

"KARMA"

by

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A line at a time, the following words appears over a black screen.

KARMA - THE TOTAL EFFECT OF A PERSON'S ACTIONS AND CONDUCT DURING THE SUCCESSIVE PHASES OF EXISTENCE, HELD TO DETERMINE DESTINY.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. BANK - DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - MORNING

PEOPLE move briskly trying to make their way through the early morning traffic in this busy city that we call "The Windy City".

INT. BANK - MORNING

Here, for the first time we see TIFFANY JONES, 29, African-American, vibrant, full of energy, and drop dead gorgeous. Tiffany sits nervously at the counter biting her nails as she waits on the next customer in line.

Standing in the line talking on a cellphone is STEPHEN ANDREWS, 33, African-American, handsome, charming, and well dressed.

STEPHEN

... Well, I told you I only printed 200 of the limited editions, but if the gallery needs more I guess I can run back to the printer and have him print more.

Tiffany stares at Stephen for a beat, signals to him to approach the counter.

Stephen hangs up the cellphone.

TIFFANY

Hi, how are you today sir?

STEPHEN

Great.

TIFFANY

What can I do for you today?

Stephen hands Tiffany a deposit slip.

STEPHEN

I just want to make a deposit.

Tiffany takes the deposit slip from Stephen.

TIFFANY

Okay Mr. Andrews, that's \$9,300 into your business checking. Is there anything else I can help you with today?

Stephen stares into Tiffany's PRETTY BROWN EYES for a beat, as if he was mesmerized. He acts as if he is a little nervous to ask her for what he really wants.

STEPHEN

No... no Tiffany I think that will be it for today.

Tiffany blushes intensely, as if she could read his mind.

TIFFANY

Thank you Mr. Andrews. You have a great day.

Stephen walks away.

Tiffany can't help but to stare at Stephen as he makes his way out of the bank.

The LADIES from work Ogle him from the other side of the bank.

INT. STEPHEN'S CAR - MORNING

OPENING CREDITS. It's early Friday morning and the sun peaks over the Chicago Skyline. As Stephen cruises along LAKE SHORE DR. In his BLACK CONVERTIBLE CLK and the credits continue to roll; we see SEVERAL SHOTS of the real people who make up Chicago.

MUSIC CONTINUES...

INT. DRAKE MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

CAMERA REVEALS: A YOUNG MAN in his late 20's, sitting down with a female companion watching TV. The YOUNG MAN is DRAKE MITCHELL, a small time hustler who is arrogant, flamboyant, and he also happens to be extremely attractive. His apartment is run down with low quality furniture. It seems the only thing Drake takes pride in is his looks. Drake continues to smoke his cigarette and suddenly...

he is startled by the SOUND of the TELEPHONE. Drake picks up the PHONE and looks at the CALLER ID.

DRAKE
 (talking to himself)
 FUCK!... What the hell does she want?

FEMALE COMPANION
 I thought you were going to get rid of her.

DRAKE
 Look, you just be quiet and mind your own fucking business!

FEMALE COMPANION
 (shocked)
Excuse me!

DRAKE
 You heard what I said!

Female companion storms out of the room.

Drake continues to look at the phone. He finally answers after the forth ring.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BANK - SAME TIME

Tiffany cradles a cellphone to her ear.

DRAKE
 (into phone)
 What's Up?

TIFFANY
 (clears her throat)
 Excuse me, but is that how you answer my phone calls now?

DRAKE
 (irritated)
 No... I was just a little busy, that's all!

TIFFANY
 (angry)
 You were supposed to meet me for lunch. Did you forget?

DRAKE

Oh, my bad I guess I did. Well,
can I take a rain check on lunch?
I'm just a little tied up right
now.

TIFFANY

(angered)

Tied Up! What the hell are you
doing... You know what, never mind
it doesn't even matter!

Drake holds the phone away from his ear, as if he doesn't
want to hear what Tiffany is saying.

DRAKE

Hey look, I told you I'll make it
up to you later tonight. I'm going
to cook us a nice dinner and pick
up a movie.

TIFFANY

(sighs)

Whatever, Drake!

A beat.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Do you need me to bring anything?

DRAKE

(thinks)

Yeah, bring me a pack of
cigarettes, and a six pack of beer.

TIFFANY

(disappointed)

You know what, sometimes I ask
myself, why in the world do I still
deal with you?

DRAKE

What is that supposed to mean?

TIFFANY

Never mind Drake... It's not like
you give a damn anyway. I'll see
you later!

Tiffany hangs up the phone.

EXT. OLD BUILDINGS - EVENING

Establishing. Downtown Chicago. Strip of vintage art galleries.

INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

CAMERA REVEALS: PHILLIP SATAA, a posh, aristocratic, gay man in his early 30's, walking through the showroom floor with a pen and pad in his hand; counting inventory.

Standing next to Phillip is NICOLE, 33, beautiful and very flirtatious. She is wearing a RED DRESS revealing her curves. Nicole moves seductively around Phillip and Stephen as they continue to count inventory...

PHILLIP

(excited)

... Yeah Stephen, I told you those paintings would sell. You never have an optimistic view about these things. You know what, we should go somewhere and celebrate!

STEPHEN

Celebrate what? You're just looking for any excuse to go somewhere and drink.

PHILLIP

(still excited)

You are so lame! We just sold 100 paintings of your best work, and you don't think that's reason enough to celebrate? Well, I don't know about you, but me and Nicole are going out to enjoy ourselves!

STEPHEN

I'm sorry Phil, but I have a lot of work to catch up on. You guys go on. Be safe and have fun.

PHILLIP

Whatever Man!

Phillip walks away.

NICOLE
(concerned)
You know Stephen, you could really find yourself a good woman, if you just made yourself available.

STEPHEN
Someone has to keep you guys employed.

NICOLE
You look like you really could use some company.

STEPHEN
I'm alright Nicole, thanks for asking.

NICOLE
Are you sure you don't want to come out with us? I promise it will be a night you will never forget.

STEPHEN
(laughing)
Is that right?

NICOLE
(licks her lips)
That's right.

STEPHEN
No seriously, I can't. Maybe another time.

Stephen begins to walk away.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Good night, Nicole.

NICOLE
(disappointed)
Good night Stephen.

Stephen gathers his BRIEFCASE and exits the room.

INT. DRAKE MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Drake and Tiffany are sitting at a run down kitchen table eating shrimp and pasta, drinking wine out of plastic cups.

Tiffany has a look of disappointment on her face.

DRAKE
How's the food?

TIFFANY
(dryly)
It's satisfying.

Drake picks up a napkin and wipes his face and hands.

DRAKE
Well, you're going to have to
excuse me for a minute. I have
some phone calls to return. So
when you get done, I'll be in the
bedroom waiting on you, Baby.

Drake stands up and exits the room.

Tiffany looks down at her plate with a shameful look on her
face, continues to eat... Finally she places her fork down on
the plate and follows Drake into the bedroom.

INT. DRAKE MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Drake is sitting on the bed smoking a cigarette. He takes a
slow drag.

Tiffany comes out the bathroom wrapped in a towel. Tiffany
takes the towel, dries her hair. Tiffany then turns to Drake
and stares at him for a beat.

TIFFANY
Why can't you do right by me,
Drake?

Drake places his cigarette down in the ASHTRAY.

Drake looks at Tiffany for a beat without saying a word.
Drake then grabs Tiffany and starts to hug her. They lay
down on the bed. He softly kisses her on the lips, again and
again, as if he can't control himself. Tiffany has a look of
caution on her face.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Drake I hope you...

DRAKE
... I know... I know, don't forget
the condoms.

TIFFANY
You know we can't do this without
any protection.

DRAKE

Don't worry baby, I got you.

Tiffany finally relaxes as Drake lays her down softly on the bed. Drake proceeds down her body kissing her from head to toe. After Drake pleases Tiffany orally, he reaches over to the night stand, slides on the condom.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Happy now?

Tiffany nods.

Drake pushes gently inside her. Tiffany flinches in pain. Drake continues as if her painful reactions don't concern him. Drake pumps harder and faster. Tiffany welcomes the hard thrust and they continue MAKING LOVE...

TIFFANY

(softly)

Drake, I love you so much.

Drake stops; he knows if he doesn't respond with the right words his love making session will come to an abrupt end.

DRAKE

(whispers)

I love you too, Tiffany.

They continue MAKING LOVE...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DRAKE MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Tiffany lies silently in bed, staring at the ceiling.

Drake lights a cigarette.

TIFFANY

You still didn't answer my question.

DRAKE

What's that honey?

TIFFANY

(emotional)

Drake, why can't you do right by me?

DRAKE

(agitated)

Come on Tiffany, do we have to go through this shit again?

TIFFANY

(angered)

You always seem to find a way to avoid this conversation!

Drake jumps out of the bed, puts his underwear on.

DRAKE

(sighs)

Tiffany, I'm tired of going through this shit with you! You knew I didn't do attachments when we first got together!

Tiffany throws the cover from on top of her, sits up.

TIFFANY

(still angered)

What the hell do you mean you don't do attachments? I've been with your broke ass for 3 long years and this is what I get in return?!

Drake jumps out of bed. Tiffany quickly puts her clothes on.

Drake crosses into:

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany follows. Drake pulls open the fridge, grabs a beer.

TIFFANY

(furious now)

What do you want from me Drake?

DRAKE

Hey look, I don't want to hear this shit tonight! All we do is fuck and fight. I'm getting tired of going through this shit with you Tiff!

TIFFANY

You're going to answer me tonight, Drake! I'm so tired of going through this crap with you!

The tension is building now, there's no turning back.

DRAKE

(takes a swig out of his
beer)

Look, you really want to know the
truth?

TIFFANY

Yeah, I do!

A beat.

DRAKE

All I wanted was some sex. You
chose to keep coming back, knowing
I didn't want a relationship.

Tiffany walks toward Drake.

TIFFANY

(shocked)

You arrogant son of a bitch! You
are so immature! I don't know why
I kept messing around with you in
the first place!

Tiffany SLAPS Drake.

Before Drake knows it, he responds back with an even harder
slap.

SMACK!

Tiffany falls down to the floor.

DRAKE

(not concerned)

You got to get your shit and go,
right now!

Tiffany picks herself up from the floor, wipes the blood off
her mouth. Tiffany begins to cry uncontrollably.

TIFFANY

I can't believe you would do me
like this!

Drake looks around in silence.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Fuck you, Drake!

Tiffany grabs her purse, runs to the door.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
I'll be back to get my stuff
another time!

Tiffany SLAMS the door.

INT. TIFFANY'S BMW - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany drives, a little shaken by events. Tiffany enters the driveway of her mother's picture-perfect home.

INT. LEONA'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Sitting on the couch watching TV is LEONA JONES, 53, well versed, quiet, but has a strong demeanor.

Tiffany tries to walk in; unnoticed.

Tiffany wipes her face.

LEONA
Hi, Darling. How are you?

Leona notices Tiffany has been crying. Leona stands up and walks toward Tiffany.

LEONA (CONT'D)
(angered)
What's wrong with you?

TIFFANY
(brushes her off)
Nothing Mom.

LEONA
Oh yes it is!

Leona touches Tiffany's face.

LEONA (CONT'D)
Who hit you in your face?

A long beat.

TIFFANY
(wiping her tears)
It's Drake Mom. We had a fight and
he kicked me out the house again.

LEONA

(still angered)

That no good son of a bitch! I told you not to sell your condo and move in with him in the first place. I got a good nerve to go over there and slap him in his face and well see how he likes that! What gives him the right to slap you down like some vicious animal on the street?

TIFFANY

I guess that's what you do to people you don't love!

