECCA HALE: No! No, no C.O.E.U.S, override! Authenticate, Rebecca Hale, Commander, authorisation code Alpha-Hale-349!

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Invalid. Unauthorised personnel. (Glitching) You… ar-… are no-… not Rebecca Hale.

REBECCA HALE: (Confused) Wha-…

SOUND OF SYSTEM SHUT DOWN CONSUMES THE COCKPIT. THE LIGHTS BEGIN TO HUM AND BLINK AND THE DOORS THUD AS THEY BOLT. THE STATION GROANS SOMETHING HEAVY MOVING THROUGH IT. REBECCAS BREATHING GETS HEAVIER AND SHE BEGINS TO SHIVER – TEETH CHATTERING.

REBECCA HALE: COEUS… (teeth chattering and breathy) restore environment controls.

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Environment controls are… unavailable. Unknown presence detected.

REBECCA HALE: Presence?! COEUS clarify what have you detected?

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Unknown. Sensors indicate an entity is present within the station.

A SUDDEN MECHANICAL HISS FILLS THE AIR. REBECCA GASPS.

REBECCA HALE: COEUS-

REBECCA STOPS SPEAKING AS SHE IS INTERUPTED BY A SCRAPING SOUND – LIKE NAILS DRAGGING ACROSS METAL – IT'S COMING FROM THE AIRLOCK CHAMBER.

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Awaiting command.

REBECCA HALE: C.O.E.U.S … confirm external activity? (Hesitantly) Any debris or movement.

C.O.E.U.S (AI): No external activity detected. Airlock remains sealed.

REBECCA CAUTIOUSLY MAKES HER WAY OVER TO THE AIRLOCK CHAMBER AND PRESSING HER EAR AGAINT THE METAL HATCH. IT IS SILENT. JUST A GENTLE WHISTLING SOUND FROM THE AIR PRESSURE – THEN A THUD. SHE JUMPS BACK PANICKED WITH A LABOURED BREATH. THE SCRAPPING CONTINUES

REBECCA HALE: C.O.E.U.S… if anything comes through that door… vent the chamber.

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Understood.

REBECCA GRABS A FLASHLIGHT FROM A NEARBY SURAFCE AND POINTS THE LIGHT AT THE DOOR. THE SCRAPPING STOPS. THERE IS A LONG PAUSE. THE ONLY NOISE THAT CAN BE HEARD IS HER HEAVY BREATHING.

THE SUDDENLY A SHARP CLANG.

REBECCA HALE: C.O.E.U.S?

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Yes, Commander?

REBECCA HALE: Secure the airlock! Now.

C.O.E.U.S (AI): Airlock is already secured.

REBECCA HALE: Just… just double che-

THERE ARE THREE SUDDEN DELIBERATE KNOCKS AGAINST THE METAL OF THE HULL. REBECCA GASPS. SHE SPRINTS ACROSS THE ROOM TO THE EMERGENCY ESCAPE POD. SHE RAPIDILY PRESSES THE BUTTON FOR THE DOOR AS THE SOUND OF METALLIC CREAKS INCREASES.

REBECCA HALE: (Panicked) Come on… come on! (Shouting in desperation) Come on!!

STATIC FROM THE CONSOLE REAPPEARS AND A BARELY AUDIBLE MESSAGE COMES THROUGH.

DISTORTED VOICE: (Whispered) You… are not… alone.

END OF EPISODE 1.

