

DECLAWED

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FADE IN:

EXT. DUPLEX STEPS - NIGHT.

NICHOLE SMITH, early-twenties, sits in a men's trench coat with no pants. She is alongside SAMANTHA SHAKUR, early-twenties, leather jacket, crumbling weed into a blunt wrap.

NIKKI

-so I just sat on a chair and
watched them for a little while.

SAM

You watched another chick fuck
your husband?

NIKKI

Well, when you say it like that-
Yeah.

INT. NIKKI'S BEDROOM. FLASHBACK.

NIKKI is seated on a WOODEN FOLD UP CHAIR in the corner watching her HUSBAND, ROBERT SINCLAIR and another WOMAN make out in her bed. She gets up and leaves.

RAY

(V.O.)

So hold on-

BACK TO DUPLEX STEPS:

REVEAL RAYMOND WASHINGTON on the steps behind them, eating some cereal. He is in his early 20s, paint splotched shirt, long wild hair.

RAY

-What happened?

NIKKI

Me and my husband. Ex husband-

or maybe my husband. I don't know
right now. But, anyway, we were
having a threesome.

INT. NIKKI'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK.

Nikki enters the room kissing the other woman. Her husband,
Robert follows with a devilish grin.

RAY
(V.O.)

Go on.

NIKKI and the other woman fall on the bed. Robert falls on top
of them.

NIKKI
(V.O.)

That's it.

Robert and the woman begin to kiss. Nikki gets up and sits on a
chair in the corner.

NIKKI
(V.O.)

They kept on going. I left.

DANIEL
(V.O.)

(Out of breath) She was your
friend?

BACK TO DUPLEX STEPS:

REVEAL DANIEL EDWARDS, early 20s, glasses, sitting next to Ray
behind Sam and Nikki. He has a bowl of cereal. There is spilt
milk on his hands. He clearly heard the conversation and came
running.

DANIEL

I heard "threesome" and I came
(catching his breath) as soon

as I could. Who was the other woman?
Your friend?

NIKKI

What? No. That's gross. She was a
stranger.

DANIEL

Oh. Of course. Makes sense. What?

NIKKI

Me and my husband are members of an
adult club. It's like (tries not to
be crude, but...) It's a sex club,
mostly catering to married couples
who want to put a little of that spark
Back in their relationship. Most of
the time we don't do much there
because we don't like people watching
us. So we normally just go there and
watch other people.

DANIEL

(Questioning the irony) But-?

NIKKI

(Seeing the irony) I know.

INT. ADULT CLUB - FLASHBACK.

Nikki and Robert watch a woman dancing seductively. Robert looks
at Nikki with "go get her" eyes. Nikki obeys and walks over to
the woman. The two look at Robert as they begin to caress.

NIKKI

(V.O.)

Sometimes he sees someone he likes
and we take them home for more... privacy.

INT. NIKKI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

The girls enter, kissing. Robert follows. They fall on the bed.

Nikki gets uncomfortable, gets off the bed, sits on the chair and watches. At one point her husband stops and looks into the eyes of the other woman. They smile at each other. It's more than lust. Nikki looks on, sober.

NIKKI

(V.O.)

I felt disconnected. Like I was watching two people who belonged together, and I was the stranger. I got him what he wanted, like I Always did. She seemed to be getting what she wanted. But me... What do I want?

LOUD CRUNCH.

SAM

(V.O.)

Wait. Are ya'll eating my Captain Crunch?

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO DUPLEX STEPS:

NIKKI is ejected out of her dejected reverie.

DANIEL

(mouth full)

You said. I could have some.

SAM

When?

DANIEL

Two weeks ago. But I never got it because I had to leave, so technically this is that same bowl of cereal you

offered me then.

SAM

Man. What about you, Ray? You just eating my shit.

DANIEL

Well. Actually I told him he could have that because a few days ago, You told me I could get something to eat, but I wasn't hungry, so..

SAM

Man, ya'll aint shit. (Then)
Nikki, this is Ray. This is Daniel.

RAY

Nikki!

DANIEL

Charmed, I'm sure.

BACK TO DUPLEX STEPS:

The duplex sits between the hood and a collegetown. University students and locals walk down the street towards some kind of EVENT. Our quadruple watch the people pass by as Sam smokes a blunt.

NIKKI

How many people live here?

DANIEL

Just Sam and 7 Pizzas.

NIKKI

7 Pizzas?

SAM

(Through inhaled smoke)
Daniel and Ray live next door. They just come over to eat my food.
(Then, exhaling a cloud) So you just walked away and left some

stranger in the house with your
husband?

