

JOHNIEE

(Followed up by the indirect sequel "Love & Whatever")

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BLACK.

A LOUD FROG'S RIBBET, followed by the sound of its tiny feet HOPPING down a concrete surface.

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK -- AFTERNOON [FLASH FORWARD]

The FROG hops behind a tall MALE FIGURE dressed in OVERDONE 90's HIP HOP GEAR and CHUCK TAYLOR SNEAKERS. Male Figure walks with a bounce in each step.

The Frog hops aside into bright green grass, stands on its hind feet then smiles, waves.

Male Figure whips around like a douche! He's handsome, blondish, late 20's: JOHNIEE.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)

That's me. Johniee.

SUPER: JOHNNY

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

Um, that's with an I and two E's.

No one ever- Could you just...

SUPER: 'NY' is deleted, replaced with 'IEE'.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

Thank you.

FROG

You can do it my boy!

Smiling, Johniee points to the Frog then whips back around and continues up the sidewalk...

DOROTHY, 60's, provocative, dressed in race car gear is standing on the curb beside a sports car. She winks seductively.

DOROTHY

Go get 'em baby.

Further up the sidewalk, a MAILMAN with a broad and ridiculous smile descends from the sky via JET PACK.

MAILMAN

My main man!

JOHNIEE

My *mailman!*

MAILMAN

You go and get that job buddy. You waltz right in there and say give me this job. I want it.

JOHNIEE

Oh, I'll get it alright. And they'll thank *me* for taking it.

MAILMAN

Have them tell *that* to their mother.

EXT. HOSPITAL ER -- FLASH FORWARD, CONTINUOUS

Clouds roll in, the sky darkening as Johnnie continues up the sidewalk. Scattered about, busy DOCTORS, INTERNS dressed in CHAINMAIL. They stop and stare at Johnnie.

JOHNIEE

Uh, excuse me sir.

A KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR emerges -- he has a few inches on Johnnie. Knight speaks, but his words are MUFFLED.

JOHNIEE

What?

Knight removes his helmet: handsome, late 20's.

KNIGHT

(Australian accent)

What can I do for you, mate?

JOHNIEE

Damn you, you are handsome.

Knight stares. Johnnie nervously extends a paper.

JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

Um, I'm looking for this cafe.

Knight snatches it. Reads...

KNIGHT

Continue up this path.

Knight re-extends the paper, but does not automatically release it to Johnnie...

JOHNIEE

Thank you.

Knight stares. With difficulty, Johniee maneuvers around him managing to stay on the sidewalk.

EXT. A MANHATTAN-LIKE CITY -- FLASH FORWARD, CONTINUOUS

The clouds roll back as Johniee, still on the sidewalk, comes upon a strip of shops. A COFFEE SHOP. Johniee peeks inside...

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- FLASH FORWARD, CONTINUOUS

Johniee enters with that bounce in his steps. CUSTOMERS stare as he approaches the front counter. An excited female cashier, GLENDA, 20's, approaches.

GLENDA

Good morning! What can I get for you today?

JOHNIEE

(straightens up)
A job please.

GLENDA

(melancholy)
Well, it just so happens that our manager...
(joyous)
Just won the lottery. The job is yours!

The coffee shop ERUPTS WITH CHEERS, Customers lifting Johniee onto their shoulders. Glenda applauds and tosses a shirt high. Johniee snatches it from the air.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)

Right. So you're probably wondering what's going on. Well, you know that thing people do at night after they climb into bed?
(giggles)
Not *that* thing. Perv.

SUPER: DREAM

JOHNIEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Dream. People dream.

EXT. MIDDLE CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD -- MORNING

On a particular one-story house. Johnnie's home.

INT. JOHNNIE'S HOUSE, JOHNNIE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Posters of HIP HOP ARTISTS cover the walls. In bed, YOUNG JOHNNIE, 7 years old, is drooling in his asleep.

SUPER: 1994

DOLORES (O.S.)
Johnnie, wake up sweetie!

Young Johnnie groggily sits up. He reaches a hand back, closing a CASSETTE TAPE in his boom box on the night stand. 90's HIP HOP BLARES.

Eyes still shut, Young Johnnie bobs his head to the beat. He stands! DANCES to his closet and dresses himself: baggy jeans, baggy shirt, backwards hat, gold chains. Young Johnnie plops down and dons Chuck Taylor sneakers.

DOLORES (O.S.)
Johnnie? Honey?

Young Johnnie hits stop on the boom box.

INT. JOHNNIE'S HOUSE, HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Johnnie's mother DOLORES, late 30's, is up the hall setting breakfast in the dining room. She smiles as Young Johnnie, still jamming, crosses the hall to the bathroom.

INT. JOHNNIE'S HOUSE, BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Young Johnnie gels his hair. He starts to go then whips back around! POUTS A KISS to his reflection.

INT. JOHNNIE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Young Johnnie dances his way to the table where Dolores is seated and smiling. He sits, goes to dig in when Dolores clears her throat.

YOUNG JOHNNIE
I gotchu... Dear Lord, we thank
you. Because You are good. You are
great...

(MORE)

YOUNG JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

(rapping)

I'm so stoked about this plate...

Dolores exhales, rubbing her temples throughout...

YOUNG JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

*...I know sometimes that people
hate. But you watch my fate and
that's why I wake. Now today is my
first day of school. Hope I'm not
too cool to obey the rules. And-*

DOLORES

Amen.

Smiling, Dolores fills their glasses with juice.

YOUNG JOHNIEE

No, I said *and*.

DOLORES

That was lovely, honey. Thank you.

Young Johniee smiles. They dig in.

EXT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE -- SHORT WHILE LATER

Dolores stands behind Young Johniee, her arms lovingly draped about his neck as they wait for his school bus.

A MALE ROLLER-BLADER is nearing them on the sidewalk. Dolores wickedly cuts her eyes down to Young Johniee's basketball just on the curb. She gently kicks it in Male Roller Blader's path. His wobbly attempt to maintain balance is short-lived.

Young Johniee and Dolores giggle. They stop as TWO OLD LADIES in windbreaker suits cut them fowl looks.

OLD LADY #1

You should be ashamed.

The Two Old Ladies bend over to help Male Roller Blader to his feet when Young Johniee makes a FART NOISE. Old Lady #1 grabs her behind, nervous.

OLD LADY #1

Oh my goodness.

The Two Old Ladies drop Male Roller Blader and shuffle away. Young Johniee and Dolores burst into LAUGHTER.

JOHNIEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 My mother was the best.
 Unfortunately, I lost her in a
 squid attack the following year.

EXT. BEACH -- AFTERNOON [FLASHBACK]

Young Johniee and Dolores are among the many BEACH GOERS
 who are knee deep in the ocean, splashing each other when-

DOLORES IS YANKED UNDER WATER! BLACK INK splatters across
 Young Johniee's face. He releases a deep, THROATY SCREAM.

EXT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE -- FLASHBACK, CONTINUOUS

Dolores lovingly squeezes Young Johniee.

FREEZE FRAME.

SUPER: 1959 - 1995

JOHNIEE (V.O.)
 God I miss her... But anyway.

INT. CLASSROOM -- FLASHBACK, CONTINUOUS

Young Johniee bounces into class and takes a seat.
 Smiling MS. MCDONALD, 40's, moves from behind her desk.

MS. MCDONALD
 Good morning class. My name is Ms.
 McDonald and we are going to have
 a fabulous-

YOUNG JOHNIEE (O.C.)
Old McDonald had a farm.

MS. MCDONALD
 Excuse me?

YOUNG JOHNIEE
 (pops collar, stands)
 I said, *Old McDonald had a farm.*
Had a few cats- They got strangled
in some yarn. Don't give a horse a
match, 'cuz he'll burn down your
barn. Mama taught me not to curse,
so I'll just say dazizarn.

Traumatized, Ms. McDonald grabs a clipboard.

MS. MCDONALD
J- Johniee? Johniee is it?

YOUNG JOHNIEE
Wit' a double E.

MS. MCDONALD
Please have a seat. Just, sit.
Young Johniee does his best Harlem Shake before doing so.

MALE CLASSMATE (O.C.)
Attention. Newer kid on the block.

YOUNG GLENDA
I hate him.

Young Johniee smirks to himself as his CLASSMATES stare.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)
I didn't know it yet, but I was
kind of a douche.

Ms. McDonald struggles to hold a smile.

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT -- AFTERNOON

SUPER: 2003

TEENAGE JOHNIEE is playing ball with other BOYS his age.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)
So like I said, my mom is dead.
No! Make that deceased. I kind of
gave up the whole hip hop thing...

EXT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON [FLASHBACK]

Stifled hip hop music as CHRIS, Chinese, late 20's with the broadest most serene smile, carries his duffle bags to the front door. He fumbles with his keys while...

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)
So here's Chris. My mom's best
friend. After her death I learned
that he was also my legal
guardian. Fun.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, JOHNIEE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Young Johniee is facing a mirror, RAPPING to the music

when Chris enters. COMPLETELY HORRIFIED, Chris stomps over to the boom box and dramatically yanks the cord from its socket and holds it, snarling while...

CHRIS

You will studyyyy! And go to colleeeeee!

Young Johniee is stiff as Chris throws the cord and goes.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

Yeah, hip hop wasn't for me.

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT -- 2003, CONTINUOUS

Teenage Johniee and the Boys are still playing ball while Chris, less than enthused, watches from the bleachers.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

Poor Chris. He spent years trying to get me to study. To be smart. But one day it finally hit him.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON [FLASHBACK]

Dishes have piled up. Teenage Johniee opens a cabinet to find that the bottle of DISHWASHER DETERGENT is empty. He looks over to the sink -- DISH WASHING LIQUID.

Teenage Johniee is squeezing *all* of the dish washing liquid into the dishwasher.

EXT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR -- FLASHBACK, CONTINUOUS

With that serene smile, Chris approaches with groceries. He looks over, waves -- across the street washing a sports car is the Sexy Old Lady: DOROTHY. She licks the tip of the hose... Uncomfortable, Chris slips inside.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK, CONTINUOUS

Chris enters to a large bubble POPPING in his face. More and more, they're coming from around the corner...

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN -- FLASHBACK, CONTINUOUS

On a counter, Teenage Johniee nervously watches as Chris

enters, wading through KNEE HIGH SUDS. Chris drops the groceries. Teenage Johnnie readies himself-
Chris GOES OFF IN CHINESE!

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT -- 2003, CONTINUOUS

Teenage Johnnie blocks a jump shot.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

He eventually gave up on my brains
and resorted to having me engage
in physical activity. So three
times a week he'd bring me out
here praying that I'd become the
next Larry Bird.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Teenage Johnnie watches as Chris dices vegetables.

CHRIS

You dunk. Like Larry Bird. Dunk...
Dunk! Dunk! Dunk! Haha!

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT -- 2003, CONTINUOUS

Chris' eyes widen as Teenage Johnnie leaps atop one of
the Teenage Boys, majestically flying through the air as
he goes for a jump shot. Chris' smile nearly returns when-

Teenage Johnnie SLAMS into the backboard! Chris snarls.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

He had hopes. Once.

Teenage Johnnie writhes on the court.

TEENAGE BOY #1

Damn bro.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

To avoid further humiliation, let
me just throw a few things out
there. I suck at all sports.

QUICK CUTS of Johnnie failing miserably at:

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

Football. Baseball. Soccer. Track.
Hockey.

(MORE)

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

Rugby, which is actually very dangerous. I can't draw. The list is eternal. I mean, I can't even write in cursive. Do you have any idea how embarrassing it is when I'm asked for my signature?

EXT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR -- MORNING [FLASHBACK]

Smiling, that same Mailman holds a package as he rings the doorbell. Yawning, Johniee answers the door.

MAILMAN

Morning. Just sign here for me.

Johniee warily takes the pen, quickly signs and returns the clipboard. Mailman's smile fades.

MAILMAN

The hell?

INT. JOHNIEE'S CAR -- 2003, CONTINUOUS

Chris sits shotgun while swollen Teenage Johniee drives.

CHRIS

Dolores wanted a girl, you know. When she told everyone she was pregnant, we were all hoping for a girl. But it wasn't. It was you.

TEENAGE JOHNIEE

You damn right it was me. What's the matter with you?

CHRIS

You have no skills Johniee!

TEENAGE JOHNIEE

And things would be better if I was a girl with no skills?

CHRIS

Yes. You could at least be a model or something like that. You have decent bone structure.

TEENAGE JOHNIEE

First of all, you can go to hell. Two, I have *great* bone structure. I'm an eight and a half, *at least*.

CHRIS

Ten pounds ago you were an eight
and a half... You're an eight now.

Teenage Johniee fumes, staring ahead as he steers.

EXT. JOHNIIE'S HOUSE -- SHORT WHILE LATER

Teenage Johniee hops out of his beat up '91 Mustang
Convertible. He and Chris approach the front door.

TEENAGE JOHNIIE

You're a jerk you know that?

(CHRIS signs)

I have feelings you just hurt. You
should think before you talk.

Teenage Johniee opens the door. They enter. And we are...

INT. JOHNIIE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- MORNING

SUPER: TODAY

Johniee enters. Chris is here in tiny spandex shorts,
smiling as he fries eggs. Johniee takes a seat.

CHRIS

Good morning... What?

JOHNIIE

I didn't say any... Good morning.

Chris turns with the frying pan. His apron reads: *WORLD'S
GREATEST DAD*. Johniee eyeballs him as he sits.

CHRIS

What? What is it?

JOHNIIE

You know I hate it when you wear
that thing. You're my godfather,
not my dad.

CHRIS

Then who am I to you Johniee?

JOHNIIE

...my godfather.

CHRIS

Our relationship doesn't have to
be biological to be meaningful.
We're The Jungle Book.

JOHNIEE

Don't. Don't do that.

CHRIS

You're Mowgli. I'm Baloo.

