

"FEBRUARY"

A screenplay for a feature film

Draft 1 by

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"FEBRUARY"

FADE IN:

EXT. LEKKI-EPE EXPRESSWAY - NIGHT

An expensive grey SUV is roughly parked inches away from a white commercial two-storey building. The vehicle is COMPLETELY wrecked -- with a shattered windscreen, broken headlights, minor dents and scratches to the doors, deflated tyres, and a bonnet RIPPED open, revealing a running engine oozing out thick black fumes. The air-bags are blown open.

Screen Caption: FEBRUARY 14, 2016 11:01 PM

A Couple, whose faces aren't revealed to the Screen, lay MOTIONLESS in the car, covered in their own blood.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAGOS ISLAND - SERIES OF ESTABLISHING SHOTS

A) King's College with students in sparkling-white uniform, loitering about the veranda.

B) Catholic Mission Street with private vehicles and yellow commercial tricycles prying speedily along the neatly tarred road.

C) The French Gothic style architecture of the Holy Cross Cathedral with a few worshippers praying before the grotto.

D) The ever-busy Lagos City Hall.

E) The multi-level parking lot of Saint Nicholas Hospital.

EXT. ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - MORNING - ESTABLISHING

Establishing shot of St. Nicholas House -- a white fourteen-storey mixed-use high-rise building. The private hospital spans the first five floors of the commercial building.

Screen Caption: FEBRUARY 15, 2016 11:32 AM (PRESENT DAY)

Screen Caption: ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL, LAGOS-ISLAND

Private vehicles, commercial tricycles, and YELLOW cabs with BLACK horizontal stripes painted across their sides, pry SPEEDILY and dangerously along the busy Campbell Street, linking to the main entrance of the building.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

You may need to come back later,
sir. The patient is stable and
responding to treatment, but she
isn't awake yet.

FEMI (O.S.)

Don't worry I will wait.

An EMPTY white ambulance, completely buried in the faint shadow of the tall building, is PARKED on the tarred road of the Street, and very close to the entrance of the outpatient clinic on the ground floor. Female nurses in clean uniform are outside the building, heading for the entrance, chitchatting with one another and laughing.

There's a large blue signboard just above the main entrance, which reads: "ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL".

INT. RECEPTION HALL, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

A NEAT, ORDERLY and somewhat QUIET king-size room.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

It may take several hours.

FEMI (O.S.)

It's alright, I've got all day.
Just don't forget to let me
know when she's awake.

An old lady, finely-wrinkled, probably in her mid-70s, completely grey-haired, wearing an old-fashion eye glasses with a black plastic frame and thick large lenses, is being pushed across the Screen, on a wheel chair, by a young female NURSE, who's neatly dressed in a sparkling-clean white uniform.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

Okay, sir. Please do have a seat.

We arrive at a dashingy-handsome gentleman, definitely in his early-30s, NEATLY dressed in a clean Nigeria Police uniform, blue shirt and black trouser, essentially decorated. The three red 'V's on his short sleeves indicate that the young chap is a SERGEANT in the Nigeria Police Force.

The Officer is RESTLESSLY seated on one of the many benches where families of patients are IMPATIENTLY waiting -- some of them are in GRIEF, others are in TEARS, but many of them are overwhelmed with ANXIETY, without any verbal interaction with anyone.

On one of the benches is a gentleman on a blue shirt and a grey trouser, swiping the screen of a sleek tablet, with his eyes glued to the screen. Next to him is an exhausted lady dressed in a native purple attire, dozing off. Behind them is a robust woman dressed in Ankara, speaking to herself in despair.

There is a vending machine at one corner of the room filled with wrapped foods and bottled drinks. Next to the vending machine is a bronze sculpture of the Late Nigerian gynecologist, obstetrician, and federal health minister, Moses Majekodunmi -- the founder of the hospital. In front of the rows of benches is a beautifully lit mini-grocery store with an equally beautiful female store attendant reading a stripped copy of Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart, while wearing an enchanting smile.

EXT. IKOYI - SERIES OF ESTABLISHING SHOTS

- A) The head office of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency.
- B) The white and brown two-storey building of the Lagos Preparatory School.
- C) The empty premises of the Church of The Assumption, Falomo.
- D) The quiet atmosphere of St. Georges Boys & Girls School.
- E) The eight-storey high-rise mixed-use Mulliner Towers.

