

ENEMY | FLINT

A full-length drama by
Diana Burbano

Based on *An Enemy of The People* by Henrik Ibsen

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

THIA STOCKMAN, 20s. Smart. Driven. On a break from medical school.

CATE KEELE, 20s. Thia's best friend. Practical. Nurturing.

PETRA, 19. Cate's sister. A teaching assistant at Mott Child Development.

MARI, 11. Thia's younger sister. Very sensitive. Google "Little Miss Flint" for inspiration.

CAPT. KYLE GUERRERO, 20s. Discharged from army due to injury. Drives trucks for a living. Smart and thoughtful.

PETE STOCKMAN, late 20s. Older brother of Thia. Dreams of being a politician. Sharp.

MARTIN KEELE, 45-50. Cate's dad. Owns a factory in Flint. Rich, but miserly.

HOLLY, 20s. A young journalism student. Hotshot social media maven.

ACE, 20s. Captain of the Bears basketball team.

DIZ, 20s. An independent thinker. Artist. Any gender.

PEOPLE IN THE CROWD, various.

SETTING

Flint, Michigan. Mott College campus. The characters are written to reflect the people of Flint. In the last census, Flint was 57% African-American, 38% White, 2% Latino, and 3% Native American, Asian and Mixed Race. All sets should be simple. Place can be indicated by movement or projection. Perhaps the set can be created with crates of water.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Enemy | Flint premiered at Rio Hondo College (Whittier, CA) in April of 2018, where it was directed by Julianna Stephanie Ojeda and produced by William Korf.

Cast (in order of appearance)

Holly..... Sisan McNeill
Cate Keele..... Vanessa Hernandez Madera
Diz..... Jakob Olmos
Pete Stockman..... Luis Licona
Thia Stockman..... Sarahi Arellano
Mari Stockman..... Ana Nava
Capt. Kyle Guerrero..... Devone Gorum
Petra Stockman..... Julleah Velez
Martin Keele..... Isaiah Collazo
Ace..... Jeremiah Collazo
The People..... Tyler Alaniz, Phone Tha, Brian Contreras,
Jonathon Barajas, Emily Velazquez, Laurence Rivera, Roman
Gaytan and Erik Perez Casas

Artistic Staff and Crew

Scenic/Lighting/Video Designer and Technical Direction, Matt Schleicher; Costume Designer, Marly Hall; Sound Designer, Victorhugo Herrera; Stage Manager, Daniela Bustamante; Asst Stage Manager, Christina Estrada; Prop Supervisor, Jennifer Scott; Sound Supervisor, Gabe Carrasco; Production Asst, Shenia Brown; Light/Video Crew, Adam Hernandez, Roselyn Sandoval; Sound Crew, Alex Mora-Rivera, Samantha Cabanas; Backstage Crew, Aron Soto, Sergio Marquez, Nataly Pugh, Emily Donoza, Belinda Dornaus; Sets built by members of Theatre Crafts 150 class.

Performed by members of Rehearsal and Performance 170 class.

PROLOGUE

(A radio station. HOLLY MARQUEZ is reading the morning news into a mic.)

HOLLY: Good morning. This is Holly Marquez for WFUM: Flint, Michigan News, Weather, Sports. October 13, 2014. News we are following today: A Texas nurse who tested positive for Ebola appears to have contracted the virus due to a "breach of protocol" while providing care for the first person diagnosed with Ebola in the U.S. President Obama is currently considering enhanced screening at international airports. A federal judge on Sunday overturned Alaska's constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Alaska's ban on same-sex marriage was the first in the nation.

Chloride levels in treated Flint River water are so high that General Motors will no longer use it at its engine plant here because of fears it will cause corrosion. The plant will return as a Flint water customer after the city switches back to using Lake Huron water, something that's not expected to happen until the end of 2016.

(Fade out.)

SCENE 1: DISCOVERY

(A pretty, older, 3-bedroom home located near Flint's college cultural area. Walking distance to Flint's downtown. The house is a bit of a mess, as it houses 5 college-aged people. Rent is \$675 a month.)

(It is evening. DIZ, early 20's, an independent thinker and artist, is sitting on the couch, watching a big-screen TV, eating leftover Chinese food. There are paper plates, and "Young Sing Chinese Restaurant" bags on the tables and floor.)

(CATE KEELE, early 20's, practical, nurturing, enters with a dish of food.)

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ANNOUNCER ON TV: Michigan invites you to explore our 11,000 inland lakes, nearly 200 waterfalls, and 3,200 miles of Great Lake shorelines. Experience the water that makes Pure Michigan truly unique. To learn more, go to www.michigan.org.

(The commercial ends and a football game comes on the TV.)

DIZ: *(To TV:)* Woo hoo!! Go go go!! YES! *(To Cate:)* Hey – can I have an eggroll?

CATE: *(Handing dish to Diz:)* Don't eat all the fried rice! We got more people coming!

DIZ: No worries! No worries!

CATE: Where's Holly?

DIZ: On her way. She had some editing work to finish in the lab.

CATE: *(Watching Diz eat enthusiastically:)* There won't be anything left.

(PETE STOCKMAN, 20's. enters. He's dressed in a very sharp suit and is holding a showy new iPhone.)

Hey! Pete! Where you been, sweetheart?

PETE: *(Re: Diz reacting loudly to something on the TV:)* Are you having a party? It's a school night.

CATE: No, this fool is always over, eating our grub.

(Diz swats her playfully.)

I hid some Moo Shu and a couple of egg rolls – you want one?

PETE: I'm on a juice fast. *(Shows her an expensive looking juice bottle.)* How is Young Sing's still open?

CATE: I dunno. It's cheap.

PETE: Where's my sweet baby sister?

CATE: Thia took Mari to the park to run off some energy. Thia's not Mari's.

(Noises from outside.)

Here they are! Oh. *(With a guilty look to Pete:)* Hey, Holly!

(Holly enters, sees Pete, but pretends not to see him and heads straight for the TV and the takeout.)

HOLLY: Can I have something to drink?

CATE: Water?

HOLLY: You need a Brita – that stuff's nasty. Coke?

PETE: Rot your beautiful teeth, Holly.

HOLLY: *(To Pete:)* Pete! Hey. Long time no see. You got anything to say about how the mayor pulled funding for Mott's film festival?

PETE: No.

HOLLY: Too bad, 'cause your sister's got a lot to say –

PETE: Thia has a big mouth. The mayor has to make cuts somewhere.

HOLLY: And the film department is an easy sacrifice?

PETE: We're working really hard to get jobs back.

DIZ: *(Snickers.)* "We."

PETE: I may be a junior in the office now –

DIZ: You're a glorified office boy.

PETE: I'm the mayor's right-hand man! I was in the meeting with General Motors today!

DIZ: They know you drive a hoopty?

PETE: *(Ignoring him:)* We're bringing arts and manufacturing back to Flint. You'll see. The new farmers market, the new assembly plant. A new stadium! It's exciting.

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CATE: I hope that doesn't mean our rent's about to go up.

PETE: My advice? Buy this place. Or any place. Property values are about to go back up, you'll see.

CATE: (*Sarcastically:*) With what, Pete? Our SNAP cards? The change under the couch?

DIZ: They ain't any, I checked.