JOHNIEE

(exhales, drops fork)
Can we not just eat?

CHRIS

We are eating.

JOHNIEE

We're not eating.

CHRIS

How are we not?

JOHNIEE

How we are not is because-

CHRIS

Bad English.

JOHNIEE

Shut up- Is because I'm trying to
eat, but can't because you have to
drag Walt Disney into everything.

CHRIS

That's a lie. And you're a liar.

JOHNIEE

Just once, I want a day to pass
where Princess Jasmine is not a
reference to your personal body
stank.

Chris folds his arms, fully rejecting Johniee's claims.

JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

Or where King Trident is actually
Ariel's father and not your...
I've seen it, OK? It's shriveled
and spoiled and just, no.

CHRIS

Every penis is unique and mine
simply has a slight lean.

JOHNIEE

That's not a lean. That's a broken
kick stand.

CHRIS

You know what? Shut the hell up.

JOHNIEE

You ruined The Little Mermaid for
me! It was my first VHS, I use to
watch it everyday and now I can't
even look the box in the face.

(leans in, points)

And I know you did it on purpose
because of how I feel about red
heads.

CHRIS

(slaps his hand away)

Well, I'm sorry you feel that way.

JOHNIEE

Yeah right. Stop changing your
clothes in my room, you're not
Baloo, I'm not your damn jungle
boy and if you're going to keep
running your illegal barbershop
out of your bedroom then clean it
up every once in a while. The
entire house smells of coconut oil
and Axe body spray.

CHRIS

Whatever Johniee, OK? You go and
be your own person.

JOHNIEE

I am my own person. Not the girl
you wanted, but my own person.
Anyway, I need a new job.

CHRIS

What?!

JOHNIEE

Are you deaf? I need a new job.

CHRIS

What happened to your damn job?!

JOHNIEE

What happened to my damn job is
that my whole department got laid
off yesterday without notice.

INT. DULL AND UNEXCITING CALL CENTER [FLASHBACK]

Johniee and other WORKERS. BORING MAN comes into view.

BORING MAN

Um, we're laying you all off.
Sorry for the, no notice.

Boring Man walks away.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

CHRIS

Are you sure you didn't just *dream*
you got fired.

JOHNIEE

(slightly triggered)
You know I can't dream, I have a
sleep disorder. So why would you
even ask? Why would you ask that?

Chris brushes aside his make-believe locks.

CHRIS

Well, at least you have your
savings.

Chris doesn't notice Johniee's abrupt worried look.

JOHNIEE

...look, it doesn't matter. I
wasn't happy there anyway.

CHRIS

I tried to help you find a career.

JOHNIEE

Shipping me off to a Guatemalan
sweatshop to make sneakers isn't
exactly my idea of a career. And
it's too damn hot in Africa
anyway. I just need to find the
one thing I'm good at, you know?
(MORE)

JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

I don't want to keep bouncing around doing odd jobs, I want to help people. I want to make a difference.

CHRIS

That's nice and wonderful, but in the meantime, the sneaker business that's not in Africa by the way, is becoming more and more lucrative without you.

Chris begins to SOB.

JOHNIEE

Are you crying?

CHRIS

I had a rough day.

JOHNIEE

It's nine o'clock in the morning.

CHRIS

I know... Ah!

(JOHNIEE flinches)

She rejected my song.

Chris slams a hand on the table! Johniee flinches again. He points a commanding finger at Chris. Chris laughs.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's alright. I know it's not *me* she rejected. It's my song.

Chris looks away. And we are...

EXT. LUXURIOUS GATED ESTATE -- NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Giddy, Chris prances to the gate waving a FLARE GUN. He leaps on the gate shaking it like a mad man, SHOOTING!

CHRIS

Celine!

He sticks a crumpled paper through the rails. SHOOTS!

INT. JAIL -- FLASHBACK, CONTINUOUS

Chris' MUG SHOT.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

CHRIS
(...smiles)
Would you like some coffee?

Concerned, Johniee just stares at Chris.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

The coffee shop from Johniee's dream.

Smiling broadly, Chris crosses in front of Johniee to the front counter. He looks down at a bell. RING! RING!

CHRIS
Hello? Service.

JOHNIEE
You know, when you asked me if I wanted coffee, I actually thought you were going to make coffee.

RING! RING!

AMANDA, dark hair, 20's, attractive, annoyed, moves to her register. Chris' eyes droop as he extends a hand.

AMANDA
Welcome to- What are you doing?

CHRIS
I want a latte.

AMANDA
Great. Put your hand down. What can I get for- Put your hand down. What do you want?

JOHNIEE
Me?

AMANDA
No, the door behind you.

JOHNIEE
You're being sarcastic.

AMANDA
Not at all. I'm actually talking to the door behind you.

JOHNIEE
You are being sarcastic.

CHRIS
(chuckling)
Dammit. Just order.

JOHNIEE
Sorry. Can I have a small coffee?

AMANDA
Hmm, dunno. C- C- *Can you?*

Johniee's eyes widen as Amanda turns. Chris pinches him!

CHRIS
Get her number for me.

JOHNIEE
That hurt. And I'm not asking that
rude rag doll for her number.

CHRIS
Who cares rude?

JOHNIEE
That's bad English.

CHRIS
She looks like Jennifer Connelly.

JOHNIEE
Jennifer Connelly is hot-

AMANDA
(staring...)
Yeah she is, but I usually get
Megan Fox.

JOHNIEE
Psh. Girl, don't even.

CHRIS
I'll handle this... You do *not*
look like Megan.

JOHNIEE
I mean, I think you're pretty, but
like that cute pretty. You're
pretty-cute. But Megan? I mean.
(MORE)

JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

Maybe you *wish* you looked like Megan and that's why you make up people saying that you look like Megan. Maybe that's how you cope.

CHRIS

(smiling)

But Jennifer Connelly. Come on.

JOHNIEE

(whispers)

Do you wish you looked like Megan?
Because Megan's prettier than you!

AMANDA

Six dollars and eighty-two cents!

Amanda eyes Johniee as he removes his worn out wallet.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Did you find that at a garage sale or the garbage?

CHRIS

It was a gift from me.

That explains a lot. Amanda takes a \$20 bill from Johniee and dumps his change into the tip jar. Johniee warily reaches for the tip jar. Amanda squints.

Johniee reaches for their drinks when he notices a sign taped to the counter: HELP WANTED.

CHRIS

Yeah so can I have your number? I want it... Maybe you give it to him and I stumble upon it?

JOHNIEE

Are you guys hiring?

Amanda hands Johniee an application and walks off. Johniee and Chris move to a small table and sit.

JOHNIEE

What qualifications do I have?

CHRIS

Let's see. Well, there's me not giving a damn.

JOHNIEE

Chris, I need a job.

Amanda passes their table, heading for the door.

CHRIS

Johnniee?!

JOHNIEE

What?!

CHRIS

I think she looked at me.

Chris stands and follows after Amanda.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

Amanda is waiting by the curb, checking her watch when-

TIRES SCREECH TO A HALT -- a bad ass sports car.

The passenger window rolls down. The driver is JAKE, the Knight from Johnniee's dream. Amanda waits.

Jake rolls his eyes and steps out. He walks around and opens the door for her.

AMANDA

You're late again.

JAKE

I'm *here* again. What about that?

Smiling, Chris exits the shop- Detours at the sight of Jake who roughly shuts Amanda's door. They take off.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

At the counter, Johnniee hands his application to Glenda. She tosses it aside, Johnniee's eyes follow it.

GLEND A

I'll give it to the manager when he gets back from vacation.

JOHNIEE

I could do with a vacation. Actually, I could do with winning the lottery. Am I right?

GLEND A

Are you gonna order? I don't understand why you're still here.

JOHNIEE

Well, when will your manager be
back *and you're walking away*. K.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

Johniee exits. Chris, head hanging, moves to him.

CHRIS

Did you get the job?

JOHNIEE

Chris, people don't just give you
jobs and lift you up on their
shoulders. This is real life.

CHRIS

It was just a question Johniee!
How was I suppose to know?

JOHNIEE

...she wasn't right for you.

CHRIS

Shut up child, you know nothing.

JOHNIEE

Chris you're going to meet the
right one some day and she's going
to be perfect for you.

CHRIS

Really? I'll find my princess?

JOHNIEE

Yes. She'll be calm then irate-
(with his hands)
Eye level. She'll be great.

CHRIS

And good looking too right? Sexy?

Johniee isn't too sure, but Chris doesn't care,
cheerfully linking arms with Johniee who smiles.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP, BACK PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

Johniee and Chris approach two bicycles.

JOHNIEE

Did we leave our coffee?

Chris does a quick pat down of his chest.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

Johniee and Chris' coffees sit undisturbed on the counter. Outside looking in on their bikes, they stare.

CHRIS

You spent good dollars on those.

JOHNIEE

Yeah. But we'd have to get off our bikes and *go back inside*.

Johniee and Chris stare... They pedal off.

EXT. QUIET, TWO LANE STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Johniee and Chris are peacefully riding along.

CHRIS

You missed your appointment.

JOHNIEE

What appointment?

CHRIS

The dentist called two weeks ago with an opening. I told them you would take it of course.

JOHNIEE

Why didn't you tell me?

(CHRIS blushes)

You never forget to tell me when I miss an appointment, just that I have one in the first place!

CHRIS

We ran out of magnets.

JOHNIEE

This isn't about magnets! You forget everything! You're the reason I haven't seen a dentist in twelve years! Halitosis at my prom- My date spent the entire night breathing through her corsage!

Their bickering becomes INAUDIBLE while...

JOHNIEE (V.O.)

I'm going to interject here. I am not a jerk and Chris is a great guy. He is. However, he can be a real... There are no words to even describe a person like this. Chris has three emotions, OK? Serene happiness, annoyance and hatred.

Chris snarls then rides off in the opposite direction.

Some time later and Johniee is still riding down that street. He starts that familiar head bob when a 70's SEDAN comes into view behind him. HONK! HONK!

JOHNIEE

Go around.

HONK! A vulgar OLD MAN, a *Clint Eastwood worthy grimace* on his face, sticks his head out the window. HONK! HONK!

OLD MAN

Get off the road you filth!

JOHNIEE

Just go around.

Outraged, Old Man pumps his fist.

JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

Crazy old goat.

BUMP! Old Man hits Johniee's bike, laughing maniacally as Johniee struggles for balance. BUMP!

JOHNIEE

Are you crazy?! Stop it!

OLD MAN

Off the road, sewage slime!

JOHNIEE

Just go around you jerk!

The sedan slows until out of view.

Johniee regains his balance, but senses something isn't right. He stops, looks back -- the sedan is motionless.

INTERCUT: OLD MAN IN THE SEDAN / JOHNIEE IN THE STREET

Old Man grimaces / Johniee squints / Old Man grins / Johniee's eyes widen / Old Man hits the gas!

Johnnie hurriedly pedals when BAM! He flies from his bike landing in grass on the side of the road. SCREECH!

Mumbling, Old Man approaches Johnnie's unconscious body and gives him a light test kick -- nothing. Old Man returns to his car and *slowly* drives away...

NIGHT -- Johnnie is still unconscious when FEMALE HANDS pull him from the grass to the middle of the street where Jake's car is parked. It's Amanda. She kneels over him.

AMANDA

Oh god, it's you.

JOHNNIEE

I need to change my underwear.

Amanda rolls her eyes, lifting and helping Johnnie to the passenger side of Jake's car.

JOHNNIEE

I know you. You're from the-

AMANDA

(shoves him in)

Yep.

INT. JAKE'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

AMANDA

Put on your seatbelt. I don't need you getting anymore banged up before I can dump you off at a hospital.

JOHNNIEE

I don't want to go to a hospital.

AMANDA

Fine. Where do you live?

JOHNNIEE

Whoa. Just like that?

AMANDA

Just like that. Where do you live?

JOHNNIEE

I could have brain damage.

AMANDA

Yeah well I still need you to put on a seatbelt.

JOHNIEE

Seriously? Like you- You know what? Just take me home. Take me home! I have a headache.

AMANDA

Give me your address and I will.

Johniee takes a wallet from the dashboard -- Jake's license, hospital badge, etc. Johniee tosses it back.

JOHNIEE

I have somewhere to be.

AMANDA

Yeah, where?

JOHNIEE

That's none of your business. Just take me home. I have a jam packed Thursday.

AMANDA

Today's Tuesday.

JOHNIEE

And yesterday was Friday. You're pretty, but so stupid at the same time. You're *pretty-stupid*.

AMANDA

I don't know what your problem is, but either give me your address or you're walking home.

JOHNIEE

I'd rather go to the hospital.

AMANDA

You just said-

JOHNIEE

It was a bluff dammit! I said I'm afraid of brain damage!

AMANDA

You're *afraid* of brain damage or the effects it's having on you?

JOHNIEE

Ma'am.

AMANDA

Amanda.

JOHNIEE

Well OK, *Amanda!* You don't have to snap at me. It's not like you introduced yourself or like I'm wearing some magic genie helmet. How was I suppose to know that?!

Johniee's head drops. Amanda leans in, examining him. She lifts an eyelid -- glossy. She leans back, SIGHS.

AMANDA

Look, I don't know how hard you were hit-

JOHNIEE

Pretty hard!

AMANDA

Clearly, because you have a concu-

JOHNIEE VOMITS EVERYWHERE! IT'S COVERS AMANDA!

JOHNIEE

Do you have a paper towel? ...you have a little-

He wipes, making more of a mess. He retracts his hand.

JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

I'd like to go to the hospital.

Amanda fumes and puts the car in drive.

EXT. HOSPITAL ER -- CONTINUOUS

The hospital from Johniee's dream.

Amanda unfastens Johniee's seatbelt, catching him as he spills out. LESLIE, a female nurse, 20's, approaches.

LESLIE

Ma'am, do you- Amanda?

