

IT'S NOT A GAME

AN ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

BY

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FADE IN:

ON BLACK the statement:

Black Love Can Be So Strange;
And Strange Is Often Black Love.

The FAINT SOUNDS OF URBAN MUSIC, SCUFFLING FEET, a BASKETBALL AS IT IS DRIBBLED and SHOT AGAINST A BACKBOARD, and SEVERAL MALE VOICES talking about a basketball game can be heard. The sounds gradually begin to increase in volume until they can easily be heard.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

It is a typical day on the basketball court. SPECTATORS walk by and lean on a HIGH CHAINED-LINK FENCE that surrounds the court. Separate four on four half court games are being played. BALL PLAYERS are entering and leaving the court from an open gate in the fence. Urban music is loudly being played on a BOOM BOX.

A YOUNG, BLACK MAN

is coming down the basketball lane for a slam-dunk.

SPECTATORS (O.S.)

Damn!

ANOTHER PLAYER

stands at the free throw line holding a basketball, he is AIR WILLIE.

AIR WILLIE

Game baby, who's got next?

He looks towards the open gate entrance.

AIR WILLIE

Oh hell n'all, who are these...

FOUR YOUNG BLACK MEN

ages? descriptions?

walk on the court. They are CLYDE, ERIC, FLOYD, and TIM JOHNSON. They are all about the same age, and Tim is wearing GLASSES.

AIR WILLIE (O.S.)

...miscellaneous Negroes walking on the court.

Clyde walks toward Air Willie at the free-throw line.

AIR WILLIE

(to Clyde)

Yo baby, we're playing serious ball out here today. No room for amateurs.

The fellas continue to walk on the court. Clyde now stands in front of Air Willie.

AIR WILLIE

You fellas are serious aren't you? Well before you get set on playing, let me introduce my squad to you.

He points toward each of his players one at a time.

BABY SHAQ appears first.

AIR WILLIE (O.S.)

We call him Baby Shaq, because of his unstoppable low post game.

ICE CREAM appears next.

AIR WILLIE (O.S.)

We call him Ice Cream, because his moves are smooth and chilly.

SLAM JAM appears last.

AIR WILLIE (O.S.)

And the one with the nasty game
ending dunk, we call Slam Jam.

AIR WILLIE

points to himself.

AIR WILLIE

And of course there's me. Who
am I? All you need to know is
that before there was Air Jordan,
there was me -- Air Willie.

CLYDE

Oh Negro, please! Give me the
touch.

Air Willie gives the basketball to Clyde. Clyde turns to this
teammates.

CLYDE

Everyone pick up a man.

Tim takes off his glasses, and puts them in his pocket.

TIM

(to Clyde)

Should we even bother to play?
We don't have any names.

CLYDE

Don't believe the hype!

The fellas each pick up a man. Tim gets Slam Jam; Eric gets
Baby Shaq; Floyd gets Ice Cream. Clyde turns back to Air
Willie, and tosses him the ball.

CLYDE

Let's rock!

The game begins:

ICE CREAM shoots a jumper.

FLOYD makes a lay up.

SLAM JAM makes a rebound dunk.

ERIC makes a hook shot.

AIR WILLIE makes a jumper.

CLYDE makes a shot.

BABY SHAQ makes a low post move and a lay up.

TIM makes a lay up.

BABY SHAQ tries to shoot a short jumper over Eric. Eric blocks it cleanly.

SPECTATORS (O.S.)

Damn! He got his shot blocked.

Baby Shaq hears the comment and points to Eric.

BABY SHAQ

I got ball.

ERIC and FLOYD REACT

to the call with disbelief. Clyde picks up the ball and starts to walk to the top of the free-throw line. Air Willie follows him.

AIR WILLIE

Yo man, Baby Shaq called "ball".

CLYDE

That's a bullshit call.

AIR WILLIE

You gotta respect a man's call.

Clyde quickly turns to Air Willie.

CLYDE

I don't have to respect a damn thing! That was a clean block --

FLOYD AND ERIC

are standing next to each other on one side of the court.

FLOYD
(to Eric)
-- by the "Eraser".

ERIC
The Eraser? I like that.

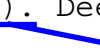
Air Willie stands directly in front of Clyde.

AIR WILLIE
But that was Baby Shaq who
made the call.

CLYDE
Is that suppose to mean something
to me? Shit, he isn't Shaq. Baby
Shack perhaps, but definitely not
Shaq.

Clyde and Air Willie go back and forth arguing (AD LIB) in the background as Tim, who is standing under the basket, happens to look off court. He SQUINTS, and takes his glasses out of his pocket and puts them on.

TWO YOUNG BLACK WOMEN

are at an EXERCISE STATION located across a small field outside the fence. They are SHARON and DEE DEE (SHORT FOR DINNA DUNCAN). Dee Dee is working out while Sharon is looking back at Tim.  Does this matter in the story? Leave it out.

TIM waves to Sharon.

SHARON'S FACE

frowns as she looks back at Tim.

As Tim waves, he does not notice that Clyde and Air Willie had resolved their dispute over the call. Clyde has the basketball and restarts the game with a pass to Tim.

A BASKETBALL IS THROWN

to Tim head high. Tim reflexively ducks out the way at the last moment, and the ball hits the fence with a loud CLACK.

CLYDE

Tim, get in the game.

Tim goes to retrieve the ball. He gets it and tosses it back to Clyde.

He looks back off court.

THE EXERCISE STATION

is now empty.

He takes his glasses back off, puts them in his pocket, and gets back into the game.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY - LATER

Clyde is at the top of the free-throw line handing Air Willie the basketball.

CLYDE

All right fellas, this is game point.

Air Willie turns to his team.

AIR WILLIE

I want you guys to shut these boys down. It's no way that these guys are suppose to be in the game with us.

He turns back to Clyde and tosses him the ball.

AIR WILLIE

Let's rock.

Clyde throws the ball to Eric. Eric makes a move and gives the ball up to Floyd. Clyde comes down and picks Tim's man, Slam Jam. Tim comes around the pick and Floyd throws him the ball. Tim catches it and shoots.

THE BASKETBALL

goes into the basket.

Clyde, Floyd, and Eric come over and congratulate Tim, as the losing team walks off the court.

AIR WILLIE

I can't believe that we got
beat by those guys.

CLYDE

Believe it Holmes -- believe it!

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Clyde, Floyd, and Eric sit on the COUCH and CHAIRS watching the outcome of a playoff game between the New York Knicks and the Los Angeles Lakers on the TELEVISION. Several empty BEER CANS and SNACK CHIP BAGS sit on the COFFEE TABLE in front of them.

The basketball game is in the last seconds. We do not see the action, but HEAR THE ANNOUNCER as he describes it.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...20 seconds left in the game
and the Knicks need a basket to
win...

ANGLE TO -

~~INT. TIM'S APT - HALLWAY - NIGHT~~

Tim is on the phone. The Announcer can be heard in the background.

TIM

(on phone)

Could you tell Sharon that Tim
called?

(frowning)

All right then, thanks.

Tim hangs up the phone and shakes his head.

~~BACK TO THE~~

~~INT. TIM'S APT~~ x LIVING ROOM f ~~NIGHT~~

CLYDE, ERIC, AND FLOYD

sit on the edge of their seats.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...5 seconds left as Ewing has
the ball...Ewing pivots...3 seconds
left...He shoots the jump hook...
1 second...It'ssssss GOOD. THE
KNICKS HAVE BEATEN THE LAKERS!

The fellas jump out of their seats yelling. Tim appears in the hallway entrance with the phone in his hand. He stops at a SMALL TABLE at the hallway entrance which has an AQUARIUM and BOX OF FISH FOOD on it. He places the phone on the table.

TIM

What happened?

ERIC

Ewing hit a nasty, game ending
shot. You should have seen it.

CLYDE

Where were you, you missed the
best shot of the game.

TIM

I was on the phone.

CLYDE

Phone? It must have been a pretty
important wicked call to miss the
end of the game.

FLOYD

"Wicked" call?

CLYDE

Yeah, a wicked call. It's that late night call you make to a honey to see if you can come over and get-get-get-get busy.

ERIC

I use to call that my "Midnight, I need to get paid" rap. Tim must be getting an early start tonight.

TIM

No, it was something else.

Eric and Floyd sit back down. Clyde starts to head to hallway.

CLYDE

(to Floyd)

Floyd, did you put that beer you just bought us in the frig?

FLOYD

Yeah, it's in there.

Clyde walks ^{past} ~~pass~~ Tim ~~who is still standing in the hallway entrance and disappears~~ down the ~~hallway~~ ^{hall}.

ERIC

(yelling)

Get me one too, Clyde.

FLOYD

I made a slight change in the beer order.

Clyde re-enters holding two cans of beer. (He gets back to fast)

CLYDE

What kind of shit is this? I thought I told you to buy some Miller's or something.

You already said he re-entered

He (walks back into the living room), ~~and~~ tosses one of the beers to Eric who looks at the label.

FLOYD

When I got to the store to buy the beer, I saw that they had this beer on sale. I calculated that this beer was substantially cheaper per ounce than the other beers, so I got it.

CLYDE

Floyd -- You're so cheap. What's a few cents cost savings mean when it comes to beer?

He opens it, and takes a sip; So does Eric.

CLYDE

This shit taste like guinea pig piss.

ERIC

This is like the stuff we use to home brew in the country, and serve in mason jars.

Clyde sits.

FLOYD

You guys act like you've been drinking brand name beers your whole lives. Why, just a couple of years ago you guys were drinking 40 ounces with a straw. Now you act like you're beer connoisseurs, or something.

CLYDE

Things change.

FLOYD

Things change, huh?

CLYDE

Yeah things change, because I'm living large these days -

ERIC
(interrupting)
-- Extra large --

CLYDE
-- in my small world.

Tim walks into the living room.

TIM
All right now, someone tell
me what I missed in the game.

CLYDE
We already told you that New
York beat the Lakers sorry ass
in the last seconds. What else
do you need to know?

TIM
Was it a tough win?

CLYDE
Of course it was, it's always
tough when you're playing the
Lakers.

TIM
You know that the game would
not have been that close if
they had drafted that six-foot
guard out of State last year.

Clyde, Floyd, and Eric give Tim a CONFUSED LOOK.

CLYDE
Who are you talking about?

TIM
Why me of course -- Tim Johnson.

Floyd and Eric ~~start laughing.~~ ^{laugh} Clyde shakes his head ~~back and forth.~~

CLYDE

What the hell are you talking about? This guy hits one lucky shot in the playground, after messing up my nice pass, and the next thing you know he's talking about the NBA. What's wrong with him?

ERIC

I don't know. The boy needs help.

FLOYD

Lots.

CLYDE

(to Tim)

If anything, you have one of the weakest games in this room.

Clyde points to a TELESCOPE standing in the corner ~~of the living room.~~ (We know we're in the living room)

CLYDE

Your game is so weak you would need your telescope to see it.

(laughing)

Come to think of it, I'm ten times the ball player you wish you could be.

TIM

So I'm weak, like zero on the game scale, huh?

CLYDE

That's right, you're a zero.

TIM

But wait a minute, you said that your game was ten times as good as my game, so what does that make you? What's ten times zero?

Eric and Floyd begin to laugh.

CLYDE
Oh, shut the hell up.

TIM
(pointing at Clyde)
Don't mess with me.

The phone RINGS.

CLYDE, FLOYD, & ERIC
(yelling)
WICKED CALL!

TIM
Nobody move, I'll get the phone.

Tim hurries over to the phone, picks it up off the small table, and disappears down the hallway before he answers it. The fellas are amused at Tim's reaction.

What's happening on the screen during these "moments"?

Moments later, Tim reappears in the hallway entrance.

TIM
Eric, it's your wife.

Eric gets up, ~~and walks over to Tim.~~ He takes the phone, and goes ~~walks~~ down the ~~hallway.~~ ^{hall} Tim picks up the box of fish food from the small table, and starts to put ~~some~~ fish food in the aquarium.

FLOYD
You were expecting a call, Tim?

TIM
No, not really.

CLYDE
I told you about that weak game of yours. Where is your answering machine at? I don't know any single guys that still answer their phone in person. That answering machine is your first line of defense.

TIM
Defense? Defense against what?

CLYDE

Defense against unwanted women,
of course. Isn't that right Floyd.

FLOYD

That's right, it has saved me
plenty of times.

TIM

I had a machine, but I disconnected
it.

Eric reenters, bumping Tim as he goes by. Tim almost spills
the box of fish food into the tank.

TIM

Watch it. You almost made
me spill the whole box in
the tank.

ERIC

I'm sorry, we wouldn't want
that to happen. I know how
you love those fish.

TIM

(to Eric)

So, how's the Mrs?

Eric sits. Tim stops feeding the fish, and stands on the
outskirts of the living room.

ERIC

She's fine. I guess she saw
on the news that the game
was over, and wanted to know
when I was coming home.

FLOYD

What, is she checking up on
you? Sounds kind of rough to
me.

ERIC

It's not rough, actually she has been very nice lately. She has let me get away with a lot without saying a word. You know I have it like that.

CLYDE

I'm glad you do, because I think that it is tough being married these days, especially with all of the women out here today. It's got to seriously slow up your game.

ERIC

Being married hasn't slowed my game up at all.

TIM

He's got that right!