Leona walks over and consoles Tiffany by rubbing her shoulder in a one arm embrace.

LEONA

Don't worry baby. It's plenty of guys out there that would love to be with you.

TIFFANY

Mom, I don't want anyone else. I just want Drake to love me the same way I love him.

LEONA

(still comforting)

Tiffany, I know you don't want to hear this now, but I'm going to say it anyway. Everybody makes mistakes, but only a fool continues to make them. You're a smart woman, not a fool.

TIFFANY

This is the last time I will ever let him hurt me like this!

LEONA

That's my baby. Now, you go upstairs and try to get you some sleep.

TIFFANY

Mom, how can I sleep at a time like this?

LEONA

You just forget about tonight and get a start fresh tomorrow.

Tears roll down Tiffany's face.

TIFFANY
Thank you so much Mom.

Tiffany and Leona continue to embrace.

INT. LEONA'S HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

Tiffany lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. She reaches over to pick up the telephone.

Tiffany dials the phone--

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Sitting at the desk looking over paperwork is EARL WILSON, 55, African American, stern face, and well groomed.

The PHONE RINGS.

Mr. Wilson reaches over to pick it up--

MR. WILSON
This is Mr. Wilson. How can I help you?

TIFFANY
(groggy)
Good morning Mr. Wilson. How are you doing?

MR. WILSON
(surprised)
Good morning Tiffany. How are you?

TIFFANY
Mr. Wilson, I know it's last minute, but I'm not going to be able to make it to work today.

MR. WILSON
(concerned)
Is everything alright?

TIFFANY
Yes Mr. Wilson, I'm Okay. I'm just feeling a little under the weather today.

MR. WILSON

This is a little strange for you to be calling in to work. Are you sure everything is alright?

TIFFANY

Yes Mr. Wilson. I'm good.

MR. WILSON

Okay Tiffany, I hope you feel better and I'll see you on Monday.

TIFFANY

Thank you Mr. Wilson. You have a good weekend.

MR. WILSON

You to Tiffany.

Tiffany hangs up the phone.

Unsure what her next move will be, Tiffany rolls out of bed.

INT. LEONA'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Leona listens to the RADIO as she prepares breakfast.

Tiffany enters--

LEONA

(energetic)

Good morning, Baby. How are you feeling today?

TIFFANY

I'm fine Mom. How are you?

Leona looks at her watch.

LEONA

Don't you have to work today?

TIFFANY

I didn't feel like going.

LEONA

I understand Baby. All you can do is take it one day at a time.

TIFFANY

Thanks Mom.

LEONA

Well, since your not going to work,
can you go to the store for me?

TIFFANY

Sure Mom, what do you need?

LEONA

I'll make you a list.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - AFTERNOON

Tiffany sits in the parking lot of the local grocery store.
Tiffany reaches into her purse and picks up her cellphone.

She dials the phone--

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DRAKE MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Drake is sitting on the couch with a YOUNG LADY. The PHONE
RINGS. Drake reaches over to pick it up--

DRAKE

Hello.

TIFFANY

Hello, Drake.

DRAKE

(angered)

Wait hold on, Didn't I tell you to
stop calling me!?

TIFFANY

(shocked)

Wow, I was just calling to
apologize to you about last night.

DRAKE

I don't care what you called for,
don't call me again! The next time
you call me I'm going to call the
police on you for stalking!

Tiffany looks around in disappointment.

TIFFANY

You know what, you don't ever have to worry about me calling you again, you arrogant no good son of a bitch!

DRAKE

Thank you!

Drake SLAMS the PHONE down.

Tiffany continues to look around.

Tiffany sits for a beat. Finally she turns the car off and exits...

INT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

We see Stephen Andrews casually walking down the aisles picking up some groceries.

Stephen turns the corner and sees Tiffany. He looks shocked by the fact that Tiffany is shopping there at the same time.

Tiffany glances up, they catch each other's eye's. They try to look away but find they can't.

Tiffany finally looks away and continues shopping.

Stephen begins to walk toward Tiffany.

Tiffany passes Stephen, as if she doesn't know him.

Stephen turns around.

STEPHEN

Excuse me Miss, but you dropped something.

Tiffany turns around.

TIFFANY

(attitude)
What?

STEPHEN

(laughing)
An opportunity.

TIFFANY

(smiling)
Real cute.

STEPHEN

Were you just going to walk right
pass me like you don't know me?

TIFFANY

(laughing)
I don't know you.

STEPHEN

Oh... come on, I'm at your job all
the time.

TIFFANY

(thinks)
Oh, Mr. Andrews. I'm sorry, I
thought you looked familiar. You
look so different without a suit
on.

STEPHEN

(sarcastically)
Wow! I didn't think I looked that
bad.

Tiffany smiles, hesitates a beat.

TIFFANY

(clears her throat)
Well, it was nice seeing you, but
I'm kind of in a rush. You take
care.

Tiffany walks away.

Stephen turns to her.

STEPHEN

Tiffany, you got a minute?

TIFFANY

(looks at her watch)
Okay, but I'm kind of in a rush.

STEPHEN

Tiffany, I'm not the one for games.
So, I'm going to be totally honest
with you. I find you very
attractive, and I was wondering...
If I could take you out to dinner
sometime?

TIFFANY

(blushing)

I'm flattered Mr. Andrews, but I really don't think that would be a good idea right now.

STEPHEN

(sarcastically)

Look, in order for this to work, you at least have to call me by my first name.

TIFFANY

(laughs)

What is your name?

STEPHEN

Stephen.

TIFFANY

Well Stephen, again thanks but I can't.

STEPHEN

I understand. I'm not your type. What? I need to take rough neck 101 first? I do have a an associates in pimpology, but I'm pursuing a Master's degree in Commitment these days... I'm searching.

TIFFANY

(laughs)

I think you may be a nice guy and all, but I'm just going through some things right now. I'm sorry.

Tiffany continues walking.

STEPHEN

(softly)

Don't let him steal your joy.

Tiffany stops, turns around.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Listen Tiffany, if you happen to change your mind, here's my number.

Stephen reaches in his POCKET, pulls out a CARD.

Tiffany reaches for the card, looks at it.

INSERT - CARD

Words on fine print: "VISION OF DESTINY"

BACK TO SCENE

Tiffany reacts with a smile.

TIFFANY
Interesting name. What kind of
work do you do?

STEPHEN
I'm an artist.

TIFFANY
(intrigued)
Really, what kind of art do you do?

STEPHEN
All kinds, but I mostly try to
focus on Black Art. That shows
family, love, and strength.

TIFFANY
(excited)
Really! My mother has been looking
for that kind of art for quite some
time now.

STEPHEN
Really?

TIFFANY
Tomorrow's my Mother's birthday and
she would absolutely love those
type of pieces. Where can I look
at some of your work?

STEPHEN
I usually keep some samples with
me, but I didn't drive my truck
today.

TIFFANY
(disappointed)
That's alright, I'll just get her
some perfume or something.

STEPHEN
Listen, if you're not too busy later
I can meet you somewhere and you
could take a look at them then.

TIFFANY

No, I can't ask you to do that
Stephen.

STEPHEN

No, really it's alright. I can
meet you anytime after 8:00.

TIFFANY

(thinks)

That may be a little late. What
about tomorrow?

STEPHEN

I usually close the shop early on
Saturday's, but you can come down
anytime before 1:00.

TIFFANY

I don't know, I think we are going
to be tied up all morning trying to
prepare the food.

Tiffany puts her head down.

Tiffany sighs, then:

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Maybe you can come over and let her
take a look at them herself.

STEPHEN

What time?

TIFFANY

Any time after 1:00.

STEPHEN

That sounds great. Where do you
live?

Tiffany writes her address down, gives it to Stephen.

Tiffany offers a hand shake to Stephen. They shake hands.

TIFFANY

Thank you so much.

STEPHEN

No problem at all, you take care.

INT. LEONA'S HOME - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

We see SEVERAL IMAGES of Tiffany and her FAMILY MEMBERS partying the day away. They are entertained by some MUSIC as they dance and prepare some food.

EXT. LEONA'S HOME - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Stephen approaches the door with a carry bag in his hand, he KNOCKS, and waits patiently.

INT. LEONA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sitting down drinking a beer is Tiffany's cousin, ROD, 25, bloodshot red eyes, well fit, and he looks like he doesn't take no shit.

Rod approaches the door, opens it.

ROD
(hard voice)
What's up?

STEPHEN
(looks around)
I was looking for Tiffany, but I think I'm at the wrong house.

ROD
Yeah, Tiffany lives here, but what you need with her?

ANGLE ON

Stephen, sees Tiffany approaching in her vibrant RED SUNDRESS. He stares at Tiffany in shock.

Tiffany quickly steadies herself on her heels, walks to the door.

TIFFANY
(to Stephen)
I see you made it.

STEPHEN
Yeah, I thought I was at the wrong house.

ROD
You are.

TIFFANY
Quit playing boy!

Rod laughs, exits doorway.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Come on in Stephen.

INT. LEONA'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stephen approaches the kitchen behind Tiffany.

FAMILY MEMBERS stop for a moment and stare at Stephen, as if they were undressing him with their eyes.

LEONA
(sarcastically)
DAMN, you all give the man a chance to get in before you go attacking him like a pack of wolves!

ANGLE ON

Tiffany stands next to SHERRY LOVE, 28, dark, and *GHETTO* as hell.

Sherry stands and admires Stephen from a distance.

SHERRY
(whispering)
Girl, that's one fine ass brother there! If you don't want him, let me have him!

TIFFANY
(laughs)
You're crazy girl.

LEONA
Stephen, come on in and relax.

Stephen walks in, grabs a seat.

LEONA (CONT'D)
Hi, I'm Leona. It's nice to meet you.

Stephen reaches out to shake Leona's hand.

STEPHEN
Hello, I'm Stephen. It's nice to meet you too.

LEONA

I'm glad you we're able to come so I could pick my own gifts for a change. My daughter has some strange taste in gifts.

SHERRY

She does have some weird taste, but she sure can pick some fine ass men.

FAMILY MEMBERS laugh.

TIFFANY

Anyway, can you all leave this man alone? He has business to take care of.

Stephen laughs.

Stephen grabs his bag, opens it, and places his prints on the table.

The women go crazy as they peruse through these caring, provocative, and inspirational prints.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

(to Stephen)

Can I get you a beer or something?

STEPHEN

I don't drink that much, but I'll take some pop.

TIFFANY

Would you like something to eat?

STEPHEN

(smirks)

No that's alright. I just had lunch before I came over.

TIFFANY

We have a quiet room in the back if you want to watch the game or something.

STEPHEN

I did want to see the game.

They exit the room.

INT. LEONA'S HOME - DEN - CONTINUOUS

They sit in silence watching the game for a moment as Stephen nervously taps his hand on the coffee table...

TIFFANY

... So Stephen, what part of town are you from?

STEPHEN

Oh, I'm not from here. I'm originally from Florida.

TIFFANY

Wow! What are you doing here?

STEPHEN

Well, Black Art isn't very big in the south. So I came here to open an Art Gallery.

TIFFANY

That's really interesting. What made you want to be an artist anyway?

STEPHEN

Well... I like looking at life the way it is, and then calm it down with a touch of love and understanding. That's what I try to convey in my pieces. Especially with my BLACK LOVE SERIES.

TIFFANY

Black Love, what's that?

STEPHEN

That's the series that focuses on the African American Man and Woman at their best and worst in a relationship.

TIFFANY

That's very admirable. I can't remember when, if ever, I've met a man that was so interested in the idea of family.

STEPHEN

I've always envisioned having a strong relationship, but like they say, "A GOOD WOMAN IS HARD TO FIND."