AMANDA

Thank God, come help me.

LESLIE

Oh my God. Did you hit him?

AMANDA

No.

LESLIE

You have to stop hitting people.

AMANDA

I didn't hit, this one- Just be quiet and help me get him inside.

LESLIE

Dear god what did he eat?

INT. HOSPITAL ER, NURSE'S STATION -- CONTINUOUS

Full of ANNOYED PEOPLE waiting to be seen while Jake chats with another MALE DOCTOR, 30's. A timid MALE INTERN is passing when Jake smacks him across the face, laughs!

MALE DOCTOR

How was China?

JAKE

Oh, it was beautiful. But I tell you, it was the strangest place. There were all these men running around named Kim, but not one chick named Kimberly.

Male Doctor is puzzled, but steps aside as Amanda and Leslie approach with Johnniee.

AMANDA

Jake.

JAKE

Well, well. If it isn't my little damsel. Here to see your N-I-S-A?

LESLIE

What the hell is an N-I-S-A?

JAKE

Knight in shining armor you boob.

LESLIE

Night as in darkness?

JAKE

Knight as in great warrior.

LESLIE

And that's with a K?

JAKE

...get out. And who's the douche bag and why is he covered in poo?

AMANDA

Just run some tests or whatever.

JAKE

Whoa, whoa. You're coming to my pool party right?

AMANDA

Uh, tempting. But I have to study and more importantly it's at your grandmother's house. So yeah, no.

JAKE

I pulled some strings, rescheduled her dialysis. She won't be home til twelve. In the morning.

AMANDA

You're throwing a party at your grandmother's house while she's hooked up to a machine?

JAKE

Exotic fruits. Gluten-free dessert bar. I'll light the fireplace.

AMANDA

Wash his face.

Amanda goes. Disgusted, Jake looks down at Johniee.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- LATER

In bed, Johniee opens his eyes to Jake. Jake smiles.

JAKE

So, you're friends with Amanda?

JOHNIEE

Who?

JAKE

Come on. I saw the way you were looking at her.

JOHNIEE

I don't know what or who you're talking about.

Jake's smile vanishes, then returns. Johniee sits up.

JAKE

Johniee with two e's? How'd that happen? That's pretty, uh-

JOHNIEE

Different-

JAKE

Stupid.

JOHNIEE

Did anyone call Chris Grumfeldler?

JAKE

In a minute.

(X-RAYS)

You hit your head pretty hard.
Never seen the likes of it.

Johniee touches his bandaged head when Jake reaches out!

JAKE (CONT'D)

Don't touch that you'll kill yourself.

JOHNIEE

Could you please call my contact?

JAKE

Sure.

JOHNIEE

...so I guess any minute now.

JAKE

(grinning)

On my way.

Several beats... Still grinning, Jake finally exits.

INT. HOSPITAL ER, NURSE'S STATION -- CONTINUOUS

JAKE

You, Lena.

LESLIE

Leslie.

JAKE

Call his contact. I want this orphan out of my ER.

Jake smugly drops the clipboard. Goes...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- LATER

CHRIS

(bursting in)

I'm here dammit!

(checks over Johniee)

Are you OK? Did they hurt you?

JOHNIEE

No, this is a hospital.

JAKE

(enters... grins)

I'm Doctor Jake Gordon. MD.

CHRIS

(near tears)

What happened to him? I will sue this damn place!

JOHNIEE

Stop shouting.

CHRIS

Quiet Johniee, save your strength.

JAKE

Mr. Grumsfelder, there's nothing to be concerned about. Your son-

JOHNIEE

I'm not his son.

Chris is appalled by Johniee's words!

JAKE

Your son has suffered a *major, life-threatening* concussion. I'd keep him here for further observation, but...

Jake smiles, shakes his head and shrugs his shoulders.

JOHNIEE

Just tell me what I need to sign.

JAKE

Nothing. No paperwork. No hassles. Just quality service from your friendly neighborhood ER.

JOHNIEE

That doesn't sound-

JAKE

I really just want you to go.

EXT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY -- LATER

Annoyed, Chris helps Johniee to the front door. Across the street, Dorothy is getting into her sports car.

DOROTHY

You alright there handsome?

JOHNIEE

Hi, Miss Dorothy. I'm fine.

DOROTHY

You take care of those sexy cheeks. You know which cheeks I'm-

JOHNIEE

Yes, Miss Dorothy.

Dorothy winks as Johniee and Chris enter the house.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Chris plops on the couch as Johniee makes for his room.

CHRIS

There's nothing to be concerned about. Your son- I'm not his son!

JOHNIEE

I'm sorry. Goodnight.

CHRIS

Goodnight!

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, JOHNIEE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Johniee crawls into bed. Turns out the light.

BLACK...

A LOUD FROG'S RIBBET, followed by the sound of its tiny feet HOPPING down a concrete surface...

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK -- DAY [JOHNIEE'S DREAM]

FROG

You can do it my boy.

Johniee continues up the sidewalk where Dorothy winks...
The Mailman descends from the sky via jet pack. Lands.

MAILMAN

You go and get that job, buddy.
You waltz right in there and say,
give me this job. I want it.

Johniee, that bounce in his steps, continues on...

EXT. HOSPITAL ER, DARK SKIES -- DREAM, CONTINUOUS

The Knight in shining armor/Jake stalks forward.

KNIGHT/JAKE

What can I do for you, mate?

JOHNIEE

Damn you, you are handsome. Your
eyes are like crashing waves. The
stubble on your cheeks is just
right and those lips.

(KNIGHT stares)

Um, I'm looking for this cafe.

Knight snatches it. Reads.

KNIGHT/JAKE

Continue up this path. Don't
speak. Just go.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- DREAM, CONTINUOUS

Johniee peers inside then enters.

GLEENDA

Good morning! What can I get for
you today?

JOHNIEE

A job please. And I want it now.

GLEENDA

Well, it just so happens that our
manager... Just won the lottery.
The job is yours!

Cheers as Customers lift Johnniee onto their shoulders. Johnniee snatches the shirt from the air when Amanda majestically appears behind the counter.

JOHNIIEE

It's you. You saved me.

AMANDA

Of course I did Johnniee.

JOHNIIEE

Can I take you on a date?

Customers don cheesy smiles, giving the thumbs up. Amanda nods yes. CHEERS ALL AROUND!

INT. JOHNIIEE'S HOUSE, JOHNIIEE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

A smile creeps across Johnniee's sleeping face. He wakes, excited and jumps out of bed! He dons pants, his eyes searching for something. He flips his pillows, sheets...

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Sweaty, Chris is PRANCERCISING when Johnniee enters.

JOHNIIEE

Have you seen my shirt?

Chris prancercises his way to Johnniee. Jogs in place.

CHRIS

What shirt dammit?

JOHNIIEE

The one from- Back up!

Chris prancercises away, flipping pillows and cushions.

JOHNIIEE (CONT'D)

The one from the coffee shop.

CHRIS

They don't sell shirts.

JOHNIIEE

Duh, it's for work.

CHRIS

(halts, smiling)
You've found employment?

JOHNIEE

Uh, yeah. I'm the new manager of that rinky dink coffee shop. You were pining over that girl.

CHRIS

So beautiful.

JOHNIEE

And taken. We have a date tonight.

CHRIS

You did what?!

JOHNIEE

I'll just ask for another one.

Chris snarls, jerks away and resumes his prancercising.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- LATER

Glenda is behind the counter, frowning as she sniffs Amanda's hair when Johniee enters. They eye him.

JOHNIEE

Hey you.

AMANDA

Hey you? You barfed on me last night.

JOHNIEE

(chuckling)

Uh, no. Let's see, Glenda is it?

GLENDAA

What?

JOHNIEE

Whoa. Is that how you talk to your superiors?

GLENDAA

What?

JOHNIEE

You're right, I should've said supervisors. But you know what? It's a new day. Don't worry about it. Just be a doll- Run back, get me another shirt. Appreciate it.

GLEENDA

...what?

JOHNIEE

Glenda, I'd really like to start my first day of work on my first day of work. So be a dear-

GLEENDA

What are you talking about?

AMANDA

It's not his fault. Again, thanks for switching with me. See ya...

JOHNIEE

I'm gonna step away for a moment, but when I get back, I'd like that shirt I've been asking about for the past fifteen minutes, k? There's a new sheriff in town.

Glenda stares blankly as Johniee exits.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP, BACK PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

Amanda is opening the driver's door of Jake's car when Johniee approaches. She quickly gets in.

AMANDA

Get lost, you don't work here.

JOHNIEE

Uh, yeah I do. They gave me the job yesterday when I came in.

AMANDA

Oh they did, did they? *Yesterday?* Yesterday being, Tuesday?

JOHNIEE

Yeah and tomorrow's-

AMANDA

Fr-...

JOHNIEE

Wednesday!

AMANDA

Thursday.

JOHNIEE

No one cares. Anyway, where do you
wanna go for our date?

AMANDA

Excuse me?

JOHNIEE

Um, we made plans yesterday. Don't
act branch new.

AMANDA

Um, *no*, we *didn't*. And stop saying
um, you sound like a lunatic.

JOHNIEE

What's the matter with you people?
Everyone sucks today. You, Gloria-

AMANDA

Glenda.

JOHNIEE

My dad.

AMANDA

The Chinese guy?

JOHNIEE

His name is Chris. And you have a
bad attitude.

AMANDA

So fire me.

JOHNIEE

Psh. I'll do it.

AMANDA

Of course you will. And FYI, that
concussion excuse will only work
for so long.

Amanda speeds away.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

JOHNIEE

You people are stressing me out. I
was run down yesterday. Nearly
again today. It's too much so I'll
just start tomorrow.

GLEND A

Two days in a row? You don't say.

JOHNIEE

Yeah, I was on my bike and... Um.

GLEND A

I must say, I've never heard of anyone getting run down two days in a row. Sounds more like a personality issue if you ask me.

Johniee's eyes dart back and forth, trying to comprehend.

INSERT CUT: Johniee unconscious on the side of the road.

JOHNIEE

I was here last night.

GLEND A

You were puking in Amanda's hair last night. She has perfect hair. Why would you do that to her? Why would you do that to anyone?

INSERT CUT: Johniee smearing his vomit on Amanda's hair.

Johniee glances about -- CUSTOMERS are staring at him.

JOHNIEE

I'm gonna-

GLEND A

Go take a dump in someone's coffee now? OK boss, see ya tomorrow.

Johniee turns. Humiliated, he goes.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

Johniee exits the coffee shop, nearly bumping into SHARON, red head, 40's. She is holding a heavy box while trying to open the door to the VACANT OFFICE SPACE next to the coffee shop. Johniee, huffing, opens and holds the door for Sharon who enters.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Thanks. That's the first nice thing anyone's done for me all-

Johniee hurries on, but briefly halts to eye the "FOR LEASE" sign on the vacant office space beside Sharon's new office space. This bothers him as he continues on.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP, BACK PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

At his car, top down, Johnnie is struggling with his key when it BREAKS OFF in the door -- his cell phone RINGS.

JOHNIEE

What?!

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, CHRIS' BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Chris, phone to his ear, is cutting a WOMAN'S hair.

CHRIS

What are you wearing?

Chris laughs hysterically!

INTERCUT: JOHNIEE / CHRIS

JOHNIEE

I get it. Funny.

CHRIS

Did they find your shirt?

Chris' laughter is near sinister as he stomps his foot...

Johnnie tosses his phone into the car then realizes the top is down! He punches the door then walks to the trunk.

He bams his fist on it, it opens. Staring at something inside the trunk, Johnnie sighs...

EXT. QUIET, TWO LANE STREET -- LATER

Johnnie is ROLLER SKATING when a luxury car swerves from behind him. The passenger window rolls down -- a smiling African American male in his 40's: RAY.

RAY

Johnnie? Johnnie is that you? *It is you!* How you doing man?

JOHNIEE

Ray?

RAY

Yeah. I haven't seen you since your mom got ate by that squid.

JOHNIEE

It didn't eat her.

RAY

Yeah it did. I read about it in all the newspapers.

JOHNIEE

It didn't eat her. It just, ripped her apart a little.

RAY

She was fine as hell... I'll see you later.

Ray speeds off!

JOHNIEE

Hey!

RAY (O.S.)

Yeah?

Johniee displays himself!

INT. RAY'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Ray's drooping eyes watch Johniee's roller skates settle on the floor. Ray looks up at embarrassed Johniee...

RAY

Why are you wearing roller skates?

JOHNIEE

I was rolling home.

RAY

I'm sorry?

JOHNIEE

I was rolling home.

RAY

...this is a brand new car.

JOHNIEE

Yeah, it's nice.

RAY

Thank you man! See, I always told Dolores you were a nice kid. It was a gift from my wife. My sweet, beautiful...

Ray becomes sad. Johniee looks away.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)
 Ray and Chris grew up together.
 They were, I repeat, were best
 friends.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM [FLASHBACK]

PICTURE DAY. Two smiling TWELVE YEAR OLD BOYS: YOUNG
 CHRIS and YOUNG RAY, arms around each other. FLASH!

EXT. CHURCH STEPS -- AFTERNOON [FLASHBACK]

WEDDING GUESTS toss rice as Ray and his BRIDE, her face
 unseen, exit the church when Ray is kicked from behind
 and goes FLYING FROM THE STEPS.

Chris, snarling and gripping the bouquet, has done it.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Ray has been patiently listening to Johniee's nonsense.

JOHNIEE
 And there was this long sidewalk.
 And my mailman had a jet pack.

RAY
 A jet pack.

Ray takes a mini notepad and pen from his pocket. Writes.

JOHNIEE
 A *jet pack*. I mean, what's the
 post office doing with that kind
 of technology?

RAY
 That's really a question for the
 President.

JOHNIEE
 And there was this knight.

RAY
 Of course there was.