~~As Eric continues, Tim looks towards the television.~~

ERIC

I get more play now, than when I was single. I can't count the number of times when a woman has asked if I was married and I told her "Yes", and her next question had been "Happily"?

TIM

Fellas, check out the TV.

They all look.

INSERT THE TELEVISION ON SCREEN.

A BLACK FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR, LINDA MCKENNON, sits behind a large desk with the station call letters, KBMW, visible behind her.

LINDA

This special report is entitled
'Good Black Men: Where Are You?'
We are doing this report because
of the numerous responses we have
received from Black women about
the unavailability of finding good
Black men. First some statistics:

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK

as the statistics appear line by line.

BLACK MEN MAKE UP 7% OF THE POPULATION, BUT 60% OF PRISON
INMATES.

LINDA (V.O.)

Black men make up 7% of the
population, but 60% of the
prison inmates.

MORE BLACK MEN ARE IN PRISON THAN IN COLLEGE.

LINDA (V.O.)

More Black men are in prison
than in college.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST CAUSES OF DEATH FOR BLACK MEN 18-26 IS
HOMICIDE.

LINDA (V.O.)

One of the biggest causes of
death for Black men 18-26 is
homicide.

40% OF THE BLACK MEN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 20 AND 35 ARE
EITHER IN JAIL, OR IN SOME WAY INVOLVED WITH THE PROBATION
AUTHORITIES.

LINDA (V.O.)

40% of the Black men between
the ages of 20 and 35 are either
in jail, or in some way involved
with the probation authorities.

LINDA REAPPEARS ON SCREEN.

LINDA

Additionally, the other factors of high unemployment, drugs, gay lifestyles, and Black men marrying outside of their race, does seem to build a case for those Black women who say there are not many available Black men.

FLOYD

is relaxing on the couch; He sits up and leans towards the television.

FLOYD

I don't know about all those statistics, but that Linda McKennon is fine.

ERIC

Isn't she? I was just thinking the same thing.

CLYDE

I wonder what she looks like naked?

TIM

Would you guys be serious for a minute. I'm trying to hear what she's saying.

They look back at the television.

INSERT THE TELEVISION ON SCREEN.

LINDA

Statistics can be misleading sometimes, so we sent three reporters out to the three places one would likely meet Black men: Work, Club, and Church. First lets join Reporter Michelle Dewitt, at a job site.

THE FIRST REPORTER, MICHELLE DEWITT, APPEARS ON SCREEN.

She is standing in front of a LARGE OFFICE BUILDING, MICROPHONE IN HAND. Behind her stands a LARGE GROUP OF BLACK WOMEN.

MICHELLE

Michelle Dewitt here. With increasing numbers of Black women entering the professional work places today, I have come to this office building to ask this group of professional Black women the question:

She turns to the group.

MICHELLE

(yelling)

Are there many good Black men here?

GROUP OF WOMEN # 1

(yelling)

NO!

Individual Black women start to yell out responses to the question posed by Michelle. Michelle puts the microphone in front of each that speaks. The women will speak in rapid succession.

OFFICE WOMAN # 1

I don't see any, and when I do they are underachievers, like the security guards.

OFFICE WOMAN # 2

If you do meet one on your professional level, then they're culturally unsophisticated...

OFFICE WOMAN # 3

...or a chauvinist, they don't want to respect your career.

OFFICE WOMAN # 4

That's because they are intimidated by a professional Black woman.

OFFICE WOMAN # 5

A lot of them know about the shortage of decent men and try to exploit it.

OFFICE WOMAN # 6

And don't forget about the ones that date White women.

The entire group moans; Michelle turns back to the screen.

MICHELLE

There you have just a sampling of how these women feel. They all agree that there are not many decent Black men here. Back to you, Linda.

LINDA REAPPEARS ON SCREEN.

LINDA

Thank you, Michelle. Now lets go to our second reporter at a well known local nightclub.

THE SECOND REPORTER, LISA WOODS, APPEARS ON SCREEN.

She is in front of a club with ANOTHER GROUP OF BLACK WOMEN, MICROPHONE in hand. The name of the club, HOUSERS, shows prominently over the entrance door.

LISA

Lisa Woods here. The club scene has always been a place where Black single women have gone for entertainment, and perhaps a chance to meet Mr. Right. I'm here at Housers with a number of women to ask the question:

She turns to the group.

LISA

(yelling)

Do you women ever meet a lot
of decent Black men here?

GROUP OF WOMEN # 2

(yelling)

NO!

Just like at the office building, Lisa will place the microphone in front of various women that speak in rapid succession.

CLUB WOMAN # 1

You use to always find one or
two decent guys in a club, but
now there isn't anything here,
but a bunch of dogs.

CLUB WOMAN # 2

They play too much, like immature
boys.

CLUB WOMAN # 3

Most of the men are fake, wanna-
be-something-they-aren't types.

CLUB WOMAN # 4

And so cheap, they won't even
buy you a drink nowadays.

CLUB WOMAN # 5

When you do meet a nice one here,
they are either married and on
the wild --

CLUB WOMAN # 6

(interrupting)

-- or gay.

The group laughs; Lisa turns back to the screen.

LISA

Well Linda, it looks like it's tough sailing here also. Back to you.

LINDA REAPPEARS ON SCREEN.

LINDA

It seems that things are hard all over. Perhaps our last reporter has had better luck. Pat, are you there?

THE LAST REPORTER, PAT YOUNG, APPEARS ON SCREEN.

She stands in front of a LARGE CHURCH, MICROPHONE in hand. Behind her is ANOTHER GROUP OF BLACK WOMEN.

PAT

Yes Linda, I'm here. I'm Pat Young, and I'm standing in front of a church with a group of its women members. It has been said that church is where you could always go to find a decent Black man.

She turns to the group of Black women.

PAT

(yelling)

Ladies, are there many decent Black men here?

GROUP OF WOMEN # 3

(yelling)

NO!

Just like the other two times, Pat will interview different Black women from the group.

CHURCH WOMAN # 1

I have been coming to this church for five years, and I haven't met a good one yet.

CHURCH WOMAN # 2

I've had men tell me that they don't come, because they can't get up out of bed on Sunday morning.

CHURCH WOMAN # 3

Trifling! That's the word describing most of them.

CHURCH WOMAN # 4

A lot of Black men are sinners today and figure that they can't change.

CHURCH WOMAN # 5

And don't forget about tithing. A lot of guys are either too cheap, or don't have the money to give the church.

Pat turns back to the screen.

PAT

It would seem that the well has run dry here also. Back to you, Linda.

LINDA REAPPEARS ON SCREEN.

LINDA

Although our report should not be thought of as absolute, it does seem to collaborate with what many Black women have been saying today: A good Black man can be very hard to find. We'll be back with more news after these messages.

TIM

stands in front of the television.

TIM

What do you guys think about that report? It would seem that you decent Black men don't exist anymore.

CLYDE

Don't believe that nonsense. There is no shortage of decent men out here. It's just that a lot of today's women programs are so raggedy that no decent guy will have anything to do with them.

ERIC

Clyde is right. Most of them probably meet a decent guy every week, but when they do they don't know what to do with him. They will usually pass on him for the guy with the most social problems, cause they need to be needed, or have a death wish.

FLOYD

I would like someone to explain to me what they think a good Black man is. It seems that a lot of them think that you have to be a Denzel Washington looking, doctor/lawyer, athletic, tough, yet sensitive type to qualify.

TIM

But what about the statistics. They didn't make them up, did they?

CLYDE

No, but look Tim. Decent Black women don't know anything about a shortage of decent men. It all comes down to what you're about as a woman.

Clyde sits up in his seat.

CLYDE

I bet that everyone in this room has dealt with women from similar places as the ones shown on that newscast.

Floyd and Eric nod their heads.

CLYDE

And I bet that the reason that it didn't work out was because of them, not because of some shortage.

ERIC

You got that right.

FLOYD

Yeah, he sure does.

TIM

You can't always blame it on them can you? There are other things happening today that you are choosing to ignore.

CLYDE

What's up with you and this sudden change on females? I know that you're a young boy with a rookie game, but I had no idea that it was so weak. You need to stop reading Essence magazine and start listening to us.

TIM

I do listen, but there is always more than one side to any story.

CLYDE

There is, huh?

Clyde points to Floyd.

CLYDE

Do you have a story about the type of women you sometimes meet in clubs nowadays?

FLOYD

Yeah. I could come up with something.

Clyde points to Eric.

CLYDE

Do you have a story about the Amen women you sometimes meet in church?

ERIC

Oh, yeah. You know I do.

CLYDE

Because I have a story about Black professional women you sometimes meet at the office today.

Tim

~~Clyde stands, walks over to Tim, grabs him, and starts to walk him over to where he was sitting.~~ drops him in a chair

CLYDE

Sit down here Tim, and listen up.

(to the group)

~~Tim sits. Clyde goes in front of the group.~~

~~CLYDE~~

After you hear these stories you will see that there may be ~~be~~ two sides to them, and we're on the right side. My story is about a date I recently had. I met this woman on my job...

INT. OFFICE COPIER ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Clyde, dressed in a suit, is on his knees at the foot of a COPIER MACHINE. The door of the copier is open.

CLYDE (V.O.)
...in the copier room.

He hears a FEMALE VOICE, it belongs to DESIREE JENKINS.

DESIREE (O.S.)
Is the copy machine working?

Clyde answers, but does not look back at first.

CLYDE
Not right now, but it will be in
a minute.

Clyde pulls a JAMMED PIECE OF PAPER out of the copier, and shuts the door.

CLYDE (V.O.)
When I turned around...

Clyde turns around, and SLOWLY PANS UP HER BODY.

CLYDE (V.O.)
...I seen this woman with the
serious legs, a hurtem' up body,
and a pretty face. DESIREE JENKINS
was her name, and she was P-R-O-P-E-R.
Proper!

Clyde stands and goes over to talk to her.

CLYDE (V.O.)
Some of you Brothers might have
punked out in that situation,
and not said anything to her.
But I went over and got right
in her makeup. We talked a
little bit, and I asked her if
we could finish our conversation
over lunch.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Clyde and Desiree sit a table in a restaurant. A WAITER is at the table speaking to Desiree.

CLYDE (V.O.)

Now, I usually don't ask your girls out for lunch, because usually it's a cold beat. But, seeing how she was so fine, I figured that I would give her the benefit of the doubt. But when she started talking, I knew that it would be a tripped out lunch.

Clyde watches Desiree as a waiter places a salad in front of her, and walks away from the table they are seated at.

DESIREE

Isn't the ambiance of this restaurant just marvelous? And they have the best lobster salad here.

She eats, looking down.

CLYDE (V.O.)

Ambiance? What the hell is that?

She looks back up.

DESIREE

So where was I, oh yes, I was telling you how after I graduated from Helman, in the top 10% of my class, I decided to come work for Comell and Saxe. I could have worked for anyone, of course, but since one of my sorority sisters is a VP at Saxe, I figured that I would have more upward mobility there.

She takes another bite of her salad.

CLYDE (V.O.)

She told me that she's sorority,
so you know what question comes
next.

DESIREE

Are you Greek? No?

She shakes her head, and starts to eat again.

CLYDE (V.O.)

No I'm not Greek, but my mother
does have a little Creole in her.
(sarcastically)
So why don't you impress me with
what you like to do?

Desiree looks up.

DESIREE

I like the Arts, jazz, plays,
and things like that. I also do
a lot of reading. I especially
like books by Alice Walker and
Gloria Naylor. You're probably
finding all of this a bit over-
whelming aren't you? That's
because I am a representative
of the new and dynamic Black
woman today.

She eats.

CLYDE (V.O.)

Oh is that right? So I can guess
what kind of Black man you're
looking for.

She looks up.

DESIREE

I don't know if I even need one, but if I had to get one he would have to be successful and independent minded, because that's what I am: independent. You know it's so hard to meet Black men like I described. Either they don't have the job to meet my standard of living, or they are intimidated by me.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Clyde continues to stand in front of the seated Tim, Eric, and Floyd.

CLYDE

You can see why women like this don't make it with a lot of guys. She was like a lot of your professional girls that are so pumped on their careers and themselves that they feel that no Black men are qualified to even talk to them.

TIM

She's right in your case at least.

CLYDE

I know she is, and I hope never to be qualified for her raggedy program. She told me everything about herself, except what I wanted to know.

TIM

Which was?

CLYDE

When were we going to get busy. Anything more than that was just noise.

ERIC

You mean to tell me that you weren't impressed by her job, her cultural endeavors, and her obvious superior intellect?

FLOYD

I know I was impressed.

CLYDE

Are you kidding? If you're a woman and you want to impress me -- take your clothes off. Otherwise you're just another woman who thinks she's saying something that I want to hear.

TIM

That's kind of hard.

CLYDE

No it isn't. It's just that no one has the time, or desire, to listen to some woman talk about how incredible she is. What she needed to do was to go home and talk to her mother about what men expect from her.

TIM

You're talking about that old fashion treatment, aren't you?

CLYDE

Damn straight!

ERIC

Like fixing a guys meal at dinner time.

FLOYD

Or running you some bath water after a hard day of work.

TIM

Times change fellas.

CLYDE

Yes it does, but not always for the better.

ERIC

My girl does all of those old fashion things for me.