EXT. NIGERIA POLICE STATION - SAME TIME - ESTABLISHING

Establishing shot of the Nigeria Police station at Awolowo Road, Ikoyi-Lagos -- a grey one-storey building, with the usual Police blue, yellow, and green stripes painted across its length, within a reasonably spacious compound. The compound walls are painted SAME colors. Police Officers in uniform are littered all over the interlocked compound - in bulletproof, dressed in camouflage, mostly with weapons in one arm, walking slowly in groups, chitchatting with one another, or standing put, dialoguing with civilians.

Screen Caption: THE NIGERIA POLICE STATION, IKOYI-LAGOS

A blue Police METRO PATROL van is PARKED in front of the station and along the TARRED road, with its engine STILL running. Two officers are in the van - one on the driver's seat, and the other seated on one of the two long benches in the back of the van, dressed in a mobile Police uniform, with an AK-47 rifle in his possession. They seem to be patiently waiting, maliciously, for someone to arrive, or for something to happen.

Just behind the patrol van is a private blue truck with impounded motorcycles jam-packed in its carriage. There was a signboard that strictly prohibited loitering, hawking and parking.

INT. INCIDENT ROOM, NIGERIA POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

A mini-size room with a small desk at one corner, and rough piles of paperback files defacing the top.

The chair behind the desk is empty. Behind the counter are two junior Officers NEATLY dressed in complete black Police uniform. A CORPORAL with two red 'V's attached to his sleeves, and a SERGEANT with three. The Corporal's name-tag reads: "KUNLE ADEYEMO", while that of the Sergeant reads: "TEGA OGBEGBO".

TEGA, physically unimpressive, rugged, not handsome, not ugly -- just plain. Rebellious, rude, and out-spoken, in his mid-30s.

KUNLE, gentle-faced, late-20s.

Far behind the Officers is a ratty detention cell, with HALF-NAKED men standing barefoot, oozing foul odor, FUTILELY squeezing their faces through the narrow spaces between the vertical rusty bars that jails them.

PRISONER #1
(to the Officers)
Chair, how long I go dey here?

TEGA
(without turning to
the Prisoner)
Until person come bail you
out. Meanwhile I no wan hear
fem for there.
(to Kunle)
Where Femi dey?

Kunle is scribbling on an A4 paper, lifting words from another document. He is LEFT-HANDED.

KUNLE (still
scribbling)
I don't know.

Indistinct conversations between the prisoners are being heard.

TEGA
(hisses; re: Femi)
Oga give others better partner.
My own na waka waka.
(to Kunle)
Abeg, you get credit for phone
make I use am call Femo?

KUNLE
(curtly)
I don't.

TEGA
You no go ever get, in Jesus'
Name. (bows his head quickly)
Amen!

Tega's cursing halts Kunle's writing. Kunle pauses, slowly looks away from the paper, and glances at Tega disapprovingly.

KUNLE

(vexed)

You asked me a question and I answered. So why are you cursing me?

TEGA

(angrily)

If you talk for there again I go sand you. E be like say you no sabi your mate for here again.

Kunle reverts to his routine without any further utterance. Tega dips his hand into his trouser pocket and pulls out an OLD-FASHION phone. He fiddles with the stiff keypads for a bit before raising the phone to his ear.

BACK TO:

INT. RECEPTION HALL, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

A phone call comes through, as the Officer's phone is INDISTINCTLY heard ringing. CLOSE ON a white plastic name-tag pinned to his uniform, just above his left breast pocket, which reads: "FEMI KOLAWOLE".

FEMI appears to be ABSENT-MINDED, staring at the STRAIGHT face of the Hospital RECEPTIONIST, with his face wrinkled by a FROWN, hoping that shortly it would be time to gain entry to interview one of the patients currently receiving treatment at the hospital.

The Receptionist fails to make any VISUAL contact with Femi. She is comfortably seated behind a busy desk, chewing gum, and ROUTINELY stroking the keys of the keyboard, while PERPETUALLY staring into the bright Computer monitor in front of her.

FEMI

(to himself; re:
Receptionist)

Who give this kin' woman job for hospital? How person go dey chew gum for work? I sure say she no even go school finish. Person know person na wetin full this country.

INT. INCIDENT ROOM, NIGERIA POLICE STATION - SAME TIME

Tega is IMPATIENTLY listening to the dialing tune of his phone.

TEGA
(restless; re: Femi)
O boy, pick up.

BACK TO:

INT. RECEPTION HALL, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Femi's attention is finally brought to his ringing phone as he feels a mild vibration within his right trouser pocket. He whines:

FEMI
Na who me and am dey share
phone? (sighs)
Who dey always reduce the volume
of this my phone sef?

He dips his right hand into his trouser pocket and reveals his phone, which is still indistinctly playing his ring-tone.