CATE: I'm working two jobs right now. I can't wait till I turn 25 and my dad has to give me my grandpa's inheritance.

PETE: Thia still not contributing?

HOLLY: (*Interrupting:*) Oh, Petey, you're gonna love my latest video. It's called "Flint and the Future." Thia wrote the copy.

PETE: (*Incredulous:*) Really? A video about Flint from Little Miss Burn It All Down?

CATE: (*Defensive:*) That's not fair. Thia loves Flint.

PETE: She should. That scholarship to pre-med was practically invented for her.

DIZ: How come you didn't get a scholarship to somewhere?

PETE: (*Ignores this.*) Thia's smart, but she's a dreamer. You need someone who has the patience to actually do the work.

CATE: You should've gotten a scholarship, too.

PETE: Yeah. Well.

(THIA STOCKMAN, smart, driven and abrasive, enters with her little sister MARI and CAPT. KYLE GUERRERO.)

THIA: (*Giving Cate a kiss:*) Hey beautiful, look who rescued us! Kyle saw the two of us huffing and puffing on MLK and 5th and offered to drive us home in his truck!

CATE: What!? Kyle! Honey, do you ever stop working?

KYLE: Just got back from a short-haul trip to Omaha. I could do it in my sleep. I think I did, actually.

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MARI: I'm thirsty! Can I have a Coke?

CATE: No! Water or milk. Those are your choices.

THIA: Milk. Go. Then brush your teeth, use the bottled water! Get ready for bed. *(Mari exits.)* Well come in, Kyle—what the heck are you waiting for, an e-vite?

CATE: *(Indicating the food:)* There's leftover Moo Shu.

KYLE: *(To Thia:)* Hey, uh, your sister around?

(Kyle is trying to be smooth. Cate and Thia give each other a knowing smile.)

CATE: Petra's not home yet. You better stay—she'll want to see you!

KYLE: *(Happily:)* I guess I can stay for a bit.

THIA: Where are you sleeping?

KYLE: Truck cab's plenty comfortable.

CATE: No! Here! Stay here, Kyle, the couch is yours.

KYLE: *(Reluctantly:)* Thanks, but—

CATE: C'mon, into the kitchen, I'll dig something up for you. Thia, did you say hi to— *(Indicates Pete.)*

THIA: *(She has been ignoring Pete.)* Petey! Hey, you look like a hipster! Holly, what did you ever see in him?

(Holly doesn't look amused. She and Kyle exit into the kitchen.)

PETE: I have to go—

THIA: *(Sweetly:)* Oh, don't be a dope. Stay. We have sweet tea. Like Mom's.

CATE: Not as good. Diz? Do you need anything?

DIZ: Nah, I'm good— *(At look from Cate:)* I mean—you said you had extra Moo Shu right?

(Cate and Diz exit into the kitchen.)

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PETE: (*Looks around the paper bag strewn room.*) How much is your food bill?

THIA: I like feeding people. We both know what it's like to be hungry all the time. Share the wealth, right?

PETE: What happened to school in Chicago?

THIA: I wanted to come back to Flint. There's promise here. Chicago's expensive, Petey! Even with a scholarship, sometimes lunch is an apple and a sandwich from Reynado's, and that's it for the whole day. Luckily water is free. 8 glasses a day, right?

PETE: I prefer juice.

THIA: Now that I'm back home, I can share the wealth! A Chinese feast from Young Sing's every once in a while, with my friends—I think I can do that, here. At home. My home. Look. We got a big-screen for cheap.

PETE: Off a truck?

THIA: (*Ignoring him:*) The couch we found, and Cate and Mari redid it.

PETE: What about the rent?

THIA: We scrape by. Cate's picking up gigs here and there.

PETE: Still letting your girlfriend support you? Be careful with her money.

THIA: I am! I carefully use it to feed the people I love. When I'm a doctor, I'll have huge meals every night. With steak. And potatoes.

PETE: Holly said that you helped her make another video about Flint? Is that for your scholarship?

THIA: Oh. Holly's video? That's not the one you should be worrying about, Petey.

PETE: (*Alarmed:*) Thia! Damn it!

THIA: Petey –

PETE: NO! I know that crazy look in your eyes. Trouble. How many times did you get us family kicked out of foster care because you made trouble?

THIA: Saving Petra from a predator was not "making trouble."

PETE: No, but getting a teacher arrested –!

THIA: I'm not keeping quiet when I see injustice. It's good trouble.

PETE: There is no such thing! Not for people like us. Please, for the first time in your life, think before you do something stupid. *(Checks his watch.)* I gotta go. Say bye to Holly for me.

(Pete exits. Thia looks bemusedly after him. Cate and Diz enter.)

DIZ: Ooh. Did I miss a fight –?

CATE: Babe, what did you do to him?

THIA: Nothing!

CATE: Uh huh. Your brother stomps outta here with that look on his face for nothing?

(Holly, Mari and Kyle come out of the kitchen carrying more food. They fling themselves onto the floor and the couch, perfectly at home.)

DIZ: *(Seeing that Kyle has a huge plate of food:)* You were holding out on me! Gimme another egg roll.

CATE: Save some for Petra!

KYLE: What's with Pete?

THIA: He's juicing.

DIZ: He's always like that.

HOLLY: Got a stick up his butt. Just like in high school.

DIZ: You broke his heart, Hol.

CATE: Pete's a lonely guy. You guys should be nicer to him

THIA: Kitty, I swear you're the sweetest person I've ever met.

(Thia pulls Cate onto her lap and kisses her.)

CATE: *(Changing the subject:)* Where is work going to be sending you next, Kyle? Mari loves your postcards.

KYLE: They never tell me till the night before I leave.

MARI: California!

KYLE: Maybe. You want me to send you something from Disneyland?

THIA: Do you have your absentee ballot for the election?

KYLE: No. What election?

DIZ: What? Stay woke, man!

KYLE: I dunno who to vote for. All politicians suck.

ALL EXCEPT DIZ: *(Adlib agreement.)*

DIZ: Dude. This country is like a ship! Everybody's gotta be prepared to be the captain.

KYLE: That wouldn't work on a military vessel.

THIA: *(To Diz:)* Kyle did his duty, fighting for us overseas. Let him be. *(To Holly:)* What's up for tomorrow's podcast?

HOLLY: Not too much about the election, everyone is sick of it already. But your piece—

THIA: Hold onto that for awhile—OK, Holly?

HOLLY: But now's the perfect time—

(PETRA, Thia's other sister, enters. Kyle leaps up, awkward.)

PETRA: *(Tired but happy:)* Hey! A party for me! *(Seeing Kyle, she smiles wide.)* Kyle, when did you get back?

KYLE: Today.

(They share an awkward hug. Everybody else smiles and whispers shyly. Kyle and Petra pull away.)

DIZ: *(Stealing from Kyle's plate:)* You want an egg roll?

PETRA: No, you keep it. Hey Thia, someone left this for you in my box at school. Looks official. *(Hands Thia a thick envelope.)*

THIA: *(Rushing to get it:)* You should've called me!

(Thia stands apart from the others and reads with growing excitement.)

PETRA: Sorry, I've been way too busy. We're doing developmental assessments. There are so many special needs kids this year!

CATE: More than usual?