TIFFANY
(softly)
So is a "GOOD MAN."

STEPHEN
(laughing)
Well, it's like you said, you
haven't met anyone like me before.

Tiffany stares at Stephen for a moment, begins to stand up.

TIFFANY
Can I get you something else to
drink?

STEPHEN
No, that's okay. I better get
ready to leave.

TIFFANY
Alright... I'll walk you out. Just
excuse me one second. I'm going to
see what these nice young ladies
are up to.

Tiffany walks out.

PAN TO Stephen, staring at Tiffany, as she exits the room.

ANGLE ON

Rod, walking in the den to talk with Stephen.

Rod sits down next to Stephen. He slowly sips his beer.

ROD
You know I was just fucking with
you earlier, right?

STEPHEN
Oh man, it's cool. I didn't know
what to think, but it's all good.

ROD
No seriously, Tiffany has been in
some fucked up relationships in the
past, and I don't want her to keep
going through the same old shit
with the same no good brothers all
the time. You feel me?

STEPHEN

My man, it's not even like that. I just came over to let her Mother look at some pictures.

ROD

I hear you, but I'm just telling you for future references.

Unafraid Stephen looks Rod in the EYES.

STEPHEN

Like I said, it's not even like that. I'm not the one to play any games.

Rod reaches out his hand, they begin to shake hands.

Tiffany walks back in the room and stares at the two of them.

TIFFANY

(to Stephen)

He's not harassing you, is he?

Rod exits the room.

STEPHEN

Everything's great, but I better get going.

TIFFANY

Is everything okay?

STEPHEN

It's cool. I'm just going to say goodbye to your family.

INT. LEONA'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

FAMILY MEMBERS are still perusing through the prints admirably.

STEPHEN

Alright ladies, have we decided yet?

LEONA

(excited)

I hope you have some more of these, because we're going to take all of these from you!

STEPHEN
(surprised)
That's great!

A beat.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
You know what, since you like these
so much, I'm going to let you guys
have them.

Stephen walks over to Leona.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Happy birthday.

Stephen hugs Leona.

LEONA
(taken aback)
WOW! Thank you so much, but I can't
take these from you without giving
you something.

STEPHEN
It's okay, I can print more.

Stephen reaches for his carry bag.

LEONA
You're not getting ready to leave,
are you?

STEPHEN
I would love to stay, but I have a
early flight to catch in the
morning.

LEONA
Well, I really wish you could stay
longer. You be safe, and I hope to
see you again.

STEPHEN
You as well.

LEONA
Thanks again Stephen.

Stephen and Tiffany exit the room.

EXT. LEONA'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany walks Stephen to his car.

Tiffany reaches out to shake Stephen's hand.

Stephen takes her hand, softly kisses the back of it.

TIFFANY

I'm glad you were able to make it.

STEPHEN

Me too. I hope to see you again.

Stephen gets in his car, drives off.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - MORNING

Stephen sits alone in his posh, upscale, and well decorated loft. Stephen is looking over some paperwork. The SOUND of a RINGING TELEPHONE startles Stephen. Stephen reaches for the phone... It is too late his ANSWERING MACHINE picks up.

TIFFANY (V.O.)

Hello Stephen, it's Tiffany. I thought about what you said the other day, and I wanted to take you up on your offer for dinner. When you get some time, please give me a call back.

Stephen responds with a huge smile on his face, continues doing his work.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - MIDDAY

Stephen sits alone eating his lunch and looking over some paperwork.

ANGLE ON

A YOUNG WOMAN walking over to Stephen's table.

CAMERA REVEALS: NICOLE, she looks stunning, as she stands next to Stephen.

NICOLE
 (sexy voice)
 Well... didn't you miss me?

STEPHEN
Wow, you look great, I almost
 didn't know who you were.

NICOLE
 Don't I get a hug or something?

Stephen stands up and greets Nicole with a warm embrace.
 Stephen and Nicole sit down. Stephen looks around in
 confusion.

STEPHEN
 So... where is Phillip?

NICOLE
 He couldn't make it today.

STEPHEN
 Okay... anyway, You look nice.
 Going on a hot date later on or
 something?

NICOLE
 (confident)
 I'm on it now.

STEPHEN
 (smiles)
 I didn't know this was a date. I
 thought this was supposed to be a
 business meeting with Phil.

NICOLE
 I guess I could have called you and
 cancelled, but I just couldn't
 resist seeing you.

STEPHEN
 That's pretty slick. That's
 something I would have pulled on
 someone in my player days.

NICOLE
Please, You brothers have been
 pulling this shit off for years. I
 just thought I would give you a
 taste of your own medicine.

STEPHEN

(shocked)

Wow! Phillip told me you were aggressive. I just didn't think it was like this!

NICOLE

Please. As fine as you are, I know you get a million and one women coming on to you everyday.

STEPHEN

Whoa... Whoa... slow down for a minute. Let me catch my breath.

Nicole grabs Stephen's glass, takes a sip from it.

NICOLE

Can I be honest with you?

Stephen rests his hand on his chin, as if he was entertained.

STEPHEN

Sure.

NICOLE

I want...

The conversation has abruptly ended by the SOUND of a CELLPHONE.

Nicole looks at the phone, stands up. She makes a hand gesture at Stephen as if to tell him to hold on. Nicole disappears.

Stephen looks around in confusion, downs his drink.

Moments later Nicole re-appears back at the table.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Stephen, I forgot I had some prior engagements. I hope you don't have plans later.

STEPHEN

I'm sorry Nicole, but I do have plans for tonight. Maybe another time.

Nicole stands up as if she was in a rush.

NICOLE

I hope we can finish this conversation real soon.

STEPHEN
(smiling)
I'm sure you do.

Nicole exits.

Stephen shakes his head, continues drinking.

INT. UPSCALE SALON - MIDDAY

Tiffany is sitting down reading a JET MAGAZINE, until--

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)
Tiffany.

CAMERA REVEALS: DONTE SMITH, 24, tall, buff body, sporting DREADLOCKS.

Tiffany rises from her seat and follows Donte to the back.

INT. UPSCALE SALON - CONTINUOUS

Now a routine, Tiffany gives Donte a gentle rub on his chest and Donte directs Tiffany to her chair. Tiffany sits down and places her feet in the water.

TIFFANY
(sighs)
Donte, you just don't know how bad
I've been needing you.

DONTE
(island accent)
Don't you worry now. I've got you
girl.

Donte begins to rub Tiffany's feet; softly.

TIFFANY
Donte, I have to ask you something.

DONTE
Go ahead my dear.

TIFFANY
Donte, have you ever been so torn
between doing something you know
isn't right for you, versus doing
something you know could be good
for you in the long run?

DONTE

Tiffany, you sound as if you have a man dilemma of some sort.

TIFFANY

I sort of do, Donte. I have a date tonight with a very nice and generous man. It's just that I have another man on my mind and in my system that I know isn't good for me. It's just really hard for me to shake him, you know.

DONTE

Tiffany, you woman always say you want a good man, but when the opportunity arises you find a way to walk away from him, not giving him a chance at all.

Tiffany sits back.

TIFFANY

(thinks)

I guess you're right, but it's not that easy to let go.

DONTE

Tiffany listen, now try to imagine a man treating you in a way that I give you this here VIP Treatment. It's like heaven, right? Well, this is the feeling you want to have with your man most of the time. It shouldn't feel like a roller coaster ride where you build up to a high point and then you come crashing down. Check Me?

TIFFANY

(thinks)

Yeah Donte, I get it. For the past 3 years I've been coming here, you've always managed to help resolve my crazy mixed up mind.

Tiffany relaxes and melts away into a heavenly state.

DREAM SEQUENCE - INT. DRAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tiffany takes her keys, unlocks the door...

INT. DRAKE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

As she opens the door, Drake is awaiting her arrival with a dozen of red roses. Drake stands shirtless. Drake walks over to Tiffany and gives her a warm, long hug, embracing her body as if he was trying to hold on to her for dear life.

DRAKE

I've been missing you so much.

Drake pulls her up closer and kisses her lips very slowly and passionately.

Tiffany welcomes the kiss and they embrace tighter.

Tiffany grabs Drake by the hand and leads him into the bedroom then...

SFX: THE PHONE RINGS.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

INT. UPSCALE SALON - CONTINUOUS

DONTE

Alright Miss Lady, you're done.

Tiffany looks up at Donte wide eyed and confused.

TIFFANY

(smiling)

I almost forgot where I was.

DONTE

Then I've done my job.

Tiffany slides into her shoes and begins to stand up.

TIFFANY

Thank you again Donte. You always seem to know exactly what to do to please a woman.

DONTE

(smiles)

See you soon, pretty girl.

Tiffany exits the salon.

EXT. UPSCALE RESTARAUNT - NIGHT

Establishing. Downtown Chicago. Many old buildings; filled with restaurants and movie theatres.

INT. UPSCALE RESTARAUNT - CONTINUOUS

Stephen and Tiffany sit at a candle lit table, sipping coffee, smiling and attentive to one another.

A HOSTESS walks over to the table.

HOSTESS

Hi Mr. Andrews, how are you tonight?

STEPHEN

I'm fine. How are you?

HOSTESS

What can I get you guys to drink tonight?

STEPHEN

The usual.

HOSTESS

I'll be right back with your drinks.

Tiffany looks around in disbelief.

TIFFANY

Wow, this is a really nice place. I've never been here before, but I see that you have.

STEPHEN

Yeah, this is where I get a lot of ideas for my work.

TIFFANY

Why here?

STEPHEN

When I come here, I see a lot of couple's, and it gives me inspiration for my work.

TIFFANY

That's different.

STEPHEN

I know it seems kind of weird, but that's what I do.

TIFFANY

I know your Mother must be really proud of you.

STEPHEN

My parents actually gave me the inspiration for my first piece.

Tiffany speechless...

TIFFANY

So... I take it that your parent's are still together?

STEPHEN

In fact they are. They've been married almost 35 years and still going strong.

TIFFANY

Well, unfortunately I wasn't so lucky. My dad left when I was five years old, and he never came back.

STEPHEN

(sighs)

Wow. Do you ever talk to him?

TIFFANY

It took me into my adult years to forgive him for leaving, but we do talk from time to time.

STEPHEN

I know it must be hard for you to trust a man again.

TIFFANY

Please, let's not even go there!

Tiffany SLAMS back her drink.

STEPHEN

Wow! Seems like I hit a soft spot!

Silence, Then...

TIFFANY

His name is Drake, and we've been dating for three years.

STEPHEN

(surprised)

That's a long time. Is it a serious relationship?

TIFFANY

Serious for me, but not for him. You know how you brothers do, use and use until we get fed up with you all, and then that's it, we're done.

STEPHEN

I don't understand some men. They have a good woman at home and it's like they just have to go out and be with other women. I just don't get it.

TIFFANY

Yeah, I guess I stayed so long hoping and praying that some day he would come around, but time after time he just continued to hurt me.

STEPHEN

I don't understand women like you, you have everything going for yourself and you all settle for the wrong brothers, and when a good man comes along, you'll just treat him like dirt, like he's not there.

TIFFANY

No... No... you don't understand. The pickings for a good man around here are slim to none. So, half a man is better than no man at all. At least in my book it is.

A beat.

STEPHEN

Now that you've found a good man, what are you going to do with me?

TIFFANY

(laughs)

You're funny.

Tiffany continues sipping her drink.

STEPHEN

So, what kind of music do you like?

TIFFANY
Mostly R.&B.

STEPHEN
If you want, we could go upstairs
and dance when we're done here.

TIFFANY
Please, it's been so long since I
went dancing.

STEPHEN
Just follow my lead, and you'll be
just fine.

