

The four girls stand in spots and the Commander, a powerful woman enters.

Commander

Welcome to unit NBCRT ladies. I am your Commander. When you address me, you may say “yes” or “no”, “Commander”.

The Girls

Yes Commander.

Commander

So...I’m sure you want to know why you’re here. Don’t worry about that now. I want to spend this first week getting to know you—and seeing how we work together. The first two weeks will be like basic training—and after that we’ll get into what makes this unit different from the others. Now—some primary—

Daniela’s phone rings.

Daniela

Shit.

She pulls out her phone and begins to turn it off. The Commander takes it from her. She answers.

Commander

Hello? Who is this? Hello Mr. Riter. This is Daniela’s Commander. Yes. Yes—yes you did interrupt—well the first day. *(Smiling)* I’ll forgive it this once. I’m sure we will meet soon. She is here safely sir—everything is fine. But we’ll have to let you go now. Yes, sir. We’ll take good care of her. *(The Commander hangs up the phone and puts it in her own pocket.)* If it were up to me—none of you would be near the phones for three months. But it is not up to me—unless you abuse it—which Riter just did—her phone is now mine. I hope to have all of them by the end of the week. As you know--this is a high profile—yet extremely classified section. You are the first women ever admitted into this unit. So let’s not act like girls. Am I clear? *(Rivka shoots a look to Sarah and quickly regains composure.)* You have been issued two uniforms. They are located in your kit bag found on your bunks.

The Girls

Yes Commander.

The Commander notices Noa’s army shirt. She walks to her and yanks the knot out of

the back. Noa flushes.

Commander *more to Noa*

Your hair will be up and pulled out of your faces at all times.

The Girls

Yes Commander.

Commander

Good. Now. You have two minutes to get into your tent and change into your army fatigues—if you haven't started all ready. *(She shoots Noa another look.)*

The Girls

Yes Commander.

A loud, jarring buzzer sounds.

Commander

Then Go. Go. Go.

The spots disappear. The lights come on upstage to show the inside of their tent. The girls run in and quickly find their bunks with the large kit bag.

Commander

Time is running out! Move it ladies!

Daniela grabs at the bag—which is snapped shut with a large clasp. She tries to unlock it, but cannot. The others have already ripped into their bags and begun dressing.

Commander

GO, GO, GO! Keep moving!

Daniela pulls desperately, but cannot open her bag. She begins to strip off her civilian clothes--falling to the floor as she struggles with her boot. Rivka looks at her briefly and sees her distress. Rivka returns to her own bag after making a decision not to help her. Daniela strips down to her underwear and again attacks the bag.

Commander

Any private who is not out of that tent in thirty seconds will find herself on my bad side. That is not a good place to be. This is a hot desert and no one likes to run in it. Keep it up girls, let's go.

Daniela has been unable to open her bag, but manages to squeeze open a small hole through which she pulls through most of the contents of the bag. She puts her uniform on hurriedly, but cannot extract the pants. The spots downstage begin to come up one by one, symbolizing the regrouping of the line. Sarah is the first in line again.

Commander

Good, Kaplan. Excellent time. *(The others appear, except for Daniela.) Ladies!* Your time is up! The time is up now! You had better be in that line!

Lights upstage go dark on Daniela.

Commander

Who is missing from this line? Riter! Riter! Get out here now! We are all waiting for you Daniela! No one in this section will be dismissed for dinner until you get out here! What is going on? Get out here now!

Daniela steps forward into the line. The spot hits her. She is fully dressed except for her pants. In full uniform and in panties—Daniela is even wearing her boots—she salutes and stands at attention. There is a beat of silence. The girls do not laugh, but are horrified.

Commander

Private Kaplan, as the first in line...you have nominated yourself as the section leader. You are responsible for role call in drills and keeping this unit in line. *(Sarah beams.)* You are all dismissed for dinner.

The entire line of lights goes out.

Commander

Except for Private Riter.

Daniela's spot comes back on. She is still at attention. The other girls have left the stage.

Commander

Hello Riter.

Daniela startled by the Commander's calm

Hello.

Commander

Are you having a good day?

Daniela

Yes, Commander.

Commander

Do you like the army, Riter?

Daniela

Yes, Commander.

Commander

Riter?

Daniela

Yes, Commander?

Commander

Where are your pants?

Daniela

In my kit bag, Commander.

Commander

Why are they in your kit bag, Riter?

Daniela

The clasp was broken and I couldn't open it, Commander.

Commander

That's fine. Show me.

The lights change as Daniela and the Commander move back into the tent. Daniela walks straight to her bag and lifts it for the Commander to see. The Commander sees that the clasp is broken, pulls out a switchblade, and in one quick gesture cuts the cord, freeing the contents of the bag.

Daniela

Thank you.

Commander

Put them on.

Daniela does so—first having to sit down and take off her boots.

Daniela

Thank you, ma'am.

Commander

Daniela?

Daniela

Yes, ma'am?

Commander

Are you usually this unlucky?

Daniela

No, ma'am.

Commander

Just today?

Daniela

Yes Commander.

Commander

It happens.

Daniela

Yes, ma'am.

Commander

Do you know what you have been chosen for?

Daniela

A special division—

Commander

A special unit that requires—

Daniela

Yes.

Beat. The Commander studies her.

Commander

So you know. You know what it requires?

Daniela

More than the average basic training...I know—

Commander

Yes?

Daniela

I'm to be here for three months instead of two weeks—to undergo training for a special unit that you won't give a name to yet.

Commander

Yes.

Daniela

May I be excused, now Commander?

Commander

Give me twenty-five push-ups, Riter. (*Beat. Daniela is stunned.*) You were not on that line in time.

Daniela

Yes, ma'am.

Daniela begins to do the push ups with her knees on the floor.

Commander

Real push-ups. As a man.

Daniela

How was I to—

Commander

I don't care that your bag was broken.

Daniela doing the pushups as a man

Yes, ma'am.

Commander

Your arms are weak. We'll have to give you more of these. Can you do them with my foot on your back? *(The Commander puts her foot on her back.)*

Daniela

Yes, MP.

Commander

Good. Are you angry?

Daniela

No, m'am.

Commander

You look angry. Are you angry?

Daniela

No, ma'am!

Commander

If you want someone to be angry with, you can be angry with me. I chose you to be a part of this unit. Look at me.

Daniela *furious*

Yes, ma'am.

Commander

I looked at the tests of hundreds of girls and I chose you. It wasn't an accident that you're here. It was me. Do you understand?

Daniela

Yes, ma'am.

Commander

That's enough. Get up, Riter. Good.

They stare down each other.

Commander

You may join the others. Thank you.

The Commander exits.

Blackout.