

MY SPECIAL BOY

Written by

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INT. TV SCREEN - AFTERNOON

We see REGINALD LEWIS JR (40). He's black, confident, and educated.

He's being interviewed by another black man live on TV, DAMON REYNOLDS. They are both respected political commentators having a heated debate.

REGINALD

You see, I'm tired of Black Americans using racism as an excuse, we have to take ownership.

DAMON

You're missing the point. No one is protesting for Darnell Simmons it was clear as day that he killed Samantha Ellis but Darius Walker? He was a bystander. He didn't know Darnell was going to shoot and kill her.

REGINALD

We're both educated black men, am I correct?

DAMON

Yes.

REGINALD

What is one of the biggest issues in our community?

DAMON

Black on black crime?

REGINALD

Well yes, that too but what I'm referring to is the lack of a father figure.

DAMON

What does that have to do with this case?

REGINALD

It lead Darius astray to the wrong crowd.

DAMON

What!? So now Darius deserves to have life in prison for not having an active father!?

REGINALD

You listen to me. My heart goes out to that boy, I pray everyday for him and his family. But if you do the research on Darius's father, he was a drunk who left Darius and his mother when he was only five. Why are black fathers leaving our black boys astray?

DAMON

My father didn't leave me astray.

REGINALD

And you turned out great.

DAMON

Unbelievable.

REGINALD

If Darius and Darnell had a strong, black male figure we wouldn't see this happening to our youth. When will our community look at ourselves? Absent fathers, black on black crime, our music. It's a poison to our community.

DAMON

What if Darius was white? He would have been let go. The police automatically saw him as a criminal. There was absolutely no evidence directly connecting him to the crime!

A beat.

DAMON (CONT'D)

I have a question for you. What about you and your father?

This catches Reginald off guard.

REGINALD

What about him?

DAMON

Was he a "strong black male figure"?

REGINALD

Not at all...but I pushed to be better than he'll ever be.

DAMON

How did you turn out to be so successful without a "strong black male figure" in your life?

This strikes a tiny cord in Reginald, he thinks long and hard on this question.

REGINALD

Discipline, pure discipline.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Something else we lack in our community.

Damon can't believe his answer.

DAMON

You have got to be kidding me!

A beat.

REGINALD

Thank you Damon, for your insightful comments. We will have to stop for a brief break.

Reginald now turns to the camera.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Are we too "woke" as a society? More on this topic when we return to the Reginald Lewis Show.

The live audience clap.

INT. TV STUDIO - AFTERNOON

Reginald walks off the set and towards the backstage. Crew members scurry around him making sure everything is perfect after the commercial break.

MATTHEW YOUNG (45), Reginald's publicist, walks towards him.

MATTHEW

Great job! You were calm yet definite. You brought up issues most people want to ignore. No matter how many jabs were thrown at you, you were in character. Great job!

REGINALD

Thanks.

MATTHEW

I have few more interviews lined up this week. I will let you know when they are officially scheduled.

REGINALD

Got it.

As Reginald and Matthew are walking, Matthew looks at Reginald's hair.

MATTHEW

You hair is looking a bit...frizzy.

REGINALD

Frizzy?

MATTHEW

I'm just saying, a little trim won't hurt.

Reginald pats down his hair a little

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

We'll keep in touch.

Matthew walks off. Reginald is by himself again. He digs in his pocket and looks at his cell phone. He looks at the screen and sees THREE MISSED CALLS from DENE'.

Reginald stares blankly at the screen.

INT. BACKSTAGE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Reginald sits down in front of a vanity mirror set. He has the phone to this ear.

DENE' (O.S.)

Hello?

REGINALD

Sorry, I was doing an interview. What's up?

Dene is silent.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Hello?

DENE' (O.S.)  
Yeah, I'm here...it's mom...

He clinches his jaw. He is stoic, unemotional.

REGINALD  
How much longer?

DENE' (O.S.)  
The doctor is saying a week now...

A beat.

REGINALD  
I'll be down there in a couple of days.

DENE' (O.S.)  
A couple of days!? Your mother is dying!

REGINALD  
Please understand.

DENE' (O.S.)  
Understand what?

REGINALD  
I just have to sort through some things. I'm very busy, with a tight schedule. I need time to make room, okay?

Dene' is silent.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Okay?

DENE' (O.S.)  
Alright...whatever...

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
Love you bro.

REGINALD  
Love you too.

Reginald hangs up the phone. He's still but you can tell he has a million thoughts on his mind.

INT. REGINALD'S MANSION/ HALLWAY - EVENING

Reginald walks through the front door.