They continue drinking.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Stephen and Tiffany are parked in front of the the Club.
Zapp and Roger's "I Wanna Be Your Man" plays on the RADIO.
Stephen rubs his eyes, as if he was tired.

STEPHEN
So, what's the best way to get to
your house from here?

TIFFANY
Oh, I'm sorry. I'm so tired I
can't even think straight.

STEPHEN
(thinks)
I know it's a quicker way. I just
can't remember the route.

TIFFANY
Steven, I live almost an hour from
here! Didn't you say you lived
around here somewhere?

STEPHEN
Yeah, my house is a couple of
blocks up the road.

TIFFANY
Don't think I do this all the time,
but I'm extremely tired.
(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
 If it's alright with you, you can
 take me home in the morning.

Stephen sit's speechless...

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
 (laughing)
 Don't even think about it. I'm not
that drunk!

They share a laugh.

STEPHEN
 Are you sure?

TIFFANY
 It's late, I've been drinking, and
 I just want to lay down.

STEPHEN
 Alright.

Stephen starts the car, they drive off.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany stands alone in the bathroom washing her hands.

Tiffany looks in the MIRROR.

TIFFANY
 (to herself)
 Okay Tiffany, what the hell are you
 doing? You just met this guy and
 you're already spending the night
 with him. What the hell is wrong
 with you girl? WAKE UP!

Tiffany exits the bathroom.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING

Stephen is preparing breakfast.

Tiffany enters...

TIFFANY
Good morning, Stephen.

STEPHEN
(excited)
Good morning Tiffany, Did you sleep well?

Tiffany sits down.

TIFFANY
(excited)
Oh my God, that was the best sleep I've had in a long time.

STEPHEN
That's great! You need to relax sometimes.

TIFFANY
(dismissive)
Relax, what's that?

STEPHEN
I hope you're hungry, because I just finished cooking breakfast.

TIFFANY
What are you trying to do, spoil me or something?

STEPHEN
How did you know? This is the first time I used this kitchen, and I wanted it to be special.

Tiffany sits speechless as she takes it all in.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Do you have any plans for today?

A beat.

TIFFANY
Stephen, please don't take this the wrong way, but... I don't think we should be spending time like this so soon.

STEPHEN
(thinks)
You're right, I'm sorry. I don't mean to pressure you or anything.
(MORE)

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I just wanted to take someone with me to the nursing home so those ladies can buy some pictures instead of trying to take my clothes off.

They laugh.

TIFFANY

Look Stephen, you're not looking for anything serious. Are you?

STEPHEN

Hey look, I've been single for a long time, but I won't put myself in a no win situation with a lady whose heart is with someone else. So, let's just enjoy each others company. If that's cool with you?

TIFFANY

(smiles)

No strings attached?

STEPHEN

No strings attached.

TIFFANY

Well, in that case, sure I'll go with you.

INT. STEPHEN'S CAR - DUSK

Tiffany and Stephen sit in the driveway of her Mother's home.

TIFFANY

You have an interesting job. Is that typically how all your shows go?

STEPHEN

Pretty crazy right?

TIFFANY

I find it really hard to believe that you don't have a woman.

STEPHEN

I know it seems crazy, but I've been so consumed with work that I haven't even taken the time to think about settling down.

Tiffany looks at Stephen.

TIFFANY

Stephen, I had a great time last night and today. Thank you for everything.

STEPHEN

I had a great time also.

A beat.

TIFFANY

I was wondering what you were doing Saturday?

STEPHEN

(thinks)

I don't think I have any plans.

TIFFANY

Well, we are having a cookout, and I was hoping you could stop by.

STEPHEN

I would love to. What time?

TIFFANY

Around 4:30 or so.

STEPHEN

Great, I'll see you then.

TIFFANY

Alright, I'll talk to you later.

Tiffany exits the car.

EXT. LEONA'S HOME - BACK YARD - AFTERNOON

The backyard is full of PEOPLE enjoying the music and food.

Tiffany is in mid-conversation with her Cousin, MICHELLE.

ANGLE ON

Stephen looking around.

Stephen enters--

PEOPLE stare at Stephen as he makes his way over to Tiffany.

MICHELLE
 (excitement)
 Girl, who is that?

TIFFANY
 That was the guy I was telling you
 about.

MICHELLE
 (still excited)
 He is too cute, you better get over
 there before somebody snatches his
fine ass up!

TIFFANY
 (laughs)
 Girl, you're crazy.

Stephen finally makes his way over to Tiffany. Stephen looks
 Tiffany up and down.

STEPHEN
Wow, you look great!

TIFFANY
 (dismissive)
Please, I look a hot mess. I've
 been running around like crazy
 trying to get all this food
 together.

STEPHEN
 What should I do with this beer?

TIFFANY
 You can take it in the house.

Stephen exits to the house.

ANGLE ON

Tiffany freezes. Across the yard, she sees a FIGURE slowly
 approaching. Tiffany can't believe it, The devil himself,
 DRAKE MITCHELL arrives.

Tiffany quickly tries to compose herself and walk the other
 way.

DRAKE (O.S.)
 Don't try to act like you didn't
 see me.

TIFFANY

(angry)

What the hell are you doing here,
Drake?

DRAKE

What, you having a party and no one
invited me?

TIFFANY

(sighs)

(still angry)

Drake, I'm only going to ask you
one time to leave!

DRAKE

(adjusting his hat)

Yeah, whatever. Anyway I came by
to apologize to you. I had a lot
of time to think things over, and I
want you to come back home and work
things out, Babe.

TIFFANY

(laughs)

Boy, you're crazier than I thought!
What?... You think you come over
here, say you're sorry and I'm
supposed to be cool with that. You
got to be fucking crazy!

DRAKE

Wait, hold on! I don't know who in
the hell...

TIFFANY

... Look, bottom line is, we had
our time. Now it's my time.

DRAKE

So what, you're going to throw all
this away over a little
misunderstanding?

TIFFANY

No, Drake. You did that all by
yourself... anyway I have to go, I
have company.

DRAKE

What the hell you mean you got
company?!

TIFFANY

I got to go!

Tiffany turns to walk away.

Drake grabs Tiffany by the arm.

DRAKE

Don't you walk away from me!

Tiffany struggles to break lose from Drake's iron grip.

TIFFANY

(extreme anger)

GET YOUR GOD DAMN HANDS OFF OF ME

DRAKE!

ANGLE ON

Stephen sees Tiffany and Drake arguing, he approaches them.

STEPHEN

(talking to Tiffany)

Is everything alright?

Tiffany pulls away from Drake.

TIFFANY

Everything is fine, I was just
saying goodbye to Drake.

Stephen looks stunned, his heart is sinking fast.

DRAKE

Hey look man, I'm just trying to
have a conversation with my Lady.

STEPHEN

That's strange, because I didn't
know she had a man.

DRAKE

(confidently)

I know she's told you about me.
We're getting married in a couple
of months.

STEPHEN

No, I'm sorry, but she's never
mentioned you before.

TIFFANY

Look Drake that's enough. You have
to go!

STEPHEN

Yeah my man, I think it's time for you to raise up.

Drake looks Stephen up and down, as if he was sizing him up.

Intimidated by Stephen's size, Drake backs down like a little coward.

DRAKE

Alright, that's cool, I'll leave.

STEPHEN

Yeah, I think that would be the best thing.

Drake stares at Tiffany for a beat with a look of confidence.

DRAKE

Tiffany, I'll see you around Baby.

TIFFANY

In your dreams, asshole!

Drake exits the yard.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

(sighs)

The nerve of that guy!

STEPHEN

I didn't mean to cause any problems... I just seen him grab you.

TIFFANY

Yeah, he just showed out the clear blue and tried to apologize!

STEPHEN

Are you alright?

TIFFANY

Yeah, I'm fine.

Stephen helps Tiffany sit down. Tiffany begins to shed a tear.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

This seems to be the story of my life, the men I usually fall in love with, never end up feeling the same way about me!

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

It seems they care for me in the beginning, and as time passes on they end up treating me like crap, controlling and disrespecting me like I ain't shit! This is the very reason I'm not seriously dating right now. No offense to you Stephen, but I'm so afraid of relationships right now.

Stephen sits speechless...

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

I really want to thank you for showing concern for me, I know you didn't have to do that.

Tiffany inches closer to Stephen and rests her head on his shoulder.

Music begins to play softly in the BACKGROUND. "Getting Late" by Floetry.

STEPHEN

(quietly)

I must admit, I was cool with just being your friend, but...

Tiffany stares at Stephen as the TEARS continue to roll down her face.

Stephen grabs Tiffany's hand.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

... Tiffany look at me. I know we haven't known each other that long for you to trust me, but I want you to free your mind of all the things that have went wrong and just imagine the blessings that could come your way if only you would just believe in life and love again. I'm not asking you to marry me. I'm just simply asking you to look deep in your heart, mind, body, and soul to let your spirit fly free and watch what could happen.

Tiffany begins to blush, as if her world has just changed.

Stephen slides his hand down Tiffany's back as the embrace.

Stephen starts to softly caress Tiffany's back.

There lips become closer, they share a soft kiss.

The music continues...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

TITLE CARD: 4 MONTHS LATER

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - DAY

Stephen and Tiffany are moving furniture around.

The DOORBELL RINGS... It is a MOVER, 20, well built, coming to bring Tiffany's furniture.

The Mover has a logbook in his hand.

Stephen opens the door...

MOVER

Hello, are you Mr. Andrews?

STEPHEN

Yes, I am.

MOVER

Well Mr. Andrews, it's time to go to work.

Stephen laughs.

TIME CUT TO:

SAME SCENE - THREE HOURS LATER

Stephen and Tiffany finish unpacking.

They are enjoying their first evening at home, eating popcorn and watching movies.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The sound of an ALARM CLOCK goes off.

Tiffany moves frantically to stop the alarm from going off. Tiffany rubs her eyes, as an indication that she didn't get enough rest. Tiffany pulls the COVER over her head. Finally Tiffany gets up and sits on the side of the bed.

TIFFANY
Ugh, it's morning again.

Tiffany looks over at Stephen.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Good morning Stephen.

Stephen sits up.

STEPHEN
(serious tone)
How long are you going to keep
fighting this?

TIFFANY
What are you talking about?

STEPHEN
I told you to quit that job, I make
enough money to take care of us
until you finish your studies.

Tiffany stands up and walks to the bathroom.

TIFFANY (O.S.)
You know I can't quit my job!

Stephen lays back down.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Go back to sleep.

STEPHEN
Oh... by the way, tell your Mother
that our plane leaves at 10.00.

TIFFANY (O.S.)
Are you sure your parents won't
mind her coming with us?

STEPHEN
Please, they would love to have
some company for Christmas.

TIFFANY (O.S.)
I can only imagine what your
parents think about us shacking up
like this.

STEPHEN
My parents can't wait to meet you.

Tiffany walks out of the bathroom, gives Stephen a kiss.

TIFFANY
Have a nice day, Mr. Arteist.

STEPHEN
You to, Dr. Jones.

Tiffany exits the room.

EXT. PARENT'S HOUSE - CHRISTMAS DAY - NIGHT

Establishing.

Christmas Decoration cover this picture-perfect home.

INT. PARENT'S HOUSE - CHRISTMAS DAY - NIGHT

The home is full of FAMILY MEMBERS, enjoying the Christmas festivities.

CAMERA REVEALS: STEPHEN'S FATHER, MICHEAL ANDREWS, 61, thin, but well dressed.

MICHEAL
(deep voice)
Alright you all gather around.

FAMILY MEMBERS make their way to the kitchen table, as Micheal prepares to say grace.

MICHEAL (CONT'D)
Let's bow our heads.