FEMI (CONT'D)
(sighs louder; re: Tega)
This wahala boy again.

Close on the phone's screen, which reads: "TEGA IS CALLING...". Femi forcefully pushes down the GREEN answer button with his thumb, and steadily raises the phone up to his right ear.

FEMI (CONT'D)
(greet in Yoruba)
Bawo ni.

Screen Translation:
Hello.

His attention is now completely drawn away from the Receptionist, who takes a quick glance at him.

TEGA (O.S.)
(telephone voice)
Some people come station today
dey fin' you. E be like say them
landlord wan pursue them commot
house.

FEMI
(aggressively)
No mind those yeye peopl. Them no
dey ever talk true for them
miserable life. Their landlord don
give them six months, say make
them fin' money pay their house
rent or make them pack them load
commot him house. Them just dey
fin' free house for Lagos so.

Femi appears COMPLETELY soaked in the phone conversation.

TEGA (O.S.)
(telephone voice)
If na so, make them pack
them things commot. Shu!

FEMI (over-
confidently)
No wahala. When I reach station, I
go carry you and Kunle go pack
them things throwway. Their village
never full.

INT. INCIDENT ROOM, NIGERIA POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Tega lifts his left hand up, close to his face, and glances quickly at the face of his brown leather wristwatch TIGHTLY fastened around his wrist. Close on the face of his wristwatch. The time is 12:03pm.

TEGA
Where you dey so? Twelve don
knack already.

FEMI (O.S.)
(telephone voice)
I dey for that hospital.

TEGA
Yes! yes!! yes!!! I don
remember. You don see the woman
wey get accident?

BACK TO:

INT. RECEPTION HALL, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Femi's attention is brought back to the Receptionist before him. His eyes are LOCKED on her every move, as she stared hard into the blinding monitor before her.

FEMI
(hisses)
Them say she dey fine, but she
never wake. I just dey wait
make she wake, make she tell me
how everything take happen.

Femi pauses for a while, listening to Tega via the phone, before bidding farewell:

FEMI (CONT'D)
Later.

INT. INCIDENT ROOM, NIGERIA POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Tega is now buried in the shadow of someone off-camera -- standing before him, across the counter.

TEGA

Later.

Tega lowers his phone, stares ahead at the phone's screen, and disconnect the call with his thumb. He looks on to Kunle, rolls his eyes at him, and sighs.

TEGA (CONT'D)

(to Kunle)

God pass you. I don use my
bonus airtime call finish.

Kunle is still writing. He doesn't make any visual contact with Tega.

BACK TO:

INT. RECEPTION HALL, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

Femi lowers his phone, and stares at its screen until the call is disconnected. He sighs HEAVILY as he drops his head down in exhaustion, staring at the nicely-finished floor of the hall, with his phone still in the FIRM grip of his right hand.

INT. INCIDENT ROOM, NIGERIA POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Tega looks on to someone off-camera.

TEGA

(smiles)

What can I do for you, sir?

COMPLAINANT

(O.S.) (in a voice
laced with panic)

I was just robbed, and the
robbers carted away with my car
and my money.

Tega's smile instantaneously fades away.

TEGA

(in a serious tone)

How much, and what's your
car model, sir?

Now we see who Tega is talking to: A HUGE good-looking man, mid-50s, dressed in an EXPENSIVE-LOOKING white Yoruba attire.

COMPLAINANT

Two point five million naira, and
a two thousand and fifteen Range
Rover.

TEGA

(exclaims in Urhobo)
Oghene!

Screen Translation:
God!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RECEPTION HALL, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

Femi's phone beeps twice with a WARNING of 'low battery'.

Screen Caption: FEBRUARY 15, 2016 12:43 PM

FEMI

(sighs)
Na wa oh! See phone wey I charge
full for night, na wetin dey
show battery low. All these new
new phones dem.

FEMI (CONT'D)

(with a frown)
Expensive rubbish!

He puts his phone away into his right trouser pocket.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

You can now go in, sir. Wing C,
Room number Seven. The seventh
door on your left. Patient is now
awake. No interrogation, please.

FEMI

(grumbles)
Na who this one think say she dey
follow talk sef? If I light am
one, them go say Femi don start.

Femi lifts himself GRACEFULLY, stands on both feet,
carefully adjusts his uniform to perfection, without eyeing
the Receptionist, GALLANTLY makes his way to the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Femi DANCES as he walks through the long and somewhat EMPTY
hallway with his eyes locked on the labels of every room
door, and his face crafted in DELIGHT.