PETRA: A lot more. Poor little babies. They're so far behind where they should be.

KYLE: You're a full teacher now?

PETRA: Not yet. But they need teachers so badly, I'm working at the Pre-K.

(Mari yawns.)

MARI: Thia, will you sign this for me? I wanna enter the Little Miss Flint pageant.

(Mari hands a piece of paper to Thia.)

PETRA: Seriously? You never even wanted to be a girl scout.

CATE: Good scholarship money. We'll scrape the entrance fee together for you, kiddo.

DIZ: *(At the sight of the fee:)* Holy crap—

CATE: We'll find the money.

PETRA: Isn't it a bit, you know, sexist?

MARI: I guess, but the winner gets to go to Washington. I wanna meet the president!

DIZ: Girl. Dream on your level! That'll never happen.

MARI: (*Shoots him a disdainful look.*) This *IS* my level. I'm gonna **be** president myself, someday. Hater. Petra, will you check my entry? I wrote about Notorious RBG.

DIZ: (*Teasing her:*) Who's that?

MARI: She's on the Supreme Court! GET A CLUE!!!!!!

PETRA: Don't get into fights with Diz – he's just pushing your buttons. I'll check it in a minute. Go to bed.

(Mari exits with a flounce.)

DIZ: That little girl is on point.

HOLLY: The girls clearly got all the smarts in your family.

PETRA: Little kids are pretty brilliant, actually, if you get to know them. I'm kind of freaked by all the problems the babies are coming in with this year.

CATE: And the moms have no idea what's going on?

PETRA: No. It's awful. One lady cried and cried. Told me what a smart baby he was, and how he seemed to get slow once she stopped breastfeeding. And then another lady said that he was OK until he was vaccinated. And that he "got" autism from the shot –

CATE: People believe that!? Thanks to Jenny McCarthy, clearly an intellectual giant.

(Thia speaks up, excited.)

THIA: I was right. Damn it. I was right.

HOLLY: Thia, what?

THIA: Did you know that Flint is close to the freshest, most beautiful water in the world? Oh my God. The irony.

DIZ: Girl, you talking crazy.

THIA: No. No, I'm not. Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink. The water here in Flint. It's poison. Lead tainted. Unbelievably dangerous.

HOLLY: I know it tastes bad—

THIA: Not only tastes bad, it's got (*Consults the paper.*) E.Coli. Trihalomethanes—

CATE: What's that?

PETRA: It's what happens when disinfectants like chlorine interact with organic matter. Kyle and I wrote a paper about it for Chemistry in high school.

KYLE: They put the chlorine in to kill the bacteria.

THIA: So much more stuff— but the worst, Petra, is lead.

PETRA: Lead— no!

CATE: Baby formula, it's all mixed with water!

THIA: That could be why you're seeing so many babies with problems.

KYLE: See, that's why GM changed the water source for their factory! Auto parts were getting corroded and damaged from all the crap that was in the water.

HOLLY: The city spent a ton getting GM pipes from the lake.

THIA: This summer I got samples from all over the city and had them analyzed at the university. The water is completely dangerous to use. Internally and externally.

CATE: Even in the shower?

THIA: Yes, absolutely.

HOLLY: I'll tweet it out right now!

THIA: Hold off, Holly. I think we should organize first. No one is going to take us seriously— we're just kids.

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CATE: Oh my gosh. Mari has spent all summer running through the sprinklers!

THIA: No more of that. We gotta tell the Timberwolf.

CATE: Don't call my dad that.

THIA: Fine. Deacon Keele then. He thinks I'm such a liberal nutbag. I have proof now. Hopefully he'll be able to get people to take the report seriously. We should contact Michael Moore.

HOLLY: Not that guy!

CATE: He's awesome!

THIA: We need backup. The city's going to have to redo the entire water system.

HOLLY: The whole system? That's gonna cost—

PETRA: We knew. Didn't we, Kyle? We did the research! In high school! We won the Science Fair!

KYLE: No one pays attention to a bunch of kids.

PETRA: We were right. We got pats on the head, and "Hey, aren't you smart." But no one did anything.

THIA: They never should have rerouted the water source. Unless they were trying to poison us poor folk! I'll text the report to Pete tonight. Let him read it.

DIZ: He ain't gonna like it.

THIA: He's smart. He'll want to be on the right side of history.

HOLLY: I wanna blow the roof off this story!

CATE: They'll want to put YOU in the mayor's office, Thia. They'll probably increase your scholarship.

THIA: No. Nope. I'm only doing my civic duty. Doing what's right.

PETRA: You are the one who knows how to get things done, Thia. Maybe you'll get to meet the president.

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DIZ: And his gorgeous daughters.

THIA: We're going to clean up Flint! And we're going to drag the authorities until they put things right. Just you wait and see.

DIZ: Dang, girl. Them politicians don't know what they got coming! (*S/He toasts her with an eggroll.*) To Thia!

THIA: No. To Flint!

ALL: To Flint.

(Lights out.)

SCENE 2: FLINT NEWS STATION STORY

HOLLY: (*Reading radio copy:*) Good morning. This is Holly Marquez for WFUM: Flint lies about 70 miles from the shores of the largest group of freshwater bodies in the world: the Great Lakes. Yet its residents can't get clean water from their taps.

A year ago, the state decided to save money by switching Flint's water supply from Lake Huron (for which they were paying the city of Detroit) to the Flint River, a notorious tributary that runs through town, known to locals for its filth. "We thought it was a joke," said Rhonda Kelso, a long-time Flint resident. "People my age and older thought 'They're not going to do that.'" The switch was made during a financial state of emergency for our ever-struggling industrial town. It was supposed to be temporary while a new state-run supply line to Lake Huron was being made ready for connection—

(Fade out.)

SCENE 3: NEXT MORNING

(Morning at the house. Cate comes in with an official-looking letter, she looks worried. Thia is typing rapidly on a laptop.)

CATE: Pete sent you something by FedEx.

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THIA: Don't open it. I got an email from him at 3 A.M. last night. He told me he was coming to see me as soon as he could take his lunch break.

CATE: He's mad.

THIA: Only 'cause he didn't figure it out himself.

(MARTIN KEELE enters. He wears a jacket that says "Keele Industries" on the back. Cate runs to hug him.)

CATE: Daddy!

THIA: Deacon Keele. Come in. Do you want a coffee?

MARTIN KEELE: Is it true?

CATE: Is what true?

MARTIN KEELE: This stuff about the water supply—is it true?

THIA: If you're referring to my research—

MARTIN KEELE: I saw Petra at Tom's Coney this morning. I thought she was trying to—what do you kids call it—PUNK me.

THIA: Petra's not like that, sir.

MARTIN KEELE: It can't be true!

THIA: It's lucky we discovered it now, before it does more damage.

MARTIN KEELE: What's the story? There are critters in the drinking water?

THIA: E. Coli. And that's only one—

MARTIN KEELE: A lot of critters, right? Invisible?

THIA: Yeah, you can't see them—

MARTIN KEELE: Excellent, excellent! That jackass mayor. Serves 'em right. Spending all that damn money to reroute the

pipes. They hounded me out of the city council! Good for you, Thia – freak them out, put them on notice. Punk 'em!

