Comedy is Cruel
by
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Directed by Konish Dutta
OVER BLACK

Voices speak over applause.

    PAUL
    Have a good night fellas. Thank
    you! Thank you!

    M.C.
    You tore it up bud. Rob Shriver,
ladies and gentlemen. Give him
some love!

The applause crescendos.

    M.C. (CONT’D)
    Who’s ready for more?

Hoots and hollers.

    M.C. (CONT’D)
    Yes, it’s time. It’s time for the
man you’ve all come here to see.

FADE IN:

INT. DRESSING ROOM -- NIGHT

DONNIE PHILLIPS (40s) droops in his chair, playing with a
SMALL BLACK BOX. We hear the M.C. speaking from the
stage.

    M.C. (O.S.)
    He just finished his world tour
and now he’s finally back in his
hometown.

Donnie slips the box inside his pocket and grabs his
jacket, rubbing his face in an attempt to loosen it.

    M.C. (O.S.) (CONT’D)
    Give it up for Donnie Phillips!

Thunderous applause. Donnie stands.

INT. NIGHTCLUB STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Donnie struts on to stage. He now has a charming smile
and meets the deafening applause with a raise of his
hand.

The M.C. shakes Donnie’s hand and leaves.

(CONTINUED)
DONNIE
Thank you. Thank you. How is everybody doing?

More yells. The audience begins to simmer down.

DONNIE (CONT’D)
Good to hear. Good to hear. And me? Well I’m doing fabulous. Just got a divorce.

A mix of sympathy and applause.

DONNIE (CONT’D)
No sarcasm. No sarcasm at all. It’s great. You hear all these terrible things about divorce, but the real secret is... divorce is wonderful!

Laughter.

DONNIE (CONT’D)
Don’t get me wrong. I love chasing women... but the only danger with chasing women is the possibility of catching one.

EXT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Donnie stands outside a bustling restaurant. BECCA (30s), a beautiful woman, approaches him.

DONNIE
Where’s your lawyer?

BECCA
I thought it would be just the two of us tonight.

DONNIE
For old time’s sake?

Becca smiles and pulls on Donnie’s jacket.

BECCA
You look handsome tonight.

Donnie rearranges his jacket, managing to crack a smirk.

BECCA (CONT’D)
How are you?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DONNIE
Thirsty.

INT. NIGHTCLUB STAGE -- NIGHT

The audience laughs heartily.

DONNIE
Yeah, you guys are feeling me. Why the hell do you think divorce is so expensive?

He cracks a smile.

DONNIE (CONT’D)
Because it’s worth it.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Donnie drinks his coffee. Across from him, Becca sits and watches.

BECCA
Today was Shawn’s first day at school.

DONNIE
Wish I heard about it.

BECCA
He wanted you there. I should’ve called you earlier.

DONNIE
What time is it?

Becca sighs and looks at her watch.

BECCA
You got a gig?

Donnie nods. Becca checks her watch. *

BECCA (CONT’D)
Quarter to nine.

Donnie shuffles through his pockets to grab his wallet.

DONNIE
I hate to rush this.

Becca tightens her face.
INT. NIGHTCLUB STAGE -- NIGHT

Donnie addresses the audience.

    DONNIE
    I mean I remember the day she asked me for a divorce. So vivid. I was watching Monday Night Football. Chargers, Packers. She comes in and says, “Honey we gotta talk.” I’m like, “Oh no.” Then she says “You are irresponsible, selfish, and emotionally unavailable. I can’t do this. I want a divorce.” I can’t tell you how it felt. I was so relieved. I thought she was going to ask me to switch off the game.

Laughter.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Donnie puts some cash down. Becca leans forward.

    BECCA
    Divorce isn’t easy... for either of us.

    DONNIE
    Yeah... it’s an endless hassle of papers and hearings. Why can’t we nix all the formalities.

Becca forces a smile. Donnie rises from his chair.

    DONNIE (CONT’D)
    How’s your new man handling it?

Donnie’s putting on his jacket. Becca’s grin sobers up.

    BECCA
    Donnie, he asked me to marry him.

Donnie freezes.

