

UNBREAKABLE BOND

By

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Inspired by some true events

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FADE IN:

INT. THE ALLEY - NIGHT

CLOSE UP - REGINA'S BODY

Lying on the cold ground on her stomach naked, surrounded by trash is the once beautiful brown skin woman in her late-twenties named REGINA.

Her hair is soaked in blood. Bruises, scrapes and various cut marks are placed on her body.

BACK TO THE SCENE

On the bottom right hand corner.

SUPERIMPOSE: DETROIT, MICHIGAN 1990

Forensic Officers are examining the scene and taking pictures.

Indistinct chatter from the police car radios, Officers and people from the neighborhood can be heard.

Focusing on the people gossiping.

PERSON #1

Thank God. Maybe my man will keep his ass at home now.

PERSON #2

I'm shocked she only has one child considering she slept with the whole neighborhood.

PERSON #3

Such a waste. Ah, well.

PERSON #4

Hopefully her daughter won't go down the same path ending up like this.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

People in your life distribute knowledge involving love and pain. You can't relish in love without knowing you'll embrace some pain. Why does life play this cruel game with your emotions? Even better...why would you allow the feeling of pain in your

life, just so you can bathe in the warmth of love? I'll start from the beginning.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. THE PARK - AFTERNOON

On the bottom right hand corner.

SUPERIMPOSE: DETROIT, MICHIGAN 1985

It's a clear blue sky. A slight breeze is circulating, taking a touch of the heat down.

The adorable brown skin five-year-old YOUNG LATRICE is playing in the sandbox alone.

Children are enjoying themselves laughing, running around.

Sitting off to the side on a bench are her parents THOMAS and Regina.

He's sober at the moment, but you can tell how the alcohol is taking a toll.

Thomas is an adorable dark skin man, short and chubby.

Coming across the field is YOUNG ANTOINE, also five-years old.

He's brown skin with a small strawberry blonde Afro.

Accompanying him are his parents TIONNA and JUSTIN wearing matching white outfits.

Tionna is a beautiful light skin woman with flowing long hair.

Justin is a flashy pretty boy with hazel eyes.

Young Antoine runs past Young Latrice, and then he stops.

He looks back at her smiling, slowly going back stepping into the sandbox.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Hi.

Young Latrice continues playing.

Young Antoine smiles, taking a few steps closer.

YOUNG ANTOINE (CONT'D)
 Can I play with you? My name is
 Antoine.

She stops placing sand in her bucket to look up at him, and she catches the same feelings he has.

YOUNG LATRICE
 I'm Latrice.
 (Chuckles)
 You have some funny colored hair.

Young Antoine laughs, rubbing his hand across his Afro.

YOUNG ANTOINE
 (Laughs)
 I think so, too.

Young Antoine takes a seat by her, and the two begin talking and playing.

Regina and Thomas sit amazed.

Tionna and Justin come down looking with the same shocked expression.

Regina notices the two, which causes her to stand up.

We can tell Thomas and Justin truly don't care about the moment from eye contact, but Thomas stands up.

REGINA
 Hello, my name is Regina, and this is
 my husband, Thomas.

TIONNA
 It's a pleasure to meet you. My name
 is Tionna and this is my husband,
 Justin.

REGINA
 Is that your son playing with our
 daughter?

TIONNA
 Yes, that's my son, Antoine.

REGINA
 He's a handsome young man. I'm amazed

our daughter Latrice is playing with him, considering she loves being alone.

TIONNA

Antoine is the same way.

REGINA

Hopefully they can continue playing with each other.

TIONNA

I don't see why not. We can exchange numbers and talk about it.

REGINA

That sounds great.

While the women get to know each other, Justin and Thomas slide off so they can talk.

THOMAS

What's going on with you?

JUSTIN

Nothing much, man. I'm happy my lil man made a friend.

THOMAS

That's how I feel about my daughter.

THOMAS AND JUSTIN POV

We see Young Antoine and Young Latrice playing in the sandbox for a few seconds before getting out, running off to play.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

That's how we met. When you're a child, you have no idea why you're attracted to someone. As you grow older. You realize attraction is created from what you deal with on a daily basis.

CUT TO:

INT. JUSTIN TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Young Antoine is sitting in the passenger seat of Justin's fully loaded black Expedition with the window down, parked in front of a store.

He's playing with a handheld game.

Taking a break from playing the game, he looks around the slum area watching the homeless drunks harass people coming out of the store, and the female prostitutes searching for clients.

Justin comes out of the store, and following behind him is an attractive brown skin woman who looks no older than twenty-one.

The woman hands Justin some folded up money.

Justin gives her a kiss on the cheek, followed by slapping her ass as she walks off.

He makes his way to the truck getting in, placing the money in his pocket before turning his attention to Young Antoine.

JUSTIN

You see your daddy working?

Young Antoine looks at his father confused.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Working?

JUSTIN

Hustling comes with pimpin' hoes.
Don't you ever give a bitch your
attention if she's not offering
something more than pussy. Understand?

YOUNG ANTOINE

I guess so.

Justin pulls out a lighter and cigarette, laughing, placing it in his mouth, lighting it.

JUSTIN

(Cool exhale)

Wait till you get older.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

My pops had no respect for women.

(Scoffs)

The love he showed my mother was
mediocre at best. Trice dad on the
other hand...it puzzled me why her
mother stayed with him.

CUT TO:

INT. REGINA CAR - AFTERNOON

The car is parked in the full parking lot of the grocery store.

Regina is sitting in the driver seat of her white Neon, while Young Latrice sits in the back.

The trunk is heard slammed shut.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. THE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Thomas is behind the car taking a sip from his flask.

Other customers coming out of the store who see him, shake their heads.

Thomas scoffs, making his way to the passenger door getting in.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. REGINA CAR - CONTINUOUS

Regina turns looking at him disgusted, and then looks forward.

With sweat glistening from his forehead, Thomas pulls out the flask, and takes another sip.

Remaining calm, Regina looks back at Young Latrice showing a warm loving smile.

REGINA

Are you helping mommy make dinner?

Young Latrice looks at her smiling.

YOUNG LATRICE

Yes.

Thomas wipes the residue from his mouth, placing the flask away.

THOMAS

Let me ask you something.

Regina looks at him batting her eyes.

REGINA

What?

THOMAS

You're not cheating on me, are you?

She rolls her eyes, sighing deep.

REGINA

Leave that drink alone.

As he rubs his chin in thought, he begins laughing.

THOMAS

Leave the drinks alone? Can you explain the condoms I found?

REGINA

Why would there be condoms in the house, and we never used them? Maybe you were using 'em with your other bitch.

THOMAS

(Laughs)

That's funny. I'll give you one chance to tell me who you've been fuckin'.

Regina rolls her eyes, and then starts the car.

REGINA

I don't have time for yo shit. You know what you do, so---

Thomas grabs her tight around the throat making her grab at his hand, while she gasps.

Young Latrice jumps back in her seat terrified.

Thomas is enjoying the sounds of Regina gasping as he leans in her face with a serious expression.

THOMAS

You're accusing me of cheating, and you sell pussy? Did you really think I didn't know?

He squeezes tighter.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
 The next time I ask you this
 question...just admit you're a whore.

Keeping his grip on her throat, he taps her hard on the side of the face before releasing her.

Young Latrice continues watching in fear.

Thomas leans back, pulling his flask out, taking a deep swig.

Regina sits crying holding her throat.

Liquor is falling from his bottom lip, the same as the sweat on his face, turning to look at Young Latrice.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
 The same thing will happen to you if
 you end up whoring like your mother.

Focusing back on Regina, he shoves her head.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
 Get us home. I'm hungry.

With no further words, Regina pulls out of the parking lot.

CLOSE UP - YOUNG LATRICE FACE

Young Latrice is silent with tears in her eyes.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
 As you can see, our lives are somewhat similar. The only difference is my mother didn't get abused, and she had no idea about my father's pimpin'. Funny how life guides you unexpectedly to the one who needs you, and you need them.

(Sighs)
 The violence and disrespect was never shown at gatherings. Five years later...me and Trice are still good friends.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. REGINA HOUSE - NIGHT

Streetlights brighten up the common urban neighborhood.

Regina's brick house is the third house from the corner.

Her car is parked in the driveway.

Two white plastic chairs are on the porch, and in the patch of grass surrounded by dirt in front of the house is an old rusty chair.

Young Antoine's ten-speed rests on the kickstand beside the house.

Young Antoine and Young Latrice are sitting on the steps laughing and talking.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

By this time our parents let us chill till a certain time, since we didn't live far from each other. So every other weekend, I'd hangout with Trice keeping her mind off her fucked up parents.

YOUNG ANTOINE

It's about time I head home.

YOUNG LATRICE

(Snickers)

You're scared of what daddy might say?

YOUNG ANTOINE

(Chuckles)

Why? We both know what my daddy would do to him.

YOUNG LATRICE

Yeah. Your daddy is tough.

YOUNG ANTOINE

He's something. Will you be okay?

She looks back at the house, and then looks at him sighing.

YOUNG LATRICE

Yeah. Mama is sleeping. When he gets home, I'll be asleep.

YOUNG ANTOINE

If you need me, call. I'll try to keep the phone as long as I can.

YOUNG LATRICE

I know. I'm glad you're my friend.

YOUNG ANTOINE

As long as I'm alive, I'll always be here for you.

His words make her blush.

Moisture fills her eyes, stepping into him for a kiss.

He turns his head before her lips connect with his.

She gently grabs his chin making him look into her eyes filled with love.

YOUNG LATRICE

What's wrong?

YOUNG ANTOINE

(Low tone)

You're my friend.

YOUNG LATRICE

Friends can kiss, right?

YOUNG ANTOINE

No.

YOUNG LATRICE

Why?

YOUNG ANTOINE

The type of kiss you want could ruin our friendship.

YOUNG LATRICE

I don't think so.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Trice---

The conversation is cut short by the loud music blasting from the beige Cherokee pulling up in front of the house.

Young Antoine stares at the Jeep confused.

Young Latrice already knows what's about to go down, sighing, shaking her head.

YOUNG ANTOINE (CONT'D)

Who is this?

She lowers her head ashamed.

YOUNG LATRICE
He's here for my mother.

Stepping from the Cherokee wearing sagging jeans and a wife beater smoking a blunt is DONALD, early-twenties.

His dark brown muscular skin is tatted up.

Taking a pull from the blunt arrogantly, he makes his way towards the porch.

He stops in front of Young Latrice taking another pull smiling at her.

DONALD
You might look colder than ya mama
when you get older.

Shame spreads across Young Latrice face, lowering her head.

Young Antoine balls up his fists.

Donald looks at him laughing, taking a pull from the blunt, flicking the ashes to the side.

DONALD (CONT'D)
What the fuck are you about to do?

YOUNG ANTOINE
You disrespected my friend.

She grabs Young Antoine's wrist trying to calm him down.

YOUNG LATRICE
It's okay. It doesn't bother me.

Young Antoine snatches his arm away, keeping his fist balled, staring at Donald.

YOUNG ANTOINE
It's not okay! If you let people
disrespect you now, it'll never stop.
(To Donald)
I need you to apologize.