Close on his WELL-POLISHED black Valentino leather shoes, as they move in rhythmical African dance patterns.

FEMI

(sings in the same tune
as Wizkid's 'Jaiye
Jaiye' song)

Femi, bad policeman. I dey catch
corny man. Ahh you already know.
I crack every case...

He lifts his now tightly FISTED hands up, close to his face, throwing them back and forth like a professional boxer guarding his face in a boxing ring from the punches of an opponent, waiting patiently for the perfect opportunity to swing a winning punch.

FEMI (CONT'D)

(celebrates)

Ah! Femi you too much...
(continues singing in the
same tune as earlier)
You for become musician...

Femi is happily in OBLIVION that he fails to notice two young female nurses walking behind him, in indistinct laughter.

INT. ROOM 7, WING C, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

PAN ACROSS a white, sanitized, medium-size room with two quality flower paintings hanging on the wall behind the bed head. A white two layer cabinet with a basket of red roses is planted on one side of the bed. A desk telephone is rooted next to the flower basket. On the other side of the bed is a black luxury leather armchair.

CHIOMA, a young OVERLY-BEAUTIFUL lady, late-20s, with worn-off make-up, and a long UNCOMBED hair, sobs in CONFUSION. She is kept warm by a thick white and blue blanket, as a needle runs partly into a vein on her right hand, injecting fluid inside her body. She is still receiving intensive medical treatment after been involved in a FATAL motor accident last night.

Close on small healing scars engraved on her face, Chioma's eyes circle around the corners of the room, trying to FORCEFULLY embrace her new environment. We have a glimpse of the vision of her wandering eyes.

Chioma tries to speak out, but the words steaming on her tongue fails to break free through her gritted teeth.

CHIOMA

(groans in pain)

Ah!

A teardrop rolls FREELY, down her left cheek.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LEKKI-EPE EXPRESSWAY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Chioma is HEATEDLY arguing with a man. The man is behind the steering wheel, while Chioma is seated on the front passenger's seat. The car is intentionally stirred off the expressway, and RAMMED into a wall by the driver.

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

CUT BACK TO:

INT. ROOM 7, WING C, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Chioma tries to get up from the bed in defense against the tormenting flashback lurking around her. Femi walks into the room through the doorway. Chioma groans in excruciating pain:

CHIOMA

Ah!!!

FEMI

Oh no, don't get up. You
will reopen your stitches.

Femi walks further into the room, straight towards the bed, and helps Chioma to lay down on her back.

CHIOMA

(softly)
Where am I?

Chioma lays back flat. Femi stands tall, over her.

FEMI

(with same softness)
You are at Saint Nicholas Hospital.
You were brought here early this
morning after been involved in a
motor accident last night. You lost
a lot of blood before getting here,
so you're indeed lucky to be alive.

Femi pauses for a short while before speaking again, using the time to appreciate the natural beauty of the agonizing lady.

FEMI (CONT'D)

(unknowingly)
You are very beauti...

He swallows the rest of his unprofessional comment.

CHIOMA
(with a half-
frown) What???

Femi lifts his head up in embarrassment, trying to avoid any further visual contact with her. Looking straight ahead, he speaks in a steady tone:

FEMI
I meant to say that you're
very lucky to be alive.

He fails to lower his head down again, in a bid to avoid staring at Chioma in the eye. She stares up at him for a while, saying nothing. She breaks into a SUBTLE smile after observing the discomfort the Officer has been cast into.

CHIOMA
(still smiling)
What day is it?

Chioma's question sort of dispelled the embarrassment enveloping the gentleman, as he lowers his head down again to catch a quick and pleasing sight of beauty before him.

FEMI
(in relief)
It's February fifteenth.
You've been in coma for hours.

INT. HALLWAY, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

A DOCTOR walks smartly along the hallway leading to Chioma's hospital room. How to describe him? Healthy-looking would come to mind, which in fact, he is. A HEALTHY-LOOKING white man, average height, bald-headed, with scanty grey-hair growth, appears to be in his late 50s, wearing a GLISTENING white laboratory coat, unbuttoned completely, revealing a yellow shirt and a stethoscope hanging around his neck.

BACK TO:

INT. ROOM 7, WING C, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Femi lifts his left hand to his face, and glances SHARPLY at the face of his gold wristwatch LOOSELY wrapped around his wrist, and dangling about.

FEMI
It's past one.

CHIOMA
(in shock)
I was in coma?

Chioma is no longer at ease. Though she is acting calm, she really doesn't know where she is, or if she could trust Femi. She pauses for a while, saying nothing.