CLYDE

I bet she does, otherwise, why would you have married her?

FLOYD

For the steady supply of sex. You know that you Black men can't live without sex for any length of time.

CLYDE

Bullshit! I went to college for four years and didn't play sports, or pledge a frat. So, you know I know how to live without trim.

ERIC

You mean you were nominated for the Dusty Dick Award, too?

CLYDE

Nominated? I think I won that bad boy a couple of those years.

TIM

Hold up a minute before you boys get out of hand. Let's get back to your date. Desiree may have been a bit overconfident, but she didn't seem that bad to me.

CLYDE

Oh she didn't, huh? Well check out this last statement of hers.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

DESIREE

is drinking from glass; She REACTS as if she heard someone ask her a question. She sits the glass down on the table.

DESIREE

Of course I've dated White men.
I don't see anything wrong with that.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - ~~DAY~~ NIGHT

CLYDE

I don't follow White boys!

TIM

So that's it! I knew that it had to be something else. So her saying that hurt you, huh?

CLYDE

Not hurt, but awakened. If you're a Black woman that has dated White men you should keep it a secret.

ERIC

Amen to that my Brother.

CLYDE

Because, in my life I may have to follow behind White men in a lot of things, such as jobs or where I can live, but not for some Black pussy.

They scream.

FLOYD

And it's not just that Clyde. You know that once they do that they will probably be into that freaky stuff.

TIM
Freaky stuff?

FLOYD
Freaky stuff, like whips, chains,
ball licking, and dick sucking.
Everything and anything except
straight fucking.

TIM
Hold up! Could we please move
on, because I think that someone
is tripping kind of hard right
now.

Floyd stands.

FLOYD
I want to go next.

Floyd takes Clyde's position, as Clyde sits down.

FLOYD
Let me tell you about a woman
I met at a club one night. As
matter of fact, I was at the club
those women were interviewed at --
Housers!

~~EXT. HOUSERS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)~~

~~THE NAME HOUSERS~~

~~shows prominently over the entrance of the club. DANCE MUSIC
is heard in the background.~~

INT. HOUSERS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

~~checks it out.~~
Floyd ~~looks around the entire club. It contains a LARGE~~ DANCE
FLOOR, BAR, BOOTHS, and A LOT OF PEOPLE. Some ~~people are~~
dancing, some ~~are~~ at the bar, and others ~~are standing. just hanging.~~

FLOYD (V.O.)
As always they were throwing
down on the music, and burning
up the dance floor.

FLOYD

~~wearing a suit stands just off the dance floor watching people dance.~~

FLOYD (V.O.)

I'm there sporting a serious suit watching the action for a while and decided to take the floor. So I started asking for dances.

A RAPID SUCCESSION OF BLACK WOMEN

appear as Floyd asks each of them for a dance.

FLOYD (V.O.)

Would you like to dance?

1st DANCE WOMAN

No, it might mess up my hair.

FLOYD (V.O.)

Would you like to dance?

2nd DANCE WOMAN

No, I sprained my ankle and shouldn't move.

FLOYD (V.O.)

Would you like to dance?

3rd DANCE WOMAN

No, I don't dance.

ANOTHER BLACK MAN

walks up to her and takes her to the dance floor.

FLOYD (V.O.)

Would you like to dance?

4th DANCE WOMAN

(after looking him up and down)

NO!

5th DANCE WOMAN

No, I don't like this song.

6th DANCE WOMAN

No, the floor is too crowded.

7th DANCE WOMAN

No, I'm just out with my girlfriends.

8th DANCE WOMAN

No, I'm getting ready to leave.

9th DANCE WOMAN

No, I rather dance with my girlfriends.

10th DANCE WOMAN

No, I didn't come to dance. I just came to turn guys down.

AT THE BAR

Floyd sits on a stool with a drink in front him.

FLOYD (V.O.)

But sometimes getting a dance with a lady takes an act of Congress. So I decided to hit the bar, and get some antifreeze to unthaw my body from the icy atmosphere. So there I was sipping my drink, when I hear this voice.

A FEMALE VOICE IS HEARD, it belongs to LATISHA PHILLIPS.

LATISHA (O.S.)

It doesn't look like you're having a good time.

Floyd turns and looks at Latisha seated a couple of chairs down from him. She is a very pretty Black woman.

FLOYD (V.O.)

I see this young, good looking honey; her name was Latisha Phillips.

Floyd speaks to Latisha.

FLOYD
No, not really. It seems that
it's not my night.

Latisha moves down the bar and sits next to him.

LATISHA
You never know, the night is
not over yet.

They start to talk.

FLOYD (V.O.)
We started talking. One thing
lead to another, and we ended
up going to get a meal...

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

~~Floyd and Latisha sit at a table. A WAITER is standing by~~
Latisha, ~~ready to take her order as she looks in the menu.~~
stands over Floyd and
their heads in menus.

FLOYD (V.O.)
...which from the start I
knew was probably a mistake.

LATISHA
What I want is so expensive, but
I think I will get it anyway if
you don't mind.

Floyd watches as Latisha looks up at the waiter.

LATISHA
I'll have the Philly of Soul if
you please.

She hands the menu to the waiter who gives her a STRANGE LOOK,
and leaves.

FLOYD (V.O.)
That's Fillet of Sole. You should
never order something you can't
pronounce.

LATISHA

I love eating out, especially
with a man who doesn't mind
picking up the expenses...

FLOYD (V.O.)

(overlapping)

Oh-Oh, I think I've made a
mistake.

LATISHA

...of a woman. A lot of Black
men don't like to pay anymore.
They can be so cheap, they should
realize that you've got to pay
for a girls time. There ain't
nothing free, especially me.

She laughs.

FLOYD (V.O.)

So, you know what comes next.

LATISHA

How much money do you make? I
know it's a bit personal, but
you're such a classy looking
guy.

FLOYD (V.O.)

Of course I didn't tell her.

LATISHA

Oh, you don't want to say. All
right then, can you tell me what
you do for a living?

FLOYD (V.O.)

That's the same question, but I
told her that I was a CPA. I
wanted to know where she was
going with this line of questioning.

LATISHA

Oh, they make plenty of money.
I don't know exactly what they
do, but it sounds like something
you can make good money in.

She takes a sip of water.

FLOYD (V.O.)

Oh, is that right?

LATISHA

The only reason why I asked is
that I've got some expensive
tastes and I need a man who can
afford Latisha.

FLOYD (V.O.)

What do you do?

LATISHA

I'm a sales associate in the
bra and panty department at
Lehman-Marcus.

FLOYD (V.O.)

So, that's why you need a sponsor!

LATISHA

Like I said, I got some expensive
tastes and with three children...

FLOYD (V.O.)

(overlapping)

Oh, hell no! Bay-Bay's kids!

LATISHA

...and no support from their
fathers can make it hard.

FLOYD (V.O.)

So you're definitely looking
for a sponsor, aren't you?

LATISHA

You know, I like you. Do you like children?

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

FLOYD

continues to stand in front of the seated Tim, Eric, and Clyde.

FLOYD

Needless to say, that was the last time I saw her. She didn't want my companionship; she wanted my paycheck. You see, some women you meet have this girl's problem: they're just looking to get paid --

CLYDE (O.S.)

(interrupting)

-- in full --

FLOYD

-- by some unsuspecting guy.

TIM

Floyd, you know how cheap you are. You're probably were upset because you had to pay for dinner.

FLOYD

It's not so much that, although when you add up the costs of the meal, tax, tip...

TIM (O.S.)

(overlapping)

Here we go.

FLOYD

...gas for the car, tire wear, etc., it does come out fairly expensive. The problem that I have is what I told my father the other day.

TIM

Go ahead, I know that this will be good.

FLOYD

Men today don't get that same bang for the buck as their fathers received.

TIM

What are you talking about?

FLOYD

It's very simple. When your father, or grandfather, put out a dollar for a woman they got two, or maybe three, dollars return on that investment. Nowadays, when we put out a dollar we get about ten cents back.

TIM

Floyd, only you would come up with something like that.

CLYDE

Listen to Floyd, you know he's right. It's almost like prostitution is going on out here, especially when you hear bullshit like "You have to pay for a woman's time." If I pay for some girls time she better be getting my shit off.

ERIC

You got that right. That's what I call getting a bang for the buck.

FLOYD

The thing that really turned me off about this girl wasn't the multiple children, or the "I deserve to get paid" attitude, but the fact that she didn't meet my minimum income requirements for women I date.

TIM

Which is?

FLOYD

Minimum 30K.

TIM

Floyd, I didn't know how much of a romantic you were until now.

Floyd starts to the couch, as Eric gets up.

FLOYD

I try to be.

TIM

Two down, and one to go.

Floyd sits as Eric stands and walks in front of the fellas.

ERIC

My story could be the trickiest of them all, because I'm going to talk about one of your church women. I met this woman right before I met my wife. I was over...

EXT. CHURCH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

~~A CHURCH~~

~~is shown.~~ HUMMING OF THE LORD'S PRAYER can be heard ~~in the background.~~ coming from inside.

ERIC (V.O.)

...at the 16th Street church.

TIM (V.O.)

I've been there, they usually
get off in that church.

ERIC (V.O.)

You got that right. Especially
when they start that humming.
So I'm inside...

INT. CHURCH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Eric is sitting on a church bench inside of a filled church.
HYMNBOOKS are in a pocket in front of him as he rocks his head
to the humming of the Lord's Prayer.

AN OLDER BLACK WOMAN sits next to him.

ERIC (V.O.)

...grooving to the hymn, when
an older lady sitting next to
me asked --

OLDER LADY

Would you give me that hymnbook
for my daughter please?

He grabs the hymnbook and starts to hand it to the older lady.

ERIC (V.O.)

I get the hymnbook, and start
to hand it to the lady when I
notice her daughter.

Eric looks over to where the DAUGHTER is seated; She is a very
attractive Black woman.

ERIC (V.O.)

She was bad! She was so nice
looking that I forgot what I
was doing.

Eric holds the hymnbook and forgets to let go as the older
woman tries to take it out of his hands.

OLDER LADY

I've got it young man, you can
let it go now.

Eric lets it go as the daughter laughs.

ERIC

Excuse me, I'm sorry.

He continues to look as he settles back in his seat.

ERIC (V.O.)

I knew right then that I had
to say something to this lady's
daughter after the service.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Eric and the daughter stand on the church steps talking, as
CHURCHGOERS walk by.

ERIC (V.O.)

So after the service, I talked
to her, found out that her name
was Mamie Harrison, and asked her
if we could go out sometime.
I was surprised when she said
that she had to take her mother
home, but afterwards I could
come by for dinner. So guess
where I ate dinner that Sunday?

INT. MAMIE'S APT - DINING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

THE DINNER TABLE

is filled with VARIOUS TYPES OF FOODS. Eric sits at one end of
the table.

ERIC (V.O.)

First of all, let me tell you that
the dinner table was laid out. It
was like the way your grandma would
do it. I thought that was enough,
but when I saw homegirl...

Eric watches Mamie in the kitchen taking a pan of biscuits out of the oven. She has a STICK OF BUTTER in her hand, and rubs it across all of them.

ERIC (V.O.)
...take a stick of butter and
slap it across the top of some
oven biscuits, all I could say --

~~CLYDE~~ BACK TO THE PRESENT

as Clyde looks towards heaven and mouths.

ERIC (V.O.)
YES! I finally found the one.

INT. MAMIE'S APT - DINING ROOM - DAY - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Eric sits at the dining table and watches as Mamie prepares a PLATE OF FOOD.(Why is this in caps?)

ERIC (V.O.)
Let me tell you that up to that
moment homegirl was right on
schedule.

Mamie ~~places the food filled~~ ^{sets} plate in front of Eric.

MAMIE
I believe in the true Christian
principles of how men and women
should have relationships...

LATER

Mamie ~~is filling~~ ^{fills} Eric's glass ~~with water from a pitcher.~~ ^{water}

MAMIE
...The man is the head of the
house and the woman should be
submissive to his lead...

LATER

Mamie stands next to Eric adding more food to his plate from a serving dish.

MAMIE

...Her duties are to her family first, and herself second. I believe that this is what's wrong with a lot of relationships today...

LATER

Mamie removes Eric's empty dinner plate and places a plate of pie in front of him.

MAMIE

...A lot of women want to lead men today, or place too much emphasis on her career instead of her man and family. I know my job as a Christian Black woman, and have no problem doing it.

ERIC (V.O.)

Until we hit a detour.

Mamie stands next to Eric holding his dinner plate.

MAMIE

Are you saved? You don't have to answer that right now, but I want you to know right up front that we will be no more than friends until you make a deep religious commitment.

ERIC (V.O.)

Which is?

MAMIE

To be totally immersed in Christ. You see, I use to be "Of the world" until one day I was in the frozen food department of a grocery store. Right there, I got struck by a bright, blinding light. It was the Lord, and he told me to change my ways. I've been changed ever since.

ERIC (V.O.)

Come on homegirl, the Lord in the grocery store? How do you know it wasn't a blue light special, or something?

MAMIE

It's true. And ever since then I've been totally devoted. I go to church as much as the Reverend tells me too. I give part of my earnings in tithing, just like the Reverend tells me, and I tell everyone about the Word. Also, I pray for the ultimate blessing every night.

ERIC (V.O.)