Taking one last pull, Donald puts the blunt out, placing it in his pocket, looking at Young Antoine laughing.

DONALD

Calm down lil nigga before you get
that ass beat.

YOUNG ANTOINE
That could be true. If you don't
apologize, I'll find out.

DONALD
(Laughs)
You'll find out? Boy---

Young Antoine swings with all his might connecting with
Donald's jaw.

The vigorous young man's fight comes to an end when Donald
hits him hard in the stomach, dropping him to his knees.

Donald hits him with a hard right.

Young Latrice gets ready to help, and Donald looks at her,
cocking his fist back, but it doesn't scare her from taking a
swing.

Instead of punching her, he shoves her hard to the ground.

Focusing back on Young Antoine still on the ground trying to
catch a breath.

Donald begins stomping him like he's a grown man, enjoying
his moans of pain.

Young Latrice gets up trying to help, and again, Donald
shoves her to the ground.

Donald walks over grabbing the rusty chair.

Walking back over to Young Antoine, he raises the chair ready
to smash his head in, and that's when Regina comes running
out the house in her nightgown.

She rushes over to Donald grabbing his arm.

He looks at her ready to attack, but instead he lowers the
chair.

REGINA
What the fuck are you doing?!

DONALD
The lil motherfucker hit me like a
grown ass man! So, I beat his ass like

a grown ass man.

Young Latrice sits up on the ground.

Young Antoine is still on the ground with blood coming from his mouth, moaning in pain.

YOUNG LATRICE

Mama, Antoine was only---

Regina turns around furious.

REGINA

You shut up! I keep telling you to leave his ass alone because he's trouble!

YOUNG LATRICE

But, mama---

REGINA

Mama my ass! Get up and get in the house! I'll deal with you after my company leaves.

Donald is looking down at Young Antoine with a slight smirk.

Regina grabs Donald's hand affectionately.

REGINA (CONT'D)

You ready, baby?

Donald looks at her smiling, giving her a kiss on the cheek, grabbing her ass.

DONALD

You know it, baby.

Regina gives him another kiss, and then focuses on Young Latrice still sitting on the ground.

REGINA

Get this boy away from my house, and bring ya ass in.

Regina walks back in the house.

Donald looks back at Young Antoine, and then Young Latrice.

DONALD

You better get a real man, and stop

fuckin' with these soft niggas.

Donald laughs walking into the house.

Young Latrice rushes over to Young Antoine trying to comfort him, caressing his face.

YOUNG LATRICE

Are you okay?

Young Antoine licks the blood from his mouth, looking at her smiling.

YOUNG ANTOINE

(Moaning)

I'll be okay.

He stands to his feet dusting off.

She stands up and holds his hand.

YOUNG LATRICE

Are you sure?

YOUNG ANTOINE

Nothing a hot bath and ice won't fix.
Will you be okay?

Young Latrice takes a deep breath looking at the house, and then back at Young Antoine trying not to cry.

YOUNG LATRICE

(Somber tone)

Yeah. I'll listen to some music as
always. It doesn't bother me like when
it first started.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Well, don't end up like her.

YOUNG LATRICE

I won't.

He places a hand of security to the side of her face, gently caressing it.

YOUNG ANTOINE

I'm serious. I love you.

He gives her a kiss on the cheek, and then slowly walks over to his bike holding his ribs.

He gets on his bike and rides off.

CLOSE UP - YOUNG LATRICE FACE

Young Latrice stands with tears coming down her face watching him pedal off down the street.

BACK TO THE SCENE

She smiles, taking a deep breath before walking in the house.

CUT TO:

INT. TIONNA HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Antoine comes into the house holding his side, closing the door behind him.

Walking through the nicely furnished living room, he pauses, staring at one picture.

YOUNG ANTOINE'S POV

It's a picture of him and Young Latrice at the park eating ice cream.

BACK TO THE SCENE

The bruises on his face makes it hard for him to smile, but he manages to crack one, before making his way into the kitchen.

Someone left their plate on the table with the silverware to the side and an empty glass.

He walks over to the refrigerator opening the door, grabbing a cold bottle of water.

Closing the door, he places the bottle to his cheek.

He winces, embracing the coolness soothing the pain.

TIONNA (O.S.)
Antoine, is that you?

YOUNG ANTOINE
Yeah.

TIONNA (O.S.)
Your dinner is in the microwave.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Okay.

Keeping the bottle to his cheek, he goes over to the microwave opening it.

Not feeling up to eating, he closes the microwave, and then walks over to the table taking a seat, lowering his head.

Tionna comes to the doorway staring at him.

TIONNA

What's wrong?

Young Antoine keeps his head down with the bottle pressed against his face.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Nothing.

TIONNA

Nothing? What's with the bottle?

Walking over to the table, she takes a seat next to him.

She gently places her hand on the back of his head.

He cringes from the pain.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

You wanna tell me what happened?

YOUNG ANTOINE

No.

TIONNA

Look at me.

YOUNG ANTOINE

I don't want you seeing my face like this.

TIONNA

My son is handsome no matter what.
Look at me.

Placing the bottle down, he slowly lifts his head.

She reaches for his face, and he turns his head.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

Who did this to you?

YOUNG ANTOINE
I was protecting Trice.

TIONNA
Did a kid do this?

YOUNG ANTOINE
No. Some guy her mother messes around
with.

TIONNA
Okay? And he put his hands on you
because?

YOUNG ANTOINE
You told me to never let her get
disrespected. He said something wrong,
so we got into it.

She slams her fist on the table.

TIONNA
Goddamn it.

Getting up from the table, she makes her way over to the
phone picking it up prepared to dial.

Young Antoine rushes over to her.

YOUNG ANTOINE
What are you doing?

TIONNA
I'm about to give that bitch a piece
of my mind. You don't let your random
fuck buddies put hands on my child,
and he was protecting yours. Fuck
that.

YOUNG ANTOINE
And cussing her out will do what?

Tionna stands silent, tapping the phone on her palm.

TIONNA
You're absolutely right. Beating the
bitch ass is much better.

She's ready to walk out the kitchen.

Young Antoine is doing his best to calm her down.

The front door is heard opened then closed.

In walks Justin flashy as usual smoking a cigarette, holding a pint of cognac that's almost gone.

Tionna looks over at him, and a sly smile spreads on her face.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

Good thing you're here. Let me go change and we can roll.

Justin takes a pull from his cigarette confused.

JUSTIN

What?

TIONNA

Let me go change into my whoop ass gear, and we can roll. What part of that didn't you understand?

JUSTIN

Who are you trying to fuck up?

Tionna is pissed, pointing at Young Antoine.

TIONNA

Are you blind? Do you not see his face?

Justin takes a sip, followed by a pull looking at Young Antoine.

Young Antoine is silent, hoping the talk between his parents ends on a good note.

JUSTIN

Somebody tore his ass up?

Tionna places her hands on her hips, seconds away from going off.

TIONNA

He got his ass beat by a grown ass man defending Latrice.

JUSTIN

Latrice fuck with older dudes?

TIONNA

Don't be fuckin' stupid. One of her
mama's random fuck buddies did this to
our son. Why are we still standing
here having this conversation, and not
at the bitch doorstep?!

Justin swallows the last bit of cognac, takes one last pull,
and then puts the butt in the bottle, placing it on the
counter.

JUSTIN

Let him take the ass beating like a
man. But if it makes you feel better,
I'll address her tomorrow.

Tionna cocks her head to the side.

TIONNA

Run that by me again.

JUSTIN

When I see her tomorrow, I'll talk
about it.

She calmly makes her way over to him.

TIONNA

Why would you see her tomorrow?

Young Antoine sees the tension building.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Mama---

TIONNA

Stay out of this.
(To Justin)
Answer my question.

Justin sways his head side to side, chuckling under his
breath.

JUSTIN

Get outta my face.

TIONNA

I'm not in your face, yet. But if the
next words coming from your mouth
don't answer my question, I will.

Justin's look turns serious.

JUSTIN

Get the fuck on with this tough shit.

Young Antoine stands silent on edge.

Tionna smirks, and before Justin can blink, she grabs the empty bottle and smacks him across the face, shattering it, followed by a strong left.

The two begin fighting, but Justin hits her with a good right, knocking her to the floor.

He gets ready to stomp her, but she's right back on her feet fighting.

Fed up with trying to legit knock her out, he grabs her by the waist slamming her hard on the table, and then he grabs her tight by the throat holding her down.

Young Antoine rushes over to Justin hitting him in the ribs, and ends up getting backhanded into the refrigerator.

Keeping his hand around Tionna throat, Justin looks back at Young Antoine on the floor holding his head moaning in pain.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Don't you ever run up on me, nigga!
Wait till I get done with this bitch!
Yo ass next!

Focusing back on Tionna, he slings her to the floor.

Young Antoine gets up running from the kitchen.

Justin stands over Tionna watching her try to catch a breath as blood comes from her mouth.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I'll see the bitch tomorrow because she owes me some pussy. Yeah, I'm fucking that loose hoe. And some of the profit she makes from hoein' comes to me. Now you know.

He laughs before kicking her in the stomach.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TIONNA BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is clean and elegant.

Young Antoine runs over to the nightstand, opening the drawer, tossing papers out so he can obtain his mother's nine-millimeter.

He hears his mother's screams coming from the kitchen, and quickly rushes back to help her.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

YOUNG ANTOINE'S POV

Justin is down on one knee repeatedly hitting Tionna in the face.

Looking at his mother's bloody face and eyes closed, Young Antoine cocks the gun aiming at Justin.

Justin looks up smiling, gently slapping Tionna so she can open her eyes.

She turns her head, barely able to open her eyes seeing her son aiming a gun at Justin.

JUSTIN

Look at the big man.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Young Antoine's face is red with tears flowing from his eyes gripping the gun with both of his trembling hands.

Justin laughs standing to his feet, cracking his neck and blood stained knuckles.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Bitches shouldn't play with guns. Now
if you don't---

BANG!!! Justin looks down at his stomach where the bullet entered.

He looks at Young Antoine, shocked he actually shot him.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I can't believe---

Young Antoine shoots him six more times.

Justin hits against the counter, slowly sliding down to the floor staring at Young Antoine.

Falling over on his side dying slowly, he remains with the same shocked expression.

Tionna inches away from Justin's dead body, barely able to keep her eyes open.

Reaching Young Antoine, Tionna looks in his eyes, grabbing the gun.

TIONNA

Baby, give me the gun.

Young Antoine doesn't respond or loosen his grip.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

Baby, it's okay. Give mommy the gun.

He comes back to reality breathing hard, slowly loosening his grip allowing Tionna to take the gun.

She places the gun to the side on the floor.

He hugs her tight, letting his tears soak her robe as she holds him.

Slowly letting him go, she looks at him wiping the tears from his eyes.

YOUNG ANTOINE

(Trembling voice)

I--I had too.

TIONNA

I know.

YOUNG ANTOINE

I couldn't let him beat you.

TIONNA

You did what was right. Now...I need something from you.

YOUNG ANTOINE

What?

TIONNA

I need you to go to your aunt's house, but don't tell her what happened.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Huh? Why do I---?