NIKKI

Ex husband. Or husband. And Yes.

SAM

How long ago was this?

NIKKI

What's today?

SAM

Thursday.

NIKKI

Then, a few hours ago.

SAM

What are you gonna do now?

NIKKI

I was hoping I could stay here.

REVEAL Nikki's luggage at the bottom of the steps.

SAM

(laughing)

Man, you crazy Nikki.

Sam gets up and walks inside. Nikki follows.

INT. SAM'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS.

NIKKI

Why not? Come on. It'll be fun.

DANIEL

(barely audible from back outside)
Should we follow them?

GIRLS

(from outside)

Sugar Ray!

SAM

I don't even think I'm allowed to have
A roommate.

NIKKI

I was the co-signer for this place,
remember? Your landlord practically
begged me to move in with you.

SAM

You don't wanna live here. I'm usually
up all hours of the night recording-
Look, I'm not even gonna make up
excuses about why you can't live here.
I respect you too much. I'll just say,
"No," so, no. Hell no.

A small KITTEN walks into the room and meows. Nikki picks it up
without hesitation.

NIKKI

Who is this little guy? Oh you gotta
Let me live here now. (to kitten)
You want me to live here, don't you.

SAM

(sighs)

Get your luggage.

NIKKI

Yes! Thank you. You will not regret it.

SAM

Damn right I ain't gonna regret it. You
ain't livin here. I just want you to bring
in your shit 'for it gets taken.

EXT. SAM'S PLACE - A MINUTE AGO

Nikki follows Sam inside. DANIEL and Ray are still on the steps.

NIKKI
(from inside the duplex)
Come on. It'll be fun.

DANIEL
Should we follow them?

VERONICA [20s] and her GIRLS are walking in the stream of people.

VERONICA
Sugar Ray!

Ray walks down and gives her a hug. Daniel listens to them talk. He can only make out a few words.

SUGAR RAY
...over... body painted?

VERONICA
...down ...work... fuck it... block party.

RAY
(speaking up)
Yo. Y'all met Daniel? This dude just started painting with me a few months ago. He's about to help me put the city on lock.

Daniel starts to get up, then stays seated as the girls begin to walk away.

VERONICA
All right. We'll see y'all down there.

Ray sits back down.

SAM

(from inside)
...I just want you to bring your
shit in 'for it gets taken.

Nikki walks down and struggles with her luggage. Both Daniel and Ray watch, transfixed by her bare legs.

DANIEL
(getting up to help)
I gotchu.

RAY
(still seated)
So you had time to pack suitcases,
but you ain't have time to put on
clothes?

NIKKI
I just grabbed for a coat. I thought
This was mines. These (suitcases) were
already packed by the door. We were
going to go to St. Thomas tomorrow.
Shit! We were going to go to St.
Thomas tomorrow.

She plops down next to Ray and pouts as Daniel carries the heavy bags into Sam's house.

NIKKI
(Cont'd)
What am I doin'? We were married
for five years. I can't just
start over can I?

RAY
Five years, huh? No kids?

NIKKI
No. We tried, but (realizing) It's
a good thing we didn't. (changing
course)No. I should just go back.

Yeah. This is crazy. I should go back.

She stands up, but she can't move.

RAY

Aaight look. Fuck everything right now. Let's leave the past in the past and let's just live in the present. Tonight we'll party. tomorrow, we'll clean up. Leave all the problems for future Vicky.

NIKKI

(feeling it, then)

Yeah, who's Future Vicky?

RAY

You. You're Vicky.

NIKKI

No. I'm Nichole. I'm Nikki.

RAY

No. Really? I'm pretty sure it's Vicky.

NIKKI

I think I know what my name is.

RAY

Aaight. If you say so. (closes eyes)
NIKKI. NIKKI. Got it. (to the crew)
Aye yo Daniel! Sam! Let's hit up this block party right quick and forget our troubles.

NIKKI

(smiling pre-victoriously)

Yeah. Let's do it.

She looks off, happy for now. Her trenchcoat falls open.

RAY
(CONT'D)

Go put on some clothes first.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Daniel paces Ray. Nikki (with clothes and a PURSE) paces Sam. Others are walking in the same direction.

RAY
(to Daniel)

So what happened with baby girl
from Pittsburgh? Did you kick it
with her when you went home to
visit.

DANIEL

Yeah. Turns out I got her pregnant.

RAY

Fuck outta here dogg. First try?