INT. REGINALD'S MANISION/ KITCHEN - EVENING

Reginald walks in the kitchen and sees his wife AMY LEWIS (37) at the stove, stirring up a pot of pasta.

She's white, pretty, and supportive of him.

Reginald walks up behind her and wraps his hands around her waist. She just notices him and jumps a little.

REGINALD  
Smells good.

AMY  
Oh! You scared me!

She smiles and automatically kisses him, he kisses back.

AMY (CONT'D)  
How was your day?

REGINALD  
Busy, busy pissing off the left.

They briefly laugh. Then he stares at Amy prolongedly. Amy seems concerned.

AMY  
Is everything alright?

He continues to stare vacantly.

AMY (CONT'D)  
Honey, you're scaring me.

REGINALD  
It's my mom...

Amy's face is sympathetic.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
She has a week...

Amy wraps her arms around him and consoles him tightly. She finally let's go of the hug and notices her husband's face. He remains stoic, she looks confused.

AMY  
Are you going down there?

REGINALD

Of course.

AMY

I'm sure she'll want to see the kids.

A beat.

AMY (CONT'D)

Maybe you should see your therapist before we go back.

REGINALD

Already booked, first thing tomorrow morning.

Reginald smiles weakly. A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

I'm going to go shower now.

Reginald walks away towards the stairs.

AMY

Okay, dinner will be ready in about 20 minutes.

Amy looks back at him concernedly.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - MORNING

Reginald lies on a chaise lounge couch. His therapist DR. LANE (55) sits next to him, giving him her undivided attention.

REGINALD

I know we weren't supposed to meet until next week but this is urgent.

DR. LANE

No problem, just glad you can come in. You've been so busy being a star.

Dr. Lane laughs slightly. Reginald joins. A beat.

DR. LANE (CONT'D)

What's the issue?

Reginald takes a deep breath.



REGINALD  
My mother has a week to live.

Dr. Lane takes in his comments.

DR. LANE  
I'm sorry to hear that.

REGINALD  
Don't be. I don't feel anything...

Dr. Lane's eyebrows furrows. A beat.

DR. LANE  
Nothing at all?

REGINALD  
Nothing at all.

DR. LANE  
Don't suppress your feelings.

A beat.

REGINALD  
I'm not. She's the reason why I'm here in the first place, you know that.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
It's going to sound terrible but in some strange way, I think she deserves it...

DR. LANE  
You're entitled to your feelings.

REGINALD  
Anyway, I'm going to go and see her tomorrow. Any advice?

DR. LANE  
Forgiveness.

A beat.

DR. LANE (CONT'D)  
I know your mother put a lot of pressure on you to succeed but you have to forgive her. You see where you are in your career. Imagine if she never pushed you.

(MORE)

DR. LANE (CONT'D)

You wouldn't be where you are today  
without her vigor. She doesn't have  
a lot of time, forgive her before  
it's too late.

Reginald doesn't look too sure. A beat.

REGINALD

I would also like a refill of my  
Zoloft before the trip please.

INT. REGINALD'S CAR/ HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Reginald is in the driver's seat as Amy is in the passenger's  
side.

Their two children are in the back seats. Lillian Lewis (5)  
has her seatbelt on and Reginald The Third (2) is strapped in  
a car seat.

Reginald continues to drive. Amy notices he looks solemn. She  
reaches over and caresses his lap.

AMY

Everything will be fine, honey.

Reginald smiles but only half heartedly.

EXT. FRONT PORCH/ DENE'S HOME - EVENING

Reginald rings the doorbell, his family surrounds him.

Someone opens the door. It's DENE' LEWIS (35) black,  
naturally beautiful, and curvy.

She sees Reginald and lights up.

DENE'

Reggie!

She goes in for a huge hug. Reginald hugs her back and smiles  
warm heartedly.

REGINALD

Hey sis.

DENE'

Looking good! But you look slimmer  
on TV though.

She pats his stomach a little.

REGINALD

Stop it!

Reginald looks around. A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Where's Kendricks?

Dene' shrugs her shoulders.

DENE

That's my brother but I am not his  
keeper.

Dene' sees Reginald's children, she's in awe.

DENE'

Oh my God. They're all grown up!

Reginald looks over to his daughter Lillian.

REGINALD

Lilly, this is your Aunt Dene'.

Lillian sheepishly waves. Everyone laughs.

DENE'

Stranger danger.

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

It's okay baby, your daddy never  
brought you around.

Dene' looks directly at Reginald. Reginald looks guilty.

Dene' looks over to Amy. Amy is holding a car seat with  
Reginald The Third in it.

DENE' (CONT'D)

Nice to finally meet you Amy.

Dene' hugs Amy and Amy hugs her back.