    BECCA (CONT’D)
    Sit down. Please.
INT. NIGHTCLUB STAGE -- NIGHT

Donnie stops the laughter.

DONNIE
My friends warned me before I got hitched. They said, Donnie, be careful. Marriage is a marathon, not a sprint. Well I’ve run a marathon and I was happy when it was over. I mean they gave me bagels and a cool shirt. Why don’t they have that at divorces? “I Finished My Marriage.” Bagels would be nice too. Then when my friends ask, “Donnie, what happened to your marriage?” I could just say, well I completed it. You’re just pissed because you’re not done yet.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Donnie sips his drink.

DONNIE
Surprise surprise.

He sips again.

DONNIE (CONT’D)
Don’t you think it’s a bit early to marry again.

BECCA
Where’s the time? I mean he’s pushing sixty.

Donnie laughs.

DONNIE
Jesus. Sounds like gramps is going to be teaching Shawn how to use a walker.

BECCA
Donnie, why can’t you just for once...

Donnie ceases his laughter.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BECCA (CONT’D)
He’s taking me to pick out my
dress tomorrow morning.

DONNIE
Wait till he takes you to pick out
your maternity gown.

Becca picks up her coffee to look at it and puts it down.

BECCA
Do you really think I’ll look
silly?

Donnie is taken aback.

DONNIE
No Becca, I don’t think you’re
going to look silly.

BECCA
I don’t want it to be some joke.

DONNIE
Everyone could use a joke
sometimes.

Becca smiles as she pulls out a small black box from her
pocket.

BECCA
Everyone could use a joke
sometimes.

INT. DRESSING ROOM -- NIGHT

Donnie finishes styling his hair in the mirror. Laughter
echoes in the background. He reaches into his pocket and
pulls out his small black box.

Slowly peeling it open, he peers inside. We hear voices
off stage.

PAUL (O.S.)
Have a good night fellas! Thank
you! Thank you!

A flower... but wait, there’s something underneath it.

M.C.
You tore it up bud. Rob Shriver,
ladies and gentlemen. Give him
some love!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He laughs. Tears well up in his eyes.

Inside the box... A WEDDING INVITATION.

M.C. (CONT’D)
And now, the man you’ve all come here to see.

Donnie loosens his face with his hands and smiles.

M.C. (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Give it up for Donnie Phillips!

Thunderous applause. Donnie stands.

INT. NIGHTCLUB STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Donnie struts on to stage. He now has a charming smile and acknowledges the deafening applause with a raise of his hand.

The M.C. shakes Donnie’s hand and leaves the stage.

Donnie takes the microphone and looks at the audience. Hesitating to speak, he looks off stage. He glances back at the audience. The M.C crawls back on stage.

M.C.
Donnie?

Donnie looks at the M.C. and hands him the microphone. He rushes off stage, which seamlessly turns into...

INT. COURTHOUSE -- DAY

Donnie walks through the courthouse to his seat with his lawyer. His wife sits on the other side with her LAWYER and sixty year old BOYFRIEND. The JUDGE (who is played by the same character as the M.C.) pounds a gavel.

JUDGE
Donnie Phillips. You may stand.

Donnie and his lawyer stand.

JUDGE (CONT’D)
We will now contend the arrangements on the house. You may begin.
As my client has already stated in his previous testimony, he bought the house before the couple conceived their child Shawn, meaning that his wife was unemployed during the period in which the house was acquired...

His words turn into babble as Donnie’s face clenches. Donnie impulsively stands.

F*ck it!

The audience turns, surprised.

Women... I’ll never understand them.

He turns to Becca.

Despite all this bullshit, Becca, all this fucking bullshit you’ve put me through, I love you. I don’t think I’ve ever stopped loving you. F*ck it, take the house, take the car, the fucking butler, take it all. At least I have my comedy. And that’s the one thing, Becca, the one fucking thing, that you can never take away from me.

Donnie starts to storm out of the courtroom. All the men in the room stand to applaud, even the judge. The women in the room are disgusted.

With style and SLOW-MOTION, Donnie walks out of the courtroom, seamlessly into...

INT. STAGE -- NIGHT

Donnie walks in.

Give it up for Donnie Phillips!

Thunderous applause. Donnie smiles.

THE END