

LOW TONE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. RAY'S HOUSE - MORNING

TWO STORY HOUSE. Quiet NEIGHBORHOOD.

INT. RAY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

BECKA, 26, a TALL, BEAUTIFUL BRUNETTE is arguing with..

...RAY, 26, SHORT, AFRICAN AMERICAN.

BECKA

I've told you *no*. I've told you *no*  
a thousand times. I'm not going out  
with you.

RAY

Why not? I'm good looking, I'm  
successful. Is it the height?

BECKA

It's not the height.

RAY

Cuz if it is the height I can fix  
that.

BECKA

It's not the height!

RAY

They sell these platform shoes that  
strap on. It'll be our little  
secret provided it doesn't freak  
you out *but turns you on.*

BECKA

It's not the height, it's not your  
job, and it's not your looks.

RAY

Then what is it?

BECKA

It's your voice.

RAY

(High pitch)  
What's wrong with my voice?

BECKA

There-that right there is what's wrong with it! I need a man with a deep-black-sexy voice that can melt ice. Not a high pitch Mickey Mouse voice that can command dogs to hump trees.

(a beat)

Unless you can sound like Barry White, don't ever think for a fraction of a second of us going out.

She leaves and slams the door. Ray is devastated.

INT. APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

DOMINGO, HISPANIC, 28, and T, 26, WHITE, Ray's best friends, are busy playing VIDEO GAMES and laughing at his dilemma.

DOMINGO

Now that you mention it, you do sound like Mickey Mouse.

RAY

(High pitch)

No I don't.

They laugh.

RAY (CONT'D)

You guys are supposed to be my shoulders. Not my persecutors.

DOMINGO

Alright, alright, we're sorry.

T

Yeah, we're sorry.

DOMINGO

You really like this girl?

RAY

Yeah, I do.

DOMINGO

Then we'll help you get her. Right T?

T

Damn straight. Let's go.

RAY

Where?

DOMINGO

To the secret place.

RAY

Wait, wait, wait-

(pause for effect, then:)

Did you say the secret place?

DOMINGO

(nodding)

...*the secret place*.

RAY

(fast, excited)

That place you guys are always bragging about, but have never bothered to take me along.

T

The one and only.

RAY

That place that's rumored to be full of everyman's wishes, desires and sexual fantasies.

DOMINGO

It's not rumor son, it's a fact.

T

Hell yeah, it's a fact.

T and Domingo high five each other.

RAY

That place that has the answers to every question in the known universe, including who we are, why we're here, and what are purpose in life is?

DOMINGO

Turns out our purpose is to sit here all day long...

T

And play videogames while smoking weed.

RAY

I knew this time would come. How do we get to the secret place?

T

That's a secret.

DOMINGO

That only members of the secret place know.

T

We'll be facing a perilous path of hidden dangers and trials. I hope for your sake you're ready.

DOMINGO

Pray that you're ready.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - STREETS - EVENING

The TRANSIT BUS pulls away from the curb, leaving the three amigos in the wake of it's fumes. Ray looks around.

RAY

I thought you said it was going to be a perilous path of dangers and trials.

T

You ever taken the Los Angeles city transit bus before? It's dangerous.

EXT. ALLEY - EVENING

They walk the alley. Ray looks around and can't get over how eerily quiet it is.

They turn the corner and find themselves at a dead end, with a DUMPSTER against the wall.

RAY

Well, now what?

Domingo gestures to T and together they push the dumpster out of the way to reveal a GOLDEN DOOR.

RAY (CONT'D)

Wwwwhhhooooaaaaa...

DOMINGO

Now, for the secret knock.

Domingo pounds on the door relentlessly. A PEEP HOLE slides open. EYES emerge. They scan the men.

GUARD (V.O.)  
Password.

DOMINGO  
It's me, Domingo.

GUARD (V.O.)  
That's not the password.

DOMINGO  
I know it's not, but it's me,  
Domingo, your cousin.

GUARD (V.O.)  
...password.

DOMINGO  
I don't know the password. I forgot  
it.

GUARD  
...Password.

DOMINGO  
Ok, fine. The password is, *I'm  
gonna tell your moms it was you who  
put the dent on her new volvo, and  
not your sista Keisha. Then I'm  
gonna watch as she pulls out her  
whip that she beats your daddy  
with, and watch her whip your ass a  
few hundred times.*

The eyes blink. The peep hole closes. The door is unlocked,  
and opens.

GUARD  
Damn, man. Why do you have to do me  
like that.

INT. THE SECRET PLACE - EVENING

The secret place is a massive WAREHOUSE full of male  
enthusiast bargain shopping.

T, Domingo, and Ray move through the sea of testosterone  
passing BOOTHS full of SEX MAGAZINES, MOVIES, MOTORCYCLES,  
BIG SCREEN TV's, CAR RIMS, and everything you could possibly  
want in a male fantasy SWAP MEET.