AMY

Thank you, nice to meet you too.

Dene' suggests to the car seat.

DENE'

Can I see him?

AMY  
Of course.

Dene' walks closer and sees Reginald The Third lying in the car seat.

DENE'  
Oh my God! He is so handsome! He looks just like his daddy...but red.

Reginald and Dene' laughs to themselves. Amy is left out.

AMY  
Red?

Reginald and Dene' looks at each other secretly judging.

REGINALD  
(to Amy)  
Like, lighter skinned.

AMY  
Oh...

A beat.

DENE'  
Why don't ya'll come on in? I can help ya'll with your stuff.

REGINALD  
We won't be staying the night...we have a hotel booked this week.

DENE'  
Oh...no problem...

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
She's right in there. I'm sure she'll be happy to see you.

Dene' looks at Reginald, piercing through him. Reginald looks apprehensive.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ JACKIE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Reginald walks into a bedroom, his family slowly follows him in. He sees a bed. Hiding under the quilted linen is a withered body.

He walks cautiously towards the bed. He sees his mother JACKIE LEWIS (60), looking identical to a corpse. She is worn and weary, it's not how Reginald remembered her.

Her eyes are closed, looks like she has already passed.

AMY

Maybe we should just let her rest.

REGINALD

No, she's okay.

Reginald taps his mother a few times.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Mom?

Jackie is still for a moment. He taps her again.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Mom!?

Jackie's eyes start blinking, it looks like it hurts her. She slowly opens her eyes, only half conscious, almost in a comatose.

She wearily turns her head towards Reginald. Her droopy eyes light up a little. There's a little sparkle in her eyes, a little bit of life back in her.

She smiles crookedly. She speaks but only in a whisper, her speech is ghostly.

JACKIE

My special boy...

REGINALD

Hey mom...

JACKIE

You looking so handsome. How long has it been?

REGINALD

Five years.

A beat.

JACKIE

You only live an hour away...

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
Where my grandbabies?

Reginald turns around and eyes Lillian.

REGINALD  
Come here Lilly this is your  
grandmother, granny Jackie.

Lillian walks towards her grandmother's bed. She eyes her  
grandmother and looks terrified.

JACKIE  
Don't be scared child, I don't  
bite.

Jackie takes her in, it's the first time she has seen her.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
She is just so beautiful.  
How old are you now?

LILLIAN  
I'm five.

JACKIE  
Lord have mercy.

Jackie scans Lillian's dark, silky, flowing hair.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
Look at all that pretty hair.

Jackie creepily leads one hand towards her granddaughter's  
hair and strokes it weakly.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
You didn't get that from your  
daddy.

Reginald makes a disgruntled face but subsides it for the  
moment.

REGINALD  
And this is my wife Amy.

Amy moves closer to Jackie, she still holds the car seat.  
Jackie is not as open towards Amy, she stares at her,  
scanning and judging her.

Amy smiles from cheek to cheek.

AMY

It's so good to meet you Mrs.  
Lewis.

A beat.

JACKIE

So there's the white girl who took  
my boy away from me.

There's an awkward pause. Then Jackie interrupts it with a  
haggard laugh.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Got you, didn't I? Don't worry  
girl. I've seen this before. You  
ain't his first white girl.

Reginald and Amy exchange uncomfortable glances. Reginald  
quickly changes the subject. He carefully picks up Reginald  
The Third from the car seat Amy is holding. He lifts him  
proudly.

REGINALD

Come here little man.

Reginald gets Reginald The Third situated on his arms. He  
smiles at his son. The baby looks around the room innocently,  
his head turning curiously.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

And this, this is Reginald The  
Third.

JACKIE

Oh my Lord. He looks just like  
you...a spitting image of his grand  
daddy...

Reginald is triggered, his anxiety is kicking in, he trembles  
a bit. Amy notices.

AMY

You okay?

REGINALD

Yeah.

AMY

Should I take the baby?

REGINALD

Yeah sure.

Reginald clumsily hands Amy Reginald The Third. He takes multiple deep breaths. A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Well mom, its been nice but I have to get going.

Jackie and Amy are confused.

JACKIE  
Already son? It's been five years.

REGINALD  
I know but we have to check into the hotel soon, it's getting late, the kids still have to take their baths.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I'll be back tomorrow though.

JACKIE  
Well, you're a grown man. I can't stop you.

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
I'll make sure to fix you some breakfast in the morning. My pancake, eggs, and sausage with a nice, cold glass of orange juice. Your favorite.

REGINALD  
(coldly)  
I'm looking forward to it.

He turns to Amy.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Honey, you ready to go?

That question was more of a command. Amy can't believe her husband right now. She hides her frustration and turns towards Jackie sympathetically.

