NOWHERE TO TURN

Shooting script

Written by Jenna Reilly BLACK SCREEN

DISCLAIMER: "This film contains content that mentions sexual violence and suicide, as well as replicates the experiences of PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Viewer discretion is advised."

BLACK SCREEN

TYPING.

TITLE CARD: "NOWHERE TO TURN"

OPEN ON:

1 INT. EVALUATION ROOM - DAY

1

HARLEY (20, female) timidly looks around the room and sits on a chair.

The walls are bare except for a diploma and photo of a doctor. There are plants neatly placed under them. Behind her are medical instruments and educational posters on cleanliness and disease.

DOCTOR SMITH enters.

DOCTOR SMITH

Harley Walsh...

HARLEY

Yes.

He sits across from Harley and types on his laptop. He wears a white lab coat. Doctor Smith doesn't look up at her.

He checks his watch. She notices him do this.

DOCTOR SMITH

It's nice to meet you, I'm Doctor Adrian Smith.

He scrolls, his eyes search the computer screen.

DOCTOR SMITH (CONT'D)

Ah, here you are.

DOCTOR SMITH (CONT'D)

So beyond your yearly check-up...

He types, and looks up at her.

DOCTOR SMITH (CONT'D)

...why did you schedule this appointment?

HARLEY

I'm here because I haven't been
feeling the best...
 (struggles to admit)

...mentally.

DOCTOR SMITH

I see.

He types on his computer, then looks back up.

DOCTOR SMITH (CONT'D)

Tell me about your symptoms and experiences.

Harley looks to her hands in her lap as she plays with one of her rings. Then to Doctor Smith who stares at her.

She takes a breath.

HARLEY

Uhh...well, it's been going on for a while now.

Doctor Smith looks back down and types. The typing diverts her eyes to the computer. But she looks away and continues.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

A form of it, at least.

MATCH CUT: BLURRED FOCUS TO BLURRED FOCUS TRANSITION.

2 INT. COLLEGE DORM - NIGHT

2

Harley slumps into the corner of a room, lights around her flash, there is a party of people, but she is alone.

Back against the wall, her friend MAE offers her a joint.

MAE

(muffled)

You want more?

Harley joins her at the edge of the window.

Mae goes to the window to smoke. Deep in thought, Harley stares out in front of her.

HARLEY (V.O.)

I realized that my thought patterns and...moods weren't considered normal.

3 INT. EVALUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

3

Doctor Smith types on his computer across from Harley.

DOCTOR SMITH

What patterns?

HARLEY

I guess, how I saw things... And how I...live for little distractions.

4 INT. COLLEGE DORM - CONTINUOUS

4

Harley takes a big hit and breathes out the smoke. An attractive girl, ALEX (20s, female) catches her eye across the room.

DOCTOR SMITH (V.O.)

(slightly distorted)

Distractions from what?

Harley's eye line is stolen by the emergence of a blue light. It comes from a creaked door across the room. A calm, familiar fear hits Harley's demeanor as she keeps looking at it.

HARLEY (V.O.)

Feelings?

The blue light turns an eerie dark blue.

HARLEY (V.O.)

(decrescendo whisper)

Hopelessness. Numbness. Everything.

A man's hand with a banded ring on the index finger slowly starts to open from inside.

Harley's face shows a paralyzed but familiar fear. It has her undivided attention.

DOCTOR SMITH (V.O.)

Were these feelings present at all times?

HARLEY (V.O.)

As long as I can remember.

Harley snaps out of it when Alex passes by the door and takes her attention back.

The hand slips back into the door.

Harley stares at Alex, who wears a jacket. Alex looks at her, Harley looks away as not to stare, then back again. Alex cracks a smile. Harley smiles back.

HARLEY (V.O.)

I found things that would take me away.

Alex smiles a last time then leaves the party with a group of her friends (20s). Harley's attention falls to the ground...

HARLEY (V.O.)

But I realized...

...then back to the blue lit door.

HARLEY (V.O.)

...the feeling always comes back.

Harley's fear grows more paralyzing in her face, she is visibly uncomfortable.

The entire room's lights fade to light blue then into dark.