TIONNA

Just listen to me. I won't have my only child spend the rest of his life behind bars. I'll die before I let that happen.

YOUNG ANTOINE

...But I did it. You always told me to accept punishment if I did something wrong. This is something I have to accept.

TIONNA

I won't let you accept it. You protected your mother, and that's what matters. Just...just do what I told you.

They hug, breaking down crying, neither wanting to let the other go.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

Don't worry about me. Mommy will always love her big man.

Knowing this could possibly be the last time he'll hold his mother, he gives her a kiss on the cheek, pulling away wiping the tears from her eyes, while she wipes the tears from his.

YOUNG ANTOINE

I love you.

TIONNA

I'll always love you. And remember what I'm about to tell you. Men show their emotions through actions, not tears. Shed tears for lost loved ones. Not for doing what you had to do.

(Sniffles)

Now, go.

Young Antoine stands there for a few more seconds getting a good visual of his mother.

He gives her one last kiss on the cheek before making his way out the kitchen.

Tionna continues crying, picking up the gun hearing the front

door open and then closed.

She looks back at Justin's dead body smiling, slowly standing to her feet.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. TIONNA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Neighbors are outside worried after hearing the gunshots.

Young Antoine comes from the porch of the ranch style house making his way to the side of the house getting his bike, hopping on riding off.

Just as he gets in front of the house, he hears a gunshot.

The neighbors quickly rush over to the house banging on the door.

He wants to see what happened, but his mother's words keep replaying in his head causing him to keep pedaling forward.

CUT TO:

INT. LATRICE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Her room is well-organized.

Young Latrice is sitting on the bed skimming through a fashion magazine with her headphones on.

Reaching the end of the book, she puts it down and takes her headphones off, smacking her lips for taste because her throat is dry.

Standing up ready to leave the room, she pauses when she hears an argument going on outside.

Walking over to the open window, she moves the curtain looking outside.

YOUNG LATRICE POV

She sees Thomas and Regina arguing standing beside Donald's running Cherokee.

Thomas is drunk, barely able to stand straight.

THOMAS

You're in my goddamn house fuckin'

other niggas, and my daughter is in there?! I guess you'll be happy if she ends up a hoe like you!

REGINA

First off, I ain't no motherfuckin' hoe! I'm doing whatever the fuck I wanna do just like you!

THOMAS

Nasty ass, bitch!

REGINA

That's all you can say?! You beat my ass whenever you feel like it and fuck other bitches, but I'm a hoe?! I'm a bitch?! What the fuck does that make you?!

Thomas balls his fist ready to hit her, but then he looks at Donald inside the car.

THOMAS

Get the fuck away from my house.

Regina laughs, clapping her hands.

Thomas turns his back, walking away.

REGINA

For somebody to claim he's a man, you're acting like a weak bitch right now.

He stops and turns around.

REGINA (CONT'D)

I thought so. Let me tell you one more thing. If my daughter turns out doing exactly what we do, blame yourself. You let her see how men should treat women. Yes, she knows what I do, so I know my part in it. You on the other hand...

(Sighs deep)

Once upon a time, you were a man. Now you're a washed up drunk, only able to run off at the mouth and beat women. Nice job of being a role model to our daughter.

She walks up to him, patting him on the shoulder.

She laughs walking back to the jeep, getting in.

Thomas stands silent, watching the jeep pull off.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Young Latrice stands with glossy eyes.

Hearing the front door open and slammed shut, she quickly gets back in bed pretending she's asleep.

We can hear his loud footsteps coming up the stairs stopping at Young Latrice bedroom.

He opens the door with force, slamming it against the wall.

Thomas stands in the door staring at her.

THOMAS

I know you're not asleep! Did you hear what that bitch you call a mother said? Of course you did. Bitches hear everything.

Walking over to the bed, he turns his head to the side, spitting.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You look just like her, so I know you'll be doing the same thing. And you know what?

With a sinister smile, he quickly grabs Young Latrice by the arms.

She's terrified.

Thomas leans down in her face.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I'll be right here to beat and degrade you like the whore you are.

He gives her a kiss on the forehead.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Go to sleep...before I beat the whore out of you now.

Slowly, he releases her arms with the same sinister smile.

Young Latrice continues staring at him in fear, watching him make his way to the door.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I knew I should've made her get an abortion.

He walks out slamming the door behind him.

Staring at the door shedding tears, Young Latrice doesn't blink or move.

After a few seconds, she turns on her side, opening the drawer on her nightstand, reaching in grabbing her diary and pen.

Opening the book, she begins writing the horror she just experienced letting her tears blot the pages.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ALLEY - TWO HOURS LATER

Trash blows along the filthy alley as Homeless search through the trash for food.

The random coughs and mumbling are heard.

YOUNG GANGSTER #1 and YOUNG GANGSTER #2, both of them seventeen-years-old come walking from the other end of the alley wearing all-red, smoking and shaking spray paint cans looking at the graffiti on the walls.

Young gangster #2 is nervous because of the area they're in, but he won't let Young gangster #1 notice it.

YOUNG GANGSTER #2

Man, let's hurry up and do this.

Young gangster #1 takes a pull from his cigarette, looking at Young gangster #2 disappointed.

YOUNG GANGSTER #1

What are you scared of?

YOUNG GANGSTER #2

I ain't scared of shit. I just wanna hurry up so we can bounce.

YOUNG GANGSTER #1
Nigga, you scared. It's cool.

YOUNG GANGSTER #2
Fuck you.

The two continue walking down the alley.

Young gangster #1 spots some gang graffiti on the wall they should cross out.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 1
Let's get that shit over there.

YOUNG GANGSTER #2
What?

Young gangster #1 is looking at what would appear to be a mural dedicated to someone who was killed.

YOUNG GANGSTER #1
This shit right here.

Young gangster #2 gets nervous, taking one last pull from his cigarette, tossing it to the side.

YOUNG GANGSTER #2
Let's tag something else.

Young gangster #1 snatches Young gangster #2 can from his hand, shoving him to the side.

YOUNG GANGSTER #1
Scary ass. Wait till we get back in the hood. I'm telling everybody---

A speeding vehicle is heard, and then it comes to a quick stop.

The two quickly hide behind a dumpster.

A door is heard opening, followed by a loud thud.

The door is heard closing, and now we see a van speeding off down the alley.

They wait a few more seconds before coming from behind the dumpster.

Young gangster #2 looks around paranoid.

Young gangster #1 is curious about what made the thud.

YOUNG GANGSTER #2

Let's get the fuck from over here.

YOUNG GANGSTER #1

Hold up. Don't you wanna see what they dumped?

YOUNG GANGSTER #2

Hell no. I'm getting the fuck on.

Young gangster #2 takes off in the direction the van went.

Young gangster #1 brushes him off making his way down to the spot where the van stopped.

As he gets closer to the spot, he steps back scared, covering his mouth from hurling before taking off trying to catch up with Young gangster #1.

CLOSE UP - REGINA'S BODY

We see Regina's body as we did in the beginning of the movie.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Life plays a twisted game. The night I killed my father, Trice's mother was found raped and murdered. Trice thinks the dude who beat my ass killed her, but the murderer was never found. This night created two paths for us to choose from.

FADE TO BLACK:

THREE YEARS LATER

INT. TAY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Weed smoke lingers in the air as rap music plays.

Antoine has gained some weight, and his hair has grown.

He's sitting at the table covered with money, crack, weed, liquor bottles and cups.

Some older guys and GUY #1, a tall dark skinned man in his early-twenties is sitting at the table.

Antoine, only wearing his pants looks at his cousin TAY mid-

twenties standing over the stove with his back turned.

Tay is slim but on the muscular side and dark skin with no shirt on wearing jeans, showing off his body covered with tattoos.

Guy #1 is staring at Antoine with hate in his eyes, taking a sip from his cup.

TAY

Once you do this shit, ain't no turning back.

Antoine cracks his neck, sucking his teeth.

ANTOINE

Not trying to brag because I'm not happy with the outcome. But aside from you, I'm the only real killer in the room.

Antoine scoffs, and then downs his cup.

Guy #1 takes a pull from his blunt looking at Antoine sideways.

GUY #1

What the fuck are you talking bout, lil nigga?

With a stone-face, Antoine looks at Guy #1 cracking the knuckles on his right hand balling his fist.

ANTOINE

You heard what the fuck I said. Should I be scared?

Guy #1 goes to reach under his shirt, and Antoine stands up prepared to rush him, but the other guys at the table break it up.

Tay still has his back turned to them.

TAY

Both of y'all shut the fuck up, and calm down.

(To Antoine)

Are you using ice?

Antoine takes his seat keeping his eyes locked on Guy #1.

ANTOINE
I don't need ice.

Tay turns around holding a hot butter knife.

TAY
Suit yourself.

He places the knife on Antoine's right arm.

Antoine bites down on his lip, but doesn't scream.

CUT TO:

INT. LATRICE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Latrice is sitting on her bed wearing black jogging pants and a T-Shirt crying, holding a roll of tissue.

As she rocks back and forth, Thomas comes into the room holding a pair of blood stained panties.

Latrice looks up at him with teary-eyes.

THOMAS
Looks like your period started. It won't be long now. You better find out what you need to do, and how you'll take care of that problem. More importantly, you need to invest in condoms. I'm not watching any of your whore babies.

He throws the panties at her, and then turns his back.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Learn how to hide your shit better if you don't want anybody finding out.
(Sighs)
You're just as sloppy as your mother.

He walks out slamming the door.

Latrice sits on the bed crying, lowering her head.

BLACK SCREEN:

INT. THE SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Latrice is walking down the crowded hallway wearing something fitted, heading towards her locker.

Loud talking and laughter is heard from the students.

When she reaches the locker, she opens it, getting some books out.

Closing the locker, there stands TRAVIS. A tall light skin pretty boy grinning ear to ear.

Latrice looks at him trying not to blush.

TRAVIS

What's going on, baby?

LATRICE

I'm your baby, now?

TRAVIS

You've always been my baby. Everybody knows who I'm trying to get at.

LATRICE

Uh huh. What do you want?

TRAVIS

I was wondering if...

Travis eyes get wide, lowering his head, sighing.

Latrice looks at him confused.

LATRICE

What's wrong?

Travis keeps his head down.

TRAVIS

...Look.

LATRICE POV

Antoine is coming down the hall wearing a Blue shirt and jeans making his way towards her, giving everybody a play he walks past.

BACK TO THE SCENE

He reaches Latrice and wraps an arm around her, giving her a kiss on the cheek.

ANTOINE

What's up?

LATRICE

Why didn't I see you this morning in class?

ANTOINE

I didn't get much sleep last night.

Antoine looks at Travis, and then looks at Latrice.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

What's wrong with ya boy?

Travis lifts his head.

TRAVIS

I can speak for myself.

Antoine cocks his head to the side.

ANTOINE

I didn't say you couldn't.

TRAVIS

If you're questioning something about me, speak to me.

Antoine moves Latrice to the side, stepping up in Travis face.

ANTOINE

Stand behind ya feelings, nigga.

Everybody stops thinking it's about to be a fight.

Latrice quickly gets between them defusing the situation.