JOHNIEE
 And he was bloody gorgeous! Like
 on a scale of one to ten. Thirty.

RAY
Johnnie shut the hell up.

Ray stands, rips the page away and extends it.

JOHNIEE
What's this?

RAY
A blank prescription for whatever
the hell it is you need. I'm out.
(straightens tie)
This fool here.

JOHNIEE
I don't need drugs, Ray. This
really happened to me.

RAY
Do you wanna know what I think?
I think I'm late for my wife's
chow mein. *Bye!*

JOHNIEE
Come on Ray, please.

RAY
Look, my brother was doing the
same thing right before he moved
to some beach in Tahiti. Making up
people and romanticizing. And
honestly, what I think you both
need is a girlfriend. *I gotta go.*

Ray turns and is met by Chris who is storming in!

CHRIS
Get out of my house!

JOHNIEE
It's technically my house.

RAY
Look Johnnie, if you ever need
anything you can always call...
Not me, him. He's here for you.
(JOHNIEE goes...)
Eu-meh said she called you.

CHRIS
Out. Out, damn you!

INT. JOHNIIE'S HOUSE, JOHNIIE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Johniee is sitting on his bed, staring at a picture of Dolores. He then lifts an unopened letter from the bank which distresses him further.

Smiling, Chris enters. Johniee quickly puts the letter away as Chris sits beside him.

JOHNIIE

I didn't get that job did I?

CHRIS

(laughing)

No you idiot.

JOHNIIE

But I was there. I saw it.

CHRIS

Johniee, when you were a baby-

JOHNIIE

You're not my dad Chris.

CHRIS

Shut up. When you were, *younger*, I always thought you were pathetic.

(JOHNIIE eyes him)

But as you got older, not much changed... But someday it might.

Chris smiles and kisses Johniee's cheek then stands. Johniee kicks him in the leg! Chris falls, but quickly stands, looking about suspiciously when he smiles!

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Oh! Maybe that concussion cured your sleep disorder.

JOHNIIE

Wait, really? You think I could've dreamt it? That I can dream now?

CHRIS

(yawning)

Your problem.

Chris leaves the room. Johniee smiles until-

JOHNIIE

Reschedule my dentist appointment!

Hours later, Johnnie is before his open laptop reading an article on REM SLEEP. He shuts it and lies back, smiling and wriggling with excitement as he shuts his eyes.

INT. OFFICE SPACE -- DAY [DREAM]

Sharon is dressed in a suit of CARDBOARD BOXES. She answers the ringing telephone on her desk.

SHARON

Hello?

JOHNIEE (O.S.)

Hi, my name's Johnnie. That's with two e's. I bumped into you and was wondering if you were hiring.

SHARON

Well, it just so happens... That I am. See ya tomorrow kid.

Sharon hangs up the phone.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, JOHNIEE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Johnnie wakes. He stares blankly at the ceiling then smiles with a fist bump to the air.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN -- MORNING

Johnnie approaches the refrigerator -- a note stuck under a magnet: '*I BOUGHT MORE MAGNETS. DENTIST APPOINTMENT NEXT FRIDAY.*' Johnnie smiles and pours a glass of milk.

JOHNIEE

Why'd you leave a note?

CHRIS (O.S.)

I was ashamed!

(JOHNIEE chuckles)

Did you dream?

JOHNIEE

No. But I have an interview today so that's something. I'll see you later.

CHRIS (O.S.)

You need a trim!

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- LATER

Amanda is behind the counter reading from a large PRE-MED TEXTBOOK. Johniee approaches, but she does not look up.

AMANDA

Back to give me another tongue lashing, boss?

JOHNIEE

I think we might have gotten off on the wrong foot.

AMANDA

Why? It's not like you smeared your four course vomit across my face or fired me.

JOHNIEE

I am so, so sorry for whatever happened. I'd apologize in greater detail, but I don't remember much.

AMANDA

Classic textbook concussion.

She taps her textbook. Smirks.

JOHNIEE

Oh, you're in med school. So you probably knew right away. You were probably like *whaaat?*

AMANDA

...look don't worry about it. It was Jake's car and we just broke up so, it worked out OK.

JOHNIEE

Good. Things worked out for me too. I, um, I found a job.

AMANDA

A real one?

Amanda smiles, returning to her textbook. Johniee smiles.

INT. OFFICE SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

Sharon is painting a wall when Johniee enters.

SHARON

Can I help you?

JOHNIEE

Yes, we spoke on the phone.

(SHARON stares)

I'm Johniee. Two e's.

SHARON

Two e's? That's certainly different, but I don't recall a phone conversation. I'm sorry.

JOHNIEE

(realizing)

Oh no. I mean, this is great and all. I dreamed. But oh no. Miss, I'm really sorry. I'll leave now.

SHARON

No, don't go. I know you. You're the cutie who held the door for me, right? I'm Sharon.

(JOHNIEE waves)

You looking for a job, cutie?

JOHNIEE

Desperately. At this point, I'll scrub and unclog toilets if I have to.

SHARON

That is desperate. What experience do you have?

JOHNIEE

(stares off)

Um.

INT. DULL, UNEXCITING CALL CENTER [FLASHBACK]

JOHNIEE

(on a call)

Hi, can I interest you in a one year supply of watermelons?

CALLER (O.S.)

(male, psychotic)

Watermelons?! What *the hell* am I suppose to do with a year supply of watermelons?! How could I even store them?!

JOHNIEE

Well, you'd actually have to *grow* them. We sell... Seeds.

CALLER (O.S.)

Seeds?!

INT. OFFICE SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

SHARON

...oh.

JOHNIEE

I'm really sorry.

SHARON

Wait. Do you like kids?

JOHNIEE

The nice ones.

Sharon smiles, walks to a desk and returns with a form.

SHARON

Take this. I'll do a background check and if all goes well, we'll move on to a drug test.

JOHNIEE

Wait, just like that?

SHARON

Why not?

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

The coffee shop is empty as Johniee sits and completes the application. Amanda eyes him and walks over.

AMANDA

Looking for a second job?

JOHNIEE

No this is for my, um.

AMANDA

Oh, for your um. I see.

JOHNIEE

I'm applying for a job. Right next door actually.

AMANDA

Next door? Isn't that going to be some sort of children's center?

JOHNIEE

Honestly, I don't know what it is.

(THEY LAUGH)

But I really can't afford to be picky. My mom left me the house which I'd nearly paid off, but in desperation I took out a second mortgage which I'm behind on. So.

AMANDA

I'm sorry.

JOHNIEE

You know you seem like a really nice person. Why were you such a jerk the other day? You know, before this vomit you speak of?

AMANDA

Things are tough and I'm what many would call uptight, I guess.

JOHNIEE

Many as in many or many as in just your ex-boyfriend?

Amanda eyes Johniee for several moments. She looks up-

AMANDA

Ugh, what do you want?

Jake enters, then a business suit clad MALE CUSTOMER.

JAKE

You're not answering your phone. What's the orphan doing here? He's staring at my ass.

JOHNIEE

No, I was looking at all of you.

AMANDA

What do you want Jake?

JAKE

I miss you Abby.

AMANDA

Amanda.

JAKE

I miss you and I'm throwing an amazing pool party.

MALE CUSTOMER

Can I get a coffee please?

AMANDA

One second. Jake, I'm not going to your stupid pool party. And you need to come get your things.

JAKE

So uptight. Let's take a holiday. I know a great beach up the coast.

AMANDA

No, I have plans with my, him.

JAKE

The toddler? Really? See this is why I miss you *Annnmnda*.

AMANDA

You just called me Anmnda.

JAKE

No I didn't.

MALE CUSTOMER

(hands on hips)

Yes you did. Now can I just get a small coffee please? I take it black with eight sugars, four creams and three pumps of mint.

AMANDA

One sec.

MALE CUSTOMER

And two marshmallows.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Do you know the first time he met my dad, he told him that his *Ariel* was a great gal.

JOHNIEE

(perks up, smiles)

Ariel?

AMANDA

And then when my dad corrected him, he asked, *are you sure?*

MALE CUSTOMER

This is damn ridiculous.

Male Customer *half* climbs over the counter and, with unnecessary difficulty, prepares his own coffee while...

JAKE

Your dad had had a few drinks that night. I was just making sure.

AMANDA

We were *here*.

MALE CUSTOMER

Where's the milk steamer?

JAKE

Come on, Amy- Alyssa- Breanna- Dammit!

AMANDA

Goodbye Jake.

Jake smugly backs away and goes.

JOHNIEE

Did he really say amazing pool party?

AMANDA

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to put you on the spot like that.

JOHNIEE

No worries. But if you change your mind about this pool party, I have a killer birthday suit.

Amanda smiles. As she turns, Male Customer aggressively brushes past her with his coffee, more two iced coffees and a bag of bagels and makes out the door.

INT. OFFICE SPACE -- LATER

Johniee hands Sharon his application.

SHARON

Perfect. Let's get to work.

JOHNIEE

Wait. And I should have asked this first, but what is this place?

SHARON

Right now, it's an empty office. But when we're done it'll be an after school and weekends center for children ages five to twelve. There's no curriculum, just an alternative to being left home alone or whatever trouble kids get into these days.

JOHNIEE

So baby-sitting?

SHARON

No... Yes, but it's more than that. It's the interaction. Steering them in the right direction. Letting them know someone cares about their life.

JOHNIEE

A role model? ...I think it's great, what you're doing here. And I wish you the best. Goodbye-

SHARON

You know, sometimes the best role models are the one who don't think they're good enough.

JOHNIEE

But the difference is, I've accomplished nothing in my life so I know I'm not good enough.

SHARON

Johniee, I'm very good at reading people and, blame it on my fifteen years as a clinical psychologist, but there's something about you... Besides if I'm wrong and you go nuts on me, I'll just have you institutionalized. I know a guy.

Johniee and Sharon share a laugh until-

SHARON (CONT'D)

No, really... Now get out of here. I'll call you when your background check comes back.

JOHNIEE

...thank you.

Sharon winks as Johniee goes.

INT. JOHNIIE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- LATER

Pleasantly surprised, Chris enters hands on hips and a flat iron hanging from his shoulder.

CHRIS

You made dinner.

JOHNIIE

I make dinner every night because you can't cook. Now sit and tell me how I got this sleep disorder.

CHRIS

There's nothing to tell. You were a baby. You hardly felt it.

JOHNIIE

Hardly felt what?

CHRIS

Dolores. Your mother-

JOHNIIE

I know who she is.

CHRIS

She dropped you. In the washer.

JOHNIIE

Come again.

CHRIS

Suds went everywhere.

JOHNIIE

It was going?!

CHRIS

Relax. She picked you up. Even set your collarbone back herself.

JOHNIIE

So she dropped me in a spinning washing machine and that's why I've never been able to dream?

CHRIS

People drop babies, Johniee.

Johniee fumes as Chris nonchalantly continues eating.

INT. OFFICE SPACE/CHILDREN'S CENTER -- MORNING

Johnnie and Sharon stare proudly at the painted walls.

JOHNIEE

It looks good.

SHARON

It does.

RING. That same Mailman is at the door with a package. Sharon excitedly opens the door and lets him in.

MAILMAN

Good morning.

SHARON

Morning. Johnnie, sign for that would you?

Mailman spots Johnnie and rolls his eyes, extending the writing pen. Johnnie carefully takes his time.

MAILMAN

An X works too.

Johnnie returns the pen. Mailman eyes Johnnie's signature then scowls, goes. Sharon removes supplies from the box.

JOHNIEE

Do you want some coffee?

SHARON

That'd be great. Thanks.
(JOHNIEE starts)
She's cute. The girl next door.

Johnnie blushes, exits. Sharon smiles.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

Johnnie enters, his smile fading upon seeing Glenda.

JOHNIEE

Oh. Hi. Two medium coffees and two blueberry muffins please.

GLEND A

Amanda said next time you come in your order is on the house.

(JOHNIEE smiles)

(MORE)

GLENDА (CONT'D)

Some old bastard ran over her dog the other day and somehow you're still the worst thing to happen to her this week.

(JOHNIEE starts-)

I hate you. I feel like I've always hated you.

JOHNIEE

Well, I work next door now so hopefully we can be friends *and you're walking away.*

INT. CHILDREN'S CENTER -- LATER

BOBBY enters, 10 years old, not in the newest of clothes.

JOHNIEE

Whoa, slow down Power Ranger.

SHARON

Johniee.

JOHNIEE

I mean, may I help you?

BOBBY

Do you have games?

JOHNIEE

That depends. What's your name?

Sharon is anxious to see the two interact.

BOBBY

This place is dumb. I'm leaving.

JOHNIEE

Alright. See ya.

BOBBY

I said I'm leaving.

JOHNIEE

Yeah. Peace out you little turd.

SHARON

Johniee.

BOBBY

I thought this was supposed to be some sort of after school thing.

JOHNIEE

It is, but school's not out yet.
Plus I don't like you.

BOBBY

Screw you!

SHARON

No, wait. Please.

Sharon moves to stop Bobby leaving.

JOHNIEE

He's a jerk. Let him go.

BOBBY

You guys suck!

JOHNIEE

You suck. And I'm gonna call the
cops so they can drag your class
skipping behind back to school.

Bobby straightens up. Johniee softens and approaches.

JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

Or you can show a little respect
and tell us your name.

BOBBY

...Bobby.

JOHNIEE

Well *Bobby*, if you stop being an
ass for two seconds we can break
out the Xbox and order a pizza.

BOBBY

...do you have the new *Halo*?

JOHNIEE

(laughing)

Do we have the new *Halo*?

(to Sharon)

Do we have the new Halo?

SHARON

(smiles)

Of course we do.

JOHNIEE

Of course we have the new *Halo*!

Johniee puts an arm around Bobby, leading him to a TV in a corner. Sharon exhales, relieved.

Hours later, Sharon watches with a smile as Johniee and Bobby laugh and joke. She checks her watch.