Which is what?

MAMIE

A man, of course. Someone to bond with in the quintessential light of the Lord.

Mamie puts one of her hands on Eric's shoulder.

MAMIE

You know, I asked for a man last night, and behold you are here.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - ~~DAY~~ NIGHT

ERIC MAKES A TIME OUT SIGNAL

with his hands as he stands in front of the seated Tim, Clyde, and Floyd.

ERIC

Timeout! Timeout homegirl.

TIM

What's the problem? She was doing fine.

ERIC

She was doing fine until she decided to get too supernatural with the religion.

FLOYD

You mean you didn't believe the close encounter of the strange kind story.

ERIC

I'm not saying that I don't believe in religious miracles, but blinding lights in the supermarket is too far out for me.

CLYDE

It's just not that supernatural stuff, but don't you like it when a lady was "Of the world" which you can interpret to mean a live freak, and then all of a sudden decides to get brand new. Like some guy wants to hear all of that. Actually, I'd prefer to have known her when she was a freak.

FLOYD

And I got a problem with that tithing part.

TIM

I bet you do.

FLOYD

No, you don't understand what I'm saying. I don't mind giving money to a church that needs it, but I don't want to pay for the Rev to live large.

TIM

I didn't think she was that bad until she said that the Lord sent Eric to her. If she had said the Devil I would have been more likely to believe her.

ERIC

That's cold, baby.

TIM

I'm just kidding. What did you end up doing with that girl?

ERIC

I left her there. I didn't even finish dinner. I wanted to leave before that quintessential bonding started.

They scream.

ERIC

You see Tim, I don't mind a church girl. My wife and I go to church every Sunday, but don't overkill a guy on it. A lot of those church girls alienate themselves from guys by getting too spooky when it comes to religion, and end up being alone.

CLYDE

And so that concludes this lesson on how messed-up Black women can be today. If they don't have a man, it's not because of a shortage. I hope that you're straight on that point now, Tim.

TIM

Wait a minute. I haven't gotten my chance to tell a story yet.

CLYDE

What kind of story do you have? I think we covered all the bases.

Tim stands as Eric goes and sits down.

TIM

No, you haven't covered all of them. You know that Sharon and I aren't seeing each other anymore.

They all shake their heads no.

FLOYD

I didn't know you were dating anyone.

Tim walks in front of the fellas.

TIM

I was, and I'm going to tell you my story right now. I was in the field next to the basketball court we played on today...

EXT. SMALL FIELD - TWILIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Tim is adjusting and looking in the eyepiece of his telescope.

TIM (V.O.)

...setting up my telescope when I hear this female voice.

SHARON (O.S.)

What are you looking at?

TIM

Nothing much right now, but
later I may be able to see...

Tim stops looking in the eyepiece, turns around, and sees Sharon dressed in a warm-up suit.

TIM (V.O)

...something. I look, and to
my surprise I see this pretty,
young lady.

Tim stands.

SHARON

Isn't it going to be hard to
see any stars due to the lights
of the city?

TIM

Yes it would be, but I should be
able to see something interesting
here tonight.

SHARON

I see, you know I haven't looked
in a telescope since my father and
I use to starwatch years ago.

TIM

Would you like to join me awhile
and do some watching?

TIM (V.O.)

Before she could answer I hear
this other female's voice. It
was her roommate, Dinna Duncan,
Dee Dee for short.

DEE DEE (O.S.)

Sharon, You ready?

Dee Dee, wearing a warm-up suit, walks up to both of them.

DEE DEE

I'm done with my set.

SHARON

Dee Dee, this is...Excuse me,
but what is your name?

Tim extends his hand to Dee Dee.

TIM

Hello, I'm Tim Johnson.

Dee Dee gives Tim a REAL LIMP HANDSHAKE.

DEE DEE

Sharon, it's time to go if we
plan to finish.

SHARON

Dee Dee, I think that I'm going
to stay here with Tim, and look
through his telescope. You go on
and finish.

DEE DEE

Really? You want to stay and do
this? O.K. then, I'm going on
ahead.

Dee Dee starts to jog away, shaking her head. Tim and Sharon
resume tinkering with the telescope.

TIM (V.O.)

After Dee Dee left, I finished
setting up the telescope. As I
did, I knew that there was something
different about Sharon. I mean, that
was the first time that any Sister
had ever come up and wanted to look
in my telescope. So, after we finished
I had to find out more about this lady.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Sharon sits across from Tim at a table in a restaurant with a MENU in her hands.

SHARON

Hey Tim, I've been here before, and they have a nice seafood platter. It's large enough for both of us to eat, so we might as well order that. No need to spend extra money if we don't have to.

A WAITER enters.

TIM

We'll have the seafood platter.

SHARON

With two plates, please.

The waiter takes their menus and exits.

SHARON

So, have you been into astronomy for a while? That's kind of an unusual hobby, isn't it?

TIM (V.O.)

Oh-Oh, when a lady says stuff like that she usually thinks you're a lame.

SHARON

I don't mean anything negative by that, it just seems that you don't find too many young Black men getting into a lot of stuff like that too often. I always admired people that did things they like, even if they weren't that mainstream.

TIM (V.O.)

She was beginning to impress
the hell out of me.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT - LATER - (FLASHBACK)

Sharon has a semi-finished plate of food and empty glass in front of her. She sits, intensely looking across at Tim.

SHARON

I believe that there are a lot
of decent Black men out there,
but usually they are not the
obvious choices...

LATER

A WAITER walks up to the table, refills Sharon's empty glass,
and starts to remove some of the dishes.

SHARON

...Character, that's what I
look for. If a man has character
you don't have to worry about
how much money he makes, or what
he does...

LATER

A WAITER pushes a DESSERT CART up to Sharon; She shakes her
head NO, and the waiter pushes the cart away.

SHARON

...A strong Black man is never
intimidated by a strong Black
woman. They both should realize
that it should be a team effort,
with each using each other's
strength to make themselves stronger...

LATER

A WAITER is pouring coffee for Sharon.

SHARON

...Black men have it so hard today. It seems that everyone is so down on them, especially some Black women. I guess it's all the media attention they get. I know that they are not as bad as everyone says they are...

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

TIM

So, what do you think about Sharon so far?

CLYDE

She sounds pretty good.

ERIC

Yeah, she sure does.

FLOYD

I liked her right from where she ordered the one meal with two plates in order to save money. This is my kind of girl.

CLYDE

All right Tim, she's off to a good start, but she still could be gaming. Some women can fake all that "I'm the perfect one for you stuff" on the first date just to get in the door.

TIM

You're right, but I'm not done yet. After dinner I took Sharon home. Little did I know, as I found out later from Sharon, someone else had thoughts similar to yours Clyde, but from a different perspective.

INT. SHARON'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Sharon is relaxing on the couch. Several open MAGAZINES lay on a COFFEE TABLE in front of her.

DEE DEE

stands in front of Sharon.

DEE DEE

You've been out with who all this time?

SHARON (O.S.)

With Tim, you know the guy from the park.

DEE DEE

Tim..Tim..you mean that lame, nerdy looking Brother in the park with the telescope? You must be kidding.

SHARON

Why do you think I'm kidding? He showed me some things in the telescope, and took me to dinner afterwards. He's a very interesting guy.

DEE DEE

Interesting, what are you talking about?

SHARON

He's intelligent, for one thing.

DEE DEE

I bet he is with that big light bulb head he's got.

SHARON

He's well read in many areas.

DEE DEE

A nerdy bookworm with a light
bulb head, keep going.

SHARON

That's not true! He plays sports,
including some minor league baseball.

DEE DEE

Nerd sport.

SHARON

He also likes Jazz.

DEE DEE

That's because he probably can't
dance.

SHARON

And he's extremely nice.

DEE DEE

I bet he is, like most nerds.
Girlfriend, can't I let you
out of my sight for one moment
without you picking the wrong
guy? Haven't I tried to school
you on what a real man is?

SHARON

Yes.

DEE DEE

And haven't I tried to hook you
with one.

SHARON

Yes, but -

DEE DEE

(interrupting)

But what?

SHARON

I really didn't like those guys.

DEE DEE

And you like this nerd?

SHARON

Yes, from the little bit of time
that I have been with him I do.

DEE DEE

What am I going to do with you?

Dee Dee turns ^{to} ~~and starts to walk into~~ the ~~ADJACENT~~ DINING ROOM.

~~INT. SHARON'S APT DINING ROOM NIGHT (FLASHBACK)~~

~~Dee Dee enters the dining room, walks pass the DINING ROOM TABLE, and heads for a SOLID SWINGING DOOR. A TELEPHONE hangs on the wall next to the swinging door. She pauses and looks at the wall a CLOCK that hangs on the wall. She starts to adjust her WRIST WATCH as Sharon walks up to her.~~
^{the kitchen}
^{and}
^{adjusts}
^{enters.}

SHARON

How do you know that Tim is a
nerd? You only said hello to
him.

~~Dee Dee stops, and turns to Sharon.~~

DEE DEE

I know he is. He's got that nerd
look about him, with those glasses
and everything. That look that
tells you that when he was a kid
he used to wear glasses with tape
on the corner. Trust me Sharon, he's
as much a nerd as I am Black. What
does he do anyway?

SHARON

I think he said ~~that he was~~ an
engineer. ^{he's}

DEE DEE

An engineer, girlfriend please.

(starts to smile)

Oh, I get it now, you're putting up with this nerd thing so that you can get paid. Engineers do bring home a nice salary. My training is paying off.

SHARON

That's not why I went out with him. I went out with him because of who he is, not what he is.

DEE DEE

What kind of talk is this? You know how trifling a lot of Black men are today. They got plenty of games they like to play. It doesn't make any sense for a woman to waste her time on a man who doesn't have a dime, or look, or something.

SHARON

That's not how my parents raised me. My father always told me that you look inside to see what people are about, not the exterior.

DEE DEE

Oh no, not your father's philosophy again. I've been trying to get you to lose that old country stuff ever since I met you. What your father said back then for his day might have worked, but this is the today girl. All Daddy's philosophy will do is get you dogged.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLYDE

sits up on the couch.

CLYDE

That Dee Dee a bitch, isn't she?

ERIC

No, she's just typical.

TIM

Can I continue? The next couple of weeks we did a lot of different things together...

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

TIM AND SHARON play one on one basketball. Tim shows Sharon how to make a move to the basket, then tosses her the ball. She catches the ball, gives a nice move, and goes in for a lay up.

TIM (V.O.)

...and you know what I was doing.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

TIM AND SHARON are on the dance floor along with OTHER COUPLES.

TIM (V.O.)

She had given me that "I'm the perfect one for you" rap, but...

INT. CHURCH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

TIM AND SHARON are standing with a hymnbook singing with the congregation.

TIM (V.O.)

...I wanted to find out if she was legit, or...

EXT. PARK - DAY (FLASHBACK)

TIM AND SHARON eat lunch from a picnic basket ~~under a large tree~~ on a blanket. ~~Each are~~ laughing, having a good time.

~~under a tree,~~

TIM (V.O.)

...if she was running a game on me.

EXT. PARK - WALKWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

TIM AND SHARON ~~are walking~~ ^{walk} along a path. ~~Tim has the picnic basket in one hand, Sharon has the blanket under her arm.~~ ^{with} ~~OTHER PEOPLE walk and jog by.~~

TIM

So let me guess your history. You're probably one of those suburban, integrated high school, white girlfriend having, college found Black identity, now super down Sister...You know you can add to this list if I forgot something.

SHARON

No you're doing fine. You did forget dynamic Black woman, backbone of the race part though.

Tim smiles.

TIM

Don't take everything I say seriously, I'm just trying to get a feel for where you're coming from.

SHARON

What do you mean?

They stop at a VENDOR ~~who is~~ selling ~~SINGLE~~ FLOWERS. Tim buys one, ~~and~~ gives it to Sharon.

SHARON

Thank you, Tim.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek.

TIM

See, that's what I mean. What do you call that?

SHARON

A kiss.

They start to walk again.

TIM

A kiss? That's not a real kiss. That's what I call an auntie kiss.

SHARON

A what?

TIM

A type of kiss you give your aunt when she comes to visit.

SHARON

So what did you expect?

TIM

I don't know. It's just that I thought that we have had some nice dates and we would be a little bit more intimate by now.

SHARON

I believe you should start out small, and work your way up to something larger.

TIM

(low, to himself)

I hear you. I just hope you're not trying to play me.

SHARON

What's that?

TIM
Oh nothing, I was just talking
to myself.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

TIM AND SHARON

sit on a bench with their picnic things on the ground next to them. As they watch PEOPLE WALK BY they will make comments about some of them.

A YOUNG, WHITE, YUPPIE COUPLE walk by.

TIM ~~(O.S.)~~
Look, definitely retro-Reaganites,
present day Rush Limbaugh supporters.
They're probably on their way
to a young Republicans meeting,
or a Klan rally.

SHARON ~~(O.S.)~~
What's the difference between
the two?

TIM ~~(O.S.)~~
I think it's if your sheets
come from Saks, or Wal-Mart.

Sharon laughs.

A BIG, MUSCULAR MAN walks by.

TIM ~~(O.S.)~~
Definite ex-athlete, or
straight from prison.

When Tim says this the man LOOKS OVER at Tim and Sharon, like he heard that last statement.