MATCH CUT: BLURRED FOCUS TO BLURRED FOCUS TRANSITION.

5 INT. EVALUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

5

Harley stares at the table between her and Doctor Smith, who is typing on his computer.

DOCTOR SMITH

When did you decide to reach out for help?

Harley looks ahead and takes a breath.

HARLEY

I brought it up to my parents, but they weren't...understanding.

Doctor Smith nods his head and types.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

And then I went through a...rough couple of days. Starting with my gender studies class a few weeks ago.

She looks down to her hands and fiddles them nervously.

PROFESSOR (V.O.)
(off in the distance and growing nearer)
Continuing our discussion, we are shifting from the evolution of

6 INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - MORNING

masculinity...

6

Computer on her desk, Harley sits poised and attentive in the second row of the class of college students.

PROFESSOR (O.S.) ...to sexual violence.

Harley's studious face falls into consternation while her professor speaks her last sentence. She looks down at her laptop. But she quickly plays off her anxiety and forces her face back to normal as she peers around the room.

Her professor (female) stands at the front of the classroom.

PROFESSOR (O.S.) (CONT'D) To get down to the grit of it, the numbers have remained consistent for many years. One in five women will experience sexual violence during their lifetime as will one in fourteen men. The definition of sexual assault is when...

Self-aware of her expression, as if to not give it away, she grits her teeth and looks at the professor as she finishes speaking.

MATCH CUT: HARLEY'S SIDE PROFILE.

7 EXT. PARK - DAY

7

There is only Harley with her headphones in. The world around her is blurry, the pale light from the overcast sky washes out the branches of the trees. She clutches her backpack straps and watches the ground in front of her as she briskly walks home. Along with a few turns of the head as if someone could be following her. Then back to the ground, not to be seen, just to get home.

MATCH CUT: HARLEY'S SIDE PROFILE.

8 INT. HARLEY'S ROOM/HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

8

Harley walks through the hall into her room.

MAE

(muffled)

Oh hey, how was class?

Harley continues.

MAE (CONT'D)

(louder, muffled still)

Harley?

(louder)

Harley!

Harley jolts toward Mae.

HARLEY

(startled)

SHIT!

Mae (female, 20s) in a relaxed, mellow outfit appears in the frame.

MAE

How loud do you listen to music? You should follow those volume warnings, hearing loss should not be taken lightly.

Harley calms herself quickly.

HARLEY

I'm sorry, I'm just, jittery today.

MAE

Aw no. Do you wanna talk about it?

HARLEY

No it's alright, I don't really know what it is anyways.

MAE

Ok, well you know I'm here, let me know.

(MORE)

MAE (CONT'D)

But I wanted to tell you that I can't make movie night tonight. I'm sorry, but Sam got last minute tickets to see COIN! I'M SO FUCKING EXCITED!

Harley is a tiny bit offended by this betrayal.

HARLEY

You're just gonna ditch me? We've been meaning to watch Les Mis.

MAE

We watch it like once a month I thought this could be a special circumstance.

HARLEY

(trying to be a good friend)

It's fine, no, I'm sorry. Go have fun. Take a video for me.

Mae is relieved. She squeezes Harley's shoulder.

MAE

(smiling)

Thank you, we'll watch Les Mis next week.

Mae runs away and laughs in excitement.

Harley smiles to herself in amusement then looks off into a mirror. A daze of fear washes over her like a draft.

UPBEAT SONG plays.

She grabs a cute outfit for a night out...

TRANSITION TO:

9 INT. PARTY - NIGHT

9

Half speed: BLACK then FLASH the lights go in and out.

The song follows to the party.

The lights flash all colors, primarily blue, as Harley dances in a crowd of partygoers and loud music. She is dazed but confident in a cool outfit as she moves freely.

In her hand appears a drink, she takes a big sip as she dances.

She catches a glimpse of the attractive girl, Alex, from the other party, up against the wall drinking.

They make eye contact. Alex looks away in slight embarrassment then looks back, Harley is still looking.

Harley smirks and charismatically motions for Alex to come and dance. Alex looks next to her to find who she is motioning to, so Harley points directly at her and motions again. Harley smiles for the first time. Alex laughs to herself, finishes her drink in one sip and goes to Harley.