AMY  
It was so nice to see you. You take care, sleep well.

She kisses Jackie on the forehead.



Amy then walks away carrying the baby and Lillian follows behind her. She glares at Reginald, he's dumbfounded.

His family disappears out the room, he's right behind them -

JACKIE

I love you son.

Reginald turns around and sees his mother desperate for forgiveness. He is stone-faced and silent.

He then walks out of the bedroom and closes the door behind him.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

Reginald and Amy are brushing their teeth side by side. Amy spits out the toothpaste in her mouth.

AMY

I can't believe you. We were there for literally five minutes.

REGINALD

What? She saw me, you, and the kids what else does she want?

AMY

What else does she want? She is your mother.

REGINALD

No one knows that more than me. What are you getting at?

AMY

What am I getting at? She's your mother, you haven't seen her in five years, she is sick, she is dying! That's where I'm getting at! You really can't stay in the same room with her for more than five minutes!?

REGINALD

You don't know that woman. I have PTSD now because of the way she pushed me through school, pushed me to succeed, pushed me to take care of her, pushed me to take care of my siblings.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Did you know I paid for Dene's nursing program because mom could not afford it. Never asked for a dime back.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I've bailed Kendricks out of jail more than three times and my mother still had the nerve to give my money out to his baby's mothers and yes that is plural, when he wasn't taking care of his kids, all five!

Amy seems a bit more understanding.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Where does the line stop?

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I felt financially, emotionally, mentally drained. So five years ago, when I found out I had PTSD, I had to cut her out. It was the only choice.

Reginald takes a deep breath.

AMY  
Listen babe, I understand. It sounds like your family has a lot of things to work out.

A beat.

AMY (CONT'D)  
You go back tomorrow. The kids and I will stay here.

REGINALD  
What? Why?

AMY  
You should be there with your sister and brother alone, getting through this together. Talking, laughing, healing. Because when that time comes...it's going to be hard.

(MORE)

AMY (CONT'D)

Losing a mother...that's something only siblings can get through together. We'll only be a distraction.

REGINALD

Baby, I love you and the kids. I need you all by my side too.

AMY

We will be. When that time comes but in the meantime, you should be with your siblings preparing for this...

Reginald thinks on this. He kisses Amy, Amy kisses back.

REGINALD

Okay. I hate to admit it but you're right.

Amy laughs a little. Reginald continues to kiss her, they begin making out. Reginald lifts Amy's leg up with one of his arms.

AMY

Stop it, the kids are sleeping.

REGINALD

Shhhh...here...

He grabs one of the hand towels hanging up on the wall.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Just put this over your mouth.

Amy laughs out loud and they continue to make out.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

Reginald and Dene' are setting up the kitchen table. They have pancakes, eggs, sausage, and a pitcher of orange juice.

DENE'

Well you sure left early yesterday.

REGINALD

Yeah, it was time to check into the hotel.

Dene' eyes Reginald. Reginald notices.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

What?

Dene' shakes her head, Reginald looks guilty. They sit down and start digging in. A beat.

DENE'

You know Mama forced me to make this meal for you right?

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

She couldn't physically do it herself so I had to do it.

Dene' imitates her mother.

DENE' (CONT'D)

Fix that boy some breakfast in the morning for him and his family. Tell him it is from me.

They laugh a bit. A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

You know you're her favorite right? You're rich, famous, giving her grandbabies with "good hair".

They laugh again.

DENE' (CONT'D)

I could never give her that...

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

Where are Amy and the kids by the way?

REGINALD

Amy thought I needed to prepare for what's about to happen...alone with my siblings...

DENE'

Yeah...it's not going to be easy...

A beat.

REGINALD

How are you holding up?

DENE'

I'm good.

REGINALD

You sure?

DENE'

Yeah, I'm holding on.

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

I was taking care of her for the past two years. So, I've been preparing since then.

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

She misses you. She thinks you don't have time for her anymore...

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

Speaking of...I saw that interview about Darius Walker...are you serious my dude?

REGINALD

I'm not here to talk politics Dene'.

Dene' is silent.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

How's the job?

DENE'

Working late hours, taking care of everybody. Then I have to come here and take care of mom, making sure she's fed, washed, not pissing or shitting herself.

These comments sink deep in Reginald's subconsciousness.

REGINALD

I send you a check every week to make sure Mom is good. Is that not enough?

DENE'

Yes, it's plenty financially. But do you know how many times she has asked about you? Calling you in her sleep? Sometimes I can't tell if she's calling for you or daddy...

Reginald anxiously taps his fingers on the kitchen table. A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

How can money make up for that?