DANIEL

Yup. She took my virginity, had
me compromise my Christianity, and
Then she got an abortion. I
broke up with her.

RAY

Yo B. She did you a favor, man. We
aint done growing up. She bought you
some time.

DANIEL

Yeah. I know. She was way too fast for Me anyway. I just need a chick I can sit on the couch and play video games with.

Sam and Nikki:

A CUTE GUY catches up to our ladies.

CUTE GUY

You ladies wanna come into this alley with me?

NIKKI

Yes.

SAM

No.

He shrugs and keeps walking.

SAM

(CONT'D)

(shaking her head) Itty bitty Nikki Dicky.

NIKKI

(softly) I don't like when you call me that.

SAM

Every blessing is a Curse. Every curse is a Blessing.

SAM

All personality traits are good and
Bad, depending on when they're used.
You're so sweet.

NIKKI

Thank you.

SAM

No. That's the thing. You got married
just in time, and you stayed married.
There are certain things you didn't
You didnt need to learn.

NIKKI

Wait. This doesn't sound like a
compliment.

SAM

Look.

Sam consecutively points to people on the street: 1. A guy
kisses a young lady while holding another young lady's hand. 2.
A guy aggressively makes out with a college girl. 3. A man lures
a female college student into the shadows. Lastly, a young lady
sits on the steps, drunk, while a bunch of frat boys circle her.

SAM

(CONT'D)

One. That bitch getting an STD. Two.
That bitch getting pregnant. Three
That bitch getting murdered. And
lastly, she probably gonna visit one

Of those late night food stands.
Get some street meet. Maybe like a
Philly Cheesesteak or something.
Little peppers and green onions and
then she getting raped. And she'll
probably end up pregnant with an STD
Before getting murdered to death.

NIKKI

Jesus Sam.

SAM

The thing that all of those chicks
Have in common is that they are too
Agreeable.

NIKKI

I don't think I'm that agreeable.

SAM

Yes. You are.

NIKKI

Maybe I am.

Daniel and Ray:

RAY

Yo. So we got about five models down
To get body painted for the next
Fashion show. We need at least ten.
So when we get down here, let's

Try to pull nine. Because out of
Those, about six will actually
show up.

DANIEL

Hold on. Lemme get a calculator.

RAY

Nikki. You wanna get body painted?

NIKKI

Um (Off Sam's look) No?

SAM

Very good.

NIKKI

(whispering)

I know. And I really wanna get body-
painted.

RAY

(looking ahead)

Fuck!

The four stand at the corner of the "block party." It's
literally one block long, beset on all sides by cops on horses
behind Police barricades. It looks like the whole city is
smooshed into this small space.

DANIEL

Well, at least... (gives up) I couldn't

think of nothing to say.

EXT. BLOCK PARTY - NIGHT

Ray, Daniel, Sam, and Nikki shuffle like zombies, grouped together in the tight crowd. Ray shows love whenever someone from the crowd calls his name.

Sam tries to hide her blunt from on looking cops.

DANIEL tries to avoid touching people. A COLLEGE GIRL passes by. He opens his mouth to talk to her but he can't find the words.

Meanwhile, every guy in the vicinity hits on Nikki as Sam blocks.

GUY #1

Don't I know you from
France?

NIKKI

I've never been there, but
Maybe.

SAM

(To the Guy)
Nigga, you ain't never
Been to no France.

GUY #2

Birthday cake?

NIKKI

What kind of cake?

SAM

No.

GUY #3

It's my mother, you have to
help. Come with me!

NIKKI

Oh my God! Where is she?

SAM

Nigga, you ain't got
no mom.

NIKKI

(smiling at Sam)

I think, I'm getting pretty good at this. (then) Hey? You know I have a little money saved up. How much is your rent?

SAM

Little Nicky Dicky.

NIKKI

Why do you always-

SAM

Little itty bitty titty Nicky Dicky. Look, I just got used to living alone. Plus I...

NIKKI

What?

Ray slings his arm around Nikki.

RAY

Yo. I gotta apologize. I knew this was gonna happen. Three years ago, This, man (looking off) parties as far as the eye could see. It was like a citywide festival. But they slowly kept chopping it down. Now they got us walking around like a herd of cattle.

Ray slings his arm around Sam.

RAY

(CONT'D)

Whassup Sam!? Let's join the duplex together and have a double party.

SAM

I ain't having these shiftless

muthafuckas mess up my place.

A GUY looks at Sam, offended.

SAM

(To GUY/CONT'D)

You heard me punk.