10 INT. PARTY BATHROOM - LATER

10

Harley and Alex enter the bathroom together and Alex pushes Harley against the wall and they start to make out.

Harley opens her eyes and sees a hand with a ring on, like the one from before, wrap around the door of the bathroom.

HARLEY

AH!

Harley jolts away from Alex.

ALEX

What's wrong?

Harley looks back to the door and it is fully closed, no hand.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

Alex gives Harley space. Harley is shook up now and almost shaking in fear.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Did I do something?

She is almost cowering away from a concerned Alex, then starts for the door.

HARLEY

(head down)

I'm sorry.

11 INT. PARTY - CONTINUOUS

11

Panicked, trying to keep it together, Harley leaves the bathroom and pushes through the crowd dancing. The lights are flashing shades of dark blue now.

The crowd gets harder to push through and she practically gets sucked in by it. People surround her and there is no room to breathe.

Her breathing grows faster and she gets frantic as she physically pushes herself away from the crowd.

She finally makes it out.

MATCH CUT: HARLEY STUMBLES OUT OF THE CROWD, HARLEY STUMBLES OUT THE DOOR ONTO THE STREET.

12 EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

12

The world races past Harley as she walks down the street. Threats at every corner she eyes everything around her.

HARLEY'S POV:

Things pass fast: A tree next to the sidewalk. A garbage can. A car passes by. Behind the tree next to the sidewalk. The car as it leaves. A MAN walks toward her on the sidewalk.

Harley's face is full alert at the man, she tries to seem unalarmed.

The man wears a backpack, and a big jacket. Harley eyes these features as he approaches. Her breathing grows faster as she speeds up her walk.

He grows closer and looks at Harley, a creepy smile flashes.

Struck with panic, Harley double takes the man's face and it is normal, looking ahead as he walks by her.

She turns around to see him walking away and she breaks into a scared run down the street.

13 INT. HARLEY'S ROOM/HALLWAY - NIGHT

13

Harley is messy, sweaty, and tired as she looks herself in the mirror.

MAE

Hey...

HARLEY

(startled)

FUCK!

This startles Mae. Harley realizes it's her.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

GOD! Can you stop doing that?

MAE

I'm sorry!

HARLEY

(not in the mood) What do you want?

MAE

(pensively)

I..heard you come in... Did you go
out alone?

Harley turns back to the mirror.

HARLEY

Yeah I did.

MAE

(concerned)

That's not very safe.

HARLEY

I knew some people at the party.

MAE

Still, traveling alone in the city, did you at least Uber?

HARLEY

No, I'd rather walk than sit in a car with one of those fucking men.

MAE

Alright, but, be careful next time. Something could have happened, especially not sober.

HARLEY

GOD! OK, THANKS!

MAE

I just don't want you to get hurt.

HARLEY

Yeah? Well, I could have been safe and sound at home, watching Les Mis like we were supposed to instead.

MAE

Did something happen at the party?

HARLEY

No. I had fun. So much fun, ON MY OWN thank you very much. I actually prefer it that way. Rather than you trailing behind me all night.

MAE

Trailing behind you?

Harley ignores her.

MAE (CONT'D)

I have a life too, Harley.

HARLEY

One that I'm barely a part of! You're my best friend and I never see you.

MAE

Maybe we're not tied at the hip like we used to be. But I have a girlfriend now, school's been picking up, but I'm with you every spare minute I have.

HARLEY

I'm sorry spending time with me is such a chore.

Mae's forgiving eyes see the seriousness in Harley's. Harley turns back to the mirror.

MAE

(offended)

A chore?

MAE (CONT'D)

Harley, I love you, but what you want is a dependency. You're describing something I can't give you.

Harley walks over to face Mae.

HARLEY

(fed up)

You know what Mae? For someone who doesn't wanna end up like their mom, you're really good at abandoning the people you love, aren't you?

This visibly hurts Mae. Harley sees this and only says:

HARLEY (CONT'D)

Goodnight.

Harley backs into her room and closes the door on Mae.