Reginald feels guilty. A beat.

REGINALD

You know I couldn't let her stay with me.

DENE'

Why not? That's what she really wanted.

REGINALD

I live a hectic life.

DENE'

So just put all the pressure on me? Because I ain't doing shit right? Being a nurse is just a walk in a park!?

REGINALD

That's not what I'm saying.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Dene', it's deeper than that. I'm still healing from her.

DENE'

Okay, I get that but mom put pressure on me too.

REGINALD

I've been seeing a therapist Dene'. I have PTSD, most of it stems from mom. There are things about her you just don't know...

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
 As a sister, just be there for me  
 too okay?

Dene is empathetic now.

DENE'  
 Sorry, I didn't know that. I'm here  
 for you Reggie. I am. It's just all  
 been so taxing on me. I tried so  
 hard to take care of her by myself,  
 and now she's going...

Dene' tears up.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
 All that hard work for nothing...

Dene' sheds a tear, she quickly wipes it.

REGINALD  
 It's okay Dene', you did a great  
 job.

Reginald clearly wants to change the subject.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
 How's your love life? You found a  
 partner?

DENE'  
 Partner? I'm not going to the  
 rodeo.

They both laugh together, lighting up the mood.

REGINALD  
 Okay...girlfriend...?

DENE'  
 I don't have time to date.

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
 By the way, I started reading your  
 book "The Wild, Wild, Left". You  
 said something on the lines of "The  
 LGBTQABCXYZ community is a threat  
 to our youth?"

REGINALD

I just think it's strange that drag queens want to read to kids. That's all I'm saying.

DENE'

See, this is why Twitter keeps coming for your ass.

They laugh a little.

The front door opens loudly. KENDRICKS LEWIS (29) busts through the door. He's a good looking guy, he dresses like a thuggish teenager, he's a little immature for his age. He walks in cheesing.

KENDRICKS

What's good sis!?

He then sees Reginald and they lock eyes for a moment.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)

Oh, hell nah.

REGINALD

Good to see you too Kendricks.

KENDRICKS

Dene', get this Uncle Tom outta here.

REGINALD

Uncle Tom huh? Original, never heard that before.

Kendricks ignores Reginald and gears his attention towards Dene' again.

KENDRICKS

Whatchu got in here?

DENE'

Pancake, eggs, sausage...

Kendricks grabs a plate and starts digging in immediately.

REGINALD

Where were you yesterday?

KENDRICKS

Where were you the last five years?



Reginald bites his tongue (figuratively). He looks over to Dene' she is laughing to herself. When Reginald spots her, she immediately conceals it.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)  
Don't worry 'bout me playa.

Kendricks looks around. A beat.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)  
Where yo fine ass white girl at? I was always jealous of you, gettin' all the white pussy.

Kendricks laughs to himself. Reginald looks enraged.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)  
Just playing man, calm down.

Kendricks plops down with his plate full of food. He stuffs his face. He speaks with a full mouth.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)  
How you been for real?

REGINALD  
How have you been?

Kendricks rolls his eyes and continues to stuff his face.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I'm good Kendrick, how are you?  
What have you been up to?

KENDRICKS  
Same ole, same ole.

REGINALD  
Still hustling?

KENDRICKS  
Just doing that 'til I blow up.

REGINALD  
Oh right...what's your stage name again?

KENDRICKS  
Lil' Drix.

REGINALD  
Lil' Drix, got it.

Reginald laughs to himself.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

You do realize you're almost thirty right?

KENDRICKS

I don't know why you're worrying about me and what I do. You don't offer nothing.

REGINALD

I don't have to. How many times did I bail you out of jail?

KENDRICKS

I'm not talking about for me, I'm talking about for my kids.

REGINALD

That is your responsibility Kendrick. I take care of mine.

KENDRICKS

Easy for you, privileged ass.

REGINALD

I work hard for everything I have.

KENDRICKS

Mama got you where you are. She made you go to that fancy ass private school...

REGINALD

That's because I was recommended to attend there.

KENDRICKS

Then you got accepted to Harvard. You had Mama busting her ass trying to pay for that school -

Reginald is triggered.

REGINALD

Don't you go there, you don't know shit.

KENDRICKS

I know mama deserves better than how you treat her.

REGINALD

She ain't your mom.

KENDRICKS

She is not my mom.

Kendricks smiles at Reginald condescendingly. Reginald is livid.

REGINALD

She's my mother. When your mother died from an overdose. My mother took you in. You'd be nothing without her. Just dad's bastard son.

This triggers Kendricks but he cools himself off.

KENDRICKS

I know I'd be nothing without her. That's why I love her and there for her.