Family Members bow their head.

MICHEAL (CONT'D)
Lord I want to thank you for bringing us here safely today. I want to thank you also for the many blessings we received this year. And last but not least, bless this food that we are about to receive for the nourishment of our body. In your name we say, thank you, and Amen.

FAMILY MEMBERS
Amen.

MICHEAL
Alright, lets eat!

Family Members sit down and begin to enjoy the many varieties of soul food that awaits them.

Many Family Members begin to take pictures.

Flashbulbs go off...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. - PARENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Flashbulbs. Stephen stands with his dad, drink in hand.

Family Members are excited as they open their CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

CLOSE - STEPHEN ANDREWS

Stephen is standing next to a stand that appears covered with some material.

Stephen slowly unveils what's under the stand. It is a PAINTING.

The painting is well defined as A WOMAN sitting down on a PARK BENCH with A MAN on one knee asking the WOMAN for her hand in marriage.

CLOSE - PAINTING

The label at the bottom of Painting simple says "Matrimony".

Stephen, with extreme emotion walks slowly over to Tiffany with a SMALL BOX in his hand.

CLOSE - TIFFANY JONES

Tiffany looks around in great suspense.

STEPHEN

(emotional)

Tiffany I know that this may come as a surprise to you, but I think it's time we took our relationship to another level. I know to you this may be a little to soon, but you can't put a time line on love, and Tiffany, I love you. Honey, all I want to do is spend the rest of my life making you happy and taking care of you the way you deserve.

Tiffany stands speechless.

Stephen opens the box.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
(still emotional)
Tiffany Jones, will you marry me?

Tiffany reacts with tears of joy.

TIFFANY
(crying)
Yes Stephen... yes I will marry
you.

They embrace with a long hug and kiss.

The Family Members react with APPLAUSE AND TEARS.

The DJ puts on "Matrimony" by Maxwell.

The couple begin to dance together. The music continues...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

TITLE CARD: 6 MONTHS LATER

EXT. MARINA - MIDDAY

Establishing. A Beautiful YACHT docks on the banks of Lake Michigan; Navy Pier.

INT. BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany and four WOMEN are in the DRESSING ROOM getting Tiffany prepared for her big day.

CUT TO:

INT. BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Stephen is sitting down at the bar with Some MEN having a drink.

A WOMAN who appears to be the WEDDING COORDINATOR walks over to Stephen.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

I'm sorry to interrupt you Stephen,
but I think it's time to begin the
ceremony.

Stephen SLAMS back his drink.

STEPHEN

Already!

WOMAN

(laughing)
Yeah, I'm afraid so.

MAN AT BAR

Don't get scared now!

Stephen smiles, finishes his drink and exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BOAT - CONTINUOUS

The BOAT is well decorated with lovely Flower Arrangements.

Standing at the ARCH is the PREACHER getting his notes in
order for the Ceremony.

Stephen looks nervous as he glances around at the GUEST.

Suddenly... We hear MUSIC from the SPEAKERS, "Ribbon In the
Sky" by Stevie Wonder.

CLOSE - TIFFANY JONES

Tiffany looks stunning in her Glamorous (WHITE) FULL LENGTH
GOWN.

Tiffany gracefully strolls down the AISLE.

CLOSE - STEPHEN ANDREWS

Stephen is overcome with emotion as he watches his lovely
bride come down the aisle.

GUEST stand for the bride.

Tiffany arrives next to Stephen.

The couple look deeply into each other's eyes with a sense
of fulfillment, and happiness.

Guest sit down.

PREACHER

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today, in the presence of GOD, to join this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony. The couple have created their own vows here today that they want to share with you.

TIFFANY

(crying)

Stephen, I love You. You are my best friend. Today I give myself to you in marriage. I promise to encourage and inspire you, to laugh with you, and to comfort you in times of sorrow and struggle. I promise to love you in good times and in bad, when life seems easy and when it seems hard, when our love is simple, and when it is an effort. I promise to cherish you and hold you in highest regard. These things I give you today, and all the days of our life.

STEPHEN

(broken up)

Tiffany, I love You. You are my best friend. Today I give myself to you in marriage. I promise to encourage and inspire you, to laugh with you, and to comfort you in times of sorrow and struggle. I promise to love you in good times and in bad, when life seems easy and when it seems hard, when our love is simple, and when it is an effort. I promise to cherish you and hold you in highest regard. These things I give you today, and all the days of our life.

Preacher is overcome with emotion.

PREACHER

The rings please.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

By the power invested in me, I now pronounce you, HUSBAND and WIFE. You may kiss your Bride.

The couple engage in a sweet, subtle, and passionate kiss.

PREACHER (CONT'D)
I now present to you, Mr. And Mrs.
Stephen Andrews.

FLASHBULBS go off... GUEST APPLAUSE...

PREACHER (CONT'D)
Can everyone make there way up to
the second floor, we are about to
begin the cruise.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOAT - CONTINUOUS

GUEST eating, drinking, and dancing to the latest music.

"I Can't Stop Loving You" by KEM plays on the RADIO.

Stephen walks over to the microphone.

STEPHEN
(clears his throat)
Hello everyone. I hope you all are
having a great time. First off...
I would like to say, thank you all
for showing up on such a short
notice.

GUEST laugh.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
I just want to say a few things to
my lovely wife. Tiffany my love,
you are my greatest inspiration,
and the love of my life.
Everything that I am and everything
that I do is for you. Thank you
for choosing me to spend the rest
of your life with. Our journey
starts here. Tiffany, my love I
want to love you for life.

Stephen raises his cup and gestures a toast.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Here's to my Wife.

CLOSE - TIFFANY ANDREWS

Tiffany is overcome with emotion.

Guest toast. The music continues...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

AROUND CHICAGO MONTAGE:

Stephen and Tiffany enjoy time as newlyweds.

Stephen and Tiffany go on a seemingly endless horseback ride with one another.

Stephen and Tiffany watch the sunset on LAKE MICHIGAN, lost in animated conversation. They seem surprised at what they're discovering in each other.

Stephen and Tiffany enjoy a football game together.

Stephen and Tiffany dine at a cafe, sipping coffee, tentative with one another.

Life couldn't be better for the couple until...

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Stephen and Tiffany are enjoying a quiet evening dining at a local restaurant.

STEPHEN
(quietly)
Honey, I love you so much.

TIFFANY
(surprised)
Stephen, I love you too, baby.

Tiffany reassures Stephen with a soft kiss on his cheek.

STEPHEN
Tiffany, I know we need time to ourselves being that it's so early in our marriage, but... I think in order for us to be complete, we need to add to our family.

A beat.

TIFFANY
What do you mean?

STEPHEN
You know... kids.

TIFFANY
(taken aback)
What! When?

STEPHEN
Relax baby, I'm not saying today.
I'm talking sometime in the near
future.

TIFFANY
(sighs)
Stephen, we have only been married
for 8 months. Don't you think we
need some time to ourselves?

STEPHEN
(angered)
We're not getting any younger you
know!

TIFFANY
Stephen, we need to plan this a
little better before we go rushing
into something like that!

STEPHEN
(still angered)
Rush?! I'm 35 years old, I'm not
going to wait until I'm old and
gray to have my first kid!

TIFFANY
Stephen calm down. All I'm saying
is give me a little time. I'm just
getting my career back on track. I
can't just keep putting it on hold
like that, Honey!

STEPHEN
Wait, hold on a minute! You mean
to tell me that your career is more
important than our family?

TIFFANY
No Honey, I'm not saying that. I'm
simply saying that we need a little
more time to make sure our finances
are in order.

STEPHEN
Our finances are in order!

TIFFANY
 (convincing tone)
 But baby we'll be a whole lot
 better off when I'm done with my
 Dissertation.

STEPHEN
 (calming down)
 How long do you have left?

TIFFANY
 Look, doing a Dissertation isn't an
 easy task... it takes time you
 know. But I should be done shortly.

STEPHEN
 (sighs)
 Tiffany, promise me one thing.

Tiffany moves in closer to Stephen.

TIFFANY
 What's that, honey?

STEPHEN
 When you're done, please consider
 completing my life with our first
 child.

TIFFANY
 Honey, I promise.

Tiffany and Stephen embrace and continue eating their food.

A beat.

STEPHEN
 Are you still coming to the Art
 Show with me next week?

TIFFANY
 (surprised)
 Next week? I thought it was at the
 end of the month.

STEPHEN
 (laughing)
 Next week is the end of the month.

TIFFANY
 (thinks)
 I don't think so. I have so much
 work to catch up on.

STEPHEN

That's cool, I'm sure I can manage Phillip on my own this time.

TIFFANY

I'm sure you'll have a great time doing that.

Stephen laughs and they continue eating.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - MIDDAY

SEVERAL SHOTS of PEOPLE walking around THE ART SHOW admiring PAINTINGS from various ARTIST.

THREE SHOT - STEPHEN, PHILLIP AND NICOLE

PHILLIP

So... what do you guys want to get into tonight?

STEPHEN

I was thinking we could find something to eat in The French Quarters.

PHILLIP

Man, Please! This is New Orleans, we have to check out a Blues Joint or something.

STEPHEN

Phil, you know we have to get up early. Let's just grab a bite to eat, and call it a night.

NICOLE

I'm with Phil, I'd rather check out some clubs instead of going to some lame ass restaurant.

A beat.

STEPHEN

I'm guess there's no harm in that.

PHILLIP

That's what I'm talking about, I'm so glad you took your skirt off.

STEPHEN

Whatever! You just meet me in the lobby at 8:00.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Tiffany is typing very intensely on her computer.

The sound of a TELEPHONE startles her.

TIFFANY
 (to herself)
 Who the hell is calling me this
 time of night?

Tiffany reaches over and picks of the phone--

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
 Hello!

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SHERRY'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

SHERRY
 (into phone)
 Damn girl, relax, it's just me!

TIFFANY
 (relaxed)
 Oh, hey chick, you almost got your
 butt cursed out.

SHERRY
 Anyway... I was calling to see if
 you wanted to hang out tonight?

TIFFANY
 Hang out? Girl please! I have so
 much work to do it's not even
 funny!

SHERRY
 (excited)
 Come on girl, you need to take a
 break anyway. I promise not to
 keep you out to late.

TIFFANY
 (unsure)
 I Don't...

SHERRY
 ... Come on cuz, it will be fun.

A beat.

TIFFANY

(convinced)

I was getting a little frustrated anyway.

SHERRY

(still excited)

That's what I'm talking about girl, I'll see you around 11.00.

TIFFANY

Calm down girl. It's going to have to be a little later than that. I haven't done anything to my hair.

SHERRY

Well, you know where I'll be.

TIFFANY

Girl, you always want to be seen. Don't you want to try some where different tonight?

SHERRY

Please! You already got a brother with money... Shit, I'm trying to find me one too girl.

TIFFANY

(laughs)

I'll see you later.

Tiffany hangs up the telephone.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Tiffany turns heads as she walks through the Club with her seductive dress on; shows all her curves.

Tiffany tries not to pay attention to all the GENTLEMEN trying to come on to her, but she can't help but to blush.

ANGLE ON

Tiffany sees Sherry sitting at the table. Sherry waves Tiffany over.

Tiffany finally makes her way to the table, sits down.

SHERRY

Tiffany, this is my friend I was telling you about, Daryl.

Daryl reaches out to shake Tiffany's hand.

Tiffany looks angered as she extends her hand.

TIFFANY
(dryly)
It's nice to meet you.

DARYL
Same here.

Tiffany signals over to Sherry to get up.

SHERRY
Daryl, you're going to have to
excuse me for a minute.

They exit.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHTCLUB - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany and Sherry stand in the bathroom having a heated conversation.