A thunderous boo is heard, and everybody starts walking off.

Antoine and Travis continue griming each other.

LATRICE

Look, don't start---

ANTOINE

Get yo ass to class, and stop fuckin' with lames. Do you need me and Drew to give you a ride home?

Latrice shakes her head.

LATRICE

I'm good.

ANTOINE
I'll holla at you later.

Antoine mugs Travis as he walks off.

Travis watches Antoine walk off, and then he turns his attention to Latrice.

TRAVIS
What's wrong with that nigga?

LATRICE
He's basically been there for me my whole life. He makes sure I'm safe.

TRAVIS
He gon' fuck around and get his ass beat.

Latrice catches herself from laughing.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
What's so funny?

LATRICE
Leave that alone. What did you wanna talk about?

The students clear out as the bell rings.

TRAVIS
The shit we talked about on the phone.

Latrice blushes stepping into him, grabbing his crotch.

LATRICE
Let's go.

Travis cracks a smile, but then he looks around nervous.

TRAVIS
What about ya boy?

Turning her back, she reaches back grabbing him by the belt.

LATRICE
Keep your mouth shut and he won't know.

Travis has a big smile on his face as the two walk off.

CUT TO:

INT. TAY CAR - NIGHT

Tay and Antoine are sitting in Tay's old-school Jet-black Monte Carlo across the street from the spot drinking and smoking.

TAY

After I make this move tonight, cuz.
We gon' be straight.

ANTOINE

You've been saying that shit all year.
I'll believe it when I see it.

Tay takes a pull from the blunt, followed with a sip from his cup.

TAY

Watch what I tell ya.

ANTOINE

Can you hurry this shit up?

TAY

(Laughs)
Hurry up? Nigga, you act like you got
something else to do.

ANTOINE

I do.

TAY

What? Check on Trice?

Antoine takes a sip from his cup giving him the finger.

TAY (CONT'D)

(Laughs)
Sit and be pissed all you want.

Tay takes one last pull from the blunt and then places it down in the ashtray before getting out of the car.

Antoine picks up the blunt taking a hit, leaning back in his seat watching Tay walk across the street to the house that looks abandoned.

Gunshots go off which makes Antoine drop the blunt, reaching on the side of his seat for his gun before getting out of the car.

Guy #1 and two other guys come running out the house down to Tay moving around in pain.

They aim down at him ready to shoot, and Antoine opens fire causing them to duck and return fire.

Antoine ducks behind the car as the glass from the bullets shattering the windows fall on him.

The three quickly get up making their way to an old-school Honda getting in.

Antoine comes from behind the car shooting, just as the car takes off.

Antoine stands in the middle of the street pissed off he didn't hit anybody.

He turns his attention to his cousin, running over to him, dropping down to one knee.

Tay has blood coming from his mouth and chest, struggling to catch a breath.

ANTOINE

Just breathe. Breathe, you'll be okay.

TAY

...That--that bitch ass nigga...set me up.

Those were the last words coming from Tay's mouth.

Tears are falling from Antoine's eyes onto his cousin's face.

He grabs the back of his head, placing his forehead against his.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Needless to say. The nigga who killed my cousin ended up dead. The cards dealt to me and Trice could've been played differently, but this is what fate wanted us to embrace. Now that we're all caught up...here's where we stand now.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. WOMEN PRISON - AFTERNOON

Indistinct trash talking is heard from the inmates.

Tionna is covered with tattoos.

She has her feet on the bottom bunk doing push-ups, breathing hard, covered with sweat.

Taking a break, she stands up wiping the sweat from her face, looking at the wall with pictures of Young Antoine, reminiscing on the last time she saw her son.

Walking to the wall, she places her fingertips on a picture of him and her when he was baby.

Closing her eyes ready to cry, a guard comes to her cell.

GUARD

You got a visitor, Tionna.

As the cell door opens, she takes a deep breath looking towards the open cell in confusion.

Working her shoulders out as if she's about to fight, Tionna stares at the picture one last time cracking a slight smile.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE VISITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Antoine is sitting at the booth with the phone already up to his ear and his head down.

He's wearing a blue wife beater with his hair in cornrows.

When Tionna comes up to the booth, her heart drops seeing her son.

She quickly takes her seat, picking up the phone, placing it to her ear.

TIONNA

Hey, baby.

ANTOINE

(Low tone)

Hi, ma.

TIONNA

What's wrong? Why do you have your head down?

ANTOINE

No reason.

TIONNA

Are you scared to look me in the eyes?

ANTOINE

...I'm not scared. I'm ashamed.

She eyes over his tattoos and brand on his arm.

TIONNA

Reading the story on your body, you can't be too ashamed.

ANTOINE

I'm ashamed---

TIONNA

Before you say another word, look me in the eyes.

ANTOINE

...I can't.

TIONNA

I haven't seen my only child in years. Either you look me in the eyes or this conversation is over.

Antoine snuffles, slowly raising his head.

Tionna cracks a slight smile.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

Why does my big man have tears in his eyes?

Antoine doesn't respond, wiping his eyes.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

I remember my son being tough. What were the last words I told you?

ANTOINE

That was then.

TIONNA
What's so different now?

ANTOINE
...The woman I love is behind bars.

TIONNA
My body is behind bars. My love and
spirit is always with you.

ANTOINE
That's not the same, ma.

TIONNA
Is that what you're ashamed about?

ANTOINE
No. I'm ashamed of myself.

TIONNA
Antoine...this had to be done. I have
no regrets.

ANTOINE
...I do.

TIONNA
How's Latrice?

ANTOINE
Aside from when I wrote to tell you
about her mother getting murdered,
she's okay.

TIONNA
Be ashamed if you let her become her
mother. I'm comfortable in my
situation, so there should be no guilt
in your heart. I'll always love you.

The words touch his heart as the tears fall from his eyes.

ANTOINE
I love you, too.

Tionna looks back at the Guard, and then Antoine.

TIONNA
My time is almost up. Come back and
see me again. Do you remember what I
told you?

ANTOINE

I will. And yes, I remember.

TIONNA

Son, stop crying. You only shed tears
for lost loved ones. Not for doing
what you had to do. I love you.

Wiping the tears from her eyes, she places the phone back on the hook looking at her son one last time before standing up walking away.

Antoine remains holding the phone wiping the tears from his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. REGINA KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Music is heard coming from the radio sitting on the counter.

Latrice is standing over the sink washing dishes.

Finishing up with the last few dishes placing them in the rack, she walks over to the refrigerator covered with pictures of her mother and the obituary.

She places a hand on the obituary closing her eyes thinking back on the fun times she had with her mother.

Feeling refreshed, she opens the refrigerator, and grabs two steaks.

Walking back over to the sink, she opens the steaks, and then grabs a cutting board.

Ready to season and tenderize the meat, Thomas comes into the kitchen wearing his chef uniform, pausing, staring at her.

Latrice looks at him smiling.

LATRICE

Are you ready to eat?

Thomas stares at her for a few more seconds sucking his teeth before walking over to the refrigerator.

THOMAS

What are you trying to make?

She places her hands on the counter taking a deep breath.

Thomas grabs a beer from the refrigerator placing it on the table, and then he grabs a cold water bottle.

Opening the water, he turns looking at her taking a sip.

Keeping her back to him, she takes another deep breath.

LATRICE

I'm making steak and mashed potatoes
with a salad.

THOMAS

Something basic just like your mother.

He looks back at the refrigerator and snatches the obituary down.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I wonder if you picked up the rest of
her traits.

He scoffs, tossing the obituary on the floor.

She slams her fist on the counter, turning around looking at him.

LATRICE

Why do you talk to me that way? Why do
you disrespect me every single day?

THOMAS

(Laughs)

Disrespect you?

(Sips)

You disrespect yourself by being a
whore. Blame yourself for your
actions.

LATRICE

You're my fuckin' father! The man
that's supposed to guide me through
this fucked up world. What kind of
man, or father figure are you? Don't
you think it's fucked up how you treat
me?

He's silent, lowering his head.

LATRICE (CONT'D)

I don't mean to disrespect you by
cussing, but this has to end. I'm your

daughter, and I love you. All I want is for my father to show me the same love.

Her lips tremble, closing her eyes letting the tears fall.

Lifting his head seeing his child crying, the guilt surges through his body walking towards her.

With a deep sigh, he places a hand on her shoulder.

THOMAS

I'm sorry.

The tears continue pouring from her eyes, lifting her head, sniffing.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I shouldn't take my anger out on you. From here on out...I'll never disrespect you again.

He gives her a warming fatherly smile.

Just as she gets ready to smile, he slaps her so hard it almost slams her head into the sink.

He grabs her by the arm and slings her to the floor.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Whores love talking, knowing they're only worth a few pumps by any man who sees fit.

He pours the rest of the water on her, and then slings the bottle down on her head.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I'm sure you love this by more than one man at the same time. Get your dirty ass up and make dinner.

Stepping over her as if she's a piece of shit, Thomas grabs his beer from the table and then walks out the kitchen.

Slowly sitting up on her knees, Latrice whimpers, wiping the water from her face.

Standing to her feet, she grabs her phone from the counter making a call.

She gathers herself before the person on the other end answers.

JASON (V.O.)
What up?

LATRICE
What are you doing?

JASON (V.O.)
Shit, chillin' with my boys. What's going on?

LATRICE
Are y'all drinking?

JASON (V.O.)
Yeah, and we can get some more. Are you coming out?

LATRICE
Come pick me up.

JASON (V.O.)
What are we doing?

LATRICE
Let me get a few drinks first, and then we can talk about it.

JASON (V.O.)
Be there in twenty.

She hangs up sniffing, rubbing the side of her face.

She walks out of the kitchen so she can go get ready.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BLOCK - NIGHT

Loud music is coming from the cars parked in front of the spot.

People are standing on the sidewalk drinking, smoking and talking shit.

Some people are off to the side rapping, while others are shooting dice.

Sitting on the porch laughing, drinking and smoking are some

more people.

Liquor bottles and beer cans are resting off to the side.

Among the people is Antoine's friend DREW, early-twenties. He's brown skin, short and stocky.

Antoine is standing by the door smoking a cigarette, holding a cup of liquor laughing at the conversation going on.

Antoine's hair is down resting on his shoulders.

Also sitting on the porch is ANDRE, dark skin and lanky.

He's known for starting shit, but never gets involved until the end.

He's smoking a blunt, laughing with everyone else.

ANTOINE

It's more niggas than hoes out here.
What type of shit is this?

DREW

What? You don't see all those bitches
down there?

Antoine takes a sip from his cup looking down at the girls smoking and drinking dancing up on guys.

Some of them are sandwiched between two guys getting groped, and some of them are down on their knees sticking their tongues out in front of guys leaning up against cars.

Antoine looks back at Drew and scoffs.

ANTOINE

All I see is runners. Knock ya self
out with them infected bitches.

Drew laughs, taking a sip.

DREW

Pussy is pussy. That's what they made
condoms for.

ANTOINE

Bitches burn through those.

Andre takes a pull from his blunt holding the smoke in.

ANDRE
(Slow exhale)
Drew, you know what type of girls this
nigga like.