Nikki falls in step with Daniel:

NIKKI

Why doesn't Sam want me to live with her? We was thick as thieves in high school. Now we thin as saints.

Daniel looks confused. "Thin as saints?" He opens his mouth to say something, but before he can...

NIKKI

(CONT'D)

Granted, once I got married, we stopped hanging out, but I was/am married and I had/have a new life And- Oh God! Do you think she's mad because I stopped hanging out with her?

Daniel starts to speak, then...

NIKKI

(CONT'D)

It's my fault. Once I thought about the idea of having her for a roommate, I got myself excited, and I realized I haven't been excited about anything in a long time. I haven't wanted anything in a long time. And I know your not supposed to fall in love with your ideas, but (defeated) I did.

Daniel starts to speak, stops, and then looks at Nikki's crestfallen face.

DANIEL

I don't think it's that deep. I just think Sam just likes her Space. She's a loner, Dottie, a rebel.

NIKKI

(lighting up)

Pee Wee.

DANIEL

What you know about Pee-Wee's Big Adventure?

The two share a silent moment of levity.

DANIEL

You know what I like about you, Nikki? Ever since I met you an hour ago, I noticed that you aren't afraid to put yourself out there. I admire that. I wish I could do it. And it's rare for someone to be so bold, but also sweet and selfless. And you walk that line. And maybe you won't get what you want this time, but, at least now you have an idea of what you want.

Nikki smiles and walks ahead.

DANIEL

(to himself)

That was amazing. I'm amazing.

He sees the same COLLEGE GIRL he tried to speak to earlier.

BACK TO RAY AND SAM:

RAY

(To Sam RE: Daniel)

Look. Look. Look.

Daniel walks beside the COLLEGE GIRL, looking for words he couldn't find earlier. He doesn't find them, but he just opens his mouth and says anything.

DANIEL

Did you know this use to be called
The African American Heritage
Festival? (he cringes)

COLLEGE GIRL

It's still called that, right?

DANIEL

Yeah. But, you know. It's really
"The block party." (blurting) Do
you wanna be in a fashion show?

COLLEGE GIRL

Sure!

Nikki approaches Sam, still warm inside from her conversation with Daniel.

RAY

(To Sam)

That nigga be getting it in! (then)
Okay. What if we throw the party and
then tomorrow me and Daniel come over
and clean up?

SAM

And paint my car?

RAY

And paint your car.

She doesn't answer. That's good enough for Ray.

RAY

(CONT'D)

Bet. We'll bring out your air
Mattress in case anybody wants to
Crash.

Ray sees Veronica and her friends.

RAY

(CONT'D)

Shawty! Follow us.

NIKKI

(from warm to cold)

Really Sam?

SAM

(CONT'D)

Itty Bitty Nicky Dicky.

NIKKI

Stop calling me that! It makes it
Sound like I have a dick. It makes
It sounds like I have a small dick.
You'd really let a bunch of strangers
in, but you won't let me stay?

SAM

Nikki, come on. You let a stranger into
your bed.

Nikki reels back from the verbal slap. Once she gathers her emotions, she starts to walk off.

SAM

(CONT'D)

Nikki!

Nikki gets lost in the crowd.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Nikki walks by herself, cross. She slows to a stop when she sees a WOODEN FOLD UP CHAIR peeking out from the shadows.

SOMEBODY is behind her. She keeps walking.

SOMEBODY

Hey.

She looks back to see the CUTE GUY from earlier.

NIKKI

You again? No.

CUTE GUY

Wait up.

NIKKI

No.

He picks up the pace. She picks up the pace. She fumbles around in her PURSE to try to find something to use as a weapon.

She turns and throws some lipstick at him. He isn't phased. She throws a comb, then some pens. She tosses a napkin at him as hard as she can. It stays in the air, slowly floating back and forth until it's on the ground.

He's right in front of her.

NIKKI

(Drained)

Fine. Just make it quick.

CUTE GUY

What? Here. You dropped these.

He hands her her keys.

CUTE GUY

(CONT'D)

Hey, sorry about before. I realized I probably sounded creepy, asking you two to follow me into an alley. I shouldv'e explained better. My friend is having a get together down that street. I was just trying to ask if you wanted to go.

Nikki begins crying.

NIKKI

I'm so sorry. I just broke up with my Husband during a three way and my Best friend won't let me stay with Her and she said I was gonna get Pregnant and I've never been pregnant even though we tried. We really tried.

He comforts her. She melts into him and snorts, calming down.

CUTE GUY

Hey hey. It's okay. You know what Won't get you pregnant?