THIA: But –

MARTIN KEELE: Get 'em to swallow the bait, and I'll give a thousand dollars to any charity you like.

CATE: Daddy, I could happily use a thousand dollars right now!

MARTIN KEELE: It's worth it to me to see those bast–, excuse me, "gentlemen," dangling like fish on a hook.

(Holly enters.)

HOLLY: Whoops –

MARTIN KEELE: You're the girl on the news! EXCELLENT! Good on all of you. Take down those snobs on the city council! This is going to be a bug up all their butts for a good long while. HA! Bugs! Get it? Ha– You keep up this game, Theodosia—it's a good one. You're smart for one of those kinds of girls.

(Keele exits laughing.)

HOLLY: What's he mean? Those kinds of girls?

CATE: LGBTQ kinda girls.

HOLLY: C'mon. You guys have been together since junior year. He hasn't gotten used to you yet?

CATE: He keeps hoping I'll "come to my senses."

THIA: He's an idiot! Sorry Kitty – I mean about the water supply.

CATE: *(To Holly:)* Dad's family has had a factory on the river since, jeez, since –

THIA: Since the Durant-Dort Carriage Company opened its doors in 1886. *(At Cate's look of amazement:)* What? It's all he

talks about after a couple of beers. *(To Holly:)* His family sold part of the company that became GM. No wonder he's always pissed.

CATE: He's got plenty of money.

THIA: That should be yours!

HOLLY: *(Interrupting:)* Have you heard anything from the mayor's office?

THIA: Pete sent me an email. And a FedEx. I'm waiting for the singing telegram.

HOLLY: Thia, you've always been the girl to start up controversy –

THIA: Controversy? I just want people to wake up to the truth!

HOLLY: – You've uncovered something in the water, and that uncovers a lot of other things.

THIA: Yes, between the dirty river and the messed-up pipes –

HOLLY: That's not the only mess. It's the mess that this whole state is in! The governor doesn't give a crap what happens to poor kids in this joke of a city.

CATE: Flint's not a joke.

THIA: Yesterday I saw orange water coming out the fire hydrant.

HOLLY: The governor appoints his buddies to watch over our poor, crime-ridden town and reroute our pipes into our filthy river.

THIA: I used to go fishing in the river, and whenever I stuck my hand in there, it would come out red and mottled.

HOLLY: Those bastards have been dumping their sludge in the Flint River for years. I want to work with you – to take down this corrupt government.

THIA: Except for Pete. Pete's a good guy. A little too "upwardly mobile." But deep inside, he's the real deal.

HOLLY: (*Ignoring her:*) I see myself leading a charge. Like Arianna Huffington. Like TMZ.

THIA: TMZ??

(A knock on the door.)

Dang it, sorry.

(ACE enters wearing a Bears Basketball shirt.)

HOLLY: Hey Ace, great game last night!

ACE: Thanks. The team's getting better.

CATE: You're the best starter we've ever had.

ACE: Nah. Well, yeah. Yeah I am. But never mind that. Thia, is it true? About the water?

THIA: (*To Holly:*) I thought we were keeping this on the DL!

ACE: Diz told me at practice. I figured your cause could use a guy like me.

THIA: My "cause" — ?

HOLLY: Hell yes, a sports star —

ACE: (*Humbly:*) Uh, right. I can get a lot of the guys to back you up, do a little demonstration.

THIA: Like a march?

ACE: No, you know, something — subtle. I don't like to stick my neck out too much, you know. I've got my team to protect. This thing about the water supply — I saw it with my own eyes at the construction site I worked on this summer. The water ATE through the sheet metal.

HOLLY: Ace knows everybody. Everybody likes him!

THIA: And they don't like me. Right?

HOLLY: Well, you can get a little — feisty.

ACE: I'm easygoing, but tough, and charming. You know.

THIA: What kind of help are you offering?

ACE: I set up a big meeting for tonight at the Quad!

CATE: Tonight?

THIA: Good thinking!

ACE: We can publicly thank you for everything you've done to bring this crisis to our attention.

THIA: Well, I haven't done anything yet!

HOLLY: We need to have our story go national.

ACE: I'm gonna put out a blast. We'll have the entire community at the meeting.

CATE: I don't know why it has to be today —

THIA: The sooner we get the water fixed, the better.

HOLLY: Thia, this will help you. You're a cool chick, but you're a bit —

THIA: Abrasive.

HOLLY: Controversial. You need him. He's popular!

ACE: Yes, yes I am. See you tonight, student union, 8 p.m.?

THIA: You got it.

(Ace exits.)

HOLLY: Ok, Thia! We're gonna make that noise now!

THIA: Ace is a good guy, but —

HOLLY: This disaster needs to be on every voter's mind right now, and Ace is everyone's pal.

THIA: I've gotta talk to Pete first —

HOLLY: I talked to a guy at *Rolling Stone* today. They're VERY interested! When the mayor refuses to admit his guilt—

THIA: *Rolling Stone?* Look, Hol, before you go accusing anyone— (*Makes a decision. Hands her a flash drive.*) Use my report.

HOLLY: Really? Like right now?

THIA: Yeah. It's the facts. Nothing accusatory in that, is there?

HOLLY: I'm on it. (*Checks her phone.*) As soon as I get to Wi-Fi.

CATE: Ours is—uh—down.

THIA: (*To Cate quietly:*) I'll pay today.

CATE: With what?

HOLLY: I have to go back to the station anyway. Come by as soon as you can!

(Holly exits.)

THIA: Sorry, baby. But when I graduate, I'll buy you anything you want!

CATE: Never mind me. You've really started something.

THIA: Feels good to have people behind me for once.

PETE: (*Entering:*) Who have you got behind you?

THIA: The popular kids. Cate, will you excuse us?

CATE: If this is going to be one of your typical "discussions," then definitely.

(Cate exits.)

PETE: (*Angry:*) Why'd ya have to go and make all of these investigations behind my back?

THIA: I needed to be sure—

PETE: You blow your top, as usual. Using words like "corrupt," saying that we offer our visitors poison!?

THIA: How else would you describe it? The water is poisonous, whether you drink it or bathe in it!

PETE: You're saying we have to completely replace the pipes and reroute back to Lake Huron!

THIA: I don't see another way out of it, do you?

PETE: I went to see the town engineer, and jokingly asked if maybe we could make these so-called fixes somewhere down the line.

THIA: Down the line!

PETE: He as much as told me I was an idiot. Do you know what all of this would cost to fix? Fifty-five million. And that's conservative. And it would take years.

THIA: Babies can't afford years. We are being poisoned, Pete!

PETE: What do you propose, Thia? We're just starting to get Flint back on its feet! We are revitalizing downtown! The new crepe place just opened! You're going to ruin everything.

THIA: It's already ruined.

PETE: The city is considering turning off half of the electrical grid to save money. This report'll screw everything up. The city needs grants, Thia. Education, day care, senior services.

THIA: So—

PETE: Nobody in the mayor's office is convinced it's as bad as you say. The change of the water source is a fact. It's been done, it's been paid for. Possibly, the city *MIGHT* consider certain reasonable improvements, as long as it's in the budget. You haven't convinced me that there is any real danger—

THIA: The hell, Pete! People are getting sick! It's government corruption at the highest levels—

PETE: That attitude doesn't play so well to the people in power. You have to keep quiet and let me take it through the proper channels—

THIA: Won't work. Too many people already know about it. It's going to be all over social media. Michael Moore's gonna tweet about it.