SHARON

Bobby we'd love to keep you, but school's probably out by now and this isn't the way our program works. Besides, I don't want your parents to worry.

BOBBY

She won't worry.

SHARON

Mothers always worry. Here, have her fill this out and bring it back in person. That way she and I can chat a bit.

BOBBY

And then I can come back?

SHARON

Absolutely.

BOBBY

Cool. See you later Johniee.

Bobby quickly goes. Sharon stares after him concerned.

SHARON

Nice kid. But Johniee please tell me that's not your only approach with children. You nearly fainted.

JOHNIEE

I honestly have no idea where that came from. The words just came out of my mouth while I was talking.

SHARON

Oh Johniee.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, JOHNIEE'S BEDROOM -- LATER, NIGHT

Johniee enters, yawning when his cell VIBRATES.

JOHNIEE

Hello?

INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Amanda, in tears, is sitting on her bed with her pre-med textbook and a pile of photos of her with a Yorkiepo.

AMANDA

Johniee?

INTERCUT: JOHNIEE / AMANDA

JOHNIEE

Amanda? Hey, it's been a while.

Johniee sighs, rolling his eyes at himself.

AMANDA

Yeah. Anyway, I got your number from your application because Glenda said you left your wallet in the shop. I wanted to bring it to you, but I'd rather not dumpster dive during work hours.

JOHNIEE

Dumpster dive?

AMANDA

Yeah she kind of threw it, in, there- Anyway, I have the morning shift tomorrow so I'll bring it with me and you can pick it up.

JOHNIEE

Or we could just meet now?

Johniee's eyes widen, surprised by his own courage.

AMANDA

I really should study.

JOHNIEE

Yeah of course. *You must studddy and go to colleeege.*

Johniee quietly smacks himself with the phone.

AMANDA

K.

JOHNIEE

I mean, I hear it's important to study if you want to be a doctor.

Amanda looks down at her pre-med textbook.

AMANDA

Yeah... Hey, are you hungry?

INT. SANDWICH SHOP -- LATER

A LIGHT CROWD. Johniee spots Amanda entering. He waves at her when SMACK! He's elbowed someone.

JOHNIEE

I'm so sorry! I-

Old Man turns, gripping his nose. Growing angry, Johniee points as his eyes widen!

OLD MAN

Flee ridden alley cat, I shoulda killed ya!

JOHNIEE

You liver spotted old bastard.

Johniee starts at Old Man, but several PATRONS hold him back. Amanda spots the commotion.

OLD MAN

I'll break your teeny bopper neck!

AMANDA

What the hell is going on?

Amanda locks eyes with the Old Man, *squinting as if she knows him*. She grabs Johniee and leads him away.

AMANDA

Had I known you picked on the elderly I would've left your wallet in that pile of mold.

JOHNIEE

That's the demon possessed old bed sore that ran me down last week.

The OWNER, 40's, male, a dry British type, approaches.

OWNER

Sir, I'm afraid I have to ask you and your mannequin to leave. Your uncouth behavior and abysmal language will not be permitted in an establishment such as this.

Owner 'shoos' them away and goes.

AMANDA

Mannequin?

JOHNIEE

You have weird posture.

Amanda starts to object when Johniee pulls her to the front counter. A male CASHIER, 40's, stares unenthused.

CASHIER

Welcome to *Just For the Pallet of It*. Home of the you order it we make it no matter how disgusting or sick it might make you because we only care about profits deli sandwich. What can I get you?

AMANDA

Is he serious?

JOHNIEE

Yeah, this place is great-

CASHIER

You need to place an order sir.

JOHNIEE

Um, what did that guy order?

CASHIER

You don't need to know that sir?

JOHNIEE

Then may I have-

CASHIER

What type of bread?

AMANDA

I think he's trying to decide.

Cashier cuts Amanda a look.

JOHNIEE

Wow. You just totally had my back just now. That's pretty cool-

CASHIER

Sir, you need to place an order.

JOHNIEE

OK, OK. May I have-

CASHIER
What type of bread?

AMANDA
Dear god! Just plain bread.

JOHNIEE
I was going to say plain bread.

AMANDA
No you weren't. Just.

JOHNIEE
I'll have *Cuban* bread. With, um.
Um. Cream cheese, Dijon mustard.
It sounds gross, but it actually
works. Pickles *and* relish for
texture. Um. Mayo, bacon, carrot
peels, sprinkle a few sesame seeds
on there. Um. American *and* Swiss.
Banana peppers. Um.

AMANDA
You're disgusting.

JOHNIEE
Spinach because it's good for me.

CASHIER
Protein?

JOHNIEE
Deep fried pulled pork. And can I
have that with extra pickles?

CASHIER
...you could've just said the
number seven with extra pickles.

Johniee chuckles, so pleased with himself as Cashier
turns his condescending gaze to Amanda.

AMANDA
Oh. On...
(CASHIER squints)
Rye. Lettuce. Salt, pepper. Smoked
goat cheese, caesar dressing and-

CASHIER
Protein?

AMANDA
Salmon?

CASHIER

You want a smoked goat cheese
caesar dressing salmon sandwich?

AMANDA

On rye.

Disgusted, Cashier turns away and enters the kitchen.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Can you believe that guy? ...what?

JOHNIEE

Nothing. It's just, there's other,
better stuff on the menu.

AMANDA

You just ordered a heart attack
with extra pickles.

JOHNIEE

There was spinach on there.

CASHIER

No salmon. We have cod.

AMANDA

But that's not what I-

Cashier drops their bagged order on the counter.

EXT. SIDEWALK -- SHORT WHILE LATER

Johniee and Amanda walk, eating their sandwiches.

AMANDA

So why do you hate old people?

JOHNIEE

I don't hate old people. Though I
would've loved to have broken that
old skin-tagged face of his.

AMANDA

Oh. So you're not an ageist,
you're just violent.

JOHNIEE

Exactly.

AMANDA

(chuckles)

Is that guy really your dad?

JOHNIEE

Chris? Sort of. He stepped in
after my mom died.

AMANDA

Oh, I'm so sorry. What happened?

JOHNIEE

She was-

*INSERT CUT: That fateful day on the beach. Dolores BURSTS
out of the water, gasping for breath!*

JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

Taken from me.

AMANDA

Oh... What about your real dad?

JOHNIEE

Mom never talked about him which
didn't bother me. She was enough.

AMANDA

Then you're lucky. My parents are
alive and well, but they're also
what you call driven.

JOHNIEE

What does that mean?

AMANDA

It means finish med school, leave
a message and we'll get back to
you when it's convenient to do so.

JOHNIEE

That's whack.

AMANDA

Yeah. It's bad enough that all my
friends and my boyfriend- Well ex-
boyfriend, all graduated early
with honors and I'm not even half-
way done, but on top of that, here
come my nagging parents. *When are
you going to finish school Amanda?
You're the only one without a
degree Amanda. Your cat ate your
other cat Amanda.* It's why I don't
visit anymore. Not that they care.

JOHNIEE

I'm sorry. If it makes you feel any better Chris once told me that he wished I was born a girl.

AMANDA

(chuckles)

That does make me feel better.

JOHNIEE

Then he called me fat and insulted my bone structure.

AMANDA

You have great bone structure.

JOHNIEE

That's what I said.

They chuckle and toss their trash. A TROLLY approaches...

INT. TROLLY -- CONTINUOUS

Alone, Johniee and Amanda sit across each other.

AMANDA

So why'd you have to take out a second mortgage? That's a big deal.

JOHNIEE

...Chris' fiance wasn't ready for kids when I lost my mom. So he had to make a choice. His fiance or keeping his promise to my mom to be there for me if anything ever happened. He chose me... He was at the bank ready to sign loan docs to open his own salon when he heard the news... He took care of the arrangements and moved in. But even back then our house was older. So instead of using the money that she was able to leave me for repairs, he put it towards principle and paid for the repairs himself.

(wipes eyes)

And learning didn't come easy for me either. So the loan that was meant for his dream, he used to put me in private school.

(MORE)

JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

And I tried, but I was just not athletic so, no chance for a scholarship.

AMANDA

Oh Johniee.

JOHNIEE

I took out the second mortgage to finally give him his dream, his own luxury salon and spa. I was going to surprise him for his birthday with a rental space and some equipment, but then I lost my job, drained my savings and-

AMANDA

And you don't want to touch anymore money from your loan because you don't feel it's for you... Wow. You're lucky to have Chris. And he's lucky to have you.

Johniee releases a soft, doubtful laugh. Amanda smiles.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

So you were run off the road?

JOHNIEE

Yes. By Satan.

AMANDA

Right, the bed sore. But what about the next morning? I know you had a concussion, but *come on*.

JOHNIEE

Apparently I was washed as a baby.

AMANDA

I think most people are washed as babies, Johniee.

JOHNIEE

(smiles)

I have a sleep disorder or *had* a sleep disorder. Chris thinks the concussion knocked something back in place. You have doctor friends, maybe one of them can take a look.

AMANDA

Maybe, sure.

JOHNIEE

...why are you in med school if you don't want to be a doctor? Come on, you can tell me. I threw up in your hair. I know you.

AMANDA

(smiles...)

Truth is, I love helping people. I'm just not very good at it. I forget everything when I'm nervous and seeing someone sick or in pain makes me nervous. I want- You're gonna laugh.

JOHNIEE

I won't.

AMANDA

I want to be a wedding planner.

JOHNIEE

Then why don't you?

AMANDA

Johniee. My parents, my sister, my five brothers. Doctors. Their spouses? Doctors. And they're all gonna have little doctor babies. I have to do this. It's hard enough fitting in with them as it is.

JOHNIEE

Then don't fit in.

AMANDA

Johniee-

JOHNIEE

If wedding planning is what's going to make you happy you should do it. If I knew exactly what I wanted to do, I'd do it.

AMANDA

I can't. My parents will disown me, actually disown me if I drop out of med school. I got a C on a paper once and my parents filed a lawsuit against the school principle. I was in third grade.

JOHNIEE

They sound like real ass holes.

Johniee and Amanda laugh.

AMANDA

But it's not like I haven't tried. I switched my major to event planning a year ago without telling anyone. But Jake found out and told my parents who flipped and kicked me out of the apartment they rented for me. And I wasn't working so, I moved in with Jake. The jerk who ratted me out.

JOHNIEE

Yikes... Still, you're lucky. You may not enjoy med school, but the fact that you still haven't quit should tell you something.

AMANDA

What?

JOHNIEE

That if you put half as much effort into this wedding planner business as you do willing yourself into a pair of scrubs, you could be really happy.

Amanda eyes Johniee.

EXT. AMANDA'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- SHORT WHILE LATER

Johniee walks Amanda to the entry door.

AMANDA

Horrible dining experience aside, not a bad time.

JOHNIEE

Me too. I mean no, it wasn't.

AMANDA

Goodnight Johniee.

Amanda smiles and enters her building. Johniee goes.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, JOHNIEE'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Unseen, Chris is SINGING ALONG to a Celine Dion song. Johniee enters with extra bounce when-

JOHNIEE

What the hell are you doing?!

Chris' NAKED BACKSIDE reflects against a mirror as he turns, hairbrush to his mouth.

CHRIS

Get out!

JOHNIEE

This is my room!

Chris wraps a towel around himself and rushes out.

JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

And that's my towel!

Johniee is not angry. Just, bewildered.

INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Freshly showered, Amanda plops on her bed. Her cell VIBRATES -- A TEXT from Jake: *Call me. I breast u.*

AMANDA

Idiot.

Another text from Jake: **miss u lol*

Another text from Jake: *Boobs. ;)*

Amanda tosses the phone and falls back with a smile.

INT. CHILDREN'S CENTER -- DAYS LATER

Fully furnished, Sharon and Johniee are putting on a few finishing touches when Bobby enters with KATE, 30's, thin. Sharon extends a hand to Kate who timidly shakes.

JOHNIEE

Bobby, my man.

SHARON

Hi, you must be Bobby's mother.
I'm Sharon, this is Johniee.

KATE

Kate.

BOBBY

I told you. They're nice.

Johniee musses Bobby's hair. The two walk to the back.

KATE

He said I needed to sign this.

Kate hands the now crinkled slip to Sharon.

SHARON

That's right. He can come every day after school. And we're state funded so, there's no...

TINY RED SPECKLES spot the corner of the paper. A tan line on Kate's ring finger. Sharon forces a smile.

SHARON (CONT'D)

There's no costs.

KATE

Good. Thank you.

SHARON

Kate, is there a secondary contact for Bobby?

KATE

Not anymore. Does he need to bring food?

SHARON

No, we provide that. Pizza, candy. It's paradise.

KATE

It seems nice. This will be good for him.

SHARON

And we'll take good care of him.

Kate eyes Johniee and Bobby laughing. She goes...

Johniee and Bobby are in deep conversation when the door opens -- PETE, 40's, enters with GABBY, 6.

SHARON

Hi there.

PETE

Hi, I'm Pete and this is my daughter Gabby. Say hi, Gabby.

Gabby is too shy. Sharon kneels before her.

SHARON

Oh, we have a shy one on our hands. How about we talk over there by those stuffed animals?

Gabby nods. Sharon smiles and leads them over...

Johniee, Sharon, Bobby and Gabby are laughing around their board game. Amanda enters with two cups of coffee. Sharon smiles as Johniee stands and approaches her.

AMANDA

I figured children and coffee go hand in hand. This place looks great.

JOHNIEE

Thanks. Come on, I'll introduce you... Amanda this is Sharon, my boss. This one here is known as Bobby. He sucks at *Halo*. And this is Gabby who also sucks at *Halo*.

SHARON

Johniee.

JOHNIEE

What, they suck.

SHARON

Well it is very nice to finally formally meet you.

Bobby and Gabby make kissing noises. Johniee and Amanda both blush, slightly embarrassed.