SHARON ~~(O.S.)~~
He looks kind of mean.

TIM ~~(O.S.)~~

Yes he does, that's why we're going to stop talking about him, before he comes over here.

A YOUNG BLACK COUPLE walk by. They are both very good looking, and wear MATCHING SWEATERS tied around their necks.

TIM ~~(O.S.)~~

Look at these two, right from the tennis club.

SHARON ~~(O.S.)~~

They look kind of cute.

TIM ~~(O.S.)~~

Of course they do. They have both "ARRIVED". It's strictly Ebony man meets Essence woman. They've probably got Ebony Jr. at home.

TWO GAY BLACK MEN, who are hugging each other, walk by.

SHARON ~~(O.S.)~~

Go ahead, I know you have some comment to make.

TIM ~~(O.S.)~~

I really don't have anything to say about them, except that I didn't realize, until I got older, that Black people were gay. I thought that it was strictly a White thing - like surfing.

Sharon laughs. Tim sits up on the bench.

TIM

Sharon, there is something I want to ask you.

SHARON

Yes, go ahead.

TIM

How is it that a decent lady
such as yourself hasn't been
picked up by someone already?
I know that other guys had to
have been hitting on you.

SHARON

I guess that I haven't been lucky
enough to meet someone that I am
compatible with yet. My roommate,
Dee Dee, tried a couple of times
to set me up with some of her
friends, but it didn't work out.

TIM

No, why not?

SHARON

They were nice guys, but lets
just say that they weren't my
type.

TIM

Not your type? What type were
they?

SHARON

There was Dante', for example...

DANTE' APPEARS.

Dante' is a YOUNG BLACK MAN, dressed very colorfully in ULTRA-
MODERN CLOTHES.

This scene is a FLASHBACK WITHIN A FLASHBACK. Tim and Sharon
watch Dante' just like he was one of the passersby they saw
from the park bench.

DANTE '

Sharon baby -- what's up with you?
I knew that you were Fine, but
I didn't know that you were the
Bomb, the Whip, the Joint, the
One, the Cosmos, the Deafest,
Stupid Freshest babe I have ever
met. I figured that a lady like
you would be more of the straight
laced type, you know uptight and
all. But hey, you're finally
kicking it with Dante'.

HE HAS A REACTION like Sharon asked him something.

DANTE '

Me? What am I about? Baby, I'm
about what you're about. What
you see is what you get. But, lets
not talk about me, and get back
to you. I was just thinking the
other day that I wish I could meet
a lady like you, someone who could
improve on this already fine specimen
of a man. It should be you and me
baby, just the two of us, together,
forever, for always, for love.

END DANTE' FLASHBACK.

SHARON

sits up on the bench.

SHARON

And then there was HILTON JAMES
THE THIRD...

HILTON APPEARS.

Hilton is a VERY GOOD LOOKING (MODEL TYPE) BLACK MAN dressed
in a suit.

As before, this is a FLASHBACK WITHIN A FLASHBACK with Hilton
appearing like he was actually there.

HILTON

Hello Sharon, it's a pleasure to meet you. Now, I know that you're probably intimidated by what you see right now. I know that I am choice, a Brother that any woman would love to meet or go out with. Hopefully, you will be different than the other women who never get beyond my...

He strikes a MODEL POSE.

HILTON

...incredible good looks, and extremely successful law career. That's what I'm looking for in a Black woman. Someone who can get beyond my custom tailored suits, penthouse apartment, and Mercedes two seater convertible. I'm so much deeper than all of those things, and yet so few ladies realize that. I did mention that my Benz is a convertible, didn't I?

END HILTON FLASHBACK.

TIM APPEARS

standing in front of Sharon.

TIM

You mean to tell me that those guys weren't your types?

SHARON (O.S.)

That's right.

TIM

I've seen those type of guys do extremely well with the ladies before.

SHARON (O.S.)

Perhaps they do, but not with me.

TIM

Dante' was such a "Live" Brother though. You would never have a dull moment with a guy like that.

SHARON

He may have been "Live" as you say, but I find it hard to take a man serious who dressed like he did.

TIM

And what about Hilton? He had it all: The pretty boy looks, the busted career, the clothes, the car, everything. If I was a woman I probably would have given in to him in a minute.

SHARON

Dee Dee said the same thing. He did have all of those things, but the only person he wanted to date was himself.

TIM

Sharon, you could have had big fun with either of those guys.

SHARON

The only thing big I want in a Black man...

TIM'S EYES

open very wide.

SHARON (O.S.)

...is character.

Tim gives a SIGH OF RELIEF, and sits back on the bench.

TIM

You're a different type of Black woman than I'm use to meeting.

SHARON

I'm not that different, we're just not as visible as the other girls.

TIM

Invisible is more like it. You know, your roommate must be tripping on you going out with me.

SHARON

Why would you say that?

TIM

By the type of guys she set you up with, and how she looked at me in the park that day. I bet she thinks I'm a lame, doesn't she?

SHARON

No, not a lame.

(softly)

But a nerd, possibly.

TIM

A nerd! Where did that come from?

SHARON

I don't know, she saw you with that telescope and I guess she jumped to that conclusion. I tried to get her straight on you that night after our first date. I thought that she was being so hard on you.

TIM

How hard?

SHARON

I'll tell you later, but don't get upset about it. She has these views on Black men that are a bit rigid. She doesn't know you that well.

TIM

Neither do you.

Sharon stands.

SHARON

I think I do. I think I know you real well.

INT. SHARON'S APT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING (FLASHBACK)

Dee Dee enters, ~~the FRONT DOOR and closes it behind her. She takes~~^{off} her coat ~~off~~ and ~~hangs it on a COAT STAND. As she starts to walk into the living room she notices~~^{sees} Tim ~~sitting~~ on the couch reading a magazine. ~~Tim looks up and starts to stand.~~ ^{He jumps up.}

TIM

Hello Dee Dee, do you remember me? I'm Tim from the --

DEE DEE

(interrupting)

-- park. Of course I remember you. Sit back down there, you don't have to get up on my account.

~~As Tim sits back down,~~^{and} ~~Dee Dee continues to walk through the living room, the dining room, and disappears through the swinging doors~~ into the kitchen.

INT. ~~SHARON'S APT~~ - KITCHEN - ~~EVENING (FLASHBACK)~~

Dee Dee enters ~~the kitchen,~~^{to find} ~~as Sharon is busily covering SEVERAL FOOD CONTAINERS~~ on the counter.

DEE DEE

Why is that nerd sitting in our living room?

~~Sharon quickly turns to Dee Dee.~~

SHARON

Not so loud, he might hear you.

DEE DEE

I don't care if he hears me, I want him to.

INT. ~~SHARON'S APT~~ - LIVING ROOM - ~~EVENING (FLASHBACK)~~

TIM

quickly looks toward the kitchen.

INT. ~~SHARON'S APT~~ - KITCHEN ~~EVENING (FLASHBACK)~~

SHARON

Well I do care, so be nice.

~~Dee Dee goes and stands next to Sharon at the counter.~~

DEE DEE

What are you going to do with all this food?

SHARON

I'm getting ready to take it over to Tim's for dinner.

DEE DEE

Why? Doesn't he have food?

SHARON

~~Of course he does, but these are just a few things that I prepared.~~
It's no big deal, Dee Dee.

DEE DEE

Why are you cooking for this guy? Why doesn't he take you out to eat? You're not his slave.

SHARON

~~I know that I'm not.~~ It's just a few items for dinner.

Sharon ^{goes} ~~walks over~~ to the refrigerator, ~~opens it,~~ and looks inside.

DEE DEE

I know I wouldn't do it, especially for these men out here today. First it's cooking, then it's cleaning, and before you know it you're stuck in a house somewhere with a bunch of kids, and a man in the street.

Sharon walks back to the counter with another container in her hand.

SHARON

Tim isn't like that. He's been the perfect gentleman to me so far, and I don't mind showing him that I appreciate it.

DEE DEE

Sharon, what's going on with you? I've been noticing that you have been spending a lot of time with this Tim lately, but surely you're not interested in him, are you?

SHARON

slowly starts to smile.

DEE DEE

I don't believe it. You're interested in that nerd. How could you, after all that I have tried to teach you about which men are choice, and which are not. He doesn't have the look, or real money, or anything. How could you be interested in that guy?

SHARON

Easy ^{.B} ~~because~~ I am.

Sharon picks up her other containers.

DEE DEE

Is it the perfect gentleman thing?
Of course he's a gentleman, he's
a nerd and he knows it. This is
probably the first action he has
had in a month.

SHARON

Dee Dee, I have to go.

Sharon starts for the exit, but Dee Dee blocks her path.

DEE DEE

How do you know that this nice
guy stuff isn't some type of game?

SHARON

I'm surprised you would give
a nerd that much ingenuity.

DEE DEE

Oh he's a nerd, but just because
he is one it doesn't mean that
he isn't still a Brother. You
know that Brothers got the best
game going out here. He may not
have a top one, but he does have
a game.

SHARON

It's not a game Dee Dee. You act
like Black men and women can't
be interested in each other with-
out there being some type of game.

DEE DEE

There is always a game, Sharon.

Sharon walks around Dee Dee, and through the kitchen door.

INT. ~~SHARON'S APT~~ - LIVING ROOM - ~~EVENING (FLASHBACK)~~

~~Sharon walks to Tim on the couch,~~ ^{enters followed by} as ^{who} Dee Dee leans on a dining room chair in the background.

SHARON
You ready?

TIM
Yes.

Tim stands and takes the containers from Sharon. Sharon keeps her back to Dee Dee.

SHARON
Goodbye Dee Dee.

TIM
Goodbye Dee Dee, it was nice seeing you again.

DEE DEE
I'm sure, you're such a nice, polite guy...

Dee Dee walks towards Tim.

DEE DEE
...you mind if I ask you a question?

TIM
No, what's on your mind?

Dee Dee stands in front of Tim.

DEE DEE
Do you like to play games?

Sharon grabs Tim's arm, and starts to pull him towards the door.

SHARON
Let's go Tim, you don't need to answer that question.

TIM
Games? What kind of games?

They stop at the door as Sharon opens the closet and gets her coat.

SHARON
Don't worry about it, she thinks
~~that she's~~ being cute.

Sharon opens the door, and Tim exits; Sharon starts out, but then turns back to Dee Dee.

SHARON
Dee Dee, you're the one that needs
to stop playing games.

Sharon exits, SLAMMING THE DOOR behind her, leaving a grinning Dee Dee.

INT. TIM'S APT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Tim and Sharon sit opposite each other at the DINING ROOM TABLE. TWO LIGHTED CANDLES are in the center of the table, along with EMPTY FOOD CONTAINERS.

SHARON
So, how's the food?

TIM
Good. Where did you learn to
cook so well?

SHARON
From my mother. I use to help
her prepare my father's meals
everyday. No matter what time
he would finish his rounds she
always had his meal ready.

TIM
Rounds?

SHARON
~~Yes, Rounds.~~ He was a mailman.

TIM

That's interesting. And I bet that you were Daddy's little girl too.

SHARON

I guess that I was, seeing how I was his only child. But that doesn't make me spoiled, does it?

TIM

I didn't say that it did.

SHARON

You would have liked my Dad. He was wonderful. He liked astronomy, also. I still remember when I was ten, we would go out under the night sky and starwatch.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A TEN-YEAR-OLD SHARON and her DAD stand under a star-filled sky. Sharon is looking in the eyepiece of the telescope, as her Dad stands next to her looking up at the sky.

SHARON

I can't see anything.

SHARON'S DAD

Sharon, forget that telescope and look up.

She looks up.

SHARON'S DAD

On a night like tonight, it would be a shame to limit your view by looking in the telescope. Of all the stars you see, show me which one you want.

SHARON

I don't know, there are so many.

Her father reaches down ~~to her~~, picks her up, and rests her on his shoulders.

SHARON'S DAD ^{baby doll}
You remember this, ~~Sharon~~. It may not seem like a lot, but no matter which one you choose, you'll always have this much of a start reaching it.

END SHARON AND DAD FLASHBACK.

INT. TIM'S APT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

SHARON
He use to say things like that all the time.

TIM
He sounds like a wonderful Dad.

SHARON
He was. He died ~~when I was eighteen~~ of cancer. ^{I was eighteen.}

TIM
I'm sorry.

SHARON
So am I.
^{SADLY} ~~then drops her eyes and~~
She ~~SADLY~~ LOOKS ^{SADLY} at Tim, ~~and~~ resumes eating.

^S
INT. TIM APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Tim and Sharon are relaxing on the couch looking through TIM'S PHOTO ALBUM;

SHARON
Who are these people?

TIM
That's my mother and father. And that's my brother Donald...

INSERT PICTURES

of Tim's MOTHER AND FATHER on one page, and Tim's brother, DONALD, on the other page.

TIM

...He's 12 going on 20.

She flips to the next page.

SHARON

Who's this? He's dressed so nice.

INSERT ANOTHER PICTURE

of a nice^{ly} dressed OLDER MAN.

TIM

That's my Uncle Bob. That picture was taken the day he left my Aunt Mary. Come to think of it, I heard that it was also the last day he was able to have sex. Something to do with Voodoo.

SHARON

Voodoo? What are you talking about?