14 INT. HARLEY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

14

Almost unconscious of what just happened, Harley sits on the floor and looks in the mirror. Her leg jitters.

She stares off somewhere else.

15 INT. HARLEY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

15

Harley slowly wakes in her bed. She goes on her phone. Time passes. She turns off her phone and rubs her eyes. Everything is back to normal, but as she rises, her movements have a subtle numbness to them.

16 INT. HARLEY'S DORM ROOM - DAY

16

Harley sits at her desk, hands in her lap. She blankly stares at her computer open in front of her.

A planner reads: "Sunday - HOMEWORK: 5 page essay due tomorrow"

The computer screen shows a blank document.

The clock reads 12:14 pm.

She rests her temple in her hand, steading the weight of her head with her elbow on the desk, her leg shakes under her.

She eyes her phone on the table. She picks it up, clicks, and holds it up to her head to speak.

It rings for a moment.

HARLEY

Hey Mom.

MOM (V.O.)

Hi sweetie!
 (joking)

About time you called me!

Harley cracks a smile.

HARLEY

Yeah I'm sorry, thing've been busy.

MOM (V.O.)

I'm teasing, it's okay, what's new?

HARLEY

Not...too much. How's dad?

MOM (V.O.)

He's good. He's trying to cook right now.

(leans away from the phone)

Don't do what you did last time! (back to the phone)

You sound upset.

HARLEY

Yeah...I haven't been feeling myself lately.

MOM (V.O.)

Not feeling yourself...?

HARLEY

Yeah, just...really...down.

MOM (V.O.)

That's alright sweetie, you're just in a rut. You'll feel better tomorrow, just you see.

Harley is disappointed, but hides it.

HARLEY

I quess.

MOM (V.O.)

Oh shit! Your father's burning the chicken, I need to go, but I'll talk to you soon! I love you!

HARLEY

Love you too-

The phone call ends with a beep. Harley is now disappointed and disheartened, her mood worsens in her expression.

She looks at her computer with the blank document and curser flashing and sits back in her chair in exhaustion.

MONTAGE

- -Harley is on her phone at her desk.
- -She watches videos on her computer.

- -She eats a snack at her desk.
- -She sits with her head down.

-She sits at her desk and stares at the wall blankly with a slightly panicked expression.

END MONTAGE.

The light of day fades lower and lower into night as Harley stares off.

It's nighttime and Harley's computer still has nothing on it as she sits and stares at it agitated.

INT. HARLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is a dark blue with the illumination of Harley's open computer. On it sits a blank google document with some negative free-writing typed at the top.

Harley's face is all that can be seen except for the blue tint background. She stares through her computer.

As she sits back in her chair in despair, she rubs and covers her face and eyes. The room's natural darkness shifts to a pierced, inverted dark blue.

She notices the blue streams in from her cracked open bedroom door. She is curious, but also still dazed as she gets up and approaches it. She opens it and the light floods in more as she walks through...

17 INT. OPEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS (DEPRESSIVE DREAM-SCAPE) 17

Harley enters the room. It is completely blank, not even walls, just a blue landscape surrounds her. She looks around, slightly scared.

TEENAGE BOY (O.S.)

(whispers)
Haaarrrlleeyyyyy...

Harley notices something that chills her to her bones.

HARLEY

(whispers, terrified)

No...

She faces a person who sits in a lounge chair facing away from her.

The person turns around, it is a TEENAGE BOY (16, white), he wears a ring on his index finger. He smugly looks at Harley, her face crumbles in panic.

HARLEY'S POV FOR ALL DIALOGUE NOT HER OWN

TEENAGE BOY

(like he's talking to a

child)

I always creep in don't I. Come here Harley...

HARLEY

NO!

Harley turns to escape from him. But in front of her appears her Professor, who is covered in vibrant, fantasy light.

PROFESSOR

(angry, to Harley)

This essay was vital to your grade, I'm forced to fail you.

This adds more stress to Harley's state. But she's gonna fight, she turns away again and in her way stands Mae, with the same fantasy light as the Professor.

MAE

(maniacal)

You genuinely did stop caring about me. Didn't you?