REGINALD

There for her!? You're probably the reason why she has brain cancer now! All you did was stress her out! In and out of jail, in gangs, selling dope, having her worrying about your life!

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

And she practically raised your five your kids!

KENDRICKS

Calm your voice nigga. Acting like daddy!

REGINALD

Don't let my suits and ties fool you, I'll still lay your ass out!

Kendricks rises up from his seat violently.

KENDRICKS

I wish a nigga would!

DENE'

Ya'll stop it!

They calm down immediately. A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
 Mom is back there dying and ya'll  
 are in here fighting!? Show some  
 respect! Ya'll know she don't want  
 to hear this shit!

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
 Sit ya'll retarded asses down and  
 shut up now!

They do as they are told. They are silent for a minute...

Kendrick abruptly rises from his seat again and rushes out of  
 the door and slams it shut.

It's silent now. Dene' just shakes her head in disbelief.

Reginald ponders on his actions. He gets up from his seat and  
 walks out the front door.

EXT. DENE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Reginald walks out the front door and sees Kendricks leaning  
 against the house, smoking a fat blunt.

Reginald walks towards Kendricks. Kendricks notices Reginald  
 and sucks his teeth. He continues to smoke.

Reginald reaches Kendricks and looks concerned.

REGINALD  
 Kendricks?

Kendricks looks at Reginald annoyed, smoke escaping from his  
 nostrils.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
 I'm sorry, alright.

Kendricks nods his head. He continues to smoke and exhale.

A beat.

KENDRICKS  
 This shit is eating me alive.

Kendricks begins to tear up, tears are falling.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)  
 Why her man!?

Kendricks is bawling now. Reginald hugs and consoles Kendricks.

REGINALD

It's okay man, we will get through this together.

He hugs Kendricks as Kendricks continues bawling, wondering why he doesn't feel the same.

FADEOUT

We hear distraught and shrilling screams in the background.

DENE' (O.S.)

NOOOOOO!

KENDRICKS (O.S.)

MAMA! MAMA!

EXT. DENE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Paramedics rushes Jackie on a stretcher. Dene' and Kendricks follow behind them crying hysterically.

DENE'

Is she dead!? Is she dead!?

PARAMEDIC

She just had a seizure but I'm not sure how much longer she has. We have to get her to the hospital to run more tests on her.

KENDRICKS

MAMA! MAMA!

Reginald watches silently as the paramedics places his mother in the back of the ambulance.

INT. LOCAL HOSPITAL/ WAITING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Reginald, Dene', and Kendricks sit in a waiting room. Reginald holds Dene' as she breaks down.

Kendricks bawls to himself. Reginald remains emotionless.

INT. LOCAL HOSPITAL/ WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

DOCTOR ADAMS, 50, walks inside of the waiting room solemnly. Dene' immediately rises up from her seat and walks towards him.

DENE'

What's going on!? How is she!?

Reginald and Kendricks walks up behind her, eager to hear the doctor's response.

Dr. Adams takes a deep breath.

DR. ADAMS

The cancer has spread rapidly,  
which caused the abrupt seizure.  
The seizure has affected her  
cardiovascular system, causing an  
irregular heart beat known as  
arrhythmia. Her heart has  
drastically weakened...

Dr. Adams takes another deep breath.

DR. ADAMS (CONT'D)

To be honest, this will be her last  
night alive.

This stings Dene' and Kendricks they yelp in agony.

DR. ADAMS (CONT'D)

I am so sorry.

Dr. Adams walks away despondently. Dene' and Kendricks hold each other tightly and continues to cry. Reginald processes everything silently.

INT. LOCAL HOSPITAL/ JACKIE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Jackie's three children sit around her hospital bed, completely distraught, besides Reginald. He's just still and musing over unwanted thoughts.

Jackie's hooked up to the life support machine, breathing strenuously.

We focus on Reginald. He stares at Jackie. He can see that her eyes are open but only slightly, like little slits.

Reginald can tell she is staring at him directly, right into his soul. He can barely see her eyes but he can tell she is begging for forgiveness.

Reginald stares back unnervingly...

All we hear are the soft sounds of the life support machine, letting us know she is struggling for life...

Reginald watches as her eyes close peacefully...

BEEEEEEEEEP...the sound elongates....

We hear Dene' and Kendricks wail and holler again. Reginald continues to stare at his mother not phased and stoic as usual.

FADE OUT

INT. CHURCH/ ALTAR - AFTERNOON

We hear an organ playing melancholic and somber music.

Jackie rests peacefully in her casket. Reginald, Dene', and Kendricks are at the casket, viewing the body. Reginald has Amy and his two children by his side and Kendricks has his five children with him. Their ages range from 3-8. He has a woman with him TIARA (25), not wearing the most appropriate clothing for a funeral.