Off of her confusion, he looks down at his crotch. She looks down.

NIKKI

(Disgusted)

Oh, alright.

DANIEL

(O.S.)

Nikki!

Nikki turns to see Daniel, Ray, and Sam standing there like superheroes.

DANIEL
(CONT'D)

You okay?

She looks at the CUTE GUY. "Am I okay?" He rolls his eyes and walks off. Nikki sucks up her tears and gathers with her group.

NIKKI
What about your house party?

SAM
Biiiiitch. These niggas have a house party like every night. And every Night they trip like it's a big deal.

DANIEL
You scared the pee out of us. Ray almost had the whole block party looking' for you.

DANIEL hands Nikki her lipstick, comb, and pens.

DANIEL
(CONT'D)

I didn't want to touch the napkin.

Daniel and Ray walk in front of the girls. Nikki and Sam fall back.

SAM
You remember that time in high school When we had that blizzard and I was stuck over your house for the whole weekend? Your mom made us those chocolate chip cookies.

NIKKI
Yeah. We stayed up all night eating Them until we got sick.

SAM

Your'e mom made me go to church
On Sunday. Because that was the house
Rule.

SAM
If someone spent the
Night on Saturday, they
Had to go to church in
The morning.

NIKKI
(Imitating her mother)
If your friend spends the
she's gotta go to church.

SAM
We had that huge fight the last night
I was there. We went to sleep without
Saying a word to each other. We woke
Up and didn't talk. I left without
Saying goodbye.

NIKKI
We didn't talk for a week after that.

SAM
And I was sick, physically fucking ill
Every day that week. I thought about
The first night, how it was so much
Fun, and I couldn't figure out how
It got so fucked up. And I just
Figured, it was because we spent too
Much time together.

NIKKI
Yeah. But we got over it.

SAM
Yeah. You're right. We did. (considers)
You gotta promise not to run off
Like that if you're gonna live here.

NIKKI
Wait. Really?

SAM

I could use the money. If it ends
Badly, I can always find another
Friend.

Nikki smiles.

SAM

(CONT'D)

Call your husband or ex husband.
Tell him "Look it. I ain't never
Comin' home no more. Take it easy."

NIKKI

(announces to the group)
hold on. I might need emotional
Support.

Everybody stops and turns to her. She picks up her phone and
makes the call.

INT. NIKKI'S OLD BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nikki's husband Robert Sinclair wakes up and answers the. The
other woman is still in bed.

ROBERT

Hello.

INTERCUT NIKKI/ROBERT

NIKKI

Hey.

He looks at the phone and then looks around.

ROBERT

Are you calling from the bed?

NIKKI

No, you moron.

ROBERT

Moron?

NIKKI

Wait. You didn't even notice I was gone?

ROBERT

Gone? Gone where?

NIKKI takes the phone off her ear. She almost fights the tears.

NIKKI

I'm out getting you something to eat.

ROBERT

Oh. Okay. Can you get me an All Star Special?

ROBERT

...sausage and Raisin Toast.

NIKKI

...sausage and Raisin toast.

He remembers the THIRDSOME.

ROBERT

Oh, and get something for-

Nikki hangs up.

NIKKI

He loves Waffle House.

As they walk off into the glow of the street lights:

RAY

(To Daniel)

I still can't believe you got five
chicks to be in the fashion show.

DANIEL

Yeah. After the third one I stopped
trying. I would just say "Aye. You.
Fashion show?" They'd be like "Yes.
Yes. Please, yes." Chicks out here
Are bored.

INT. DANIEL and RAY'S PLACE - NIGHT

Daniel is on the couch playing a video game. There's a knock at
the window. He looks over and sees a FACE staring at him. He
yelps.

Nikki enters.

NIKKI

Damn. I know I'm not wearing any
Make up, but I don't look that bad
Do I?

DANIEL

NIKKI

No, you look beautiful.
What?

Is this Resident Evil?
What?

DANIEL

(Hoping she didn't hear)

Girl, what you know about Resident
Evil?

She grabs the controller and shoots a few zombies in the head,
flawlessly.

NIKKI

Sam's little kitten. You call it 7
Pizzas?

DANIEL

Yup. For the amount of money she
paid for that little thing, we
Coulda bought 7 Pizzas.

Nikki laughs. As she plays, he smiles at her while she's not
looking.

RAY

(from upstairs)

Vicky!

NIKKI

Here I come.

She hands Daniel the controller and runs upstairs. He just sits
and stares at the screen.

END OF SHOW.