Harley runs the opposite direction and her laughter echoes extremely loud. She covers her ears and winces in pain.

HARLEY

(struggling to speak) I care about you Mae...

TEENAGE BOY

Sure you do!

Harley turns her head away but the Teenage Boy appears again.

TEENAGE BOY (CONT'D)

It was your fault you know.

PROFESSOR

YOU'LL NEVER GET ANYWHERE IN LIFE!

MOM

You're such a gorgeous girl!

MAE

You're a terrible person.

They all circle around her and create a wall with no escape.

They are all she can look at and her view bounces between them. The comments decrescendo in speed.

DAD

BE GRATEFUL!

MOM

He's a good boy!

TEENAGE BOY

Will you be playing later? Your brother and I are gonna play video games...

DAD

She always was an anxious kid, even before that...

MAE

I hated you ever since I met you.

They are in her face from above.

MOM

DAD

You're such...

You're such...

MAE

...a selfish...

PROFESSOR

...little...

TEENAGE BOY

...bitch.

But their loud screams come to a slow fade. They turn calm, but no less terrible, and start to back away. Her panic fades into a numb calm.

MOM

It's disappointing to see my sweet Harley like this...

Her Dad shakes his head in agreement next to her Mom.

Then to whisper as they slowly back away. They disperse around her, but to her, they's just as close as before.

DAD

I miss that cute, quiet girl...

PROFESSOR

Too bad, such a waste of potential...

MAE

I'm glad you're out of my life...

Her face's panic and sadness fade to blank numbness and she crumbles in the middle of the circle of them down to her knees.

TEENAGE BOY

(whispering)

We'll always be here Harley...

His voice drifts on...

MATCH CUT:

18 INT. HARLEY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

18

Harley lays on the ground with the same numb expression and stares up. Her eyes close and the dark blue lighting fades back to normal.

MATCH CUT: HARLEY'S BLANK FACE ON THE FLOOR TO HARLEY'S BLANK FACE IN THE EVALUATION ROOM

19 INT. EVALUATION ROOM - LATER

19

Drained, Harley slumps in her chair. Doctor Smith continues typing, Harley glances at him then looks back down.

DOCTOR SMITH (practically unfazed)

Ok...

He finishes typing his sentence.

DOCTOR SMITH (CONT'D)

(wisely)

Harley, have you ever been to...therapy?

HARLEY

(confused)

...what?

DOCTOR SMITH

(arrogant, all-knowing)

Therapy, it's where you go and talk about your feelings and-

HARLEY

-No, no, yeah, yes. I know what therapy is.

He calms himself, slightly embarrassed.

Harley takes a deep breath.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

Yeah, I went when I was little. Because of...my brother's friend.

DOCTOR SMITH

Ah yes, how old were you?

HARLEY

...I was...five.

DOCTOR SMITH

Was it reoccurring?

HARLEY

...it happened a few times.

DOCTOR SMITH

T see.

Doctor Smith types and Harley looks down at the table.

DOCTOR SMITH (CONT'D)

Okay, I have a form for you to fill out.

Harley nods in hopefulness.

20 INT. EVALUATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

20

Doctor Smith hands her a pencil and form, at the top it says "Patient Health Questionnaire".

DOCTOR SMITH

I'll be back once you're finished.

Doctor Smith rises from his seat to leave.

Harley leans to fill out the form. The top question reads "over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?"

Under it reads "1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things" with boxes to the left labeled 0-3, above the numbers reads accordingly, "Not at all" "Several days" "More than half the days" "Nearly every day".

Harley looks at the scale confusedly. Her pencil looms over the "3" for "nearly every day", then over to "2", back between them, and then circles "2".

HARLEY

(whispers to herself)
I don't know...

But the pencil tip breaks. She looks at it, it is unusable. She takes a steadying breath to calm down.

She looks under the desk for drawers, she doesn't find any.

She searches around the nearly empty room.

She searches the table top in the corner and finds nothing. She gets even more frustrated.

There's a set of drawers in the corner, inside one, she finds a pen.

She scribbles it on the side of the paper, it doesn't work. She is angry now, then wills it to work by scribbling aggressively harder.

Back to the table.