Reginald holds Dene' as she cries. Kendricks seems stronger today, even though tears stream from his face.

Reginald stares at his mother again, not sure what he should be feeling as he hears the yelps and cries of his siblings.

INT. CHURCH/ ALTAR - AFTERNOON

Reginald, Dene', and Kendricks are standing behind a podium in front of the church. Reginald moves the mic closer to his mouth.

REGINALD

Good evening.

CONGREGATION

Good evening!

REGINALD

I am Reginald Lewis Jr. The first born of Jacqueline Lewis...and yes the guy on TV...

The congregation gives a light chuckle. Dene' and Kendricks looks at each other and roll their eyes.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Thank you all for coming here to  
celebrate the life, not death, of  
Jacqueline Lewis...

Reginald takes a pause to look at his deceased mother in the  
casket.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
What can I say about my mother?

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Well, she had an infectious smile.  
She could light up the room.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
If you lost an arm, she would cut  
hers off for you. She just wanted  
everybody to be good.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
But don't let that fool you because  
she didn't play around.

The congregation chuckles.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
She was not afraid to use that  
belt.

The chuckles continue, Dene' and Kendricks joins them.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Kendricks got the most beatings.

We get some more laughs.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
She was tough on us because she  
loved us.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I remember being in high school. I  
couldn't have any friends or  
girlfriends. I couldn't go to  
football games or even prom...



Reginald imitates his mother.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Boy, you better work! Having  
friends ain't going to get you to  
Harvard!

The laughs continue. Reginald turns to Dene' and Kendricks.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Do ya'll remember that?

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
All she did was make me work...

His demeanor changes.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Work...work...work...WORK!

The outburst has the congregation caught off guard. Dene' and Kendricks looks worried. Amy is concerned. Reginald clears this throat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Sorry, excuse me.

His heart begins to race and he sweats a little. He wipes his forehead. He thinks about what to say next, jittering. A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
My most fond memory of my mother  
was when I got accepted to Harvard.  
She was so happy for me.

Reginald laughs a bit.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
She was so happy, that she...that  
she - she - she...

All of a sudden Reginald freezes. He's staring into blank space...completely frozen, he's in absolute shock.

He's shaking now, his eyes are wide open like they are going to fall out.

Everyone is concerned. Especially Dene', Kendricks, and Amy...

DENE'  
Reggie...Reggie, are you okay?

Reginald snaps out of it and returns to earth.

REGINALD  
I'm sorry...I'm sorry...yeah I'm  
good...

He looks out into the crowd and notices them staring at him  
strangely. He can't take it.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry...I can't do this.

He walks away from the podium clumsily. He passes through the  
pews and heads out the front door.

Everyone is in awe.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - AFTERNOON

Reginald stares intensely, almost ragefully at something --

He is staring at Jackie's tombstone. Right beside her is his  
father's tombstone REGINALD LEWIS SR....something is haunting  
him...

Dene' notices and looks concerned.

DENE'  
Reggie?

Reginald is out of his trance now.

REGINALD  
Huh?

DENE'  
You okay?

REGINALD  
Yeah, I'm good.

DENE'  
I'm here if you need me.

REGINALD  
I know that.

Reginald drifts off again. Dene' looks concerned.

DENE'

I don't want it to happen again.

Reginald looks confused...then he remembers. ..

REGINALD

It won't...

A beat.

DENE'

You went mute for a month after dad died, I just hope the same thing doesn't happen...

A beat.

REGINALD

It won't, I'm good...can we just drop it...

Dene' looks away towards the crowd getting into their cars.

DENE'

We're about to leave for the repass.

A beat.

REGINALD

I'll catch up with you all. I need some time to myself. Take Amy and the kids please.

DENE'

Okay.

Dene' walks away wistfully. Reginald eyes Dene' as she walks away. He sees Amy and his kids in the distance. Dene' reaches them and suggests for them to ride with her. Amy looks back at Reginald concernedly but walks away and takes the children with her.

Reginald gears his attention back to the tombstones and continues contemplating.

INT. BANKQUET HALL - AFTERNOON

Dene', Kendricks, Tiara, Amy and the kids all sit at the head table at the repass.

They're diligently eating their food and talking.

Reginald walks in, he still looks a little disturbed. Amy notices him and immediately rises from her seat.

She runs towards him and hugs him.

AMY

Oh my goodness, is everything okay!?

REGINALD

Yes, everything is fine. Let's just sit down and eat.

Reginald and Amy take seats together.

AMY

I already fixed you a plate.

REGINALD

Thank you.