PETE: No one takes Twitter seriously. (*After a pause.*) Aren't you afraid of the consequences? Think of Mari. I am trying to help you. Haven't I been slipping you and Cate money?

THIA: Yes, Pete, yes, you have—

PETE: Take my advice. Concentrate on your education! The second you get an idea in your head, you go off half-cocked about it—

THIA: I've ALWAYS had to defend myself!

PETE: That's not fair. I did the best I could.

THIA: I'm sorry. Yes, you worked your ass off to keep us together in foster care—

PETE: YOU always made it hard on yourself. And on us.

THIA: I have to tell the truth as I see it!

PETE: You have no idea how much harm you do, do you? You complained about our mother—

THIA: Moms left us home alone, Pete! How many days could we have survived on what she left in the fridge? Mari was a NEWBORN! I got us placed with people who CARED for us.

PETE: Then when Petra got in trouble—

THIA: She was being abused, I had to—

PETE: We almost lost her! Now, thanks to my hard work, we're finally pulling the family out of the gutter where YOU put us, and you're looking to destroy the city, which is giving you MONEY to become a DOCTOR!

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THIA: I'm right about the water—

PETE: We CAN'T afford this problem right now. You are going to have to take back everything you've said. Now.

THIA: Take it back—?

PETE: Yes. Before the rumors get out of hand. Tell everyone you were wrong, you don't have enough proof. It's not as dangerous as it seems.

THIA: I won't do that!

PETE: Thia, you aren't supposed to comment on politics here in Flint.

THIA: That's against my right to free speech!

PETE: As an American citizen, yes! But as a recipient of Governor Snyder's education grant, you CANNOT criticize the government without being in danger of losing the scholarship! You will OWE money already spent. How much is tuition at that fancy university? Oh wait—did you quit because you couldn't hack it?

THIA: I took a break this semester. Those people. They're different, they're privileged. I couldn't take it.

PETE: Because you always have to be right, and you can't stand it when people know more than you do.

THIA: Shut up, Pete, or I'll kick your ass.

PETE: There's my punk sister.

THIA: Where's my punk brother? Hiding under a nice suit? You're still a foster kid—no amount of money will ever erase that.

PETE: And you're a loser. You'll never make anything of yourself.

THIA: You—

(She throws a punch. Pete ducks, surprised.)

PETE: I'll have you arrested for assault!

THIA: You've cut the police back so far no one would come!

(They start to fight like kids. It's dumb. Cate rushes in.)

CATE: Stop it, both of you! Stop it!!

PETE: *(Letting go.)* Tell Thia. She's the one who gets out of control, not me.

CATE: *(Grabbing Thia.)* Thia! Baby. Calm down!

THIA: I'm not going to keep quiet, Pete. We can't let them get away with it.

PETE: Cate, you're the reasonable one, talk some sense into her!

THIA: The water is poison! You are working for filth and corruption!

PETE: I'll make sure they declare you unfit. You'll lose custody of Mari—

CATE: No! Pete! Please! Don't do that.

PETE: Try me. Isn't she getting sick? Rashes? Sounds pretty unfit to me. Maybe it's time to expose your juvie records, Thia. You're a menace to society.

(Pete exits.)

CATE: Baby, he's got the law on his side.

THIA: I have the truth on mine.

CATE: What good is the truth, if no one believes you?

THIA: They will. The PEOPLE of Flint will believe me. That's enough.

CATE: Make up with Pete.

THIA: Pete's chosen his side. I'm bringing the war into their camp.

CATE: What about your scholarship?

THIA: He can threaten me all he wants. I'm not going to fall on my knees to a corrupt government.

(Mari rushes in crying.)

MARI: Cate. Look! It happened again. *(Shows a hank of hair that has come out of her head.)* I was washing my hair, and it just came off!

THIA: Yes. Look. She's bathing in poisoned water! I'll never bow my head to that. When I'm old, I wanna look back and say "I did the right thing. Maybe not the easy thing, but the right thing."

MARI: What are we going to do?

CATE: God help us.

THIA: We don't need God. We've got the truth.

(Lights out.)

SCENE 4: FLINT NEWS STATION

HOLLY: *(Reading radio copy:)* Good morning. This is Holly Marquez for WFUM: The city warns residents that Flint water contains byproducts of disinfectants that may cause health issues, including an increased risk for cancer over time. The water is deemed safe for the general population, but the elderly and parents of young children are cautioned to consult with their doctors –

(Fade out.)

SCENE 5: MEDIA

(The college news and media station. It's a shabby place.)

HOLLY: *(Reading:)* Je-sus.

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DIZ: You reading her twitter feed?

HOLLY: Hell yes. Thia hits them pretty hard.

DIZ: Hard? She's taking a sledgehammer to the mayor's office. This is revolution!

HOLLY: If the mayor denies this, then we can take him down for his corruption. If he DOES fall in line, then we catch bigger fish: the governor. We'll be able PINPOINT corruption in each and every one of them. We'll be able to get rid of all of them.

DIZ: Like I said, man. Revolution.

(A knock at the door. Thia enters.)

Oh, things are getting juicy, now.

THIA: Let's do this. I've sent it to all the media outlets. Mari taught me how to use Snapchat – there's a fight on now!

DIZ: Knives to they throats.

THIA: I have more. A lot more.

HOLLY: More accusations?

THIA: Evidence. I talked to a lot of people over the summer, Holly. Took a lot of video. It's all here:

(Shows her laptop. She puts it on Holly's desk. They watch video.)

A VOICE ON THE LAPTOP: She's been sick for weeks. The doctors don't know what's wrong.

HOLLY: It's good. Really, really good. It's a human interest story. Kids in peril. Corruption.

THIA: Holly, you're going to be just the right person to tell the public!

DIZ: Yeah girl, this gonna make you a star and all that.

(Holly whips out her phone and starts filming. Ace enters, carrying a case of water.)

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THIA: (*To camera:*) My own brother, Pete Stockman, whose position in the mayor's office is more important to him than family ties or truth, is trying hard to shut me up. But it's my right. As. An. American. To call out BS when I see it.

ACE: Pete – Nah, Petey's a good guy. No, hey, I don't want to be on camera –

DIZ: Pete's the man, tryin' to take you down.

THIA: Then I'm gonna take him down with me!

ACE: Wait – I thought Pete was with us –

DIZ: No man, and them that ain't with us, is against us.

ACE: We have to be careful –

DIZ: (*Sings, making up a tune:*) "Revolution in the streets, it's what we're waiting for, we are The Resistance."

HOLLY: (*Under her breath:*) Ooh, that's good. I'm putting this on YouTube –

THIA: It's not just the water supply that's foul and infected!

DIZ: "We gotta resist, persist, insist, yeah –"

THIA: It's the entire government. The –

DIZ: (*Giving her the word:*) Apparatchik – (*Back to his/her song:*) "resist, persist, insist, yeah –"

THIA: Yeah, the political apparatchik –

ACE: Are you speaking Russian – !?

THIA: I see a path, a new path, for Flint. Diz, Holly, Ace! You guys should be running this town! Young people, with real vision!