The next question is "2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless" to which she looks nervously. Then "feeling tired or having little energy" then her eyes go down to "that you are a failure" and finally they dart to "thoughts that you'd be better off dead" to which her eyes dart quickly away.

Overwhelmed, with the pen in one hand she angrily wipes the paper to the floor and throws the pen. She puts her hands on her temples/head to calm herself.

21 INT. EVALUATION ROOM - LATER

21

Doctor Smith looks at a slightly crumpled and dirty filled out questionnaire. He writes on it. She stares off embarrassed. He counts with his pencil on the page and writes down a number at the bottom.

DOCTOR SMITH

So your results are "moderately severe" for depression according to the questionnaire.

(MORE)

DOCTOR SMITH (CONT'D)

If not "severe," we're advised to hold on medication prescriptions, so I recommend finding a therapist. I'd put you on our waitlist but it's months long so you'll have better luck on your own.

He looks to Harley for an answer.

She stares at him waiting for him to continue.

HARLEY

...that's it? You recommend finding a therapist.

DOCTOR SMITH

Yes, therapy is a great resource, especially for those effected by events in their past, such as you.

She stares at him and processes.

HARLEY

But I told you all of that. Then you had me take a test where my pain was scaled down to numbers, and that told you how depressed I am?

DOCTOR SMITH

Yes, it makes things very easy, doesn't it?

Harley looks at him stunned and hurt.

HARLEY

So easy for you! Did you even write down anything I said? Instead you tell me to go find a therapist because you have no resources that won't take months?

Doctor Smith looks at Harley, unknowing of what to say.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

(looking at the paper in front of Doctor Smith)
Everything wrong in my life comes down to this paper.

DOCTOR SMITH
That seems a bit dramatic, it's
just a questionnaire-

HARLEY

(interrupting)

-Just a questionnaire that asks to rate how much I want to die.

DOCTOR SMITH

I'm sorry, I really am. I can't help the demand and lack of therapists and I can't do much for you otherwise. I do want to help you, of course I do-

HARLEY

(interrupts)

-I know, I know. I don't know. I just...

She takes a breath.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

I came here, practically begging for help...I HATE how I feel. I want to die every day. Every day.

And I'm scared.

I don't know if I'm more scared of doing it or the feeling never going away.

I was afraid to put that on that quiz because you'd put me...I need help. THIS was my last resort. My parents don't listen and I've been on a therapist hunt for months. They tell you to reach out for help, but it feels like nobody's fucking listening.

Harley's voice is breaking and her head falls low in despair.

MATCH CUT: HARLEY'S LOWERED HEAD WITH HARLEY'S COWERED HEAD ON THE FLOOR.

22 INT. HARLEY'S BEDROOM - LATER

22

From before, Harley is still on the ground of her bedroom. But now cowered on her side, her face shows pain.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Mae enters Harley's room and goes to her on the floor. Harley starts to sob.

23

HARLEY

(crying)

I'm sorry I'm so, so sorry. I don't know what's wrong with me-

Mae hugs her and takes her in her arms.

MAE

No, nothing is wrong with you, it's okay.

HARLEY

I was terrible to you! I was fucking awful and I don't know why. I don't know what's wrong. I don't know...

Mae keeps her embrace and consoles her.

MAE

It's alright, it's alright. We'll figure it out. You're okay, you'll be okay...

Mae's voice drains off into...

23 INT. EVALUATION ROOM - CONT.

Harley looks back up to Doctor Smith with an eye of determination. She stands up to leave.

HARLEY

(pulled together)

This isn't your fault. But how you take care of your patients, how they let you handle these things...

Harley motions to the evaluation sheet on the table.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

... something needs to change. This isn't it. I'll find a way, I need to.

She starts to walk out, then turns back to him.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

But one day, you won't get someone like me. There's more out there for me than what I'm dealing with. And others won't always feel the same.

She opens the door and leaves.

Doctor Smith sits in his seat, he stares in front of him, deep in emotional thought.

He looks at his computer in front of him, he closes it. He stands up, then looks at Harley's test sheet, crumples it, throws it out, and leaves the room with only his clipboard.

FADE TO BLACK.