TIM

The story I heard was that when he left my Aunt, she told him that he would never be able to sleep with another woman, because she had worked some roots on him.

SHARON

Roots? So what happened?

TIM

Lets just say that he went to every doctor in the county, and you know what they told him?

She shakes her head no.

TIM

They told him that he had better go and have whoever put that on him to take it off, because there was nothing that they could do for him.

SHARON

So what did he end up doing?

TIM

He went back to my Aunt. What else could he do?

SHARON

I should never take you serious.

She continues to flip pages, and stops.

A SMILE SLOWLY APPEARS ACROSS HER FACE.

At this point Tim takes the album out of her hands, and places it on the coffee table in front of them.

SHARON

Tim, why did you do that? I was looking at it.

TIM

Enough of this trip down picture lane. Lets talk about something real, Sharon. How do you feel about me?

SHARON

I feel good about you. Why do you ask?

Tim moves closer, putting his arm around her shoulder.

TIM

That's not what I mean. Are you attracted to me?

SHARON

Yes, I'm attracted to you.

Tim moves closer, his face is close to Sharon's.

TIM

I just asked, because we have had some nice times together, and well -- I wanted to know.

SHARON

How do you feel about me?

TIM

Good. Better by the minute. Let me show you what I mean.

Tim kisses her on the lips.

SHARON

That's not what I'm talking about. Are you attracted to me, also?

TIM

Of course I am.

SHARON

Not just my body, but what I'm about too?

TIM

First things first now Sharon. We'll start with your body, and then get to the rest of what you're about later.

Sharon pulls away.

SHARON

Oh no you won't!

TIM

I'm just playing Sharon. I don't need you for your body anyway. There are enough bodies around here already. I need you in your entirety. Anything less than that would be cheating myself.

Sharon moves back to Tim, as he kisses her again.

SHARON

I don't know about this Tim.
What if it's wrong?

TIM

I'd rather be wrong with you than
right with someone else.

He starts to lay her down on the couch.

TIM

Some things you have to take a
chance on, Sharon. You just have
to jump in with both feet and hope
for the best.

SHARON

I hope you're right Tim, but I
don't know if I should.

Tim pulls back a little.

TIM

We don't have to do anything
you don't want to do.

SHARON

No, I trust you. I just hope
you realize that we are starting
something special tonight.

TIM

Of course I do. I'm talking about
a commitment, about jumping into
something real, Sharon.

SHARON

With both feet?

TIM

That's right -- with both feet.
And I wear size 12, so you should
feel that much better.

Tim lays Sharon down on the couch and they start kissing. As they kiss:

INSERT - THE OPEN PHOTO ALBUM

on the coffee table.

A PICTURE OF A YOUNG TIM

is visible now. Tim wearing a shirt, jeans, and glasses with tape on one corner of the frames.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

TIM

continues to stand before the seated Eric, Clyde, and Floyd.

TIM

So, how do you think I was doing with Sharon so far?

CLYDE

My boy, I was getting a little worried about your game there for a minute, but you came through with flying colors. You set her up perfectly with that bogus nice guy rap, and when she fell for it you got paid --

ERIC

(interrupting)

-- in full.

FLOYD

Yeah, he played a good game, but I thought he could have been a bit more cost effective. He probably could have gotten the booty a little cheaper than he did if he hadn't gone on so many dates.

ERIC

No, he did all right. He had to pay a little something just so she doesn't feel that she gave it away for free.

TIM

All right, I think that I'm in with Sharon. Now what is the standard play for any Brother in my position?

CLYDE

You dog it. You try to max play it out.

TIM

Why?

CLYDE

Because, although your girl sounds good, and has treated you right, you still don't know if she's perpetrating. She could be like one of those other women we have talked about, just trying to get in with you. Then once she's in, it's "Let's try and play this sucker" time.

ERIC

Clyde is right, when it comes to dealing with Black women there is no place for nice guys. When Sharon's roommate told her that we got the best games, she was absolutely right. Black men have the best games, because we play against the best competition -- Black women.

CLYDE

Word on that.

ERIC

See, let me tell you what will happen if you're that nice guy. While you're doing all that nice guy dating stuff, there'll be another guy coming through her spot at about 11:00 PM --

FLOYD

(interrupting)

-- Wicked call time --

ERIC

-- that's right, wicked call time, coming over to stand up in it.

CLYDE

Now I wish it wasn't like that. I wish that we could have those Richie Cunningham, Happy Days type of dates with them, but most of them take someone being nice to them as a sign of weakness. I've seen too many decent fellas get beat --

ERIC

-- Long --

FLOYD

-- And bad --

CLYDE

-- by your girls. It's like that basketball game we played today. You would never think of showing a weak game to one of those Brothers would you? No, because they would run you off the court. Black women are no different.

ERIC

No different, hell, if anything they are worse. It would be like the Knicks playing a high school team. The game would be over before it started.

They all laugh.

FLOYD

So Tim, what happened next?

TIM

I did exactly what the protocol says I should do. I played her. Although she has a career I wanted to see if she would do the domestic stuff for me. I asked her to...

INT. TIM'S APT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Sharon is shown:

PICKING UP TRASH in the living room, and putting it in a plastic bag.

SWEEPING the living room floor.

DUSTING around the apartment.

TIM (V.O.)

...clean up my apartment...

INT. TIM'S APT - KITCHEN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A number of POTS ARE BOILING on the stove, along with several MIXING BOWLS on the counters.

SHARON

looks inside one of the pots.

SHARON OPENS THE OVEN

and pulls out a roast, then puts it back in.

SHARON GOES OVER TO A COUNTER

and picks up a bowl and begins to mix the contents.

TIM (V.O.)

...cook some meals...

INT. TIM'S APT - LAUNDRY ROOM (FLASHBACK)

Sharon is standing with her back to the washing machine in front of a HUGE PILE OF CLOTHES. She SIGHS, and begins to put them in the washer.

TIM (V.O.)

...and wash some clothes for me. She did all of those things with no problem. After that, I played her for money. I did things like...

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Tim and Sharon are sitting at a table. A WAITER comes over and leaves the check. TIM REACHES FOR HIS WALLET, but acts like he has forgotten it. Sharon reaches into her purse, takes out some money, and puts it on the table.

TIM (V.O.)

...acting like I forgot my wallet when we went out to eat at a restaurant so that she would have to pay...

INT. SHARON'S APT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Sharon stands in the open doorway trying to give Tim her CREDIT CARD. He doesn't accept it at first, but then finally gives in and takes it.

TIM (V.O.)

...Although I have a credit card, I borrowed hers...

EXT. STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Tim and Sharon stand in front of a car. She hands Tim her CAR KEYS; He refuses at first, but then takes them.

TIM (V.O.)

...and used her car instead of mine.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

TIM

continues to stand before the seated Eric, Clyde, and Floyd.

TIM

I even went to her church to see if she was running that religious game on me. It is right around the corner from here, and it was standard. Nothing crazy. So, what do you think about my game so far?

CLYDE

You seem to be playing a good game, but not a top one yet. You haven't "maxed" her out.

ERIC

That's right. "Max her, and tax her" used to be my motto.

FLOYD

Maybe we should give Tim a break, he still is a rookie.

TIM

Hold up, fellas. I'm not done yet. Last weekend Sharon and I were suppose to have dinner.

INT. SHARON'S APT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

THE DINING ROOM TABLE

has an INCOMPLETE TABLE SETTING upon it. Sharon enters from the kitchen with SILVERWARE in hand.

DEE DEE (O.S.)

Girl, are you still doing things for that nerd?

Dee Dee is visible now; She stands at the dining room table wearing a nice dress, and has her unbuttoned coat on.

SHARON

Don't start Dee Dee, Tim is suppose to come over at 8:00 for dinner and I have to finish the table.

Sharon places the silverware on the table.

DEE DEE

Look at you, stuck here cooking for that guy when you should be like me tonight. My date is taking me out for dinner, and dancing.

SHARON

That sounds nice Dee Dee, I hope you have a great time.

DEE DEE

"That sounds nice, I hope you have a great time", what is that? I didn't tell you that so you could tell me to have a great time. I told you so that you could see how you could be playing it. You don't have to do all that stuff for a guy to treat you right. Don't think that I haven't been looking at what that Negro has been having you do for him.

SHARON

It was nothing Dee Dee. I didn't mind doing those favors for Tim.

DEE DEE

How is it possible that you could be so naive? He's playing you Sharon, just like I knew he would.

SHARON

How do you know this?

DEE DEE

I know this, because I have been out here dealing with these guys a little bit longer than you. They think that if they do a couple of nice things for you they can get in and take advantage of the situation.

SHARON

Tim isn't like that. We have a relationship, and all relationships are give and take.

DEE DEE

I bet he's going to do a lot of taking, and very little giving.

Sharon smiles.

DEE DEE

What are you smiling about?

SHARON

It's you. I don't understand how you got like you are. Why are you so down on the guys.

DEE DEE

Down? I'm not down on them, I'm just real. I love Black men, and I only go out with Black men. But, when it comes to a relationship with one you have to be on the defensive. Maybe it's not their fault. Maybe it's how they were raised or something. I don't know. What I do know is what you're dealing with nowadays -- A Group of Dogs.

SHARON

I know Tim.

DEE DEE

You think you know him, but what if you're wrong?

SHARON

Go on your date Dee Dee. We
have a difference of opinion
that we're not going to settle
now.

Dee Dee looks at her wrist watch and starts to head to the
front door.

DEE DEE

I'm going. I'll be late messing
around with you.

SHARON

Have a good time.

Dee Dee walks through the dining room, and stops at the front
door.

DEE DEE

I will.

She opens the door, and turns to Sharon.

DEE DEE

Remember what I said.

Dee Dee exits, leaving Sharon who is still looking at the
door.

SHARON

(to herself)

Tim wouldn't dog me, I know he
wouldn't.

Sharon looks up at the clock.

THE CLOCK

shows 7:45. Sharon continues setting the table.

LATER

THE CLOCK

shows 8:30. Sharon, who is seated at one of the table settings, is looking at it. She gets up, goes to the phone, and dials.

INT. TIM'S APT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

THE PHONE RINGS.

As it rings, WE SLOWLY SCAN an empty apartment and stop at the PHONE and ANSWERING MACHINE on the small table by the aquarium.

TIM'S ANSWERING MACHINE CLICKS ON.

ANSWERING MACHINE (V.O.)

Hello, you have reached the residence of Tim Johnson; After the beep, please leave a message and I'll get back to you.

After a pause, WE HEAR THE BEEP.

SHARON (V.O.)

Tim, this is Sharon -- you're probably on your way, and if you are then ignore this message. If not, why aren't you here for dinner?

INT. CLUB - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

As BAR PATRONS walk by, Tim is at the bar having a drink with an ATTRACTIVE BLACK WOMAN named DARLENE. WE DO NOT HEAR what is going on in the bar, instead WE HEAR THE BEEP of Tim's answering machine followed by...

SHARON (V.O.)

Tim, dinner is getting cold. Are you coming?

INT. CLUB - NIGHT - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Tim and Darlene are on the dance floor with OTHER COUPLES slow dancing.

ANOTHER BEEP.

SHARON (V.O.)

Tim, has something happened to you? I'm getting worried -- please give me a call when you get in.

INT. CLUB - BOOTH - NIGHT - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Tim and Darlene snuggle in a booth.

ANOTHER BEEP.

SHARON (V.O.)

Tim, Is there something wrong? Please call me when you get in, no matter how late it is.

DEE DEE AND HER DATE

are slow dancing on a semi-crowded dance floor when suddenly she stops and looks over at a booth.

Dee Dee watches Tim and Darlene snuggling in the booth.

DEE DEE

(softly, to herself)

Damn.

INT. SHARON'S APT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Sharon is clearing the dishes off the table. THE DOOR SLAMS and Sharon looks up to see Dee Dee running over to her.

DEE DEE

Sharon -- guess who I just saw?

SHARON

Oh, hello Dee Dee. You're back early from your date tonight.

DEE DEE

Yes, I know I am. Guess who I saw out tonight?

SHARON

I don't know Dee Dee, and I don't feel like guessing, because I have other things on my mind. Tim didn't show for dinner, or call tonight. I think something must have happened to him.

DEE DEE

That's who I saw tonight. That no good, two-timing, nerd -- Tim!

SHARON

Tim? Where did you see Tim?

DEE DEE

At Housers, that's where my date took me for dancing tonight. I'm out on the floor dancing when who do I see -- Tim.

SHARON

Are you sure?

DEE DEE

Of course I'm sure, I'd recognize his mug anywhere. It was definitely him girlfriend, and he wasn't alone.

SHARON

He wasn't?

DEE DEE

No, he was getting cozy in a booth with some hair weave having heifer. I wanted to go over there and smack him for you, but I decided to cancel the rest of my date so that I could hurry back and tell you.

SHARON

But that can't be so Dee Dee, he was suppose to be here for dinner tonight. Are you trying to start some stuff? You never did like --

DEE DEE

(interrupting)

Excuse me, honey! Get your facts straight. Have I ever lied to you? Where is your man? You just said that you don't know where he is. Face it girl, it's just like I've told you before: Black men today are nothing but DOGS.

SHARON

But not Tim, he has treated me so well in the past. He wouldn't dog me like that. I know he wouldn't.