Antoine and Drew turn looking at him.

ANTOINE
What type?

ANDRE
The ones like your girl, Trice.

ANTOINE
And what type is that?

ANDRE
You know.

ANTOINE
Nah fam, I don't. I need you to tell
me.

ANDRE
Hoes needing protection by niggas like
you.

Everybody on the porch laughs.

Drew takes a sip from his cup trying not to laugh.

Antoine stares dead at Andre sucking his teeth, balling his
fist.

ANTOINE
Hoes needing protection?

ANDRE
(Laughs)
Hell yeah. You might as well call your
flag a cape the way you fly to save
that hoe.

Everybody continues laughing.

Antoine sips his cup preparing to hit Andre dead in the
mouth, and that's when his phone rings.

He continues pondering on hitting him, pulling his flip phone
out answering.

ANTOINE
 (Into the phone)
 Hello.

The person on the other end can barely be heard.

Antoine moves down from the porch.

ANDRE
 There he goes. That must be her
 calling.

Antoine looks back at the porch nodding his head before
 focusing back on the phone call.

ANTOINE
 (Into the phone)
 I'm sorry, can you speak up?

WARDEN (V.O.)
 This is the warden of the prison
 facility. Is this Antoine Pryce?

ANTOINE
 (Into the phone)
 This is him.

WARDEN (V.O.)
 I'm calling about your mother, Tionna.

ANTOINE
 (Into the phone)
 I was there earlier. Is she okay?

WARDEN (V.O.)
 I don't know how to tell you this.

ANTOINE
 (Into the phone)
 Tell me what?

WARDEN (V.O.)
 Your mother was found murdered in the
 shower.

ANTOINE
 (Into the phone)
 ...What?

WARDEN (V.O.)
 We don't know who committed the crime,

but we're---

The phone falls from his hand.

Antoine's eyes are wide, and his expression shows disbelief.

Drew is laughing, until he sees Antoine frozen.

He gets up from the porch walking down to him, shaking his arm.

DREW

Cuz? Cuz, you good?

Antoine doesn't blink or budge.

DREW (CONT'D)

What the fuck is wrong with you, cuz?

Andre takes a sip from his cup laughing.

ANDRE

He gotta go defend the hoe.

Drew looks back at Andre.

DREW

Why would you say some bullshit like that?

ANDRE

Come on fam, you know that shit true. She's a hoe, and he protects that bitch with his life. He ain't even fuckin' the bitch.

DREW

Man, you fucked up.

ANDRE

You know I'm right. That's yo nigga, so you'll side with him regardless.

Antoine comes from his trance looking at Drew, releasing a soft chuckle.

DREW

What's up? Who was on the phone?

ANTOINE

I'm good. It was her just like the

homie said. And, he's right. I need to stop defending a hoe.

Drew looks at Antoine confused.

DREW
Are you serious?

ANTOINE
Yeah.

DREW
You never let anybody talk about Trice.

Antoine smiles, patting Drew on the shoulder.

ANTOINE
Fam makes a point. I'm feeling what he said, so let's just drink.

Antoine walks on the porch grabbing the fifth of gin pouring him a cup.

ANDRE
I'm glad you came to your senses. Stop protecting a bitch that's never---

Antoine smacks Andre across the face with the bottle, shattering it, knocking him off the porch.

Everyone stops what they're doing.

Andre is on the ground moaning in pain with blood dripping from his face.

Antoine comes down and kicks him a few times in the face before grabbing him by the collar dragging him to the side of the house.

He begins banging his head against the bricks.

He lets him go.

Andre's face is covered with blood, and from the looks of it, he's not breathing.

Antoine gets ready to grab a brick and smash his face, but Drew rushes over grabbing him.

DREW

Cuz, calm the fuck down!

Antoine stares at Andre with hate in his eyes.

DREW (CONT'D)

What the fuck is wrong with you?

Antoine shoves through Drew, walking over to the garbage can grabbing it, rolling it back over to Andre's unconscious body.

Antoine places the can down on the side, and opens the lid.

He grabs Andre by the ankles, and slowly places him inside.

Once he's inside, Antoine sits the can back up, closing the lid.

Everyone laughs.

Drew stares at Antoine lost.

ANTOINE

What?

DREW

What? You possibly killed this nigga,
and you talking about what?

Antoine steps into Drew.

Drew gets into a fighting stance.

ANTOINE

The woman who gave me life was
murdered today. Do you think I give a
fuck about this bitch ass nigga life?

Antoine kicks the can, knocking it over.

Everybody is silent, slowly moving back.

Drew's face drops.

DREW

I didn't---

ANTOINE

Of course you didn't. That's why this
bitch is in the garbage. Find

something to do with him.

Antoine turns his back and starts walking away.

Everybody steps to the side.

DREW

Cuz.

Antoine continues walking.

Drew shakes his head looking at the tilted over garbage can seeing Andre's bloody face, and his body twitching.

Now finding humor in the situation, Drew laughs, walking back on the porch.

CUT TO:

EXT. REGINA HOUSE - NIGHT

Antoine is sitting on the porch smoking a cigarette with his head down, frustrated.

A tan old-school Caprice with tinted windows pulls up.

Antoine looks up with his red eyes taking a pull from his cigarette, watching Latrice get out of the car.

Throwing his cigarette to the side, he rushes over grabbing her by the arm before she can close the door.

She looks at him terrified.

ANTOINE

Who the fuck is this?

LATRICE

Antoine---.

JASON (O.S.)

Who the fuck is this nigga?!

Antoine moves Latrice to the side looking in the car.

ANTOINE

Mind yo motherfuckin' business, bitch!

Slamming the door, Antoine grabs Latrice by the arm, pulling her to the porch.

JASON, mid-twenties, tall, muscular and dark skin gets out of the car making his way towards the house.

Antoine turns to look at him.

JASON
Who the fuck---?

Antoine pulls out a nine-millimeter.

Jason puts his hands up in fear, slowly stepping back.

ANTOINE
Get yo happy I got some pussy weak ass
back in the car, bitch!

Antoine lets off three shots in the air.

Jason quickly runs back to his car, peeling off into the night.

Antoine fires a few more shots before focusing his attention back on Latrice.

She's staring at him in fear for her life.

Just as he gets ready to speak, Thomas rushes out the house holding a bottle of whiskey.

Antoine aims the gun at him.

Thomas freezes, putting his hands in the air.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)
Take yo bitch ass back in the house!
It's because of you she's out here
hoeing! And if you call the police,
when I get out, I'm shooting this
bitch up!

Thomas runs back in the house.

Placing the gun back under his beater, he looks at Latrice.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)
Who the fuck was that nigga?!

Her voice trembles the exact way her body is trembling.

LATRICE
Just somebody I know.

ANTOINE
Somebody you know, or somebody you
fuckin'?

LATRICE
He's somebody---

ANTOINE
You're fuckin'! That nigga was right.
Why do I bother helping you and you're
a hoe?

He turns his back walking away.

She runs up grabbing his arm making him turn around.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)
Don't fuckin' touch me?!

LATRICE
What is wrong with you?

ANTOINE
Aside from the shit you do? I can't
uphold my mother's last words because
you're a hoe.

LATRICE
Her last words?

ANTOINE
After seeing my mother earlier, she
was murdered tonight. My mother is
dead, and she wanted me to make sure
you don't turn out like your mother.
I'm pissed at myself for thinking I
could do it.

Latrice grabs his hand.

He gets ready to snatch away, but she holds it tighter.

LATRICE
Listen to me. I'm nothing like my
mother.

He quickly snatches away.

ANTOINE
The nigga that just left wasn't your
man. No nigga you fucked with was your

man. The only difference between you and her is she got paid for it.

With tears building in her eyes, she hauls back and slaps the shit out of him.

LATRICE

I know you're in pain. But don't you dare disrespect me or my mother! You have no idea what type of abuse I go through from my father! Yes, I fuck niggas! It helps me block out what he says.

Antoine looks at her rubbing his cheek, shaking his head disappointed.

ANTOINE

So...doing exactly what he labels you as is the right thing to do?

LATRICE

Yup.

ANTOINE

(Chuckle)

That makes a lot of sense.

LATRICE

Fuck you, Antoine.

ANTOINE

No, Trice. Fuck you.

He turns his back and starts walking away.

LATRICE

Fuck you! Who do you think you are coming over here judging somebody! You're not perfect!

Antoine continues walking.

ANTOINE

Don't get raped and end up like your mother.

She grabs some rocks and throws them.

One hits him, but he keeps walking.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)
Hoes are always doing some shit behind
your back.

CLOSE UP - LATRICE FACE

Latrice stands with tears coming down her face.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
Maybe what I said was wrong. Maybe
it'll help in days to come. Either
way...if it's meant for us to remain
friends, we'll get over it like
everything else. If not...a good
friendship just faded to black.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. THE CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

It looks like it's about to rain.

Silence cloaks the area.

Antoine is wearing a T-shirt and jeans holding a bottle of
cognac standing over his mother's black ground headstone with
her picture engraved on it.

There's no emotion on his face.

Moistening his lips, he strokes down his goatee as a soft
sigh comes from his mouth.

Latrice walks up standing beside him, placing her hand on his
shoulder.

Antoine remains focused staring at the headstone.

LATRICE
Are you okay?

ANTOINE
...What are you doing here?

LATRICE
Auntie told me I could find you here.
Your pain is my pain.

ANTOINE
Not in this case.

LATRICE

What?

ANTOINE

She's dead because of me.

LATRICE

What happened to her has nothing to do with you.

ANTOINE

(Deep sigh)

...You think so?

LATRICE

Yes. Cruel people murdered your mother, not you.

Placing the bottle down, he goes in his pocket pulling out a pack of cigarettes, opening the box, pulling a cigarette out and his blue lighter.

Placing the pack back, he places the one he pulled out in his mouth, lighting it, taking a calm pull shaking his head, still avoiding eye contact with Latrice.

ANTOINE

Trice...how long have we been friends?

LATRICE

We had an unbreakable bond from day one.

ANTOINE

We never hid secrets from each other. We were always there for each other.

LATRICE

Right.

ANTOINE

Well...this is something I have to keep from you.

LATRICE

What is it?

He takes a pull, shaking his head.

ANTOINE

I can't tell you, Trice.

She steps in front of him.

Antoine remains with his head down.

LATRICE

As much as we've been through
together, have I ever looked at you
different?

Taking a pull from his cigarette, he exhales the smoke,
sighing.

ANTOINE

You know why she went to jail, right?

LATRICE

She murdered your father because of
the abuse.

ANTOINE

...She didn't do it.

LATRICE

What?

ANTOINE

Remember the night I fought ole boy
your mom was messing around with?

LATRICE

Yeah.

ANTOINE

When I got home...my mother and father
got into it. I tried pulling him off,
but it didn't work. I sat inches away
watching the blood and tears roll down
my mother's face with each punch he
landed. In my mind, I decided there
was only one way I could stop him.

LATRICE

Antoine---

ANTOINE

I ran and grabbed my mother's gun.
When I came back, he looked me dead in
the eyes and laughed. He said "Bitches
shouldn't play with guns."