AMANDA

I'll let you guys get back to it. And you two, listen to every word he says. He's a genius.

SHARON

Thanks again. Now ask her out.

Johniee averts his eyes and escorts Amanda to the door.

AMANDA

So I called my parents this morning. I told them I was dropping out of med school.

JOHNIEE

That's huge. What did they say?

AMANDA

I don't know, but their voicemail was very friendly... So are you going to ask me out?

JOHNIEE

...may I take you out? I swear no pickles will be involved.

AMANDA

I like pickles. Oh God, I meant-

JOHNIEE

Yeah, just go.

Amanda graciously, uncomfortably, goes... Johniee smiles.

BOBBY

She is hot-

JOHNIEE

She is *mine*.

Later, Sharon says goodbye to a few PARENTS, CHILDREN.

JOHNIEE

Your mom's a bit late.

BOBBY

My dad got locked up so she works two jobs now... I put everything away. I can do that every day.

JOHNIEE

That'd be great. But don't expect any money OK? I'm broke. Now get your stuff, I'll take you home.

BOBBY

Your car is crap.

Insulted, Johniee pushes Bobby away. Sharon approaches.

SHARON

I must say, I was pleasantly surprised by you today. All the little girls followed you around like puppies.

JOHNIEE

Thanks, but I'm pretty sure it was just luck. Girls usually hate me. *Especially* the little ones...

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND -- DAY [FLASHBACK]

QUICK CUTS: A LITTLE GIRL smashes Young Johnnie's face into the sand -- LITTLE GIRLS abuse him with dodge balls.

Young Johnnie, at the base of a slide, is writing letters in the sand - A SLIGHT RUMBLE - YOUNG GLENDA is at the top of the slide staring wickedly. Young Johnnie goes to stand when BAM! He goes flying-

INT. CHILDREN'S CENTER -- CONTINUOUS

SHARON

(wide eyes...)

Well, you seem to get along just fine with the girl next door. Come on cutie. Let's lock up.

Johnnie blushes as Sharon sweetly pats his arm.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)

I'd always felt like I'd lost my mother, but here is when I realized that I never lost her.

INT. A BEAUTIFUL WHITE PLACE

Dolores' smiling face.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

She just sent a few others to look after me.

Dolores winks.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, CHRIS' BEDROOM -- LATER

Chris' workout is *very provocative*. Johnnie enters and wraps his arms around him with a smile.

JOHNIEE

I love you.

CHRIS

Let go dammit. You're making me uncomfortable.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- AFTERNOON

Jake is at the counter talking to Glenda.

JAKE

Oh really? You don't know any
Andrea?

Glenda spots Johnnie and puts his usual on the counter.
Jake stares condescendingly at Johnnie.

JOHNNIE

Hello-

JAKE

Alana is mine.

JOHNNIE

I have absolutely no interest
whatsoever in Alana.

JAKE

Good to know. Try not to stare at
my ass.

Jake takes one of Johnnie's coffees and turns RIGHT INTO
a table, spilling the coffee. Jake glances about,
checking to see who might have been looking then goes.

JOHNNIE

Can you believe how rude...

Glenda doesn't care. Johnnie takes the one coffee, goes.

JOHNNIE (V.O.)

I'd like to say it was smooth
sailing after I started working
with Sharon, but dreams are weird
and too many times to count I just
wound up looking stupid.

EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP -- DAY

A SALESMAN is staring quizzically at Johnnie.

SALESMAN

What?

JOHNNIE

I'm tired of repeating myself. I
said I won a free car. I couldn't
find the confirmation e-mail, *but-*
(extends a paper)
I wrote it down. It's the same
exact information. And look, I
even get a ten year supply of free
gas and maintenance.

SALESMAN

Sir what the hell is this? What is this? Hieroglyphics?

JOHNIEE

(snatches paper)
That says you've won!

SALESMAN

No it says you better get the hell up out my face!

Johniee fearfully staggers back.

INT. BANK -- LATER

Johniee is with a TELLER depositing his check. He takes his receipt and sighs. He starts off, then halts.

JOHNIEE

Actually. Can you tell me anything about car loans?

INT. SMALL THEATRE -- EVENING

A DRAMATIC ONE ACTOR PLAY. MALE ACTOR is near NUDE.

Johniee and Amanda are seated in the middle of a FULL HOUSE. Johniee smiles and leans over.

JOHNIEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Oh this is a good one. Some of my dreams just got me into trouble.

JOHNIEE

Hey, you won't believe my luck. Yesterday, the director gave me a surprise part in the play.

AMANDA

No I don't think so babe. This is a one actor- *Oh my god.*

Johniee stands, ripping open his shirt!

JOHNIEE

Fear not brother! For I am here!
Thy twin! Thine *identical* twin!

Johniee winks at Amanda. She slinks down in her seat as the AUDIENCE WHISPERS. BOUNCERS stop at the end of their row.

EXT. SMALL THEATRE -- NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Bouncers toss Johniee onto the pavement!

A flyer from the production is stuck to Johniee's face as he lifts his head from a puddle. Embarrassed, Amanda covers her face as she passes him.

INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Johniee sits Indian style before Amanda who is beside a white poster on an easel -- two columns are drawn on it: 'REAL' and 'STUPID': Various examples of Johniee's dreams. Amanda is pointing out the differences to Johniee who lowers his head in shame while...

JOHNIEE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Amanda's been really helpful with helping me spot the differences between what is-

(AMANDA points)

Real and what is *stupid*... She's amazing.

Half freaked out, half unsure, Amanda stares at Johniee.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP, BACK PARKING LOT -- DAY

Sharon turns the corner- Quickly sidesteps as Amanda rounds the corner followed swiftly by Jake. Sharon eyes the situation and makes around the corner as Amanda approaches a compact car between Johniee's and Jake's.

JAKE

Thanks for not coming to my pool party, Alice. My grandmother spent hours slicing that pineapple for nothing.

AMANDA

It's Amanda.

JAKE

Yeah, well.

AMANDA

We dated for two years. How is it that you don't know my name?!

JAKE

Annie look, I had a crazy couple of nights.

AMANDA

Yeah I *breast* you did.

Jake chuckles while Amanda fumbles with her keys.

JAKE

Would it be the worst thing in the world if I just *called* you Annie?

Amanda halts, her face gone blank. She *slowly* turns.

JAKE (CONT'D)

It could be our thing. It's sexy, easier to pronounce-

AMANDA

What's difficult about Amanda?!

JAKE

I didn't say it was difficult! I said it was easier!

INT. CHILDREN'S CENTER -- CONTINUOUS

Johnnie is reading to CHILDREN when Sharon enters.

SHARON

Just so you know.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP, BACK PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

JAKE

As usual you're blowing things way out of the-
(*struggles*)
Proportionate.

AMANDA

How did you graduate med school?

JAKE

Whatever. Just, don't throw our amazing year down the drain.

JOHNIEE

Two. It was two years.

JAKE

(*slowly turns*)
You lollipop eavesdropping little Teletubby.

JOHNIEE

I'm six foot one, so.

JAKE

Hey Mickey Mouse! How about you turn around, hop in your Vanilla Ice ride and drive home?

JOHNIEE

Your references are disturbing and stay away from my girlfriend.

JAKE

Erin, you have no idea what you're letting go.

AMANDA

Goodbye, Jake.

Jake slinks back then goes.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

My parents keep encouraging him... Am I really your girlfriend?

JOHNIEE

Yes?

Amanda smiles. Johniee follows her as she moves to the trunk of her car and opens it. He eyes his own car, but refocuses his attention when Amanda begins to speak.

AMANDA

So, as you know, Jake and I were engaged for a little while.

Amanda hands Johniee the portfolio of her wedding.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I planned it myself... Well?

JOHNIEE

These are incredible.

AMANDA

Yeah?

JOHNIEE

Yes. You definitely did the right thing dropping out of med school as awful as that sounds.

AMANDA

Oh! I got a hit on my website.

JOHNIEE

Are you serious? That's amazing.

AMANDA

Yeah, some cute young couple is getting married in a few months and *I* am officially in charge.

Johniee and Amanda lean in for what becomes a very awkward, very tongue-filled first kiss.

AMANDA

Never again.

JOHNIEE

Disgusting.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- LATER, EVENING

At the table, Chris, Ray and a beautifully regal CHINESE WOMAN, 60's: EU-MEH. Chris is staring daggers at her when Johniee and Amanda enter.

JOHNIEE

Chris, this is- Whoa...

EU-MEH

Hello dear boy.

JOHNIEE

You didn't say they were coming?

Chris stabs open a container of cream cheese!

EU-MEH

And who is this lovely pigeon?

JOHNIEE

Please don't call her a pigeon. Everyone, this is Amanda. Amanda, Chris... My grandmother Eu-Meh and my- Her husband, Ray.

CHRIS

Johniee's damn childhood uncle!

Amanda staggers back!

EU-MEH

Are the two of you engaged? You don't want to end up alone.

CHRIS

I'm sure I could dig up another boy I went to kindergarten with for him! *You'd like that wouldn't you?*

RAY

Why don't you guys join us?

AMANDA

Please say no.

JOHNEE

We're going to grab some takeout from this new place downtown. Only an hour away and maybe still open.

Eu-Meh eyes Johniee coolly, pulling out a chair for him.

INT. JOHNEE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Johniee, Amanda and Chris silently, miserably file out of the dining room into the living room. Chris plops in a chair while Johniee and Amanda take the sofa.

AMANDA

I've never had bagels for dinner.

Eu-meh and Ray enter. Eu-meh stops beside Amanda, motions for her to scoot. Amanda eyes the empty love seat *and* chaise then scoots closer to Johniee. Eu-meh sits right beside her and Ray beside Eu-meh.

RAY

So Johniee-

CHRIS

You changed his diapers!

Amanda is the only one startled. She catches her breath.

AMANDA

J- Johniee's- Johniee's diapers?

Ray raises a hand. Amanda's eyes widen.

EU-MEH

I changed yours too.

Chris throws a pointless swing in her direction!

EU-MEH (CONT'D)

You always said you wished you and Ray were related. Now you are.

CHRIS

How dare you say that to me!

EU-MEH

A relationship doesn't have to be biological to be meaningful.

RAY

Look, calm down. We're all family here. Not her, but the rest of us. Let's just enjoy each other's company and have a good time. Johnnie bust out the Uno cards.

Johnnie leads Amanda away.

JOHNIEE

She's already seen too much.

RAY

I thought he could do a better than that. Kid's a solid seven.

CHRIS

Eight!

EXT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR -- CONTINUOUS

Johnnie cannot meet Amanda's wide-eyed gaze.

AMANDA

...is this, normal?

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- NIGHT [FLASHBACK]

Snarling, Chris is holding a BLOOD COVERED toaster high over Ray who is sprawled on the floor unconscious. Eu-meh calmly spoons mashed potatoes onto Young Johnnie's plate.

EU-MEH

You could have just passed the potatoes.

EXT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR -- CONTINUOUS

Amanda's eyes have grown wider, she understands now when-

A LOUD CRASH!

Ray stumbles outside holding his bleeding head. Eu-meh calmly exits after him when Chris savagely appears in the doorway, armed with a frying pan and a lamp!

JOHNIEE
(pulls Amanda close!)
Protect your head.

Chris hurls the frying pan and-

INT. HOSPITAL ER, NURSE'S STATION -- CONTINUOUS

PEOPLE are waiting to be seen while Jake, licking an ice cream bar, chats with Male Doctor.

JAKE
Then I said to her, *politely*,
please lower your top lip when you
smile, your gums freak me out.

MALE DOCTOR
What did she say?

JAKE
She didn't say anything. She just
started crying and asking for her
mom. It's why I hate pediatrics.

Male Intern is passing. Jake pulls on the back of the Male Intern's pants, drops the remainder of his ice cream inside then kicks him away. Jake laughs.

Johniee and Amanda, both beaten up, enter. Ray, beaten too, follows adjusting his tie. Unscathed, Eu-meh enters.

Jake frowns and snaps his fingers. Male Intern, holding the back of his pants to keep the ice cream from dripping, signals Ray and Eu-meh then leads them away.

JAKE
Well, well. Look what the rat
dragged in.

AMANDA
Look what the *cat* dragged in.

JAKE
...what do you want Becky?

JOHNIEE
What anyone in an ER wants!

JAKE

Hey! Tell your puppy to shut it.

AMANDA

My puppy's dead Jake!

(reliving the moment)

Do you know he took the bag I put
Princess Sassy's body parts in-
Stuffed it into one of his *living*
grandmother's many urns and buried
it? Had a service- *Didn't even*
invite me!

JAKE

I said a prayer.

Amanda pushes past Jake, leading Johniee to empty chairs.
The two sit and Johniee struggles to meet Amanda's
frustrated gaze. He starts to speak when-

AMANDA

(laughing)

That was amazing.

JOHNIEE

What now?

AMANDA

The dinner part was creepy, but
the rest was pretty exciting.

JOHNIEE

Chris flipped a couch on you.

AMANDA

And it hurt, but listen. My entire
family lives their lives like
they're stuck in some inbred,
pitchfork, black and white photo.

JOHNIEE

That's weird.

AMANDA

Really? *That's* weird? Your uncle
who's not your uncle is your
grandfather.

JOHNIEE

I meant the photo part was weird.

AMANDA

Oh.

JOHNIEE

But it is weird that you like my family.

AMANDA

I wouldn't necessarily say I like them. One of them did just try to kill me with a picture frame.

JOHNIEE

I'm sorry about that. Ray's usually not the violent one.

Amanda and Johniee lean in to kiss when-

EU-MEH

Please don't do that here, that's my grandson.

Ray grabs Eu-meh's hand, reinforcing her words as he shoots Amanda a look. They go.

Johniee and Amanda chuckle then lean in and kiss.

APPROPRIATE SONG OVER MONTAGE...

INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM -- EVENING

Amanda and Johniee are doing wedding arts and crafts, giggling and lightly pushing each other. Johniee accidently pushes Amanda too hard. Pissed, she sits up, her hair and face covered in glitter and glue.

EXT. PARK, BASEBALL FIELD -- AFTERNOON

Johniee and a dozen or so Children are playing softball. Johniee pitches and smiles when SMACK right back in his face! In the bleachers, Amanda, Sharon and Parents REACT.

The BOY who hit the ball apologetically approaches, but Johniee is *not* having it and stomps away. Bobby, the umpire, walks on field and grabs the Boy by the ear and leads, pushes him off the field.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, JOHNIEE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Amanda is sitting up in bed comparing color palettes when Johniee enters with a smile and two cups of coffee. As he sets the coffees on a dresser, Chris enters, circling around him and taking one of the coffees in the process before exiting the room.

Amanda sighs a smile at Johnniee who doesn't let it bother him either. He then takes a flyer from his pocket and holds it up -- A NUDE, ONE MAN PRODUCTION OF *AIRPLANE!*

JOHNIIEE

I'm gonna teach the kids the arts.

AMANDA

But not those arts, right?

JOHNIIEE

God no! I found a script for the stage production of *The Godfather*.

(AMANDA stares)

Goodfellas... Casino? ...I know the perfect one.

Johnniee plops down beside Amanda and kisses her cheek. They look over color palettes when-

JOHNIIEE (CONT'D)

Yuck! Don't use that one.

Johnniee tosses one of the palettes aside. Amanda feigns annoyance and smacks Johnniee with a pillow. He snatches it from her and tackles her.

INT. JOHNIIEE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- EVENING

Johnniee, Amanda, Chris, Ray and Eu-meh are sitting around the table, all happily chatting save Chris whose arms are folded. Ray nudges Chris' arm when Chris grabs his plate and SMASHES Ray's head! Ray hits the floor, unconscious!

Amanda and Eu-meh casually continue their conversation as Johnniee pulls Ray's body out of the dining room.

EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP -- DAY

Johnniee in the driver's seat of his Mustang and Amanda in the passenger seat, arrive at the dealership.

AMANDA

You're really ready to part with your mom's car?

EXT. QUIET, TWO LANE STREET -- MORNING, FLASHBACK

Dolores drives Young Johnniee down the street, both enjoying milkshakes. She brushes hair from his face and smiles.

EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP -- CONTINUOUS

AMANDA

You don't have to do this if
you're not ready.

A PHOTO of smiling Young Johniee and Dolores from that
day is pinned to the dashboard.

JOHNIEE

But that's it. It's not just me
anymore. I need something safer
for you, the kids. And she would
want that.

(takes the photo)

I'm ready to let go.

Salesman spots Johniee and Amanda then approaches in a
huff, rolling up his sleeves.

SALESMAN

I told you to never come back.

JOHNIEE

Calm down, I've come to *buy* a car.
With cash.

AMANDA

What?

JOHNIEE

I won the lottery.

AMANDA

Johniee no-

JOHNIEE

I'm kidding.

Johniee smiles and shakes wary Salesman's hand.

SALESMAN

What are you looking for?

JOHNIEE

Something spacious, safe for kids.

Amanda smiles as Salesman leads Johniee away.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP, BACK PARKING LOT -- AFTERNOON

Sharon approaches, smiling proudly as Johniee parks his
brand new SUV -- Bobby and other CHILDREN exit the back.

INT. CHILDREN'S CENTER -- AFTERNOON

Bobby, RYAN (9), and a few other BOYS stand in the midst of the homemade set holding paper cardboard weapons, quoting lines from *Scarface*. One of the boys, dressed in all white is bowing at Bobby's feet when-

BOBBY (TONY MONTANA)

(to Ryan)

Manolo, shoot that piece of-

AMANDA

Johniee, they're ready for you.

Johniee makes for the front door when Amanda halts him.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Oh, and before you think you've gotten away with this, I already told Sharon that you're doing *Romeo & Juliet*.

Johniee scoffs as Amanda smiles, patting his chest.

EXT. CHILDREN'S CENTER -- CONTINUOUS

A NEWS CREW is present, interviewing Sharon and Johniee.

INT. CHRIS' BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Chris is tidying up when Johniee and Amanda enter with a cake. Chris is *surprised* as they sing Happy Birthday. He goes to blow out the candles, but halts -- the cake read: *Happy Birthday, Dad*. Chris tears up as Johniee and Amanda each kiss one of his cheeks.

Chris turns, following Amanda's lips when Johniee smacks him!

INT. AMANDA'S DINING ROOM -- EVENING

Amanda is working on her portfolio. She looks over at Johniee who is completing an OPEN BOOK TEST on children's safety. She smiles watching him.

INT. JOHNIEE HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Amanda, Ray and Eu-meh are at the table. Chris is at the stove in those spandex shorts and his 'WORLD'S GREATEST DAD' apron.

He turns, his jaw dropping as Johnnie enters with Sharon. Johnnie and Amanda exchange a 'fingers crossed' look.

EXT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR -- LATER

Disturbed, Sharon exits. Johnnie and Amanda appear in the doorway, both a bit bruised. *That didn't work.*

EXT. PARK -- AFTERNOON

A GRADUATION CEREMONY.

Chris, Amanda, Sharon, Ray and Eu-Meh sit within the crowd as a handful of ADULT STUDENTS make their way onto the stage. Johnnie is up next.

Chris, Amanda and Sharon stand and applaud as Johnnie accepts his certification -- Ray is fanning Eu-Meh with a handheld fan while he feeds her grapes between kisses.

In the crowd, "disguised" in a fake mustache, nose and glasses is Jake. He BOOS as Johnnie accepts his certification. Chris and Amanda looks back -- Jake is only a few rows back. He waves at Amanda then draws a heart with his fingertips until-

The entire row in front of Jake turns back -- CHILDREN from the center. Jake loses his smile.

Johnnie jumps from the stage and pulls Amanda close then kisses her -- behind them, the CHILDREN are beating Jake mercilessly, Ray and Eu-Meh providing nods of approval.

INT. BANK -- AFTERNOON

Johnnie finishes his deposit with a TELLER then takes the receipt for his Second Mortgage Payment. He eyes the CURRENT AMOUNT DUE: \$0.00, CURRENT BALANCE: \$0.00. Johnnie smiles, exhaling. He makes a call on his cell phone.

EXT. CHILDREN'S CENTER -- MORNING

Johnnie holds the door for a BUSINESS WOMAN as she exits. He curiously eyes her before entering.

INT. CHILDREN'S CENTER -- CONTINUOUS

JOHNIEE

Who was that?

SHARON

Have a seat Johniee.

JOHNIEE

Is everything OK?

SHARON

Johniee, we're doing something wonderful with this place.

JOHNIEE

I know. Amanda and I bumped into Renee's parents the other day. They said he stopped acting out in school-

SHARON

I'm leaving.

JOHNIEE

Uh, no. No. You can't. Things are picking up around here. Plus the girls are putting on a play next week and they already invited their parents. I can't just tell them no.

SHARON

Johniee-

JOHNIEE

Is the state trying to take away our funding? What about our kids?

SHARON

Johniee-

JOHNIEE

I promised Bobby-

SHARON

Johniee! The woman you just passed works for Harriet Loughten. A self made woman, the wealthiest woman in this city who's as much known for her ruthless business tactics as she is her philanthropy.

JOHNIEE

But we're state funded.

SHARON

Yes, but Mrs. Loughten saw us on the news last month and contacted me. She's touched by what we're doing and wants to help us expand.

JOHNIEE

I agree we need a bigger building, but we can't just relocate. We have obligations to *these* kids.

SHARON

We're not relocating Johniee. I am.

JOHNIEE

Come again.

SHARON

You're staying here. Truth is I always planned to expand. I just never imagined being able to do so so quickly. And I certainly never imagined a private investor. We have to act on this now.

JOHNIEE

You can't just leave me here. I won't work for anyone else.

SHARON

What we're doing here, as great as it is, it isn't enough. There are other Bobby's and Ryan's and little Gabby's out there who need what we can offer. A safe, loving, enriching environment. Things they may not get at home.

Sharon stands and crosses to a FRAMED CERTIFICATE on the wall next to photos of Johniee, herself and 'their kids'.

SHARON

What is this?

JOHNIEE

A picture frame.

SHARON

Smart ass. It's a certification stating that you are not only qualified to be here, but to also safely manage this place. And you worked damn hard for this... Say something.

JOHNIEE

You should've asked me first.

SHARON

Johniee with what you're capable of, it should've been your idea.

INT. AMANDA'S LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Johniee and Amanda sit on her couch while...

AMANDA

So what's the problem?

JOHNIEE

Are you serious?

AMANDA

Very. Those kids adore you.

JOHNIEE

And I adore them which is why I can't do this. They deserve better than me. I'm not Sharon.

AMANDA

Johniee you hurled chunks in my hair and a week later I fell for you. And it's because of you that I'm finally doing what I love.

Johniee looks away, wrestling with his thoughts.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

You said yourself that you've been searching your entire life for the one thing you're good at. And now that it's staring you in the face you're going to back down?

JOHNIEE

It's not that simple.

AMANDA

Why not?

JOHNIEE

Because I've never succeeded
before! At anything.

AMANDA

You're succeeding now.
(takes his hands)
I want to tell you something...

JOHNIEE

Are you nervous about tomorrow?

AMANDA

...yes. Yes, I'm nervous about
tomorrow. That's it.

Amanda sighs as Johniee steps away. She puts on a smile
as he returns with her portfolio and flips through.

JOHNIEE

Don't be nervous. You picked the
perfect flowers, the perfect menu.
I dare something to go wrong.

AMANDA

I know it's not *my* wedding, but I
sent invites to my parents months
ago hoping they'd like to see it.
See me doing what I love, but I
was wrong. I haven't even heard
from my sister. I thought she'd at
least come.

JOHNIEE

I'll be there.

Amanda sweetly takes Johniee's face. He then returns his
attention to her portfolio.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, HALLWAY -- MORNING

Johniee walks, buttoning his suit jacket when he hears
CRYING. He gently pushes on Chris' bedroom door. Enters.

Chris is in bed, CRYING as he clenches a VHS of *Titanic*.

CHRIS

There was enough room. *There was
enough room.*

Johniee lifts Chris into his arms, carrying him out the
room while...

JOHNIEE

You have a big heart. And yes. Yes
there was.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP, BACK PARKING LOT -- SHORT WHILE LATER

Johniee and Chris exit his SUV.

CHRIS

What are we doing here, dammit?

Johniee smiles, putting his arm around Chris.

EXT. OFFICE SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

The office space beside the Children's Center -- the
inside is shielded by curtains in windows.

Hands on hips, Chris sighs eyeing Johniee. Johniee smiles
and removes the vacancy sign then a key from his pocket.
Chris is now on alert as Johniee unlocks the door.

INT. OFFICE SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

Chris barely manages to move his feet enough to step
inside as Johniee turns on the lights -- fully furnished
with salon and spa equipment, furniture and decor.

JOHNIEE

You've done so much for me. You've
sacrificed so much that I'll never
be able to repay you, but-

Chris embraces Johniee!

CHRIS

Thank you, my boy.

A moment, Johniee fights back tears to break away.

JOHNIEE

So I um, I have to get to the
church. I'll see you there.

Johniee starts toward the door, but halts and embraces
Chris again. Johniee then breaks away more quickly and
goes. Chris smiles, wiping his eyes as he looks around.

INT. SMALL CHURCH -- SHORT WHILE LATER

Amanda is covering Johnniee's eyes as she leads him in.

JOHNIEE

Can I look now?

Amanda releases Johnniee who looks about in awe of the beautiful decorations.

AMANDA

Well?

JOHNIEE

You did all this yourself?

AMANDA

With difficulty.

JOHNIEE

It's incredible.

(takes her hands)

I want to tell you something.

Amanda, I l-

Ray and Eu-meh enter, smiling as they approach and eventually separate Johnniee and Amanda as they further up the aisle.

JOHNIEE

Anyway. I want to tell you that I-

Amanda's cell RINGS.

AMANDA

I'm sorry.

JOHNIEE

It's OK. It's only the death of all things romantic.

AMANDA

I'm sorry. Hi, Emily. Are you-

INAUDIBLE SCREAMS emanate from Amanda's cell.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

What?! Well is he- Hello?

(hangs up)

The wedding's off. The groom was hit by a car. He's in a coma.

Amanda exits the church. Johnniee follows.

EXT. SMALL CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS

Johniee catches up with Amanda, takes her into his arms.

AMANDA

I feel bad and I hope he's OK, but
I worked really hard on this.

JOHNIEE

I know babe, I know.

AMANDA

I knew something like this would
happen. Now I'm actually glad my
parents didn't show up. It'd be
just another failure for them to
rub in my face.

JOHNIEE

You know what? Don't move.

AMANDA

Where are you going?

JOHNIEE

Just stay here.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Chris is suit clad, adjusting his tie Johniee enters.

JOHNIEE

I need your help. I need you to
call everyone you know and invite
them to a wedding.

Chris stretches his arms out, a cell phone sliding out of
each of his sleeves and into his ready hands. Chris grins
mischievously, ready for action.

Johniee and Chris make multiple calls...

JOHNIEE

Yes, I'd like to invite you to a
wedding... Great. Do you know
anyone who wants to get married?
Hello?

CHRIS

Me. Wedding. Today. Interested?
...hello? Psh. Bastard.
(dials)
Wedding. Interested? ...bastard.

JOHNIEE

It's my girlfriend's wedding...

CHRIS

I am a business owner!

JOHNIEE

No I'm not in it. Why would I be in it?

CHRIS

Wedding?

JOHNIEE

If it was my wedding would I be on the phone with you right now?

CHRIS

(uninterested)

You're wasting my time.

Chris hangs up.