DEE DEE

Wake up girl and smell the coffee. What did you think you had found, the exception? No, he was just playing you like all the other Black men out here do. It's a good thing you found that out before it was too late.

THE PHONE RINGS.

Sharon goes over and answers it.

SHARON

(on phone)

Hello.

(surprised)

Hi Tim!

DEE DEE

Tim, he's got some nerve to be calling you now. Tell that Negro to french kiss your ass and hang up on him.

Sharon covers up the receiver with her hand.

SHARON
Dee Dee, would you be quiet? I
can't hear Tim.

DEE DEE
I'll be quiet, as long as you
tell him where to go.

Sharon uncovers the receiver and resumes talking to Tim.

SHARON
(on phone)
Tim, what happened? We were
suppose to have dinner over
here tonight.

~~SPLIT SCREEN.~~ This is to mechanical.
Just do an INTERCUT.

Sharon and Dee Dee on one side; Tim in his apartment on the
other side.

INT. SHARON'S APT

DEE DEE
He got tied up all right.

SHARON
(on phone)
What do you mean by tied up?

DEE DEE
Don't let him weasel out of
it. He's cold busted!

INT. TIM'S APT

TIM
(on phone)
I got tied up.

TIM
(on phone)
Just like I said, tied up.

SHARON

(on phone)

So tied up that you couldn't call? I went through a lot of effort cooking dinner tonight, and I think I deserve better than "I got tied up."

DEE DEE

Go ahead girlfriend. Tell him.

SHARON

(on phone)

It's a little late now, isn't it. I sat here with all this food waiting, while you were out at a club playing around with some other woman.

SHARON

(on phone)

~~My roommate~~ Dee Dee ~~says she~~ saw you with some woman at Housers tonight.

DEE DEE

What conclusion should she jump to?

TIM

(on phone)

I had to go out a minute, unexpectedly, and I couldn't call you. That's why I'm calling you now.

TIM

(on phone)

Some other woman at a club, who told you that?

TIM

(on phone)

Oh yeah -- you must mean Darlene. Yes, I was there with her, but you're jumping to the wrong conclusion.

SHARON
(on phone)
What conclusion should I jump
to?

DEE DEE
You're a stoned face liar.

SHARON
(on phone)
I didn't say you were lying,
I just want to hear the rest
of it.

DEE DEE
But, if she was just a friend,
how come you were so close to
her in that booth?

SHARON
(on phone)
Yeah!

TIM
(on phone)
Darlene is a girl from work.
She has been real depressed,
because she just broke up
with her boyfriend. I was
just trying to cheer her up.

TIM
(on phone)
I'm not lying.

TIM
(on phone)
Rest of it? There is no rest
of it. She is just a friend.

TIM
(on phone)
Because she needed comforting,
you know, a shoulder to lean
on. You know when a girl loses
her man, she can start to feel
bad about herself. I was just
trying to convince her that
her guy was a fool to leave
someone like her. That's why
I didn't call, I had to give
her my utmost attention.

DEE DEE
You believe this guy with all
that pseudo-compassion stuff?

DEE DEE
Hell no, I don't believe you!

SHARON
(on phone)
Yes, I believe you.

DEE DEE
Huh?

Dee Dee's facial expression
STRAINS as Sharon talks.

SHARON
(on phone)
I knew that you would have an
explanation. Tim, you're such
a compassionate person.

DEE DEE
Sharon!

SHARON
(on phone)
Tim, could you hold on a minute?

Sharon lowers the receiver and
turns to Dee Dee.

END SPLIT SCREEN.

TIM
(on phone)
Don't you believe me?

TIM
(on phone)
Yes, I try to be.

DEE DEE
What the hell do you think you're
doing?

SHARON

What do you mean?

DEE DEE

You got that Negro caught in a lie, and before I know it you're telling him what a great guy he is.

SHARON

He gave me the reason why he stood me up tonight, he was being a friend to someone in need.

DEE DEE

How could you believe that bullshit from him? That Negro was out with another woman while you were here slaving in the kitchen. He's probably got her there right now.

SHARON

No he hasn't.

DEE DEE

I don't believe it, if I didn't know any better I would say that you're turned-out by that Negro.

SHARON

Dee Dee, I have to get back to Tim.

DEE DEE

Go ahead, you wouldn't want to keep Tim away from that girl he was with tonight.

SHARON

Dee Dee -

DEE DEE

Go ahead, I'm done with you.
I'm not going to say anything
else, except that you're in
for a fall Sharon, and it isn't
going to be pretty.

Sharon begins to talk to Tim on the phone again. Dee Dee stands by her side.

RESUME SPLIT SCREEN.

INT. SHARON'S APT

SHARON
(on phone)
Tim, I'm back.

SHARON
(on phone)
Everything's fine. I had a
disagreement with Dee Dee, but
it's taken care of now. Now
where was I before -- Oh yeah, I
was telling you how I should've
never doubted you tonight.

SHARON
(on phone)
Of course I do Tim, what you
were doing tonight was more
important than having dinner
with me.

She starts to laugh.

INT. TIM'S APT

TIM
(on phone)
Is everything all right? I
thought that I heard some
arguing.

TIM
(on phone)
So you forgive me for missing
dinner?

SHARON
(on phone)
It's funny what you can find
out about a person, or situation
in a night. I don't want to go
into the details right now...

She looks at Dee Dee, who ROLLS
HER EYES.

SHARON
(on phone)
...but Dee Dee has been telling
me how bad Black men are, and
when she saw you she was sure
she knew what was going on.

SHARON
(on phone)
I'm not like other women.

SHARON
(on phone)
Would you like me to bring you
some dinner? It's no problem.

Dee Dee throws her arms over her
head, and exits.

TIM
(on phone)
What's so funny?

TIM
(on phone)
I'm glad you understand. A
lot of women would have jumped
to the wrong conclusion.

TIM
(on phone)
You're so right Sharon. The
only problem I have now is
that I missed dinner tonight.

TIM
(on phone)
No, it's late, and I think
I'm just going to bed.

SHARON
(on phone)
Can we do something tomorrow?
It's Saturday, and we could
spend the whole day together.

SHARON
(on phone)
That sounds fine...

SHARON
(on phone)
...Tim, I love you.

They both hang up.

END SPLIT SCREEN.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLYDE
My boy, that was one of the
nicest plays that I have ever
seen. I may have to take back
what I said about you having
a weak game.

ERIC
Don't flatter him, he is still
a rookie.

TIM
(on phone)
I would love to, but I'm
going home tomorrow. I won't
be back until Monday. I will
give you a call as soon as I
come back.

Darlene, wearing just a night
shirt, walks past Tim giving
him a small hug as she goes by.

TIM
(on phone)
I'll see you Sharon.

FLOYD

That may be true, but with the moves he has just shown, I think he should be put on the All-Rookie team.

TIM

If I had any doubts about whether I could play Sharon, they were eliminated right then. I was in her camp, and sitting pretty.

ERIC

The best part about that is that you got in, even with that Dee Dee trying to mess you up.

FLOYD

Dee Dee was doing some serious cock blocking, wasn't she?

CLYDE

You know, I kind of respect Dee Dee.

ERIC & FLOYD

What?

CLYDE

She's a worthy opponent. I love to break women like Dee Dee down. It's like beating the Lakers in seven games, as opposed to a sweep. You appreciate the victory more.

TIM

Wait a minute fellas, the game is not over yet. The next morning I'm getting ready to go home. Eric should remember this, because he was here that morning.

INT. TIM'S APT - ~~HALLWAY~~ - MORNING (FLASHBACK)

HANDS

Tim ~~is HANDING~~ A KEY to Eric by the fish tank. ~~A CLOTHES BAG is at Tim's feet.~~

TIM

Here's the key, ~~for my apartment.~~
~~Come by~~ Sunday ~~and~~ feed my fish.
~~Be sure to give them~~ just a pinch.
~~No more, no less.~~ I'll ~~should~~ be back
Monday, ~~and~~ I don't want to ~~come back~~
~~and~~ find my fish dead.

ERIC

No problem, ~~just a pinch.~~

~~Eric takes the key and puts it in his pocket.~~

TIM

So, what did you do last night?

ERIC

~~Nothing much,~~ I ~~did~~ the happy
hour thing over at Blues, and
~~then~~ went home to get totally
dulled out by the Mrs. What ~~did~~
you do?

TIM

I ~~went~~ ^{Went} ~~out~~ to Housers, and met
this extremely live lady and
brought her ~~back here last night.~~ home.

ERIC

See, that's what I miss ~~doing~~
since I've been married. Going
out every weekend and getting
those fresh babes.

TIM

~~I only ran into~~ ^O one problem
though.

ERIC

~~What was that?~~

TIM

I was suppose to be at my girlfriend's house ~~for dinner~~ last night. Her roommate ~~happened to see me out with~~ ^{caught} ~~that~~ ^{the} other woman, ~~and told my girl. She called me up, and let me have an ear full.~~

ERIC

~~But I bet you got out of it, didn't you? Uh-oh.~~

TIM

~~Yeah I did,~~ ^{Took} ~~after some work,~~ ^{,but I got her back.} She even called ~~me this morning~~ to see if she could come over and cook me breakfast ~~before I went home.~~ ^G It's a good thing ~~that~~ she called first, otherwise it might ^{have been grim.} ~~had been a sticky situation.~~

ERIC

Once you're in, ^{man,} ~~with a girl~~ you can do about anything, ~~and get away with it.~~ ^H The hardest parts ~~has always been~~ getting them, not keeping them. When I first met my wife she use to play me like a hit record. But, once I got in with her, boy, I could do ~~about~~ anything and get away with it. ~~That even holds true today.~~

TIM

~~Yeah, I know, only~~ ^{Perhaps you're right Eric, but} this girl has been ~~pretty nice~~ ^{good} to me. ~~She is the first one that I have ever dealt with that has treated me well.~~ ^S It seems kind of strange playing her like this.

ERIC

~~Hey,~~ ^{Hey,} ~~Don't worry about it,~~ you're using ~~the~~ normal operating procedure ~~when dealing~~ with a Black woman.

Tim picks up his bag.

TIM

Let me make a move. ~~I have several hours driving ahead of me.~~ I've got 3 hours on the road.

They ~~both walk~~^{move} to the ~~front~~ door.

ERIC

You're doing this home thing, huh?

TIM

~~Yeah, I thought that I would go~~ ^{need to} see how the folks are doing.

~~They reach the front door, Tim opens it, and Eric walks out. Tim leaves, shutting the door behind him.~~ ^{exit.} We hold the empty apartment while:

TIM (V.O.)

~~A couple of steps down the hallway~~ ^{Just then}
I remembered that I forgot to turn on my answering machine, just in case that other woman called me for a repeat performance.

~~Tim opens the door and rushes back to the answering machine.~~ ^{in, and heads to the}

TIM (V.O.)

~~As I was setting my answering machine~~ ^{and} happened to play back Sharon's messages from the night before...

Tim stands ~~there~~ motionless as he listens.

~~TIM (V.O.)~~

~~...and started to realize that Sharon was sincerely concerned about me last night. Could it be that all the things that I had done to her in order to follow the standard operating procedure were wrong in this case?~~

SHARON (V.O.)
Tim, please call me. No matter how late. I'm really getting worried.

Tims starts to look like a sick sheep.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Tim's car drives along the highway in the country.

TIM (V.O.)

All the time that I was driving home I thought about my relationship with Sharon. I was questioning my treatment of her, or for that matter, all Black women.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Tim's car cruises down a two-lane country highway.

TIM (V.O.)

I, as well as many other guys, had been playing women seemingly forever without a second thought. But, until I met Sharon I never thought about why I was doing it, or where did I learn to do it?

EXT. TIM'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Tim's car drives up a gravel driveway, and stops in front of a COUNTRY HOUSE. The house has a LARGE STEP-ON PORCH, SCREEN DOOR, and a gravel pathway to the porch.

Tim gets out of the car, grabs his bag, and starts to walk up the path. His DAD, MOTHER, and Brother, DONALD, come out to meet him on the path.

EXT. TIM'S PARENTS HOUSE - PORCH - EVENING (FLASHBACK)

Tim sits quietly on the ^{porch} ~~steps to the porch,~~ ^{while} as his father relaxes in a chair on the porch.

TIM (V.O.)

That evening I was sitting on the porch with my father, still thinking about the events of the past couple of weeks with Sharon. My father must have guessed that I had something on my mind, because I was so quiet.

TIM'S DAD

You're kind of quiet tonight,
usually I can't get you to stop
talking. Do you have a problem?

TIM

I don't know if I have a problem
or not. Dad, how did you win Mom?

TIM'S DAD

How did I win your Mother? That's
a strange question to ask now,
after all of these years. Why
do you want to know? I bet you're
having women problems, aren't you?

TIM

No, not really. Me and my girl
get along fine.

TIM'S DAD

It's sexual, isn't it? You can
tell me.

TIM

No, that's not --

TIM'S DAD

(interrupting)

-- You know your mother and I
were having some sexual problems
a little while ago.

TIM

Pops! Mom is right inside the
house. That's kind of personal
information, isn't it?

TIM'S DAD

You're family, aren't you?
What's the problem?

TIM

Go ahead.