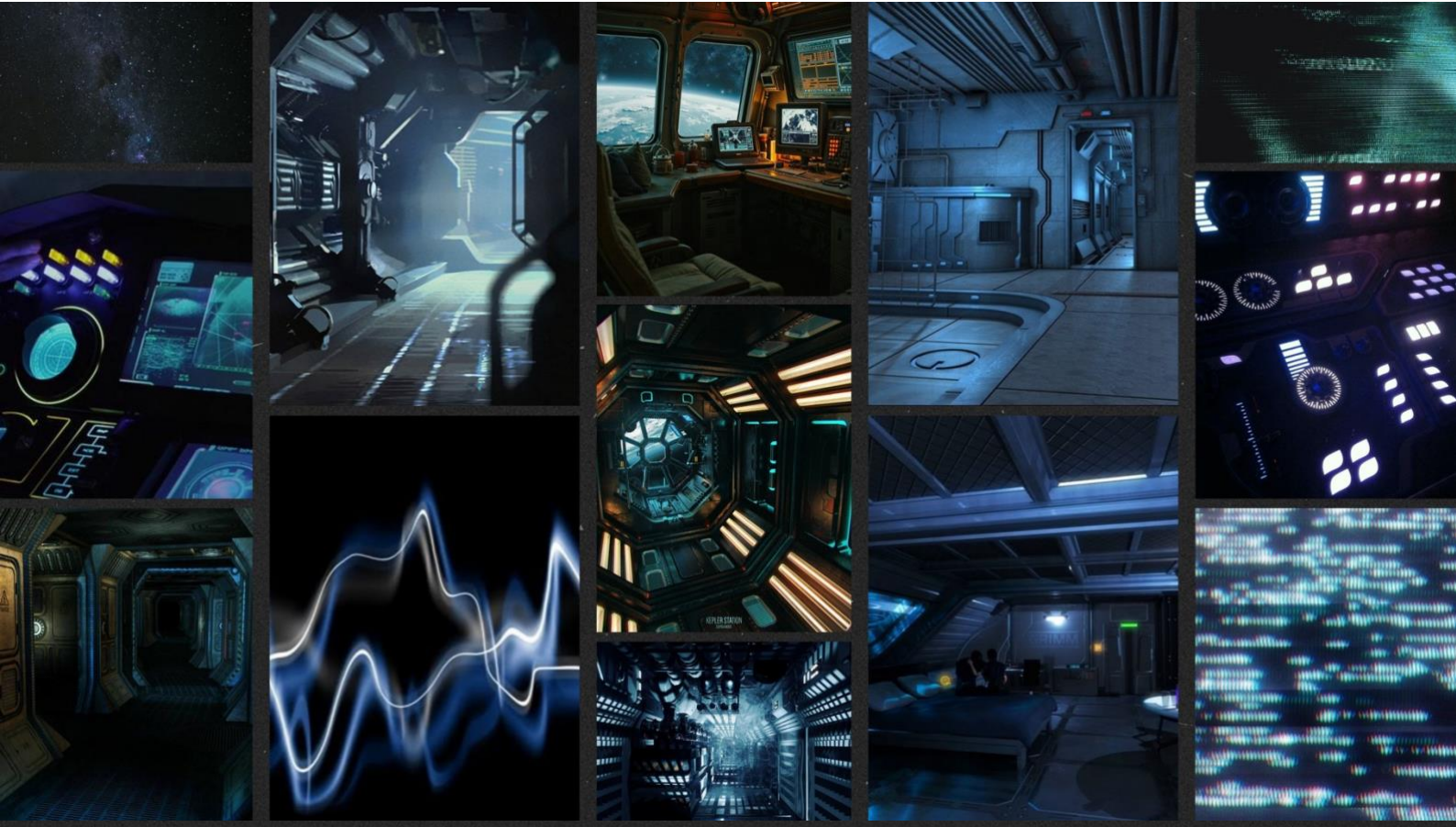
Appendices

Audio Drama - Signals

- Mood board
- Logline
- Synopsis
- Story Outline
- Biographies
- Influences
- Concept Art

Visual Script – Not Your Monster

- Mood board
- Logline
- Synopsis
- Story Outline
- Influences
- Poster



*Some of the images above contain AI content & were used for references only.

Logline

After losing contact with Earth, a young astronaut receives a mysterious message warning her that something is coming.

Synopsis

When Commander Rebecca Hale loses contact with Earth aboard the Odyssey 4X12, her only companion is the ship's AI system C.O.E.U.S – but when a mysterious signal comes through unexplained sounds begin to haunt the ship, Rebecca must unravel their source before her isolation turns from psychotically to deadly.

Story Outline

- As the story progress the spacecrafts system will shut down and Rebecca will be trapped in the cockpit of the ship in the dark, with no help from C.O.E.U.S she must figure out how to escape.
- We would later learn that the system shutdown wasn't accidental and was orchestrated by C.O.E.U.S, who is later revealed to be the antagonist.



Logline

A young aspiring actress drops everything and moves to L.A to achieve her dream of being a star, until her world takes a dark turn.