DIZ: Yes ma'am, Madame Mayor!

HOLLY: Yes! We can elect a mayor on our terms.

ACE: As long as we are cautious—there won't be any real risk—

THIA: I'm not afraid to take risks, to air out the truth!

HOLLY: Maybe you *should* run for mayor, Thia.

DIZ: Hell, I'd vote for you.

HOLLY: Lots of people would.

DIZ: A hometown heroine!

HOLLY: That's good! People will buy that!

ACE: I don't think you should put that on YouTube—

THIA: (*Smiling and bowing:*) Thank you, thank you! You are true friends. Especially after what my own brother said to me— Never mind. I'll get him back— with interest!

(*A text on her phone.*)

Shoot. I forgot! I gotta pick up Mari.

HOLLY: She's so cute. She'd make a hell of a spokesperson. Would she want to make a video for us?

THIA: She'd love that! That kid's woke-er than most adults.

(*Thia exits.*)

HOLLY: Thia could not be more perfect. This is gonna be huge.

ACE: As long as she sticks to the water crisis and doesn't start digging deeper.

HOLLY: You sound scared, Ace.

ACE: I'm not scared! Cautious. I've dealt with these local guys on building the new stadium. You don't want them pissed off at you.

DIZ: But we got a legit beef—

ACE: Look. I'm trying to make sure my players have a chance to get recruited by good teams, so they can get out of this crap town. (*Indicates case of water:*) I got water to sell at the game tonight. I've got more in the car – be right back.

(He exits.)

HOLLY: Ooh, Mr. Smooth is pissed. Oh well.

DIZ: Don't we need him?

HOLLY: Nah. He's small-time. We need to think big.

DIZ: Fight the power! We need to get this out to more people.

HOLLY: Yeah. This station's reach is too small. We need a backer.

DIZ: What about Thia?

HOLLY: You crazy? She's got less than nothing.

DIZ: Timberwolf – Cate Keele's dad. He's loaded.

HOLLY: Don't count on it. He's an old-school bigot. He's not gonna back Thia. I'm surprised he even speaks to her or Cate. At least he's not about to be elected to the council.

DIZ: But he is a hornet in the council's nest. He'll scrap with anyone. They'll have their hands full, dealing with him.

(A knock on the door. Holly opens it to find Pete.)

HOLLY: (*Flustered:*) Um. UM. Well hey! Pete's here! Hey Pete!

PETE: Nice – office.

(Pete puts a fancy juice bottle on Holly's table.)

I have had an unbelievably bad day.

HOLLY: No doubt.

DIZ: Mayor getting to be too much, man?

PETE: No. It's Thia. Thia is too much. She posted on the Facebook and Twitter feeds of every city council member

demanding they do something about the "alleged" water pipe issue. Did you know she was going to do that?

HOLLY: Um— She may have mentioned something—but you know, Kim and Kanye are about to drop their collection so—

DIZ: Hey, you would know. How do you pronounce "Karegnondi"?

PETE: Karegnondi Water Authority?

DIZ: Naw, it's another Kardashian.

PETE: (*Pointing a finger at the paper Diz is holding:*) Wait. That's the report! You're going with it as real news?

DIZ: Uh— I gotta— see a dude about a dude—

(Diz exits.)

HOLLY: It's very well-researched.

PETE: C'mon—

(Ace enters carrying another box of bottled water.)

ACE: Nestle is having a huge sale on bottled water! I shoulda gotten another case. Oh, hey Pete.

PETE: Ace. Man, are you in on this nonsense too?

ACE: In on? Oh. Oh! No, no me? No I'm just dropping off supplies for the basketball team, you know.

PETE: I admire that you guys are willing to sacrifice yourselves for Thia. Must feel good. To be "Resistors."

ACE: Uh—

PETE: And it's no small sacrifice that the people of Flint are going to be called on to make. We're talking \$55 million to replace the pipes. And that's a conservative estimate.

ACE: Where the hell are we gonna find that kind of money?

PETE: Cut programs, I guess.

ACE: Jeez.

PETE: Yep. There go subsidies to the college, for downtown, for scholarships, for basketball – for college radio stations –

ACE: You can't do that!

PETE: Where else is the money supposed to come from?

HOLLY: The Feds!

PETE: For us? With our crime rate? Our – "population"? If Flint needs a new water system, Flint is gonna have to pay for it somehow.

ACE: But – Hell – We can't –!

PETE: We'll have to shut down Mott College, stop building the new stadium –

ACE: We can't lose Mott!

PETE: They won't be able to function with costs cuts for two years –

HOLLY & ACE: (*Talking over each other.*) Two years? That long? Why?

PETE: That's how long it will take to get the ball rolling on this nonsense. We are "allegedly" living in a plague spot, claiming our water is polluted –

HOLLY: Claiming?

PETE: Holly, c'mon, the city has already checked all of this out! It was vetted by the EPA! They wouldn't lie!

ACE: It's unbelievably irresponsible of Thia to be spreading these kinds of rumors!

PETE: Try and stop Thia, just try! She's – she's out of control.

ACE: Holly. You can't really be supporting this nonsense!

HOLLY: Let me think for a minute –

PETE: I know we have a few issues, but look, the mayor has a reasonable plan of action that won't cost as much. He's invested in the future. You really think — ?

HOLLY: *(A buzz on her phone.)* Thia just texted — she's coming up.

PETE: Damn it. I can't see Thia right now.

HOLLY: Go into the closet.

ACE: Quick Pete, she's coming.

PETE: Get rid of her!

(Pete goes into the closet.)

HOLLY: Pretend to be doing something, Ace!

(Thia enters with Mari. She's carrying a case of water with a sign on top of it.)

THIA: I just took some great pictures of Mari. Holding this:

(Mari holds up a "#FlintWaterCrisis" sign.)

MARI: I tweeted it to President Obama!

THIA: We're all fired up to get this out there. Are we ready to do our YouTube video?

HOLLY: Still working out the kinks, checking sources. It may be a bit.

THIA: Maybe my medical career is going to have to be put on the back burner.

HOLLY: Well —

THIA: My future is here in Flint. I don't want any fuss, though. It's not about me. It's about cleaning up our water. I'm not looking for a medal.

MARI: What if President Obama wants to give you one?

THIA: Well then —

(Cate enters with a case of water.)

CATE: Nestle is having a huge sale. The amount of plastic this generates isn't any good for the environment!

HOLLY: Cate, wow. I don't think this place is big enough—

CATE: Holly. I have a huge favor to ask you. Please, PLEASE make sure Mari's name doesn't appear on any of the news stories. In fact, don't put Thia's name on there either.

THIA: Are you out of your mind? I'm the one who is going to blow this story up!

CATE: It's not a story! It's a disaster. If your name is attached to it, our family will suffer!! Please, don't let Holly turn you into a dupe.

HOLLY: What the hell is that supposed to mean?

ACE: Wow, Cate!

THIA: I'm not a dupe—

CATE: You are, Thia! You get so carried away, you don't think. *(To Holly:)* Thia will lose all of the grant and scholarship money if her name is attached to this story. And we may lose custody of—

(She looks at Mari. Doesn't say what she is thinking. Mari is too smart to be fooled.)