Ray marvels at the majestic sight of it all.

RAY

Wow...

T

Damn straight, wow. They got everything you could possibly want here.

DOMINGO

Even a way to get that girl you're crazy about.

JOSE, 40's, manager of the secret place, approaches the men, escorted by his entourage of BODY GUARDS.

JOSE

Domingo, T, long time my friends.  
Long time.

They greet each other. Jose sees Ray.

JOSE (CONT'D)

And who's this?

DOMINGO

He's the reason why we're here.

T

This is Jose, he manages the secret place.

RAY

Ray Jackson, pleasure to meet you sir.

Ray extends his hand, Jose shakes it.

JOSE

Pleasure to meet you *Ray Jackson*.

T

He's got a little problem with his voice.

JOSE

I didn't notice anything wrong it.

RAY

(high pitch)  
See, that's why I'm saying.

Jose, T, Domingo, along with everyone else quickly cover their ears as Ray unleashes a high pitch squeal.

TV screens crack. Dogs start howling. A man about to take a zip of his BOTTLED BEER is dumbfounded when the glass shatters in his hands. FLUROSCENT LIGHTS shatter. Fragments of GLASS rain down. CAR ALARMS blare in the distance.

The sound dissipates. The crowds aren't sure what just happened. Jose, T, and Domingo turn to Ray, who's not sure what to say.

INT. THE SECRET PLACE - ELECTRONIC BOOTH - LATER

Jose steps out of the booth and hands Domingo a TINY DEVICE.

JOSE

This should help your friend with his high estrogen count.

Domingo, T, and Ray examine it.

T

What is it?

JOSE

It's a low cut filter that reduces high frequencies, and amplifies low tones.

The three stare at Jose with blank expressions.

JOSE (CONT'D)

It changes your voice.

T/RAY/DOMINGO

Oooohhhh...we knew that...yeah..

DOMINGO

Hey, it's got a Chris tucker setting!

Domingo turns it on.

DOMINGO (CONT'D)

(Chris Tucker voice)

Can you understand the words that are coming out of my mouth.

They laugh.

T

Let me try it.



RAY  
Try the Barry White setting.

T clicks it.

T  
(Barry White voice)  
Hello ladies. Give me your panties.

They laugh.

JOSE  
I wouldn't go messing with the settings too much. If you go any lower on the frequencies you can boil water. Any higher, and you can beam messages into space.

RAY  
How are you suppose to use it?

JOSE  
You strap it on to the origin of a man's voice.

T  
His throat?

JOSE  
No.

DOMINGO  
(smacks T)  
His abdomen, stupid.

JOSE  
Wrong again.  
(a beat)  
His balls.

The men are quiet at first, then:

RAY  
But it's velcro.

JOSE  
That's the price you pay for cheap, and meaningless infatuation my friend.

EXT. RAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Two story house with lit windows.

INT. RAY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

There's a knock on the door. Ray opens it. Becka comes storming in.

BECKA

Why aren't you dead Ray? You told me over the phone that you were dying and wanted me to come over so you could sign your life savings over to me. But you seem to be ok. Why aren't you dead?

RAY

(Barry White Voice)  
Just wanted you to come over so I can say, hello...HELLO.

Becka's smiles. She's impressed.

BECKA

(All smiles)  
Whoa, Ray, you sound so different.

RAY

Do I? I didn't notice

BECKA

I like it.

RAY

Have you had dinner?

BECKA

No, I was about to when you called.

RAY

Please, have some of mine.

He claps twice.

CANDLES come alive showcasing a DINNING TABLE. The main course has been set. SEXY JAZZ MUSIC plays in the background.

Ray escorts Becka to the table. He pulls up her CHAIR.

BECKA

Thank you.

She sits down. Ray pops the CORK off a BOTTLE of CHAMPAGNE.

RAY

Say when.

He pours while gazing into her eyes.

BECKA

When.

He sets the bottle down, and sits across from her.

He takes a bite of his chicken, suckling every ounce of meat, gazing longingly at her.

She bites, and suckles the juices off her chicken. Gazing longingly at him.

BECKA (CONT'D)

So tell me Ray, what happened? Last time we talked, you didn't sound so...yummy.

RAY

It turns out that I hit a late phase of puberty. Better late than never, right?

She laughs. He laughs, until his laughter changes frequencies. Radio bits echoe out.

BECKA

Are you okay?

RAY

(Static)  
Yeah...it's just...I can't...uhhh  
(static stops)  
I'll be right back.

He rushes into the bathroom

INT. RAY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Panicking, Ray reaches into his crouch and screams as the Velcro tears off pubic hairs along with the device.

He blows off the hairs and inspects the device, not knowing what he's looking for until he finds the MANUFACTURING SEAL, "Made in China."