(Takes a pull)

That was the first and last time I was

ever called a bitch.

Latrice is silent.

Antoine takes another pull, finally looking into Latrice's eyes.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

So, like I said. She's dead because of me.

He snuffles, taking a pull.

LATRICE

She made a choice. She wanted her son to live life free instead of behind bars. Any mother would've done the same.

Antoine takes his last pull, flicking the cigarette to the side.

ANTOINE

I'll take jail instead of looking at the earth my mother is under. There's no reason for me to love, or live anymore.

He lowers his head, and the tears start falling.

The pain in Latrice is unbearable seeing her best friend crying for the first time.

Stepping into him, she embraces him with a loving hug, rubbing his back.

LATRICE

You still have me. I'll always be here for you.

No longer able to hold back the pain, he breaks down crying, holding her tight.

As the rain pours down, he doesn't let her go.

Slowly letting her go, they look into each other's eyes holding hands as the tears mix with the rain showing genuine love.

He rubs his thumb across her cheek, slowly moving in for a kiss.

Before his lips connect with hers, she closes her eyes.
Holding each other like lovers, they kiss passionately.
When they pull away, both of them are in bliss.

ANTOINE

Go wait in the car with Drew.

With a smile, she rubs her hand across his face before walking off.

Antoine turns his head watching her walk away.

A slight smile cracks the side of his mouth looking back at the headstone.

Taking a seat on the ground, he opens the bottle taking a sip.

He wipes the residue, swallowing, rubbing his hand across the headstone.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

I know you said your decision was for the best...but I can't sleep knowing it's my fault you're dead. Wherever you are. Please, forgive me.

He takes another sip from the bottle, and then places it to the side, wiping the tears and rain from his face.

Lying down on the ground on his side, he stares at the headstone, rubbing his hand across it in a loving manner.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

I hope you're truly with me. I love you.

He stays on the ground as the rain pours down, keeping his hand on the headstone as if he can feel his mother holding his hand.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

They say love hurts more than death because the loss of a loved one is death. A soul taken away is replaced with another. A part of me wishes I could be Trice's man, but...I know it can never be. All I can do is what my mother asked and make sure she's safe.

INT. THE HOTEL - NIGHT

A porno is playing on mute.

A half bottle of Hennessy is on the counter next to two red cups.

Male and women's clothing are on the floor.

The sound of the headboard knocking against the wall is heard, along with loud moans coming from a man.

On the bed glistening with sweat putting power behind each stroke is a brown skin man in his mid-thirties named KEVIN.

He has Latrice bent over gripping hold tight to her thighs as if he's clinging for dear life.

With her head turned to the side, the expression shows she wishes he would hurry up and finish.

KEVIN

This is some good pussy.

She squeezes her eyes tight, and tears of shame flow.

Kevin's moans become louder and his movement becomes faster, releasing a loud orgasmic moan.

The sweat drips from his face onto her back, gaining his composure rolling over to the side.

She lies silent on her stomach shaking her head.

Kevin lies grinning, wiping the sweat from his face, breathing heavily.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

That shit was good.

She doesn't respond, sitting up grabbing her bra from the floor placing it on.

He turns on his side placing his fingertips to her back gliding them down.

She jumps, turning to look at him.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

She stands up placing her panties on.

LATRICE
I need to get going.

KEVIN
When are we doing this again?

Placing her pants on, she looks around for her shirt.

LATRICE
Who said we're doing it again?

Finding her shirt, she places it on walking towards the door.

Kevin sits up with an attitude.

KEVIN
Like that?

LATRICE
I'm out.

KEVIN
Fuck you, bitch! You were only good
for a nut.

Opening the door pausing, she turns around looking at him.

LATRICE
And you still wanna fuck this bitch. I
can't say fuckin' you was worth the
time, but make sure you tell your wife
you fucked a bitch that can get her
husband off better than she can.

Releasing a low chuckle, she walks out the room.

Kevin sits on the bed looking dumb, rubbing his wedding ring
with sorrow.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Coming from the room of the rundown looking motel with the
lights dimming in and out on the vacancy sign, Latrice takes
a deep breath making her way through the parking lot heading
to the street.

As she walks down the empty street barely lit by

streetlights, she comes to a stop at a bus booth, walking in taking a seat.

Her breathing indicates she wants to break down crying.

Gaining a grip, she looks around the area hearing loud talking.

LATRICE POV

She sees four boys standing by a gas station.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Taking another deep breath, she pulls her phone out looking at the screen seeing four missed calls from Antoine.

Knowing he's about to give her the third-degree, she braces for his words calling him back.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

What the hell were you doing?!

LATRICE

I was busy.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

You were busy for four hours?

LATRICE

Do we have to do this, now?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Hell yeah!

LATRICE

This was something I had to do.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Where yo ass at?

LATRICE

Waiting on the bus, praying these loud ass niggas don't come over here.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Hurry up and get that ass home.

LATRICE

Okay, daddy.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
Just get home safe. Can you do that
for me?

LATRICE
Don't I always?

TEENAGE BOY (O.S.)
Look at that bitch over there!

Latrice shakes her head, sighing.

LATRICE
Here we go.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
What?

Latrice stands up coming out of the booth keeping her eyes on
the boys approaching her.

LATRICE
Here they come.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
You need to move.

LATRICE
I'm good.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
Get up and move.

LATRICE
Being overprotective over the phone
won't help in this situation.

Now we see Travis, two other boys and MARCUS.

He's short and dark skin with a stocky build.

A cigarette hangs from his mouth staring at Latrice with bad
intentions.

Latrice looks back seeing the headlights from the bus a few
streets down.

Turning back to face the group, she sighs deep.

TRAVIS
Oh, this Latrice freak ass.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
 What's going on? Why did you get
 quiet?

LATRICE
 I'll call you when I get on the bus.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
 Trice!

She hangs up, placing the phone back in her pocket.

MARCUS
 Since you know her, can you tell me if
 the pussy is good?

TRAVIS
 The pussy is good. Trice, let my man
 get some of that.

LATRICE
 Fuck you, nigga! I don't know why I
 fucked with you in the first place.

TRAVIS
 Bitch, are you giving up the pussy or
 what?

LATRICE
 Fuck you bum ass niggas!

Marcus takes one more pull from his cigarette before flicking
 it to the side.

He places his hand under his shirt grabbing the handle of a
 nine-millimeter.

MARCUS
 Bitch, make me...

The bus pulls up, opening the doors.

She quickly hops on.

Before the doors close, Marcus slaps her hard on the ass
 making her stumble forward.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
 I'll see you again, you freak bitch!

The bus pulls off.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE BUS - CONTINUOUS

The faint laughter of the boys can still be heard indistinctly, until they cross a few streets.

The BUS DRIVER looks at Latrice concerned as she swipes her card.

BUS DRIVER
Are you okay?

Latrice looks at him trying to hold back the pain.

LATRICE
I'll be fine.

Towards the back of the bus is a BAG LADY wearing flea market clothes with her purse beside her gazing out the window.

Latrice takes a seat in the back sighing, placing her hands over her face.

The Bag lady turns looking at her, slowly extending her hand.

Latrice pulls her hands down, and when she sees the lady about to touch her, she jumps back.

LATRICE (CONT'D)
Don't touch me.

The Bag lady pulls her hand back.

BAG LADY
I wasn't about to do you harm, dear. I just noticed you're---

LATRICE
How about you mind your own business? Notice that.

BAG LADY
I wanted to give you some advice so you don't end up like me.

LATRICE
I highly doubt I end up like you.

BAG LADY
I hope not.

Latrice pulls out her phone and begins texting.

The Bag lady goes in her purse scrambling around for a few seconds before pulling out a card, staring at it in-love.

BAG LADY (CONT'D)

If you don't mind, I'd like to give you something.

Latrice looks at the filth under her nails, and the beat up condition her hands scrunching up her face.

LATRICE

You expect me to take something from your hand?

The Bag lady sighs, placing the card beside Latrice leg.

The Bag lady turns looking out the window, reaching up pulling the cord ringing the bell.

She looks back at Latrice texting, shaking her head disappointed.

BAG LADY

My appearance is the reason why you're acting this way, I know. But if you take a look at the card, it'll help you be a better woman in life.

(Sighs)

Take a look at me. I wish I would've stayed with the person who gave me the card, instead of doing exactly what you're doing now.

Latrice looks at her and scoffs, returning back to her text message.

LATRICE

I hear you talking.

BAG LADY

Don't be so cold, dear.

LATRICE

You should keep the card your boyfriend gave you.

BAG LADY

I wish I could go back and accept his proposal.

LATRICE

Well, I don't know what to tell you. I don't need help with my life.

The bus comes to a stop.

The Bag lady gets up walking to the door, turning to look at Latrice one last time.

BAG LADY

Don't wait till it's too late to change.

The Bag lady makes her way off the bus.

Using her eyes, Latrice looks at the card hesitant to pick it up, but curiosity gets the best of her.

Before she can get a chance to read what the card says, her phone goes off.

It's a text from Antoine.

INSERT PHONE SCREEN

On some real shit, you need to hurry up and call me.

BACK TO THE SCENE

She places her phone down, turning her attention back to the card.

INSERT CARD

The essence of a woman is signified by a rose. Once it's uprooted, it still needs nurturing, or it'll die. You're my rose...I'll never let you die.

BACK TO THE SCENE

She stares at the card as if she's trying to decipher what it means, but in the back of her mind she's registering what the Bag lady meant.

Placing the card in her pocket, she pulls her earbuds out connecting them to her phone listening to music.

CUT TO:

INT. REGINA LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Thomas is sitting on the sofa in a suit watching the basketball game drinking a beer, sucking his teeth, turning his head looking at the front door every few seconds.

Latrice comes in closing the door behind her, taking her earbuds out ready to go upstairs.

Thomas turns looking at her, taking a sip from his beer.

THOMAS

Where have you been?

LATRICE

I was studying at the library. I couldn't get a ride home, so I had to catch the bus.

Taking a sip from his beer, he stares at her, seeing through her lie.

THOMAS

And I'm supposed to believe that?

LATRICE

Why wouldn't you?

Focusing his attention back to the game, he takes another sip, sucking his teeth.

THOMAS

Go about ya business. You're a whore like your mother.

LATRICE

(Sighs)

Don't you think that's getting old?

Thomas takes another sip from his beer, keeping his eyes locked on the screen.

THOMAS

Not if you're running up a millage with random men.

Tears form in her eyes.

Her mouth motions the words she wants to say, but they don't come out, quickly running upstairs to her room.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LATRICE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Turning the lights on, she walks over to the bed taking a seat, breathing heavy with anger.

She opens the drawer on her nightstand reaching inside grabbing the same diary she had when she was younger, along with a pen.

Opening the diary, she looks at the pages written about her sexual encounters.

Her tears blot the pages adding Kevin to the list.

Flipping through a few pages, she comes to the section dedicated to her mother.

As she sits writing with tears staining the pages, her phone rings.

Pulling the phone from her pocket, she sees Antoine's name.

She answers sniffing, wiping the tears from her eyes.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Where are you?

LATRICE

I'm at home.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Why are you crying?