MARI: Never. I'll never let them take me!

(Diz enters with a case of water.)

DIZ: Cheap water! That's what I'm talking about!

MARI: I'm staying with you, Thia!

THIA: If Pete took you, it would only put a huge red circle around the corruption he's trading in. Let him try! Plus, c'mon, I have the people of Flint behind me!

CATE: The people. My God, Thia. Which people? The people who work twelve-hour days and then just want to sit in front of the TV and watch a game? No one's got the energy to fight!

THIA: THE people! The people whose pipes are running orange, whose hair and teeth are falling out. Kitty, don't be scared. We have right on our side! We have an ironclad – (*Sees Pete's juice bottle.*) What the hell is that?

HOLLY: Crap.

THIA: I only know one person ridiculous enough to drive to Midland and pay twelve dollars for one bottle of juice.

HOLLY: Yeah –

ACE: Look here –

THIA: He came to shake you down and the second he heard I was coming, he split, right?

ACE: Yes, he's gone –

THIA: Not with (*Peers at the bottle.*) eight dollars and ninety-five cents' worth left in his bottle of juice. He's hiding somewhere –

CATE: Thia – let him be!

ACE: C'mon now –

(Thia goes to the closet door, opens it. Hands Pete his juice bottle.)

THIA: Have to drive to Midland to buy fruit juice? You must agree with me about our water, Pete. I thought you bought yourself an expensive juicer last Christmas.

CATE: Don't tease him like that –

PETE: You need to watch your damn tone, Theodosia.

THIA: My tone. Yeah, well, there's a revolution brewing, you wait and see. You'll be lucky if that pack of fools running this

city aren't run outta town tomorrow. Did you think you scared me? Nah. I don't scare easily. I got RIGHT on my side, I got the Ace—

ACE: You don't.

PETE: Holly, are you going to do this story?

HOLLY: I can't. It's against my journalistic integrity.

THIA: Your— What?

HOLLY: We can't afford to piss off the entire city with allegations.

THIA: Allegations?

HOLLY: Thia, I can't run with a story this one-sided. I need to interview the mayor, substantiate rumors—

THIA: What are you talking about? We have the facts—

HOLLY: You need real sources. We aren't TMZ—we're a serious news outlet.

THIA: You're a college radio station!

ACE: Paid for by the college and by the city.

PETE: Thank God!

HOLLY: The public pays for it, the enlightened public.

THIA: I don't have the support of the "enlightened"?

ACE: You would ruin Flint if you let outsiders think something is wrong with our water.

THIA: So, you won't back up my "claims" huh, Holly? Diz?

DIZ: (*Makes a choice.*) Nah. I'm down with YOU. I'm ya woman/man.

MARI: Me too! I'm ya woman!

CATE: Thia! This is too dangerous!

PETE: Cate's right. Hold on—just stop for a second and listen, OK? I wrote an official statement for the mayor. You back me up on this, take back everything you've alleged, we can put all the bad feelings behind us.

THIA: (*Ignoring Pete, to Holly and Ace:*) So, you'll go with whatever bull Pete is peddling, and you'll stifle the truth. Fine. How much would it cost for me to get airtime as a sponsor?

HOLLY: You'd have to be approved by the underwriters, Thia, and they won't approve you.

ACE: Your heart's in the right place—

CATE: You have to consider the consequences.

THIA: Give me my thumb drive.

(Holly reluctantly gives it back.)

MARI: (*Struggles to pick up the cases of water.*) I'm taking our water!

THIA: No, Mari, leave it. They'll need it. We'll start a water donation drive at Mott. (*To everyone else:*) Don't fret, y'all. I'm no dummy. I was trying to do it legit, but, you know, a person is only one hashtag away from starting a revolution nowadays.

DIZ: Nobody listens to the radio anymore anyway.

THIA: We're gonna get EVERYBODY in this town on the same page.

PETE: How you gonna do that?

THIA: Don't you worry about that. Diz?

DIZ: You got it, girl.

THIA: Us street rats have our way, you know. Maybe you forget that, Pete— Not everyone in this town is corrupt, unethical, backbiting. Lots of people want to do what's right.

DIZ: We'll see you at the quad tonight.

PETE: You'll get kicked out.

THIA: I'm going to scream it from the rooftops if I have to.

HOLLY: No one's going to listen to you, without proof. Not even your own girlfriend backs you — *(Gestures at Cate.)*

CATE: *(Sad, but resolute:)* I'll always have your back, Thia.

MARI: Me too!

THIA: Street kids know how to make some noise. Grab your cans, Diz. Tag the whole city. Let everyone know: there's a meeting tonight. Mott quad. There's gonna be a riot, Pete. I hope you and your cop buddies are prepared.

(Thia exits. Diz bows with a flourish and grabs a bag of spray cans.)

DIZ: The revolution is here, man.

(Diz exits.)

MARI: *(Straight up to Pete:)* "The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them!" You got problems, big bro.

(Mari exits.)

CATE: Mari, wait — You know she's right, Pete. Do the right thing. For your family —

(Cate hurries out after Mari.)

PETE: Damn it. Out of control!

(He's left with Holly and Ace. They turn to each other and start plotting.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE 6: TOWN HALL

(We hear the hissing sound of spray cans, then the sound of a bubbling stream and children playing. The sound changes into

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the sound of children crying. The sound gets louder, and becomes a rhythm for Diz's words.)

(The quad at Gilfrey Creek, Mott Community College, Flint. Diz is standing on the stage. S/He has set up mics and there are homemade signs that say "#FlintWaterCrisis," Average bill \$140 a month, poison added free!", "Not your Lab Rats," "Thirsty for Justice" and more.)

DIZ: *(Spoken word poem:)* You want to talk about the crime rate?

Yeah, it's too late.

You overrate.

The state— Of our city.

That's the crime, it's not pretty.

What do we need for life?

Water.

For the working folks it's better than wine,

And this line,

it's dyin'—

Poison, poison in the river,

come out,

No life giver.

It's in our blood.

Lead, know what that is?

Take away your brain,

Make you insane

and the truth, it's plain—

See Flint's dyin' 'cause rich folks think we're weak,

Won't speak out and say "not today."

It's not OK.

Our life you won't take away.

We reclaim our space,

Our worth.

On earth, in space.

It's a race.

To live.

(The commons are full of people laughing, chatting, eating, fighting. [Note: if done with a small cast, the voices can be recorded.])

PERSON 1: I'm here! What's all the ruckus?

PERSON 2: Hey Ronnie! I thought you couldn't make it!

PERSON 1: Dude, I never miss a dust-up.

PERSON 3: Didja bring a whistle?

PERSON 2: Hell yes.

PERSON 4: What's going on?

PERSON 5: Why is it so crowded? I need to study.

PERSON 3: Thia Stockman's got something to say!

ALL: Thia. Oh. This'll be good. *(Etc.)*

PERSON 4: She never shut up in high school.

PERSON 5: She thinks she's better than us.

PERSON 2: She is!

PERSON 1: Perfect SATs.

PERSON 3: Couldn't get out fast enough on that scholarship.

PERSON 4: Now she's back to tell us what's wrong with us.

PERSON 1: She's cool.