JOHNIEE

Gorgeous flowers... It doesn't matter what type of flowers you creep!

CHRIS

(writing)

I can't guarantee an aisle seat, but I do have a spot on pew three, and that's forty-five dollars for one seat or sixty dollars for two.

JOHNIEE

Yes it's my girlfriend's wedding. No I am not the groom.

CHRIS

(CELL RINGS)

Yeah. Uh-huh.

(a sly smile)

Pew three it is.

JOHNIEE

(--different calls--)

It's at a church. A beautiful church -- Gorgeous flowers -- Ice sculptures -- Hyacinths. But it's not like you need to know that -- Yes, the food is free.

Shaking his head, Chris cuts Johnnie a nasty look then slides him a piece of paper with "pricing".

JOHNIEE (CONT'D)

Actually no. Food is, *thirty-five dollars a plate?*

CHRIS

Look, if you're on a budget we'll cut the ice sculpture. That'll save you...

(a calculator)

Thirteen-hundred.

JOHNIEE

Thank you! Yes, of course. You can sit right in the-

(CHRIS instructs him)

How about an aisle seat on pew, six? Would that work? Great!

CHRIS

Look, you're only going to get married once. Twice if you're lucky. Give yourself the day you deserve... No, the rings cost extra. Remember you purchased the bronze package. *Pss!* Johnnie. We need lawn chairs.

Johnnie smiles, rolling his eyes as he grabs his keys.

EXT. DOROTHY'S YARD -- CONTINUOUS

Dorothy is washing her sports car. Johnnie approaches.

DOROTHY

Hey lover.

JOHNIEE

Miss Dorothy do you have plans this afternoon?

DOROTHY

Who's asking?

JOHNIEE

My girlfriend's wedding is in a bit of a jam. Her groom was hit by a car yet somehow Chris is still scalping tickets to this thing.

DOROTHY

You're not the groom in your
girlfriend's wedding?

JOHNIEE

Miss Dorothy, I understand that
you're getting up there in years,
but I really need you to focus OK?
This is my girlfriend's first
wedding and if I can't get it
going again, it may be her last.
So right now what I need is a
groom... And a bride actually, so
do you know anyone?

DOROTHY

(shuts off hose)

What?

JOHNIEE

Oh my god. *Do-you-know-*

DOROTHY

I'm not senile.

JOHNIEE

Do you know anyone who's engaged
or wants to renew their vows?

DOROTHY

You're not the groom?

JOHNIEE

I don't have time for this. Bye.

DOROTHY

Wait.

Dorothy smiles.

INT. SMALL CHURCH -- LATER

Amanda is alone on a front pew when the doors open and
GUESTS begin to file in. Excited, Johniee approaches her.

AMANDA

What's going on?

JOHNIEE

My girlfriend planned a wedding.

Amanda is amazed.

INT. SMALL CHURCH, OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Johniee enters with Amanda -- Dorothy is here zipping up her white dress.

AMANDA

Isn't this your neighbor?

JOHNIEE

Miss Dorothy, Amanda. Amanda, Miss Dorothy. Miss Dorothy and her husband, that I did not know she had, are renewing their vows. Help her get dressed. We start in ten minutes. He is coming, right?

DOROTHY

Yes, he's just running his car through the car wash.

JOHNIEE

Alright. Well, good luck...

AMANDA

Thank you for coming.

DOROTHY

Of course. I'd do anything for those ass cheeks.

AMANDA

That's sweet.

INT. SMALL CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS

Smiling, Chris is at the door slapping Guests' butts as they enter.

Johniee joins Ray and Eu-meh on a front pew. He goes to speak when Eu-meh stands and takes a seat at the church organ and plays the Wedding March. Ray nudges Johniee.

RAY

We're thinking about renewing our vows too. It's our twentieth next month.

JOHNIEE

That would've been nice to know an hour ago when I called you asking if you knew anyone who wanted to renew their vows.

RAY

Sure... So do you know anyone who plans weddings?

JOHNIEE

Yeah. My *girlfriend*.

Ray looks about. *He is not impressed*. Johnniee scoffs when he spots Mailman in a minister's robe. Mailman winks.

RAY

Who knew Dorothy was even married?

JOHNIEE

She must have been keeping him in the basement.

RAY

Whoa. Is that him?

Johnniee starts to look, but the Guests rise and obstruct his view. Chris prances past Amanda, the Maid of Honor, and stands beside Johnniee. Dorothy makes down the aisle.

CHRIS

This is so exciting.

At the altar with Dorothy, Amanda does a double take of the GROOM, his face unseen.

MAILMAN

Who gives this woman away?

Amanda can't stop staring in Groom's direction.

JOHNIEE

What is it?

MAILMAN

Somebody? Anybody? We need to get this thing moving.

Johnniee moves to Dorothy and links arms with her.

JOHNIEE

I will. Treat her right. You're one lucky-

Johnniee's eyes widen. Old Man!

MAILMAN

Do you need a few minutes or...

RAY

Johnniee, are you alright?

CHRIS

Shut up! Johnniee, are you alright?

JOHNIEE

It's you.

AMANDA

Oh my god.

OLD MAN

Take your rancid, self-abuse hands
off my wife.

DOROTHY

I'm sorry. What's going on here?

AMANDA

(pointing)

You ran down Johnniee. You killed
Princess Sassy!

Ray catches Amanda as she lunges at Old Man!

JOHNIEE

You gave me a concussion!

OLD MAN

I shoul'da gave you a coffin!

DOROTHY

Bobbert!

JOHNIEE

Bobbert? His name is Bobbert- *Your
name is Bobbert!*

Mailman sighs and just goes.

DOROTHY

I don't understand.

Eu-Meh pins her hair then stands, approaching.

JOHNIEE

He killed her Yorkiepool!

DOROTHY

You what?!

BOBBERT

I ran down the dirty mutt. And I
ain't talking bout the puppy!

Eu-meh slaps Dorothy! She then takes Amanda's hand and
exits the church with her. Dorothy is stunned.

RAY

Everyone just needs to calm down.
While I go check on my wife...

DOROTHY

Why did she hit me?

BOBBERT

Because they're all wild beasts-

A LION'S ROAR as Chris takes Bobbert down!

INT. HOSPITAL ER -- CONTINUOUS

As usual, PEOPLE are waiting to be seen. Jake is walking
up to them, individually "assessing" their needs. He
stops at a TEENAGE BOY, pushes his head back -- A BLACK
EYE. Jake drops a band-aid on Teenage Boy's lap.

JAKE

You're fine.

DOROTHY

Help!

Both beaten, Dorothy drags Bobbert in -- nearby, a
WEEPING BRIDE and BRIDESMAIDS snap selfies.

Disgusted, Jake approaches the nurse's station.

JAKE

You. Laura.

LESLIE

Leslie.

JAKE

Take the groupies. If the fossil
makes it, take him too. I'm on
lunch.

Jake smugly drops the box of band-aids and goes just as
Johniee, Amanda, Chris, Ray and Eu-meh file into the ER,
all beaten up save Eu-meh. They sit quietly for a time.

EU-MEH

That was almost very lovely
Amanda, thank you.

Ray nods in agreement.

JOHNIEE

What happened to *you*?

AMANDA

...I don't know.

BEV, 30's, an attractive brunette, enters. She's searching for someone.

JOHNIEE

Chris that clothesline was
amazing.

Touched, Chris puts his head on Johniee's shoulder.

EU-MEH

You were not raised to condone
violence Johniee.

Eu-meh, BLOOD AND SKIN beneath her nails, brushes a few hairs from her face.

BEV

Amanda?

Amanda spots Bev and rushes to her. A warm embrace.

AMANDA

Bev! What are you doing here?

BEV

That lunatic dad set me up with
had been paying some kid to hack
my phone in exchange for
artificial cadavers so I'm *just*
getting your messages. Who's this?

Johniee and Chris, Chris' eyes drooping, approach.

AMANDA

Bev this is Johniee.

JOHNIEE

Nice to finally meet you.

BEV

Aw, yes. Amanda can go on for days
about you. Just on and on and on-

AMANDA

And *this* is- Put your hand down.

Chris lowers his hand, blushing as Bev steps closer.

BEV

So this is Chris. Sis you left out some very important details. Yeah.

Johniee and Amanda worriedly eye the strong attraction between Chris and Bev until-

AMANDA

You know what, who cares? I need medical attention.

Johniee follows Amanda to the front desk.

CHRIS

So. Do you like Celine?

BEV

I only saw her in Vegas. Twice.

Chris' eyes droop.

AMANDA

Johniee I wanted to tell you something last night-

JOHNIEE

I love you.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I love you.

They lean in to kiss when-

AN ICED COFFEE smacks them in the face! Jake is not far away, laughing and ROOTING *himself* on. Johniee takes an aggressive step forward when-

With a black eye and busted lip, Male Intern smashes Jake on the back of the head with a medical tray. Jake falls face first, unconscious. Male Intern, a darker, different person now, nods to Johniee.

EXT. HOSPITAL ER -- CONTINUOUS

BEV

Well, it was *sort of* nice to meet you all.

EU-MEH

Til next time pigeon.

CHRIS

Don't you dare call her that.

RAY

You better watch yo mouth.

Ray takes Eu-meh's hand and leads her away.

BEV

Don't you all need to get seen
about? You look awful.

JOHNEE

We'd have to go back inside.

Johniee and Chris look back at the ER, thinking, sighing.
They lead Amanda and Bev away.

INT. JOHNEE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- LATER

Johniee and Amanda, Chris and Bev, Ray and Eu-meh are
around the table laughing and enjoying their bagels.

AMANDA

Then he tells me we have a date
and right after that he fires me.

JOHNEE

You were being insolent.

THE DOORBELL.

EXT. JOHNEE'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR -- CONTINUOUS

Eu-meh opens the door to Dorothy who takes a step back.

DOROTHY

Oh. I was looking for Johniee.

EU-MEH

Why?

DOROTHY

I wanted to apologize for what my-
Oh my god!

Eu-meh has raised a hand to slap her- Dorothy quickly
backs away! Eu-meh lowers her hand.

EU-MEH

That was a warning should you or
your vile mate ever consider
returning to this home to continue
your menace upon my son, my
grandson or their two white girls.
Nod if you understand... Good...
Amanda says you haven't paid her,
please put a check in the mail.

Eu-meh re-enters the house and shuts the door.

INT. JOHNIEE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ray reaches a hand out for Eu-meh as she sits. Chris
stands, takes their hands in his own and smiles.

As Ray and Eu-meh kiss, Chris loses it and knocks Ray
unconscious with his plate!

Bev feigns fright, but is clearly turned on.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)

And we all lived happily ever
after. Well we did, once Chris
finished his community service.

EXT. LUXURIOUS GATED ESTATE -- AFTERNOON [FLASHBACK]

FEDERAL OFFICERS pry Chris off the gate.

CHRIS

Just let me see her! Just let me
see her! I'm not dangerous!

An Officer finds Chris' flare gun.

CHRIS

Uh.

FEDERAL OFFICER

Over there!

Bev is running with CELINE DION MEMORABILIA. Officers
tackle her!

INT. JAIL [FLASHBACK] -- LATER, CONTINUOUS

Bev's MUG SHOT.

Chris' MUG SHOT.

EXT. CHILDREN'S CENTER -- AFTERNOON

Inside, Johniee is smoothing a sign over the front door.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

On a higher note, I took over the children's center which until now was actually called The Children's Center. I don't know what Sharon was thinking. Oh! And speaking of Sharon, she met some guy while on vacation and eloped.

PHOTOGRAPHS: An exotic background: TAHITI -- Sharon and a handsome, AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN in his 40's.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

She's bringing him home next week.

Johniee has finished with the sign: DOUBLE E'S CENTER FOR KIDS. Proud of it, he turns away.

INT. CHILDREN'S CENTER -- AFTERNOON

Kate works here now. Reading to a group of CHILDREN, she smiles at Johniee as he passes Bobby and scruffs his hair. Bobby, 'the security guard', spots a bit of commotion and quickly moves to handle it.

Johniee approaches a very pregnant Amanda and kisses her. They look about, observing how far the center has come.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

Flash forward two years. Amanda and I got married. She planned it of course. And as you can see we're expecting company.

Johniee and Amanda smile as Chris and Bev enter, both SUNBURNED from a tropical honeymoon.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

And I became a stepson. And a brother-in-law.

Chris excitedly points to Bev's belly.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

And a brother. And maybe a nephew. We're still sorting through it.

Chris pulls Johniee in for a hug- *His sunburn!*

CHRIS

Dammit!

LITTLE GIRL

Dammit.

JOHNIEE

Thanks.

Annoyed and in pain, Chris waves Johniee off.

INT. RAY AND EU-MEH'S HOUSE, BEDROOM -- AFTERNOON

Johniee, Amanda and their 2 year old DAUGHTER enter followed by Chris, pregnant Bev and their 2 year old SON.

Seated, Ray cradles Eu-meh as she cradles their NEW BORN. Frowning, Chris approaches and takes a pillow. Frightened, Ray and Eu-Meh shield their New Born.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

Now that Ray and Eu-meh have a baby, I can now officially say that I am a father, son, husband, brother, brother-in-law, nephew and possibly a cousin... That's it. That's all I wanted to say.

STIFLED HIP HOP MUSIC. Johniee kisses Amanda then turns. We follow him out of the room and down the hall where he stops in the doorway of a spare bedroom.

Within, JOHNIEE'S SON, 3 years old, is playing with toys, bobbing his head to the music on the radio. He looks up at his father, unsure what to expect.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

In more ways than one I never dreamt before I met Amanda.

Johniee approaches the radio and turns it up just a bit. Returning to the door, Johniee smiles as his son giggles and continues with his toys.

JOHNIEE (V.O.)(CONT'D)

Now it's all I can do.

Johniee goes, smiling as he shuts the door.

The End.