RAY

China!

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

DOMINGO and T are smoking a JOINT, and playing video games. Domingo's PHONE buzzes. He picks up.

DOMINGO

Yo.

RAY (V.O.)

This thing was made in china.

DOMINGO

What?

INT. RAY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

RAY

It was made in China. Since when do the chinese understand a black man's needs. It's going nuts on me. Literally, it's going nuts. What am I supposed to do now?

T (V.O.)

Work it. If you want this girl, work it good.

Ray hangs up. Takes a deep breath and walks back out.

INT. RAY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Becka is not at the dinner table.

BECKA (O.S.)

Over here sexy.

He spots her lying on the couch like a sexy vixen. She taps the cushion next to her. Ray gulps, and sits next to her.

BECKA (CONT'D)

You're not nervous are you?

RAY

(Barry white voice)  
Me, hahaha, never

BECKA

Good. I like confident men.

She leans in close and rubs his leg.

BECKA (CONT'D)

I had you wrong Ray. I figured you out as some high pitch loser, but now...now, I'm seeing a whole different side of you, and you know what?

RAY

What?

BECKA

I like it.

She growls. He laughs nervously. She leans in close to kiss him when she stops and sniffs the air.

BECK

You smell that?

Ray sniffs the air.

RAY

Smells like hot dogs.

They look down. Ray's crouch is on fire. He screams and quickly gets up.

He tries to put out the flames by slapping his crouch.

Becka looks in horror.

RAY (CONT'D)

(Array of frequencies)  
...call 911...

BECKA

What?

RAY

(Array frequencies)  
I said call 911...

BECKA

I can't understand you.

RAY

(Chris Tucker voice)  
Can you understand the words that are coming out of my mouth? Call 911.

BECKA

Chris tucker?

Ray is in pain. He stomps his feet and unleashes a Michael Jackson shout.

RAY  
HE-HEEEEE...

The FIRE ALARM comes on. Rays takes off his pants, along with the device, and tosses them into the corner of the room, where they explode!

The wall catches on fire. Ray and Becka watch as the fire races up the ceiling.

EXT. RAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

FIREFIGHTERS are trying to put out Ray's house. The raging inferno has brought out the NEIGHBORHOOD.

BECKA  
How the hell did this happen? We were having such a wonderful time.

RAY  
(normal voice)  
I don't know.

BECKA  
Aaaagghhhh--you're voice.

RAY  
What?

BECKA  
What happened to your voice. Where's my short Barry White.

RAY  
He's gone.

BECKA  
Gone?

RAY  
I can explain.

BECKA  
What? Nevermind, I'm leaving. This is all too weird.

RAY  
No wait.

Ray blocks her path.

RAY (CONT'D)

Look, Beca, I like you, I think the world of you. Since the first time I saw you at work I thought you were the most beautiful girl that I've ever seen. If you can just get past the voice I know I can give you an unforgettable and wonderful experience. Please, just a chance. Just one chance.

Becka thinks for a moment. Then:

BECKA

NOPE! Bye!

She walks away. Ray is devastated. His house, meanwhile, burns to the ground.

EXT. RAY'S BURNT HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

T and Domingo make their way through Ray's burnt home. They find Ray laying in what was once his bed.

T

You can stay at our place you know.

RAY

You're place has roaches. I hate roaches.

DOMINGO

So you'd rather sleep in this.

RAY

(defeated)

What does it matter. What does anything matter anymore when you have a broken heart.

T

And a burnt home.

RAY

...and a burnt home.

T

And all your shit is gone...

RAY

...And all my shit is gone.

T  
And you got nothing left.

RAY  
...you're not making me feel any  
better.

THUNDER. T and Domingo look up. It starts sprinkling.

RAY (CONT'D)  
Of course.

The duo share a look and then make their way to Ray. Each takes a spot on the bed.

RAY (CONT'D)  
What are you guys doing?

DOMINGO  
Getting ready for bed.

T  
Yeah, we're tired.

RAY  
You don't have to do this.

DOMINGO  
Sure we do. We're friends.

T  
Friends look after each other.  
Girls come and go-

DOMINGO  
But friends are forever. Someday  
you'll meet the right girl Ray.

T  
Yeah, a girl that doesn't require  
you to place foreign explosives in  
your balls to impress her.

Ray smiles. The rain is coming down. The three are shivering.

T (CONT'D)  
You sure you don't want to stay at  
our place. The roaches aren't that  
big.

DOMINGO  
Yeah, not anymore. We killed the  
king roach.



T  
Took us two days but we cornered  
his ass and took him down.

After a moment:

RAY  
Ok. let's go.

The three get up and walk down the neighborhood.

RAY (CONT'D)  
You think true love is out there  
for me.

DOMINGO  
It's out there for all of us.

T  
For each and every single one of  
us.

THE END