TIFFANY
(angered)
I thought it was just going to be
me and you having a drink tonight?

SHERRY
Girl, relax. I was just getting
him to buy me a few drinks until
you came.

TIFFANY
Well, I hope you're getting ready
to get rid of him!

SHERRY
Yeah girl, don't worry. I know we
got a lot of stuff to catch up on.

A beat.

TIFFANY
(finally calm)
Alright, that's cool. Look...I
have to use the potty so I'll see
you in a minute.

SHERRY
 Alright girl.

Sherry exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NIGHTCLUB - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany leaves the Bathroom and tries to make her way to the table until... Tiffany stops dead in her tracks, as if she has just seen a GHOST.

TIFFANY'S POV - DRAKE MITCHELL

Tiffany tries to walk past Drake.

DRAKE
 Hello Tiffany. I just know you weren't going to walk by me and not say nothing?

TIFFANY
 (lying)
 Oh... hi Drake, I didn't even see you. How have you been?

DRAKE
 I've been good. How about you?

Drake looks Tiffany up and down.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
 I see married life is treating you well.

TIFFANY
 Yeah, I don't have any complaints.

DRAKE
 That's good. I'm glad you found someone who adores you just as much as I do.

A beat.

TIFFANY
 Anyway Drake, I'm here with Sherry so I'd better get back over there before she loses her mind. It was nice seeing you.

Tiffany begins to walk away.

DRAKE

Wait, hold up, is this how we're going to end our reunion?

TIFFANY

(laughs)

Reunion, boy please! I see you haven't changed at all.

DRAKE

(begging)

Come on girl, the least you can do is let me buy you a drink.

TIFFANY

No I'm alright... thanks anyway.

A beat.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Look, Drake... I really have to go.

DRAKE

(still begging)

Come on Baby, it's me. Don't try to treat me like my name was Johnny or something.

Tiffany stops.

TIFFANY

(thinks)

Just one drink. No strings attached.

Drake licks his lips.

DRAKE

(laughing)

Just three, no strings attached.

TIFFANY

Anyway... Let me tell Sherry what's up so she won't think I left her.

Tiffany walks away.

DRAKE

Tiffany, don't try to pull a disappearing act on me again.

Tiffany turns up her lips, cuts her eyes; continues walking.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TIFFANY'S CAR - NIGHT

Tiffany and Drake are riding in the car, Tiffany struggles to see as she turns her windshield wipers on to get the rain off.

Tiffany and Drake sit speechless...

TIFFANY

So... Drake how we're you going to get home had you not seen me tonight?

DRAKE

I guess it was our destiny to meet up again.

TIFFANY

Yeah, whatever, I'm about to drop your butt off right on this corner so I can get out of this rain.

DRAKE

Yeah you always get a little out spoken when you drink.

Tiffany turns her windshield wipers on faster.

TIFFANY

Damn this rain is coming down hard! I can't see a thing!

DRAKE

Make the next right.

TIFFANY

Drake, how long have you been living here anyway?

DRAKE

8 years.

TIFFANY

8 years? You should own a home by now.

Tiffany stops in front of Drake's apartment, puts the car in park.

The rain is coming down even harder now.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
 (concerned)
 Drake, I really wish you the best
 of luck.

Tiffany reaches out to shake Drake's hand.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
 You take care of yourself, Okay.

DRAKE
 Is this all I'm worth, a damn
 handshake?

Tiffany begins to laugh; realizing she has the power over
 Drake now.

TIFFANY
 (sighs)
 I don't know what you we're
 expecting, but it ain't that type
 of party.

DRAKE
 Why don't you come in for a while
 until it stops raining.

TIFFANY
Boy, I got to get home!

DRAKE
 Hey look, I'm just trying to help
 you out. You know you can't see at
 night, let alone in the rain. I
 just don't want to stay up all
 night wondering if you made it home
 safely.

A long beat.

TIFFANY
 You better be lucky it's raining so
 bad.

Drake opens his door.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
 Drake, you know I trust you, right?

DRAKE
 Girl don't no body want you but
 your husband.

Drake closes the door, runs to the apartment.

INT. DRAKE MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Tiffany sits at the table in mid-conversation on her cellphone.

TIFFANY

... Me and Sherry went out, and it started raining on us.

Drake walks up to Tiffany while she's on the phone.

Tiffany holds up her finger to signal to him to hold on.

Drake walks behind Tiffany and starts massaging her neck.

Tiffany smiles and bites her bottom lip out of pleasure.

She finally turns around, gives him the signal again.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

... Alright honey, it stopped raining so I'm going to head home right now. I'll call you when I get home. I love you.

Tiffany hangs the phone up. She looks at Drake with weakness in her eyes.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Drake moves in closer to kiss Tiffany. Tiffany tries to resist, but finds she can't.

Drake begins to kiss Tiffany's neck; works his way down her body.

Tiffany reacts with heavy breathing.

Drake lifts her dress up, pulls her underwear to the side and pulls Tiffany to the edge of the sofa.

Tiffany begins to moan uncontrollably.

Drake then picks Tiffany up and takes her into the bedroom.

INT. NEW ORLEANS - HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

THREE SHOT - PHILLIP, STEPHEN AND NICOLE

Walking in from the Blues Joint. Nicole seems to be extremely intoxicated.

Stephen grabs Nicole by the arm as she begins to fall.

PHILLIP

Alright Stephen, I hope you got her
because my train stops here.

STEPHEN

Yeah I got her. I'll see you in
the morning.

Phillip exits to his room.

Stephen and Nicole continue walking until they arrive at
Nicole's room.

Nicole struggles to get her key in the door.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Here, let me help you with that.

Stephen takes the key, opens the door.

NICOLE

(slurring)

Stephen, I don't know what I'll do
without you.

STEPHEN

Are you going to be alright?

Nicole falls back.

Stephen catches Nicole.

Nicole looks into Stephen's eyes.

NICOLE

I'll be a whole lot better if you
stay and make love to me until I
fall asleep.

STEPHEN

(taken aback)

Excuse me!

NICOLE

You heard me.

STEPHEN

Nicole, you're drunk.

A beat.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
 Hey look Nicole, I'm going to leave
 before I do something I'll regret
 later.

Nicole starts to dance for Stephen erotically.

NICOLE
 (still slurring)
 I've been waiting 4 long years for
 this Stephen.

Stephen abruptly stops her in her act.

STEPHEN
 Nicole stop, I can't do this!

NICOLE
 What, you think I don't know what
 I'm doing because I'm drunk?

STEPHEN
 No, It's not that. I'm married
 Nicole. If this was a couple years
 ago, there would be nothing you
 could do to get me off you.

A awkward beat between the two. Finally...

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry Nicole, but I have to go.

NICOLE
 Stephen, how are you going to leave
 me like this sweetie?

STEPHEN
 I have to...

Nicole kisses him; nice, long, juicy, passionate kiss.

Finally...

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
 Stop! I told you we can't do this!

Stephen walks away.

CLOSE - NICOLE

NICOLE
 (to herself)
 What a lucky woman.

INT. DRAKE MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tiffany lies in bed, staring at the ceiling.

Tiffany rolls out of bed, puts her clothes on.

Drake walks over with a towel wrapped around him.

DRAKE

Damn baby, was it that bad?

Tiffany stares with a blank expression.

TIFFANY

(angered)

Drake, I have to go!

DRAKE

What's wrong honey? I know you enjoyed it as much as I did!

TIFFANY

Drake, It's not about that. This is all wrong! I have to go!

DRAKE

Tiffany, I'm not going to say I'm sorry for something that I feel is real. I understand how you feel, but we both wanted this.

TIFFANY

(still angered)

Drake, true enough we both wanted this, but that still doesn't make this right. I'm not angry with you, I'm upset with myself for losing focus. I have to go. Goodbye Drake!

Tiffany exits.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Tiffany lays in the bed with extreme agony, pulls the COVER over her face.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

Tiffany puts on her robe, crosses into:

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany opens the door. Leona stands in the doorway.

TIFFANY
(dryly)
Oh... hi Mom.

LEONA
(angered)
Don't hi Mom me, I've been trying
to call you all morning!

TIFFANY
Mom I'm not feeling to well.

Leona touches her hair.

LEONA
Yeah, I can see that.

Tiffany closes the door...

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany stands at the stove, making some coffee.

LEONA
Are you going to get dressed?

TIFFANY
Mom I don't feel like shopping
today.

LEONA
You shouldn't have been out
drinking all night!

TIFFANY
(quietly)
It's not the drinks that have me
feeling so bad.

LEONA
(taken aback)
What?

TIFFANY
(dismissive)
Nothing Mom.

LEONA
Don't nothing Mom me! What's
wrong?

TIFFANY
It's nothing.

LEONA
Alright young lady I'm only going
to...

TIFFANY
... Mom, I saw Drake last night.

LEONA
Yeah I bet. He's always at some
damn club. What does that have to
do with anything?

A beat.

TIFFANY
No Mom, I saw him last night.

LEONA
What do you mean, You saw him?

Tiffany begins to cry.

TIFFANY
(rambling)
Yeah Mom I didn't ever think I
would see him again... he was at
the club and I gave him a ride
home... and it was raining real bad
and... it just happened.

Leona is stunned as she takes it all in.

LEONA
It just happened huh? I would not
have given that asshole the time of
day, let alone a ride!

TIFFANY
(still crying)
Mom, I was drinking and it just
happened, but I'm not trying to
leave Stephen for him.

LEONA
You keep messing up like this and
You want have to leave Steven,
he'll leave you.

TIFFANY

Mom, what should I do? Should I tell him what happened?

LEONA

(angered)

Girl are you crazy? Hell no you're not going to tell him! What you're going to do is get yourself together before he comes home today!

TIFFANY

Mom, I feel so bad!

LEONA

Well you should! Stephen loves you to death, and this is how you repay him.

A beat.

LEONA (CONT'D)

Anyway, lets get down to business!

TIFFANY

Mom I told you I didn't feel like going shopping today.

LEONA

I'm not talking about that!

TIFFANY

What are you talking about?

LEONA

(sighs)

Who's bigger?

TIFFANY

(taken aback)

Mom?

LEONA

You're the one who put yourself in this position in the first place, not me! Now answer the question!

TIFFANY

(embarrassed)

Do I even have to answer that?

LEONA
 (sighs)
 That's what I thought.

TIFFANY
 What does that have to do with
 anything?

Leona grabs her keys, walks to the door.

LEONA
 Any man who knows his woman knows
 when someone has been messing with
 his cookies!

Tiffany stares at Leona.

LEONA (CONT'D)
 Go and put some clothes on so we
 can get you together before your
HUSBAND comes home!

TIFFANY
 (convinced)
 Alright mom.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tiffany and Leona are preparing dinner.

The DOOR SLAMS and Stephen enters--

Tiffany runs over and gives him a hug, as if nothing ever
 happened.

Leona walks over and gives him a hug also.

STEPHEN
 (laughing)
 Damn, I need to leave town more
 often.

LEONA
 How was the show?

STEPHEN
 It was great! I made some new
 contacts, so it worked out fine.

LEONA
 Wonderful!

Tiffany and Stephen begin to kiss (BIG ONE).

TIFFANY
Honey, I missed you so much.

STEPHEN
I missed you too, sweetie.

TIFFANY
I hope you're hungry.

STEPHEN
I'm so hungry I could eat a horse.

LEONA
Don't worry the food will be ready
in 20 minutes.

STEPHEN
I'm going to grab a shower.

Stephen exits.

Tiffany and Leona look relieved as Stephen walks upstairs.

LEONA
(quietly)
I don't like this at all! You
better keep it together!