LATRICE

I don't care to talk about it.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Is he fuckin' with you?

She bursts into tears.

We can hear Antoine's heavy breathing on the other end.

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

Don't waste tears on his useless ass.

LATRICE

He treats me like these niggas.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Don't worry about it. You'll be okay

once you leave for college.

LATRICE

I wanna know why he doesn't love me?
I'm his only child, and he shows me no
love.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

It's because of what your mom was
doing, and he knows you're on the same
path. He knows since he was always
cheating and beating her ass, he drove
her to that life. Now, he's doing the
same thing with you. Crazy part about
it all...he still loves your mom and
you, despite all of his bullshit.

LATRICE

But why treat me this way?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Reverse psychology. Treating you like
shit should prevent you from being
like your mother. I don't think he
understands it's making things worse.

LATRICE

That's so stupid.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

A lot of shit in life is stupid. You
either let it trip you up holding you
down, or step over it.

She cracks a smile, wiping her eyes.

LATRICE

I'm glad I have you.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

You know we go back to blowing bubbles
and eating peanut butter and jelly
sammiches.

She laughs.

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

What was that shit at the bus stop
about?

LATRICE

Travis was with his boys frontin'.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
What happened?

LATRICE
I guess one of them was about to pull a gun on me. The bus pulled up, and before the door closed he slapped me on the ass, talking about he'll see me again.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
That's why I be tellin' you to stop fuckin' around with these niggas.

LATRICE
Do I really have to hear this shit now?

ANTOINE (V.O.)
You already know what's up, so don't even act that way.

LATRICE
I need to ask you something.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
What?

LATRICE
This lady on the bus gave me a card, and I wanted to know---?

ANTOINE (V.O.)
What kind of card?

LATRICE
If you'd let me finish, you'll know. She gave me the card, and I wanted to know what you think it means.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
What does it say?

She goes in her pocket pulling out the card.

LATRICE
The essence of a woman is signified by a rose. Once it's uprooted, it still

needs nurturing, or it'll die. You're my rose...I'll never let you die.

She sits waiting for his response in an awkward silence.

Antoine clears his throat.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
Why did she give it to you?

LATRICE
She said she didn't want me to turn out like her.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
I see. Well, yeah, I know what it means.

LATRICE
Are you gonna tell me?

ANTOINE (V.O.)
It's something I've been telling you for years.

LATRICE
You tell me a lot of things.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
I know. I'm glad you made it home safe.

LATRICE
(Laughs)
Wow. What about the answer?

ANTOINE (V.O.)
Maybe I'll tell you tomorrow. I love you.

He hangs up.

She sits holding the card and phone smiling before placing them on the bed.

Picking up her diary, she flips all the way to the end.

INSERT DIARY

There's a picture of her and Antoine when they were kids sitting on her front porch.

Unbreakable bond is written underneath the picture.

BACK TO THE SCENE

A smile comes across her face beginning to write.

INT. THE LUNCHROOM - AFTERNOON

The room is filled with students eating and talking.

Latrice is sitting at a table by herself with her lunch placed to the side, hard at work on some overdue homework.

Antoine comes into the room wearing a blue wife beater and Khakis.

As he walks to the line for his lunch, everybody he passes sticks their hand out for a play, and he gives them one.

Travis comes over to Latrice table taking a seat across from her.

She continues writing, ignoring him.

He takes her pen.

She exhales sharply looking up at him.

LATRICE

Can I help you?

TRAVIS

That's fucked up how you did my boy.

LATRICE

What's your point?

Antoine is standing in line for his lunch laughing with the person in front of him.

ARNOLD, a tall brown skin geek comes up tapping him on the shoulder.

Antoine turns to look at him.

ANTOINE

What's up?

ARNOLD

You see Travis over there bothering

Trice?

ANTOINE'S POV

He sees Travis and Latrice having somewhat of a heated conversation.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Antoine shakes his head, putting his lunch down.

ANTOINE

Here we go with this shit.

Latrice pulls another pen out focusing back on her work.

TRAVIS

Trice, on some real shit. What's up with some head? We can slide off and get it poppin'.

She looks up from her book, throwing her pen in his face.

LATRICE

Get the fuck away from me!

People stop what they're doing looking at the two expecting a fight to break out.

TRAVIS

Well, once a hoe, always a hoe!

He grabs her arm trying to snatch her across the table.

She struggles trying to break the grasp.

The students stand up, instigating the fight.

Antoine makes haste through the chanting students reaching Travis, grabbing him by the shoulder turning him around.

Travis shoves him.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

What the fuck is yo problem, nigga?!

Antoine hits him in the face, making his head turn.

Travis quickly recovers throwing a punch back.

The two begin brawling, while the students cheer it on.

Latrice grabs two of her textbooks gripping them tight, rushing over behind Travis clocking him upside the head.

Antoine catches him with a right, knocking him to the floor.

Travis tries getting up, but Antoine kicks him hard across the face.

Antoine stomps him for a few seconds, and then moves some of the students out the way, grabbing a chair by the legs.

He comes back over to Travis ready to smash his head, and security grabs him, taking the chair away.

Antoine tries breaking free as security drags him out the room.

While the students continue cheering, other guards help Travis to his feet.

Blood is coming from his mouth trying to stand straight, but he's dazed.

The students start simmering down.

Latrice cracks a slight smirk going back to her table.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Students are coming out of the building, and talk about the lunchroom fight is heard.

Latrice comes out smiling making her way to the sidewalk.

Arnold comes running up beside her.

Continuing walking, she turns her head looking at him, and then she looks back forward.

ARNOLD

Hey, Trice.

LATRICE

What's up?

ARNOLD

Are you okay?

LATRICE

Why wouldn't I be okay?

ARNOLD

I was making sure you're okay after the whole thing in the lunchroom.

LATRICE

I'm already over it.

ARNOLD

I like how you hit him upside the head. He didn't see it coming.

She stops walking.

He stops walking, looking at her smiling.

LATRICE

What do you want, Arnold?

ARNOLD

...Can I have a dance with you, if you come to the party tonight?

LATRICE

What party?

ARNOLD

Brandy is having a house party. Everybody in school knows about it.

Nodding her head side to side pondering on the idea, she slightly smiles.

LATRICE

I'll think about it.

ARNOLD

You'll think about dancing with me?

She releases a sarcastic laugh, patting him on the shoulder.

LATRICE

If that makes you feel comfortable, yes.

ARNOLD

Really?

She laughs walking off.

Arnold stands blushing.

CUT TO:

INT. LATRICE ROOM - NIGHT

Latrice is sitting on her bed reading a book with some takeout food on the bed beside her.

She's nodding her head to the music playing low.

Her phone rings.

She picks it up from the nightstand seeing Antoine calling.

She answers with a smile.

LATRICE

You okay?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Yeah, you know me.

LATRICE

You like how I hit him upside his
shit?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Thanks.

LATRICE

You know I'll do anything for you like
you'd do anything for me. Even though
I know you were probably like why did
she do that?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Nah, he can throw, I give him that.

LATRICE

Okay.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Listen, I meant to give you something.

LATRICE

What's that?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

The meaning to what you asked me last
night.

LATRICE
Why don't you just tell me?

ANTOINE (V.O.)
You'll get a better understanding if
you read it.

LATRICE
Are you coming to the party?

ANTOINE (V.O.)
What party?

LATRICE
That cheerleader chick Brandy is
having a party tonight.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
I don't do house parties.

LATRICE
(Laughs)
Will you stop being a pussy, and come
on.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
(Laughs)
Fuck you, no.

LATRICE
Well, how else---?

Thomas bursts in the room drinking whiskey straight from the
bottle.

THOMAS
Who are you talking to?

Latrice looks at him sighing, shaking her head.

LATRICE
I'll call you back.

ANTOINE (V.O.)
Remember what I told you.

LATRICE
I know. I'll call you back.

Thomas takes a step forward, taking a sip from the bottle.

THOMAS

I asked you a question, whore.

Latrice places her phone in her pocket.

LATRICE

You like calling me that, don't you?

His face becomes etched with anger walking towards her, taking a sip from the bottle.

THOMAS

Are you getting smart?

LATRICE

Call it asking a truthful question.

THOMAS

Open your smart-ass mouth again and see what it gets you.

She stands up smiling, placing her hands on her hips.

LATRICE

You're pathetic. I see why mama---

He slaps her on the bed.

THOMAS

Just like your goddamn mother, the bitch!

She sits stunned rubbing her cheek before looking at him smiling.

LATRICE

You belittle people because you know you ain't shit. YES, mama was a hoe and I'm not far off. But now...I understand why you don't love me. So you can call me whatever you want, or even hit me again.

He balls his fist tight ready to hit her, but he can't.

THOMAS

You want me to hit you because that's all you're worth.

LATRICE

Oh, no. I know who I am, and what I'm

worth now.

THOMAS

I told you---.

LATRICE

I hope the guilt of making your
daughter a hoe eats away at you just
like the death of mama.

She stands up giving him a kiss on the cheek before making
her way towards the door.

Feeling ashamed, he lowers his head clearing his throat.

THOMAS

Latrice...let me say one thing.

She stops, but doesn't turn around.

LATRICE

What?

THOMAS

I love you.

LATRICE

(Dry laugh)
You love putting me down, so you can
feel somewhat like a man. That time is
over, little boy.

She walks out the room.

Thomas takes a seat on the bed, taking a sip from the bottle,
lowering his head.

Reaching over, opening the drawer on the nightstand, he
reaches in and takes the diary out.

Opening the book reading the first few pages, tears build in
his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. BRANDY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is filled with people dancing and drinking,
listening to the music playing.

From the layout of the room, you can tell Brandy's parents

have money.

Latrice comes into the house walking through the crowded room.

The ones who notice her turn their nose up staring at her.

Arnold is off in the corner trying to talk to a female.

The female looks at him laughing before walking off.

Latrice walks up behind him tapping him on the shoulder.

Arnold turns around with a big smile.

ARNOLD

I'm glad you could make it.

LATRICE

Why is that?

ARNOLD

I can get my dance.

She stares at him doing her best holding back from laughing.

LATRICE

Right. Before we do that, where's the drinks?

ARNOLD

In the back.

LATRICE

Let me throw a few back, and then we can dance.

ARNOLD

Bet.

Latrice walks off laughing, making her way through the people in the room.

Arnold stands blushing, turning his attention to talk to another female, and she looks at him shaking her head no.

As Latrice gets closer to the kitchen, she sets a foot in, and then she pauses with a look of fear.

LATRICE POV

Travis and Marcus are standing by the sink, drinking and smoking.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Latrice quickly turns around making her way back to the front.

Marcus takes a sip from his cup catching a quick glance, but he's not certain if it was her.

Travis' face swollen with a busted lip taking a sip from his cup.

Marcus taps him on the shoulder.

MARCUS

I think I just saw that freak bitch.

Travis takes another sip.

TRAVIS

Who?

MARCUS

The bitch from the bus stop.

Travis looks around the room.

TRAVIS

Where did she go?

MARCUS

Let's go see.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BRANDY LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Latrice is scrambling through the people on the stairs making out, heading straight to the bathroom, running in locking the door.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She takes a seat on the tub scared, rocking back and forth, pulling out her phone quickly calling Antoine.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DREW CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Rap music is playing.