TIM'S DAD

Like I was saying, your mother and I were having these sexual problems, so I went to a doctor to see what he could do. The Doc told me that what my problem was I was going to need a kick start from my wife to get me going, if you know what I mean? He said that she may need to massage it. I said that sounds all right. She may need to caress it, I said that may be all right. And if need be, she may need to kiss it.

TIM

What kind of doctor are you going to?

TIM'S DAD

I don't know, but that was definitely some eye opening advice.

Tim laughs as his mother comes to the screen door.

TIM'S MOM

Dad, what are you talking about?

TIM'S DAD

What do you want, huh? Can't you see that I'm talking to my boy. Why don't you go back and finish dinner, or something?

TIM'S MOM

Dinner is done, that's what I wanted. Tim go get your brother for dinner.

TIM'S DAD

He'll do it later, after we're done talking.

TIM'S MOM

But dinner is going to get cold.

TIM'S DAD

Does the oven work?

TIM'S MOM

Of course it does.

TIM'S DAD

Then how is dinner going to get cold?

TIM'S MOM

See that Tim? See how he treats me? If I had a million dollars, I would leave your father.

TIM'S DAD

Well if I had a million dollars I would give it to you so you would go.

TIM'S MOM

All right, I'm leaving. But remember about dinner.

She disappears back into the house.

TIM'S DAD

She made me lose my train of thought.

TIM

And let's let it remain lost. I just wanted to know how you got Mom.

TIM'S DAD

Is that what I was talking about? All right let me think...The first thing you need to know is I didn't win your Mom by being nice. I learned that lesson before I ever met your mother. I would work all day in the fields, and turn butter all night for a girl I liked. But it never works.

TIM

What do you mean?

TIM'S DAD

I don't know what it is, but they must see you doing those nice things as a sign of weakness. The more you do, the more it seems not to work. That guy that doesn't do a thing for them always seems to be what they want.

TIM

You didn't do anything nice to get Mom?

TIM'S DAD

Of course I did, but only after she proved that she was worthy. If she doesn't prove that to you, she could be playing some foolish game. Now I could be wrong as two left shoes, but I have been married to your mother for 40 years now so I must be doing something right.

TIM

Maybe you're right, maybe that's the way it's suppose to be. I just thought that you guys in your generation did things differently.

Tim looks down towards his feet.

TIM

(to himself)

It looks like some things haven't changed.

Tim looks up and sees his younger brother, Donald, on the path entrance talking to a 12-YEAR-OLD BLACK GIRL. The girl listens for a while, then runs down the driveway. Donald walks down the path towards the house.

TIM

Hey Donald, I was just going to get you for dinner. Who's the girl?

Donald stops at the steps.

DONALD

No one, she's just a friend of mine.

TIM

Your girlfriend, maybe?

DONALD

Maybe, if she passes.

TIM

Passes? Passes what?

DONALD

Her test of course, you know the test to see if she's worth me dealing with. You don't think that I would have a girlfriend that didn't prove how much she liked me first, did you? What do you think I am, a chump or something. She's on her way to the store to get me a soda right now.

TIM

Of course, I should have known better.

Donald walks up the steps.

TIM'S DAD

I thought I told you about doing that to the girl.

DONALD

Oh Dad, I'm just playing the the game like everyone else is. What did Mom fix for dinner?

TIM'S DAD

Do I look like a menu? Go in
and find out for yourself.

Donald opens the screen door, and goes in.

Tim's father stands.

TIM'S DAD

We had better go in and eat,
before your mother comes back
out here and gets us.

TIM

I'll come in, in a minute. I want
to sit here a while longer.

TIM'S DAD

All right then, but don't be too
long.

Tim's Dad exits through the screen door. Tim sits on the
porch, looking off into nothing.

TIM (V.O.)

As I sat on my porch, I thought
about what my father had said
about dealing with Black women,
and what my 12 year old brother
was doing to his 12 year old
girlfriend.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

TIM

Black men and women have been
gaming on each other for generations.
I know that us Black men have some
very convincing arguments about how
Black women act, and should be treated.
Just like Black women must have some
very convincing arguments about Black
men. But, things have gotten so out of
control that we all have come to expect
some kind of game when we meet each other.

Eric, Floyd, and Clyde all move to the edge of their seats.

TIM

My 12-year-old brother should not be gaming on a 12-year-old girl, just like I should not have been doing the same thing with Sharon.

CLYDE, FLOYD, AND ERIC

look at Tim in silence.

TIM

I loved Sharon, and she had done everything to show that she loved me. It was crazy for me to try and play her. I decided right then that I wasn't going to play her anymore. So that night instead of staying at my parent's home, I drove back...

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Tim's car speeds down the highway.

TIM (V.O.)

...to apologize to Sharon in person for my treatment of her, and to put a stop to the gaming, at least in our case.

INT. TIM'S APT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A tired Tim enters his apartment, bag in hand.

TIM (V.O.)

It was late when I got back to my apartment, and I was tired...

Tim tosses his bag on the floor as he walks towards the couch, kicking off his shoes. He collapses on the couch.

TIM (V.O.)
...so tired that I didn't even
hit my bed, I just laid out
on my couch until...

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING (FLASHBACK)

The morning sun shines in on a sleeping Tim, who lays sprawled out on the couch.

He is awakened by A SERIES OF KNOCKS on his front door.

TIM SLOWLY RAISES.

ANOTHER SERIES OF KNOCKS.

Tim gets up, and goes to the door. He opens it, and there stands Sharon and Dee Dee both nicely dressed.

TIM
Sharon! What are you doing here?

SHARON
Dee Dee and I were on our way
to church when I saw your car.
I just had to stop by and say
hello. You remember my roommate
Dee Dee, don't you?

TIM
Of course. Why don't you both
come in.

Sharon and Dee Dee enter as Tim checks what he is wearing.

TIM
You'll have to excuse me for
how I look, I had a rough night.

SHARON
I thought that you were out of
town, what are you doing here?

Before Tim can answer A FEMALE VOICE IS HEARD coming from the hallway.

APARTMENT BLACK WOMAN (O.S.)
Hello...Hello...Eric...

A SEXY, YOUNG, BLACK WOMAN enters from the hallway wearing nothing, but Tim's robe.

APARTMENT BLACK WOMAN
...is that you?

Sharon, Dee Dee, and Tim look at the woman in silence.

SHARON BEGINS TO CRY

and starts to run to the front door.

SHARON
I don't believe it. How could
I have been so stupid?

She runs past^t Tim, opens the door, and runs out the apartment. Dee Dee follows close behind, as Tim tries to say something.

TIM
Sharon...Sharon...comeback.
It's not what it seems.

He starts to follow Sharon, but Dee Dee gets in his way at the open door.

DEE DEE
Don't even try it. It is exactly what it seems. I knew that this would happen. I tried to warn that girl about you, but she wouldn't listen. You have just hurt my best friend, and if it wasn't Sunday I would tell you off. Don't you ever try to come after Sharon again after playing her like that.

Dee Dee turns, and exits. ~~through the door.~~

DEE DEE
(yelling)
Damn! Why do Black men have to
be such Dogs?

Tim stands in his apartment in disbelief of what just happened.

END FLASHBACK

INT. TIM'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLYDE
Where did the woman come from?

TIM
(to Eric)
Eric, could you answer that
question for us?

They all look to Eric.

ERIC
It was one of my honeys. I had
gone out to a club that Saturday
night, and met this fine lady
who wanted to do me right. When
we left the club, I remembered
that I had a spot available for
use that night -- Tim's apartment.
So, I just slid on through his
spot for a while, I thought,
and knocked it out. I was having
such a great time that I sort
of lost track of the time. I ended
up having to leave her there for
a while until I could go home, and
check in with the Mrs.

TIM
Do you believe this guy?

ERIC

I know that it may have been the wrong play, but what's a guy to do in such a situation? How did I know that Tim was coming back early? I figured that I had all morning to get her.

FLOYD

That might had been what you figured, but you seriously got Tim dogged with his girl.

CLYDE

No he didn't, Tim knows that he could get back in that camp if he plays it right.

TIM

Clyde, don't you get what I tried to say in this story? I probably could get back in with Sharon, but I shouldn't be able to. When you play, you deserve to pay every once in a while. I was wrong to play Sharon -- Dead wrong.

CLYDE

So you're saying that everyone is wrong then, when it comes to playing each other.

TIM

Yeah, I'm saying it's wrong.

Clyde points to Floyd.

CLYDE

Floyd, what do you think?

FLOYD

I don't know, he's got an interesting story, but I don't know.

Clyde points to Eric.

CLYDE

Eric, what about it?

ERIC

It's so tricky out here, but I think he may have something.

CLYDE

I won't say that this gaming is right, but it's not wrong either. It's just a way to survive out here, that's all. Ideally, maybe we shouldn't play the women like we do, but who wants to be that trail blazer? That guy who would be willing to take a chance on getting played by your girls until everyone decides to stop?

Eric, Floyd, Clyde, and Tim look back and forth at each other in silence.

A LOUD BUZZ ~~is heard.~~

INSERT TELEVISION ON SCREEN

which displays a test pattern.

ERIC

Is it that late? I'd better get home, because me and my girl are suppose to go to church in the morning.

CLYDE

We all better go. Lets make a move.

They all stand, and head to the front door.

TIM

With what you have done lately, Eric, I'm surprised that you don't burst into flames when you enter the doorway of that church.

ERIC

You shouldn't be like that.

They get to the door; Floyd opens it.

TIM

It has been real fellas.

They all stop at the open door.

CLYDE

What are you going to do about Sharon?

FLOYD

Are you going to try and get her back?

ERIC

It's worth a try, I could help you, you know, explain what happened that night if you want me to.

TIM

No, that's not necessary. I'm going to try to get her back, but I wouldn't hold it against her if she never took me back.

CLYDE

All right then. Floyd, do you feel like going out? We could still check out some clubs.

ERIC

You guys don't mind if I hang a bit with you, do you?

TIM

Eric, I thought that you were going home?

ERIC

I am; I'm just playing.

Eric starts to laugh as he exits.

ERIC

Later fellas.

FLOYD

Why not, perhaps I could pull
someone for the night.

Floyd exits. Clyde looks out the door.

CLYDE

(to Floyd)

Floyd, you couldn't pull a woman
if you had a rope tied to her.

Clyde exits, as Tim, shaking his head, shuts the door. He slowly walks to the phone, stops, and SIGHS.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - MORNING

Tim is positioned at the free-throw line, basketball in hand, on an empty basketball court. He shoots, makes the basket, and goes to retrieve the basketball.

As he slowly dribbles the ball back to the free-throw line he LOOKS UP AND SEES SHARON in a jogging suit standing on the court. He stops in his tracks as they both stare at each other.

SHARON'S FACE

starts to smile, and then goes blank. Tim walks over to her.

TIM

Hello Sharon, how have you been?
It's been a while since I last
saw you. I called you, and left
messages for you to call me back,
but you never returned my calls.

Exposition

SHARON

You called? I never got your messages that you called. I guess Dee Dee thought that she was doing me a favor by not giving them to me. I've been O.K., as good as could be expected under the circumstances.

Sharon looks away from Tim, and then looks back.

SHARON

Tim, Dee Dee told me that I shouldn't have anything else to do with you. But, when I saw you over here from the exercise station, I had to come and ask you one question: Why did you play me?

TIM

I don't know if I can explain this, but I did to you what I thought I had to do in order to keep you. It may seem strange, but I thought I had to make you prove how much you cared for me to make sure that you weren't trying to run a game.

SHARON

But I don't understand? I thought that I did everything to show you how I felt. It wasn't a game.

TIM

You did do everything. It wasn't you, but me. No one trusts anyone anymore. Take that last incident, for example. You have no reason to believe this, but that woman you saw in my apartment was my married friend's date. That's why she called me Eric. My friend feels that "playing" his wife is just part of the normal routine when dealing with a Black woman.

SHARON

But, that doesn't make any sense.

TIM

You're right Sharon, it doesn't make any sense, but that's how it's going to be until --

SHARON

Until what?

TIM

Until someone tries to do something different. Will you give me the opportunity to try something different, Sharon?

A SMILE SLOWLY APPEARS

on Sharon's face as Dee Dee, dressed in a jogging suit, walks up to Tim and Sharon.

DEE DEE

Girl, what do you think you're doing? I thought that you wouldn't have anything else to do with this no good, good for nothing dog.

SHARON

Dee Dee --

TIM

(interrupting)

No Sharon, I deserve that for my past actions, but it doesn't apply to me now.

DEE DEE

You believe this guy, Sharon? After all that he has done, he's still trying to run a game on you.

Sharon takes the basketball out of Tim's hands, and gives it to Dee Dee.

DEE DEE
What's this?

SHARON
Tim is not playing games anymore
Dee Dee.

Tim and Sharon walk together past Dee Dee, who turns and watches them as they pass.

DEE DEE
Sharon, where are you going?

They continue to walk away.

DEE DEE
Sharon...Sharon...come back.

Dee Dee watches as they walk away.

DEE DEE
Sharon, what am I suppose
to do with this basketball?

Dee Dee continues to watch Tim and Sharon leave. Dee Dee then turns and faces the basket.

DEE DEE
Well, since I have the ball I
might as well do something with
it.

Dee Dee dabbles the ball between her legs a couple of times, and then dabbles to the basket and SLAMDUNKS.

FADE OUT.