TIFFANY
(whispering)
Mom, what should I do?

LEONA
You do what every woman does when
her man comes back in town.

TIFFANY
Mom, I can't sleep with him!

LEONA
Well don't, and see what happens!

TIFFANY
What about last night?

LEONA
What about it? It never happened!
Do you understand me?

Tiffany nods.

Leona walks toward the door.

LEONA (CONT'D)
I'm going home.

TIFFANY
Good night Mom. Thank you.

LEONA
Don't thank me! Good Night!

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

TITLE CARD: TWO MONTH'S LATER

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Stephen and Tiffany are enjoying a quiet evening at home watching movies. Tiffany has a distant look on her face.

STEPHEN
Is everything alright?

TIFFANY
I think I have to go to the bathroom again.

STEPHEN
Again? What's going on with you?

TIFFANY
I don't know, it feels like I have vertigo all the time.

Tiffany disappears to bathroom. Beat, then she re-appears.

She sits back down on the couch.

Stephen looks at her.

STEPHEN
False alarm?

TIFFANY
I did have to go this time.

STEPHEN
(concerned)
Don't you think we need to make an appointment?

TIFFANY
I have.

STEPHEN
What do you think it can be?

An awkward beat between the couple.

TIFFANY
(sighs)
Stephen, I didn't want to say
anything... but I think I'm
pregnant.

STEPHEN
(excited)
What? Pregnant, that's great!

Stephen begins to stand and celebrate.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
How long have you known about this?
This is great!

Stephen grabs Tiffany by the hand and pulls her off the
couch, hugs her.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Thank you Honey!

TIFFANY
It just sort of came over me
overnight.

STEPHEN
(still excited)
Honey, I'm so happy! Thank you. I
know we talked about this before...
but I thought we decided to wait!
Let's celebrate.

They continue embracing.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

MONTAGE:

INT. MALL - DAY

Tiffany and Stephen walk through the mall, picking out
clothes for her and the baby as she gets BIGGER, as...

INT. LAMAZE CLASS - MORNING

Tiffany and Stephen get instructions from lamaze class, as...

INT. DAYCARE - MIDDAY

Tiffany and Stephen look at day care facilities, as...

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tiffany and Stephen eat dinner.

TITLE CARD: NINE MONTHS LATER

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Tiffany and Stephen are getting prepped for surgery.

Stephen has a nervous look on his face, Stephen grabs Tiffany by the hand.

Finally-- a NURSE walks over.

NURSE

(assuring)

Don't be nervous, She'll be fine,
women go through this everyday.

STEPHEN

I'm so nervous, I feel like I'm the
one having this baby.

NURSE

(to Stephen)

Just relax and breath, you'll be
alright. I think the DOCTOR is
ready for us, Stephen.

The nurse rolls Tiffany into the delivery room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The STAFF is awaiting Tiffany's arrival. The staff begins
the surgery.

TIME CUT TO:

SAME SCENE - ONE HOUR LATER

DOCTOR
It's a boy!

Stephen is overcome with joy.

The Nurse brings the baby over to the couple.

STEPHEN
(emotional)
He's so cute.

TIFFANY
Yes he is. He looks just like you
Stephen.

Stephen kisses Tiffany and the baby.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Thank you Stephen, I love you.

Nurse takes the baby away.

STEPHEN
We did it, Baby. Thank You.

They continue embracing.

INT. STEPHEN' HOME - EVENING

The couple bring their baby home for the first time.

MONTAGE:

EXT. PARK - MORNING

Stephen and Tiffany are walking with their baby in the park,
as...

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - DAY

Their son take his first steps, as...

EXT. STEPHEN'S HOME - MORNING

Stephen tosses the ball with Junior.

EXT. BASEBALL PARK - DAY

Junior is 3 years old now, Junior tries on his equipment for the first time.

TITLE CARD: THREE YEARS LATER

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME - BATHROOM - MORNING

Tiffany finishes vomiting. Stephen rubs her back.

TIFFANY

(worried)

Stephen, I have something I want to ask you.

STEPHEN

(concerned)

Yeah baby, what is it?

TIFFANY

Did you have any accidents the last time we made love?

STEPHEN

(laughs)

I don't remember, why do you ask?

TIFFANY

I don't know, I just haven't been feeling to well lately.

STEPHEN

Why didn't you say something. I would have got you some medicine.

TIFFANY

It's nothing, it's just probably something I ate.

STEPHEN

If you don't feel any better by tomorrow, I'm going to take you to the emergency room!

TIFFANY

There's nothing to worry about, I'll be alright.

Tiffany leans over and gives Stephen a kiss.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MIDDAY

Tiffany sits in the waiting area with a worried look on her face.

The RECEPTIONIST looks over Tiffany's paperwork.

RECEPTIONIST

Mrs. Andrews, Dr. Murphy will see you now.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany steps on the scale.

NURSE looks at Tiffany's chart.

NURSE

Girl, I need to find out what kind of diet you're on.

TIFFANY

Yeah, I know I've lost some weight.

NURSE

25 pounds since your last visit. Are you working out?

TIFFANY

(laughs)

Yes, a little bit, but it could be stress related.

NURSE

Just can have a seat in room number two. Dr. Murphy will be with you shortly.

TIFFANY

Thank you.

Tiffany exits.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

While Tiffany is fixing her shirt Dr. Murphy, 50, walks in.

DR. MURPHY
Hello Mrs. Andrews, How are you
doing?

TIFFANY
I'm fine, just a little nervous.

DR. MURPHY
(looks over chart)
Mrs. Andrews I looked over your lab
results from your last visit and I
found something we need to discuss.

TIFFANY
I'm listening.

DR. MURPHY
Mrs. Andrews I'm sorry but there is
no easy way to put this so I'm
going to get straight to the point.
Mrs. Andrews I'm afraid you have a
TERMINAL ILLNESS.

Tiffany stands up.

TIFFANY
(taken aback)
What?

A long beat.

DR. MURPHY
Mrs. Andrews, you're test results
came back positive for THE HIV
VIRUS.

TIFFANY
(irate)
What?!... No! That can't be true!
You need to look over that
paperwork again, because I think
you have the wrong person!

Dr. Murphy begins to backup to the door.

DR. MURPHY
Try to calm down, let me bring in
the results of the lab work.

Dr. Murphy walks out, closes the door.

Tiffany begins to pace around the small room.

The door opens.

In comes a COUNSELOR.

Tiffany looks around.

TIFFANY

(still irate)

Who the hell are you? Where is Dr. Murphy?

COUNSELOR

Try to calm down, My name is Ms. Williams and I'm the Counselor here at the clinic. I know this is not easy for you, but there are a high number of HIV cases out here involving African American Women. We have found new ways that make it possible for you to continue your life with this and have a better quality of life.

Tiffany sits down, shakes her head in disbelief.

Counselor walks over to Tiffany and consoles her.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

When your ready, their are some things we have to go over. It's a process, so take as much time as you need.

A long beat.

TIFFANY

I'm ready.

COUNSELOR

I see here that you're married.

TIFFANY

Yes. What's that have to do with anything?

COUNSELOR

How long have you been married?

TIFFANY

I'm sorry, but your asking me these questions like nothing is wrong! You just gave me the saddest news of my life and you're asking me about my personal life!

COUNSELOR

Yes, I understand, but that's exactly what I'm trying to do is figure out your lifestyle.

Livid, Tiffany throws her keys against the wall.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Look I'm sorry, I just want to get you the help you need. So, if you like we can finish this another day.

TIFFANY

No, let's just get it over!

COUNSELOR

Are you sure?

TIFFANY

Yes.

COUNSELOR

Do you think that your husband could have lived an alternative lifestyle.

TIFFANY

No way! My husband is a good man, he would never cheat on me.

COUNSELOR

The reason why I'm asking is because most women don't have any idea that their partners get involved in those type of relationships.

TIFFANY

Like I said, My husband isn't gay, and he's never cheated on me!

COUNSELOR

I guess my next question is... have you been completely faithful to him?

TIFFANY

(agitated)

Of course I have. I love my husband to death I would never do anything to hurt him!

Tiffany looks around in disbelief.

FLASHBACK - DRAKE MITCHELL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Drake and Tiffany are engaging in heavy four play.

TIFFANY

Drake, I hope you have some protection.

DRAKE

Of course I do.

TIFFANY

We can't do anything unless you put it on.

CLOSE - PACK OF CONDOMS

Drake reaches for the condoms, opens them up.

Drake PRETENDS he puts the CONDOM on.

DRAKE

How's that?

Drake continues with the four play.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

TIFFANY

That bastard! I knew I shouldn't have sleep with him!

The tears come down harder.

Counselor still consoling Tiffany.

COUNSELOR

It's going to be alright. You can beat this! All you have to do is stay strong!

TIFFANY

So that's it?!

COUNSELOR

No Mrs. Andrews. We're going to be here for you every step of the way.
(MORE)

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

We offer free medication and free counseling as well.

TIFFANY

(crying hysterically)

I'm sorry for being like this, but I don't know what to do. I don't know how to tell my family about this.

COUNSELOR

Speaking of your husband, he needs to get in here and get tested as soon as possible.

Counselor gives Tiffany some BROCHURES.

TIFFANY

I don't know weather to thank you, or tell you to go to hell.

COUNSELOR

(laughs)

I'll understand if you just slapped the hell out of me.

Counselor and Tiffany both laugh.

Counselor gives Tiffany a hug.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

I promise everything is going to be fine. Follow up with me next week.

TIFFANY

Thank you so much.

Counselor walks out.

Tiffany continues to sit there with her head down, sobbing.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

INT. STEPHEN'S AND TIFFANY'S HOME - NIGHT

Tiffany has just finished preparing dinner, she sets the table.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Tiffany answers it. It is Leona and Junior, 3, and full of energy. Junior gives Tiffany a big hug and runs upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany stands over the stove, cooking collard greens.

LEONA

What's the special occasion... wait don't tell me, you're pregnant again?

TIFFANY

No mom I'm not pregnant. Why can't I just cook for my family?

Stephen walks in--

STEPHEN

Hi Baby, how did the appointment go today?

TIFFANY

(lying)
Oh, everything went fine, I'll tell you about it later.

Stephen kisses Tiffany.

LEONA

So Stephen how is business going?

STEPHEN

It's going well. As a matter of fact, Phillip and I just signed a deal for a giant retail chain.

LEONA

(excited)
Are you serious? That sounds like a big money deal.

TIFFANY

Mom, why are you always talking about money?

LEONA

(laughs)
Well that's what he's working for, ain't it?

TIFFANY

Everything doesn't evolve around money! He could be doing it because he loves it!

LEONA

Well there's nothing wrong with that. Speaking of work Ms. Thang, when are you going to get a job and start helping this man out with some of these bills?

TIFFANY

(agitated)

I know you didn't just go there Mom!

LEONA

Anyway. I sure did.

TIFFANY

See Mom you're always trying to start something. Stephen hasn't ever complained about me going back to work. As a matter of fact, he's the one who told me to quit in the first place.

LEONA

I'm sure Stephen could use some help around here, Tiff. He works so hard. Always traveling and selling...

TIFFANY

... Mom I don't want to hear this tonight! I have a lot on my plate, and I just want to enjoy a quiet evening at home, alone.

Leona stands up.

LEONA

(angered)

You know what, maybe you should be alone, so you can figure out what you should be doing as a Wife and a Mother. So, let me get the hell out of her before you make me say something to you in front of my grand child! Goodbye!

Leona Exits.

INT. STEPHEN AND TIFFANY'S HOME - MORNING

Tiffany sits at the table drinking coffee, staring into space.

Stephen walks in--

STEPHEN
Good morning, Darling.