Drew takes one last pull from the blunt before passing it to Antoine.

Antoine takes the blunt, taking a hard pull, exhaling slowly, nodding his head to the music.

DREW

You think it'll be some bad bitches here?

ANTOINE

Cheerleaders keep bad bitches around. But that's not why I decided to come.

DREW

That's real shit looking out for your girl the way you do.

Antoine takes a pull, and then passes it back to Drew.

ANTOINE

That's not my girl. I made a promise with my mother I'll never break.

Drew takes a pull laughing under his breath.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

DREW

Niggas never admit when they're in-love.

ANTOINE

Shut the fuck up.

Antoine's phone vibrates on his lap.

When he looks down, he sees Latrice name.

Drew takes another pull.

DREW

(Laughs)
Speaking of yo boo.

ANTOINE

Fuck you.

Antoine turns the music down before answering the phone.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)
Are you at the party?

LATRICE (V.O.)
(Whispering)
How far away are you?

ANTOINE
About five or ten minutes away. Why
are you whispering?

LATRICE (V.O.)
Travis and that dude I told you about
are here.

ANTOINE
Fuck. Where are you now?

LATRICE (V.O.)
Scared as shit in the bathroom.

ANTOINE
Stay right there. I'm on the way.

Antoine hangs up, slinging the phone down.

DREW
What's up?

ANTOINE
Hurry up and get us there.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BRANDY LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

After searching the basement and in front of the house,
Marcus and Travis come back into the house upset.

Travis taps Marcus on the shoulder pointing at Arnold still
attempting to get down with a female.

The two make their way towards him.

Travis grabs Arnold by the shoulder, turning him around.

Arnold stares at Travis ready to fight, and then he looks at

Marcus using his eyes signaling him to look down, seeing he's holding the handle of the gun under his shirt.

Arnold's eyes get wide, taking a step back.

TRAVIS

Where did that bitch go?

Marcus pulls the nine-millimeter from his pants, holding it down in front him.

Arnold is in fear for his life.

ARNOLD

I think she went upstairs. Chill with that gun shit, Bro.

MARCUS

Shut the fuck up, nigga.

Marcus places the gun back under his shirt, and the two make their way upstairs.

Arnold stands grabbing at his chest breathing deep.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Latrice is still sitting on the tub rocking back and forth scared, holding her phone tight, praying Antoine will arrive soon.

There's a knock on the door.

She looks over at the door.

LATRICE

I'm using it.

There's another knock at the door that makes her nervous, standing to her feet clinching the phone.

LATRICE (CONT'D)

I said---

Travis kicks the door in and because the music is loud, her screams go unheard.

Travis rushes in covering her mouth, and Marcus follows behind, closing the door.

Travis throws her down on the floor, and then holds her down by the arms, while Marcus holds her legs down.

Latrice screams in fear trying to break free.

MARCUS

I told you I was coming back for this
pussy.

Travis releases one of her arms, and slaps her hard across the face.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BRANDY LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Antoine and Drew storm in the house shoving people out the way looking for Latrice.

Coming back into the living room, Antoine sees Arnold off to the side pointing upstairs.

Antoine and Drew dash for the stairs.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Latrice is on the floor crying with blood coming from her nose and mouth, stripped of her pants.

Marcus is aggressively fingering her, making sure she suffers before they rape her.

Travis stands up over her head unbuckling his pants.

TRAVIS

Time to collect on the head you owe
me, bitch.

Just as he gets ready to drop his pants, Antoine kicks the door in knocking Marcus over to the side.

Drew lunges in grabbing Travis by the head, slamming him face first against the wall.

Latrice quickly grabs her pants moving out the way.

Marcus tries getting up, but Antoine quickly grabs him.

The two begin tussling, spilling out the room.

Drew has Travis by the head slamming his face in the mirror cracking it, staining the glass with his blood.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE LANDING - CONTINUOUS

Antoine and Marcus are trying to overpower each other, and end up tumbling down the stairs.

They crash at the bottom, and the music comes to a stop.

The two quickly get back to their feet fighting.

Latrice comes running down the stairs standing to the side with everyone else watching the fight.

Marcus gets enough space from Antoine going for his gun, and that's when Drew flies down the stairs tackling him before he can get his hand on the handle.

BRANDY, the sexy brown skin petite cheerleader is off in the corner on the phone with the police.

Everybody else continues cheering on Antoine and Drew stomping on Marcus.

They stop stomping him.

They grab Marcus by the arms dragging him outside, causing everyone to follow.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. BRANDY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Outside, the quiet suburban neighborhood is disrupted by the cheers of the people at the party watching Drew and Antoine drag Marcus into the street, dropping him under a streetlight, beginning to stomp him again.

Latrice runs out the house over to Antoine grabbing his arm.

He turns looking at her with his face covered in sweat and hate in his eyes, until he sees it's her.

Grabbing her tight in a hug, he gives her a kiss on the cheek.

Drew stops stomping Marcus looking around the area hearing the sound of police sirens in the distance.

DREW

We need to go, cuz.

Antoine turns to look at him.

ANTOINE

You go. I have to make sure she's good.

Drew runs to his royal blue old-school Monte Carlo with blue tinted windows getting in, starting it up, turning around driving the opposite way down the street.

The lights from the police cars can be seen drawing near as Antoine walks Latrice over to the sidewalk.

The people on the porch continue watching, waiting to see what'll happen next.

Stopping on the sidewalk, Antoine cuffs Latrice's face looking into her tear filled eyes.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

You okay?

LATRICE

...Thank you.

ANTOINE

This is why I don't do house parties.
The shit never turns out good.

Everybody is watching the police draw near, but nobody is watching Marcus slowly turning on his side, pulling his nine-millimeter out.

Antoine cuffs Latrice face, leaning in giving her a passionate kiss.

He pulls back, staring at her smiling.

Latrice is smiling, staring into Antoine's eyes.

They hold hands in-love as the couple they should've been from the beginning.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

With every breath I take. You'll never----.

MARCUS (O.S.)

Bitch ass nigga!

Antoine turns around seeing Marcus up on his feet with blood spilling from his face aiming his gun.

Thinking about Latrice first, Antoine stands in front of her just as Marcus opens fire, hitting him once in the chest and twice in the stomach, causing him to fall back into Latrice.

They both hit the ground.

The people on the porch rush back in the house.

The police pull up and get out with guns drawn.

Marcus turns looking at them with insanity in his eyes aiming the gun.

They open fire, dropping him dead.

Latrice is crying holding Antoine in her arms as he spits up blood.

He still holds a smile looking into her eyes.

LATRICE

You'll be okay. Just lay here in my arms.

ANTOINE

You...you know me.

He spits up blood, and she wipes it away.

Police officers come over trying to tend to him, and she waves her hand for them to move.

Antoine goes in his pocket, pulling out a piece of folded up paper staining it with his blood, extending it to her.

She takes the paper, placing it in her pocket.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

(Gasping)

...That's...that's the answer.

LATRICE

I don't care about that. I need you to relax.

He spits some blood to the side.

ANTOINE

You need to care because you need to understand. Don't worry about me. I'll always...

He turns his head, and blood spills from his mouth.

She tries shaking him, but it does no good.

The scream she releases sends chills up the spines of everyone in the area as she holds him tight.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRANDY HOUSE - AN HOUR LATER

Coroners are placing the body bags filled with Antoine and Marcus bodies in the van closing the door.

Travis is sitting in the back of a squad car looking pitiful with bits of glass stuck in his bloody face.

The coroner van and squad car with Travis in the back pulls off.

Latrice is standing to the side on the sidewalk in a daze.

She looks at the bloodstained note.

The OFFICER comes over to her.

OFFICER

Are you okay?

Keeping her eyes locked on the note, she sniffles.

LATRICE

...I'll be fine.

OFFICER

Are you sure? I know you saw your boyfriend---

LATRICE

He wasn't my boyfriend.

She looks up at him with her tear filled red eyes.

LATRICE (CONT'D)

But he should've been. Please, just leave me alone.

With nothing more to say, he turns his attention to the people on the porch standing in silence, horrified from what they witnessed.

OFFICER

Everybody, pack it up. The party is over.

He walks back to the squad car, getting in sitting with his partner for a few minutes before pulling off.

Latrice is still stunned looking at the blood on her clothes.

Shaking her head, taking a deep breath, she turns her attention to the people on the porch.

LATRICE

All of you think I'm a hoe, and I can accept that. Yet, all of you fuck and suck whoever. The only difference is I put my business out there, and I'm fine with that. You niggas label me a nasty hoe, not knowing if the bitch you kiss has another man's dick on her lips.

She looks down at the blood on her clothes and laughs before looking back at them.

LATRICE (CONT'D)

The man I lost tonight. My best friend, who should've been my man. He made me realize what I'm really worth as a person.

It appears she wants to break down crying, but she maintains, taking a step towards the porch.

Everyone is nervous because they don't know what to expect.

LATRICE (CONT'D)

Continue calling me a hoe. I accept it proudly. I'm a hoe that has finally seen the light. Sadly, none of you can say that because you judge before judging yourself. But you know deep down inside, you're worse of a hoe than me.

Latrice stares them down.

They all look at each other registering the truth she spoke.

With a new found confidence in her life, she walks away with pride.

Coming to a stop under a streetlight a few blocks away from the house, she goes in her pocket retrieving the bloody note.

Taking a deep breath, she rubs her thumb across the blood in sorrow, slowly opening the note.

INSERT THE NOTE

ANTOINE (V.O.)

A woman's life is layered like a rose, trying her best to uphold beauty without the petals falling. The thorns prevent people from harming her. The stem is her strength and longevity, signifying she can go the whole nine yards with the proper nourishment. You signify the rose. And no matter what, I'll always keep you strong. You're my best friend. My heart. I love you for who you really are. Always and forever, you'll be my rose. I love you.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Words can't explain her emotions placing the note tight against her heart, doing her best to hold back the tears.

An old-school red Cadillac pulls up on the side of the street.

YOUNG PROSTITUTE gets out of the car. She's sixteen-years-old and brown skin wearing a crop top and a skirt.

Closing the door, she leans back in the car.

When she stands straight, we see her placing a wad of money between her breasts.

Latrice looks at her shaking her head.

Young prostitute places some gum in her mouth before looking at Latrice.

Young prostitute walks up to Latrice.

She shows a look of concern staring at the tears coming from Latrice eyes.

YOUNG PROSTITUTE
What's wrong?

Latrice sucks up her tears, folding the note, placing it back in her pocket.

LATRICE
(Sniffling)
...Nothing. Not anymore.

YOUNG PROSTITUTE
You wanna come with me and make this money?

Latrice sighs deep, patting her on the shoulder.

LATRICE
Find someone to nourish you for growth. You're a beautiful rose that should know your worth.

Latrice wipes the tears from her eyes, smiling, walking off.

Young prostitute spits her gum to the side letting the words Latrice said sink in, watching her walk off.

FADE TO BLACK:

"The source of life should be cherished because without women, there would be no life."

~Bernard Mersier~

END CREDITS