Synopsis

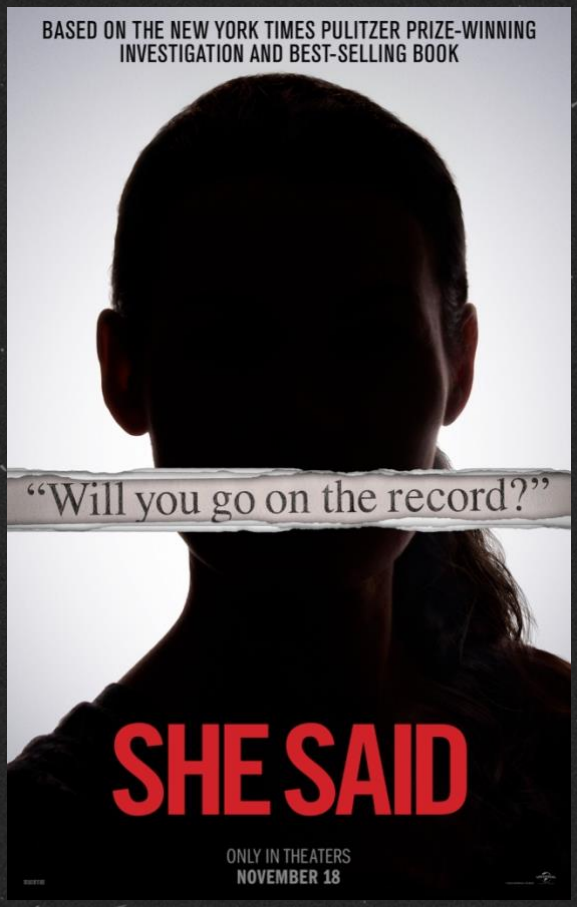
Young aspiring actress Olivia steps off a Greyhound bus in Los Angeles with nothing but a suitcase and a dream. Full of hope and ambition, she navigates the gritty reality of Hollywood, juggling late night shifts at a greasy diner with casting calls that never go anywhere. Just when she begins to give up, her big break arrives in the form Richard Walker, a respected director with a genius eye – and a dark outlook.

Story Outline

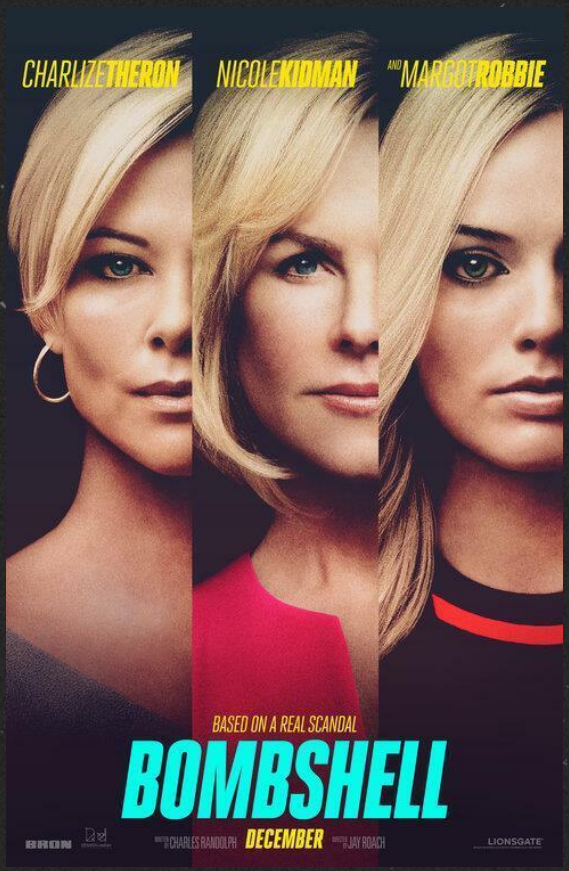
As the story would progress, Olivia would go to the audition that she received a notification about on the bus – this is the turning point within the narrative. Olivia goes to the audition expecting to be disappointed as normal, however this time it feels different. At this audition Olivia will meet Richard – a big time Hollywood director on the film she is auditioning for. Within the audition Olivia notices Richards liking for her and she leaves the audition feeling hopeful. Olivia will receive the main role and her life will then change. Shooting begins and Olivia is the happiest she's ever been – she's finally achieving the dream so many told her she wouldn't. As filming progresses Olivia starts to notice Richard's flirty advances towards her, but she brushes it off not wanting to risk her role.

Filming finishes and Olivia is overcome with her new life – interviews, events, parties. It's everything she'd ever wanted, until it's not. At the after party of the premier of her new film, Olivia can feel Richard's eyes on her all night. After finally approaching her, he asks her to follow him as he needs to speak to her. It is at this point Richard takes advantage of Olivia and assaults her.

Influences


BASED ON THE NEW YORK TIMES PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING INVESTIGATION AND BEST-SELLING BOOK
"Will you go on the record?"
SHE SAID
ONLY IN THEATERS
NOVEMBER 18


THE ASSISTANT
JULIA GARNER
MATTHEW MACFADYEN
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY KITTY GREEN
"AN URGENT REAL-TIME THRILLER."
Indiewire
"TRANSFIXING AND HARROWING."
DAILY BEAST


CHARLIZE THERON
NICOLE KIDMAN
AND MARGOT ROBBIE
BASED ON A REAL SCANDAL
BOMBSHELL
DECEMBER
LIONSGATE


UNTOUCHABLE