Stephen gives Tiffany a kiss.

TIFFANY
(dryly)
Good morning.

STEPHEN
(concerned)
Honey, what is wrong with you? You haven't been the same since you left that doctor's office.

A beat.

TIFFANY
Stephen, there's something I need to explain to you, I just don't know how.

Stephen hugs her.

STEPHEN
I'm sure whatever it is we can get through it, together.

Stephen sits down.

TIFFANY
Not now Stephen, it's just too much for me to handle right now, and besides I don't want to ruin your day at the gallery.

STEPHEN
So if not now, when?

TIFFANY
We will talk when you get home from work.

They sit around in silence.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

It's nothing to worry about, you go on to work, I'll be alright. Maybe we could take Junior out for ice cream later on.

STEPHEN

(not convinced)
Alright.

Stephen hugs Tiffany.

Tiffany wipes her tears.

TIFFANY

Stephen I love you, Don't you ever forget it.

They continue to hug.

MONTAGE:

INT. STEPHEN AND TIFFANY'S HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

Tiffany lays in the bed silently looking at the ceiling.

Tiffany pulls out her NOTE PAD and begins to write in it, as...

INT. STEPHEN AND TIFFANY'S HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

Tiffany is lying on the floor, balled up like a baby; fetal position.

Tiffany grabs her medication, Tiffany drinks from a BOTTLE of VODKA, as...

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

Tiffany gets another PRESCRIPTION from her DOCTOR, as...

INT. STEPHEN AND TIFFANY'S HOME - EVENING

Stephen cooks dinner, but Tiffany doesn't eat.

Stephen tries to talk to Tiffany, but she just brushes him off, as if he wasn't there, as...

INT. STEPHEN AND TIFFANY'S HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

Tiffany is lying in bed, seemingly aging, Tiffany takes another drink out her private stash, now a routine, Tiffany continues drinking everyday until...

INT. STEPHEN AND TIFFANY'S HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

Stephen gets prepared for work.

Tiffany lays silently in the bed with the covers over her head.

Stephen looks over at her.

STEPHEN

(angered)

Listen honey, it's been quite some time since you left that Doctor's office and you still haven't told me what's going on! You have all of us worried to death! All you're doing is laying around here all day, drinking!

Tiffany pulls the cover down from her face.

TIFFANY

(hung over)

There's nothing to worry about. I'm alright.

STEPHEN

When I get back today, I'm taking you to get some help!

Tiffany sits up in the bed.

TIFFANY

I don't need no help, this is something I got to deal with on my own.

STEPHEN

By the time I come home today, I hope you're ready to talk and get some closure to this, because to be quite frank I'm not going to keep going through this everyday!

TIFFANY

I said I'll deal with it!

Stephen kisses Tiffany and exits.

TIME CUT TO:

SAME SCENE - THREE HOURS LATER

Tiffany lays silently in the bed looking at her PHOTO ALBUM.

The tears continue to roll down harder.

She reaches over and pours a drink.

Tiffany continues to drink.

She looks around the room and in a state of rage.

TIFFANY
(to herself)
WHY ME?!

The tears continue to roll down harder.

Tiffany reaches over to the night stand and grabs her MEDICINE, she slowly sips her drink as she swallows her pills.

After a few minutes Tiffany finally falls asleep...

EXT. STEPHEN AND TIFFANY'S HOME - NIGHT

Establishing.

INT. STEPHEN'S AND TIFFANY'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Stephen walks in the home searching for Tiffany--

Stephen looks around, but there is no sign of Tiffany.

STEPHEN
Tiffany...

Stephen then precedes to walk upstairs to the BEDROOM...

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN AND TIFFANY'S HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stephen sees Tiffany lying peacefully in bed.

Stephen walks over to Tiffany.

As Stephen approaches slowly, he notices the Pill bottles on the NIGHTSTAND.

In a frantic motion Stephen pulls the COVER back.

TIFFANY IS BLUE; NOT BREATHING.

Stephen grabs Tiffany and pulls her close to him.

STEPHEN

Tiffany!

No response. He places his two fingers over her carotid artery, trying to find a heartbeat. He can't find one.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Tiffany... Tiff wake up honey!

No response.

He then tries to perform CPR on her; NOTHING HAPPENS.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Oh god... what the hell is going on?

Stephen looks around for the phone, grabs it off the nightstand.

Stephen picks up the Phone--

Dials the number--

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. 911 DISPATCH - CONTINUOUS

OPERATOR

911, may I help you?

STEPHEN

(crying)

My wife isn't breathing, can you please send someone to help me!

OPERATOR

She isn't breathing? Have you tried CPR?

STEPHEN

Yes I have! Can you get someone here, NOW!

OPERATOR

Okay sir, try and relax, help is on the way.

Stephen SLAMS the PHONE down.

Stephen continues CPR.

SIRENS approach from a distance.

Stephen rushes down stairs to open the DOOR.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

STEPHEN

(pointing upstairs)
She's right up there!

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The PARAMEDICS look at each other for a beat, they begin CPR.

Tiffany still lies motionless in the bed.

PARAMEDIC

Sir, I'm sorry but there's nothing we can do for her.

Stephen looks around, falls to his knees, begins to CRY.

By this time the DETECTIVE, 40, arrives on the scene.

DETECTIVE

(compassionately)

Mr. Andrews I'm Detective Scott. First, I would like to say I'm terribly sorry for your loss. I know this is a difficult time for you, but I was wondering if you would give us permission to look around to see exactly what went on here?

In a violent rage, Stephen PUNCHES the wall.

STEPHEN

Fuck!

He punches the wall again.

DETECTIVE

I'm sorry Sir, maybe we can do this another time.

STEPHEN

(calming down)

No Officer Please, I don't mind, just let me get my thoughts together.

The detective reaches out to shake Stephen's hand.

POLICE OFFICER

I'm terribly sorry, Sir.

Stephen starts to cry again.

STEPHEN

(screams)

Why God... why did this have to happen to her?!

Stephen walks away, reaches into his POCKET, grabs his CELLPHONE.

He tries to compose himself as he dials the number.

Stephen Dials--

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LEONA'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

LEONA

Hello.

STEPHEN

(still trying to calm down)

Hi Mom, how's Junior?

LEONA

Hi Stephen, how are you? Oh don't worry about Junior, he's fine.

STEPHEN

Yeah that's not what I was calling about. I was hoping you could find someone to watch him.

LEONA

Sure... sure Stephen, is everything alright?

STEPHEN

Yeah everything is fine, I just need you to come over as soon as you can.

LEONA

Okay, Stephen, I'm leaving right now.

Leona hangs up the phone.

INT. STEPHEN AND TIFFANY'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Stephen walks back to the Detective.

DETECTIVE

I hope you don't mind, but there are some questions I want to ask you, if you feel comfortable enough to talk.

STEPHEN

I just want to know what happened to my wife!

A beat.

DETECTIVE

Was your wife on any medications of any kind?

STEPHEN

No, not that I can think of. What's that have to do with anything?

POLICE OFFICER

Did you notice any kind of change in her behavior?

STEPHEN

I'm confused, I thought you were going to look around to find out what happened here!

DETECTIVE

Please, try to calm down. It's just routine questions.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Was your wife showing any signs of depression?

STEPHEN

(thinks)

Come to think about it, she was acting a little strange every since she came back from the Doctor.

DETECTIVE

What kind of Doctor?

STEPHEN

Our family Physician, we thought she might have been pregnant.

DETECTIVE

So I take it she wasn't.

STEPHEN

No!

POLICE OFFICER

Well, that's probably what she was depressed about. Maybe she wanted to be.

STEPHEN

See that's just it. We already have a son, she told me we should wait to have our second child.

Detective continues writing in his book.

DETECTIVE

(remorseful)

Thank's Mr. Andrews, there's just one more thing. While we were looking around, we found this.

Detective hands Stephen a LETTER.

INSERT - LETTER

Words scrawled in black ink: "TO MY LOVING HUSBAND."

BACK TO SCENE

Stephen reacts with alarm. He takes a closer look at the letter.

STEPHEN

What's this?

DETECTIVE
We found it on your night stand,
next to your wedding album.

Stephen begins to cry again.

STEPHEN
Thank you.

Stephen places the note in his pocket.

DETECTIVE
If there is anything I can do for
you, please feel free to call me.
Once again on behalf of me and the
department we want to send out our
deepest condolences to you and your
family.

Detective extends out his hand.

They shake hands...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

EXT. CEMETARY - MORNING

EVERYONE is dressed in all BLACK and wearing SUNGLASSES as
they listen to the PREACHER give is SERMON.

Tiffany's Mother is weeping, as she looks upon her beautiful
Young Daughter lye motionless in a CASKET.

Stephen stands up and begins to walk away with his head down.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETARY - CONTINUOUS

Stephen gathers a spot under a VIBRANT OAK TREE.

Stephen reaches into his COAT POCKET and retrieves the letter
that his wife left him.

Stephen opens it.

TIFFANY (V.O.)

(Crying)

Dear Stephen, my best friend, soulmate, lover, and most of all the man who understood me as a person, who never judged me of any of my short comings. Honey, by the time you get this letter, the one thing you wont be able to understand is why I engaged myself into this selfish self pity of a journey that I shamelessly put you and Junior through. Darling, the sad reality of the situation is my selfishness has brought me, and everything I envisioned all my life to a sudden and abrupt end. Honey I know you're thinking in the back of your mind what could have brought me to the decision to do such a horrible thing. You always told me that we could work through anything. Love would conquer all, and in the back of my mind I truly believed that, but some things can't be fixed. See Honey, I betrayed you. I betrayed you deeply. You probably don't recall, but some time ago you were in New Orleans working. That's when all my emotional past caught up with me. I let these feelings conquer my belief in the commitment that we shared with each other. What I'm trying to say is that I cheated on you, with Drake. At the time I didn't think that it would come back and haunt us all this time later, but I guess what they say about KARMA is true. Everything that goes around must come back around. One night of unfulfilled pleasure cost me and the ones I love a life time of pain. You're probably still thinking that we still could have worked through that, but it doesn't stop there. You remember when I went to the doctor because I was feeling sick?

Stephen thinks.

TIFFANY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Well, I was sick. I got diagnosed with HIV on that day, and it changed my whole world. That's right it really happened to me. I contracted the virus from Drake, and I couldn't deal with the hurt and shame of this for the rest of our lives. Putting you and Junior through this hurt me more and more.

Stephen begins to cry.

TIFFANY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
After all that, I still believed in my heart of hearts that we could have worked through this. I tried and tried for weeks on a way to tell you this, but I couldn't find the right words to say. But after all that, the thing that had me into a state of depression was the one thing I couldn't change in our life. The one thing I'm talking about is my son. When I say my son, I mean Junior. Stephen, he's not your's, he's Drake's.

Stephen looks devastated.

TIFFANY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
In the back of my mind I always knew, but I couldn't take that away from you. Honey, you deserve LIFE, and all the grand things in it. I will always love you, and I'm terribly sorry for the pain I caused you. My mother knew all the time, so I know Junior will be safe with her. Please forgive me! With love, your wife, Tiffany.

Stephen sits for a beat in disbelief, sobbing tears.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETARY - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany is getting lowered in the ground.

Stephen walks over to Leona.

STEPHEN
(crying)
You knew all the time?

LEONA
(crying)
Stephen, I'm sorry.

STEPHEN
(still crying)
Mom after all that, we still could
have made it, I truly loved her.

LEONA
I know Stephen, she really loved
you too, Baby.

Mother takes Junior by the HAND and begins to walk away.

Stephen stops her, grabs Junior by the HAND.

STEPHEN
(to Junior)
COME ON SON, LET'S GO HOME.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END