PERSON 3: I can't stand that b—

(Pete gets up on the makeshift stage. He is greeted with boos and cheers equally. He's tried to dress down for the occasion, but he's too stylish.)

DIZ: Yo, everyone! Thanks for coming out! As you can see from the signs, we WILL be filming today.

(Crowd cheers, clowns for the camera.)

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So if you don't want to be on TV, leave now.

(No one leaves.)

PERSON 1: *(Getting rowdy:)* Let's go!

PERSON 2: I'ma be famous!

PERSON 3: Hi Ma!

(Thia, Cate, and Mari enter to whispers.)

DIZ: There's Thia now!

(Mix of approval/disapproval noises from the crowd. Thia takes the stage. She is dressed like a street rat, in contrast to Pete's conservative look. They nod to each other.)

PETE: I think we need a neutral party up here. OK? I'm going to ask the captain of the basketball team, "Ace" Anderson. OK with you guys?

PERSON 4: Ace! Yo Ace—

PERSON 5: Naw not that dude—

PERSON 1: He knows what's what.

THIA: Fine.

(Loud applause as Ace takes his place onstage.)

ACE: Hey all! Go Bears!

(Cheers and a few boos.)

Let's not get too excited, OK?

HOLLY: *(Tweeting:)* Ace Anderson to moderate on #Flintwatercrisis.

(Everyone in the crowd's phones buzz or ding and they check the Twitter. They agree and "Like" the post.)

ACE: OK everyone! Shut up please. Who's going to start?

PERSON 2: Will you guys pipe down?

PERSON 3: Shut up.

ACE: (*Consulting with Pete:*) Uh— Pete Stockman will address the meeting.

THIA: Very professional, Ace.

ACE: Uh— thanks?

PETE: You all know that I love my sister— we've always been close, and hell, I KNOW she is smarter than I am.

(The crowd laughs. People shout "No" and "Yes.")

But look, this kind of half-assed shoddy, internet sensation-style information campaign is not going to do anybody any good.

PERSON 4: Fight! Fight!

PETE: I'm not here to fight! Check it, if you go after the city council or Governor Snyder to do something about the water, there goes our new basketball court, there go heating subsidies, and we may lose funding for the college.

(Sounds of disapproval.)

All due respect, Thia. Yeah, you're brilliant, you could've gone to Stanford and you chose to stay local.

PERSON 5: Why the hell would anyone stay here?

PETE: It's not just about the water. You're trying to start a revolution! But you can't take the whole town down with you. We'll lose everything.

HOLLY: I've been doing some digging, you know, going back on certain Facebook posts and certain emails I've seen from Thia. I feel like we've been misled.

THIA: I never misled you.

HOLLY: I represent Flint in the paper, online, on the TV. And I realize that it seems like I side with the liberals on most

issues. But you know, I have learned to listen to my conservative brothers and sisters. I think that as a JOURNALIST, it's my responsibility to proceed with caution.

ACE: Good for you, Holly.

HOLLY: Thia hasn't gathered a coalition. She's just plunged ahead without the FACTS. It's my duty to find out the truth!

(Voices in the crowd agree.)

It's hard! Thia and I have been friends since the third grade! She makes sure I get food when, you know, the cupboards are a little bare. Thia is a wonderful person! But I also know that she is led by the heart and not the head!

(More vocal crowd agreement.)

I want to stop her for the good of the community, but also for her own good –

THIA: Stick to the water supply!

HOLLY: *(To Thia:)* You're opening up a can of worms! Isn't it true you might lose custody of your little sister?

MARI: Does she mean me, Cate?

CATE: Yes, sweetie. She means you.

THIA: Leave my sister out of it. You guys wanna take me on, fine. I don't scare easily. I wasn't going to talk about the water crisis at all. I have something else I'd like to say.

PETE: Jesus, what now?

DRUNK PERSON: Hey, when does the band come on? I thought tonight was a concert. This is all bulls –

PERSON 1: Shut up –

PERSON 2: Shh –

THIA: Ask yourselves: WHY are they trying to silence *me*? This isn't Russia—it's FLINT, Michigan, United States of America! I have a First Amendment right to free-damn-speech.

DIZ: That's right, my friends!

(Martin Keele slips into the crowd.)

THIA: I've thought and thought about what I was going to say to you all today, my friends, my people. And I think what I'm going to say will mean more to you than the fact that our water supply is poisoned.

PETE: That's an allegation.

THIA: This entire community is living in a web of lies and deceit.

(Crowd murmurs angrily.)

PETE: That's a hell of a thing to say —

THIA: I love Flint. I do. I was raised here. I have roots here. Flint is full of wonderful, caring people. People who give you the clothes off their backs when you are in need. It's not like that in the big cities.

PETE: *(Sotto voce:)* You didn't last long in Chicago.

THIA: But see, there is the colossal stupidity of the authorities in this little community.

PETE: Like me, right?

THIA: The city is accepting money from a government that is POISONING its own people. Tweet that! Send that out on social media! Because it's true!

PETE: All of a sudden you're a preacher?

THIA: Look at my own beloved brother, a social climber since he was old enough to be jealous of the other kids 'cause they had Nikes and his shoes were from Walmart—

DRUNK PERSON: Hey! I don't shop for no shoes at no Walmart!

PERSON 3: Kick him out!

THIA: He's turned into a parasite who takes advantage of hard working people!

PERSON 4: True, that's true!

THIA: But you know who I REALLY blame for our problems?? You know who? YOU! ALL OF YOU!

(Crowd gets angry.)

You complain you're poor, you got no work, can't make your mortgage. And then you go down to the bar and drown your sorrows, instead of engaging with the process! How many of you voted in the last election?

PERSON 2: *(Shamefaced.)* I forgot.

PERSON 3: It doesn't matter anyway.

PERSON 1: No one cares.

PERSON 3: She thinks she's better than us, you see?

PETE: Thia, don't—

THIA: YOU have the power get our city out of the hands of the corrupt politicians. To vote! You, you—whiners! For you it's all NIMBY and apathy and reality TV. It's YOUR fault our water is poisoned! The buck stops with the people!

(There is an uproar. Talking, yelling. Lots of sounds of tweeting and ping-pong as everyone takes to social media with their outrage.)

ACE: You need to apologize, Thia!

THIA: Hell no. I won't. You're a bunch of sheep!

HOLLY: The people have the right to not vote.

THIA: That is a lie, and some of us are smart enough to see it. It's your obligation as American citizens to stay engaged in the process!

HOLLY: You're a snob, Thia.

MARI: (*Climbs onstage.*) No she's not! People died for women, African-Americans, for everybody to have the right to vote!

CATE: Mari, don't stand in front of the cameras!

THIA: I'm not wasting any more breath on small-minded people! I am calling on all of you out there to embrace the need to do your part to run the government!

HOLLY: So now you're a socialist?

THIA: I want a revolution!!

PETE: You'll never get anywhere without the majority behind you, and it looks like you've pissed off a lot of people.

(Crowd makes noises of agreement.)

THIA: By telling them the truth? (*To the crowd:*) Don't believe the lies! Think for yourselves. Get off your damn phones!

ACE: You're pretty far from the topic –

HOLLY: What lies? What lies are we so gullible to believe?

(Anger in the crowd.)

Want to read the entire script? Order a perusal copy today!