CHIOMA
(CONT'D) (in panic)
Wait a minute, where's Uche?!

The doctor marched in through the doorway.

DOCTOR
(to Chioma; in a fancy
British accent)
How are you doing, madam?

Chioma can smell it all over the sterile air -- Uche didn't make it alive.

CHIOMA
(demands harshly)
I asked, where is Uche?

Chioma tries to get up.

DOCTOR
Please don't, madam.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
I won't advice you to do that.
You need rest. A lot of rest.
That's the only way the hospital
would be able to discharge you
tomorrow morning.

The doctor gently helps Chioma lay down back. He listens to her heartbeat with his stethoscope, after which he runs a general checkup.

DOCTOR
(CONT'D) (to Chioma)
The good news is that you're
stable and your body is
recuperating miraculously.

Chioma's eyes are locked on Femi who could feel the orbs on her face piercing through his skin, but he averts his own gaze.

FEMI
(to Chioma)
Like the doctor said, you need
rest. I promise to answer any
question you have, as long as
you promise me you'll stay calm.

Femi refuses to meet her gaze and this makes her restless. Instead, he steps away from her burning glare and quietly sits on the edge of the bed.

MILDLY, he pulls Chioma's left hand in between his coarse palms. Her eyes are QUICKLY locked on the sight of Femi's hands caressing hers.

INT. INCIDENT ROOM, NIGERIA POLICE STATION - SAME TIME

Kunle is standing upright, in front of the detention cell, with a long red hardcover notebook in his hands. He flicks the cover open and flips rapidly through the pages until he is at the middle of the leaves. He stops flipping shortly and browses through the content of the page before his eyes.

His eyes freezes before he begins to call out the names of detainees present in the cell.

KUNLE

(searching for someone
off-camera)

Dare!

PRISONER #2 (O.S.)

Present!

He looks down into the notebook.

KUNLE

Segun!

PRISONER #3 (O.S.)

Present!

KUNLE

Where are you? Let me see you!

Kunle searches for someone off-camera, again, for a BRIEF moment, then looks away, down into the notebook.

KUNLE (CONT'D)

Hassan!

Nobody answers. He calls out again:

KUNLE (CONT'D)

(looking off-camera)

Hassan!!

Still no answer.

KUNLE (CONT'D)

Where's that aboki?

PRISONER #4 (O.S.)

Him dey sleep.

KUNLE
(re: Hassan)
I hope he's not dead.

Prisoners laugh. Kunle shortly joins them.

TEGA (O.S.)
Kunle, if Oga ask of me, tell
am say I don go join Femi for
hospital.

KUNLE
(to Tega)
Okay.

Tega SMARTLY heads out of the station through the exit,
while Kunle continues his call.

KUNLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Fabian!

BACK TO:

INT. ROOM 7, WING C, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

Chioma yanks her hand away from Femi's LOOSE grip.

In an attempt to dodge the embarrassment drifting his way,
Femi quickly snakes his hands away from her, straight into
his trouser pockets, gets up, and paces towards the doctor,
and speaks in hushed tones.

FEMI
(re: Chioma)
How's she doing?

DOCTOR
(to Femi)
She is miraculously recovering.
Within the next twenty-four hours,
with the necessary rest needed,
she should be out of here, and
back to her normal life.

FEMI
(looking worried)
But I need to talk to her right
now. To find out what she
remembers from last night.

DOCTOR
Sure, go ahead, but don't push her
too hard to remember everything.
These things take time. You know,
she's still fragile.

The pair smile and shake hands before the doctor slips out the doorway, shutting the door behind him, and leaving the two alone in silence.

INT. HALLWAY, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

The doctor HURRIEDLY walks down the hallway, back through the path he came from. He shakes his head sideways, with pity.

DOCTOR
(re: Chioma)
Poor girl.

BACK TO:

INT. ROOM 7, WING C, ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

Growing tension fills the room as Femi and Chioma stares long and hard at each other.

CHIOMA (inquires
very calmly)
You said you will answer any
question I have... So where's Uche?

Femi walks closer to the bed, and responds almost in a whisper.

FEMI
I'm so sorry.

CHIOMA
It's alright.

FEMI
(surprised)
It's alright?

CHIOMA
You held my hand to comfort me.
It's okay. I understand.

Femi's face crosses from SURPRISED to AGITATED.

FEMI
No, I'm not apologizing for
holding your hand.

Chioma's face is quickly baked with wrinkles.

FEMI (CONT'D)
Of course I'm apologizing for
that too...
(stutters)
But, but, but.. I'm also
apologizing because Uche
didn't make it alive.

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