Reginald begins digging in. He is beside Dene', she pats and rubs his back showing support.

A SERVER (27) walks towards Reginald.

SERVER

Is there anything else I can get for you all?

He looks directly at Reginald, he and Reginald lock eyes for a minute. The server is ecstatic.

SERVER (CONT'D)

Reginald Lewis!?

Reginald smiles.

REGINALD

Yes, how can I help you?

SERVER

I watch your TV Show...

Kendricks cuts his eye. Reginald is delighted.

REGINALD

Really? Thank you.

A beat.

SERVER

You're not everyone's cup of tea  
but I love how honest and raw you  
are. You're right, our people need  
to wake up!

A beat.

SERVER (CONT'D)

Can I have a picture!?

Reginald smiles from cheek to cheek.

REGINALD

Of course, come around.

The server circles around the table and grabs his phone. He  
and Reginald pose together. The server sticks his phone out,  
stretching his arm and he snaps the photo, he is giddy.

SERVER

This is going on my Instagram now!

A beat.

SERVER (CONT'D)

(to Reginald)

Keep doing what you're doing. Let  
me know if you need anything!

REGINALD

You know it.

The server walks away gleefully. Reginald smiles to himself.  
Kendricks can't take it anymore.

KENDRICKS

What the fuck is wrong with you!?

All the adults at the table are alarmed. Reginald is  
confused.

DENE'

Here we go.

REGINALD

What are you talking about?

KENDRICKS

Mama just died and you sittin' here  
taking pictures with your coon  
friends!?

REGINALD

It was just a quick picture, calm down.

KENDRICKS

Something ain't right with you dawg! How the fuck can you take a picture right now!? Do you really care that mama's dead!? I haven't seen you drop one tear!

REGINALD

Not everyone deals with grief the same.

KENDRICKS

So how do you deal with it? By taking pictures!? And doing that shit from earlier!?

REGINALD

I was having a panic attack.

KENDRICKS

I'm not buying that shit! You just want all eyes on you like always!

Reginald laughs a little. A beat.

REGINALD

Let's just cut to the chase. We all know what this is really about.

KENDRICKS

Fuck you mean!?

Reginald pauses, being careful with his words

REGINALD

If you worked hard, you can have what I have.

KENDRICKS

What!?

REGINALD

And it's not because you can't have it. It's because you don't work for it.

KENDRICKS

Get off your high horse! You ain't got shit I want!

REGINALD

You don't want nothing from life.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

You talking about you got love and respect for Mom but you're bringing these whores around here.

Reginald suggests to Kendricks's date Tiara.

TIARA

I ain't no hoe!

Reginald ignores her and continues talking to Kendricks.

REGINALD

(to Kendricks)

You keep making babies you don't take care of, chasing a childish pipedream. I hate to tell you but that whole "Lil Drix" thing ain't happening bruh.

That hurts Kendricks.

KENDRICKS

At least I'm not a sell out! I'm real! I understand the struggle! I never sold my soul or black card for no white man!

Reginald looks ashamed. Kendricks is getting to him.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)

What kind of nigga names his daughter Lillian and takes pictures with Donald Trump!? Fuck outta here!

Reginald is tired of it. He's enraged and only sees red. He rises from his seat violently.

REGINALD

WHAT!? WHAT!? I AIN'T NIGGA ENOGUH FOR YOU!?

Everyone at the repass turns their heads abruptly. It is silent in the room now.

AMY

Baby calm down.

DENE'

Ya'll need to stop this right now!  
Mama is turning in her grave!

REGINALD

Nah! Nah! I'm sick of this little  
tired nigga coming for me! You want  
a nigga!? Nigga here now!

KENDRICKS

There he is! There's Reggie from  
Downtown!

Kendricks laughs.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)

Sit the fuck down! Ain't nobody  
scared of you play boy!

Reginald walks up towards Kendricks like he's about to knock  
him out.

KENDRICKS (CONT'D)

I wish you would, I will glock your  
ass!

DENE'

Ya'll sit now!

Reginald's rage builds up more. He can't control it. He  
abruptly punches Kendricks, knocking him to the ground.

Everyone in the room gasps and panics. Kendricks holds his  
bleeding nose, yelping in pain.

DENE

STOP IT! STOP IT NOW!

AMY

Honey!? What are you doing!?

Reginald then jumps on top of Kendricks and punches him in  
the face repeatedly.

PUNCH!

PUNCH!

PUNCH!

AMY (CONT'D)

WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?



DENE'  
STOP! STOP!

LILLIAN  
DADDY! DADDY!

PUNCH!

PUNCH!

PUNCH!

Kendrick's face is battered and bleeding. Reginald screams in rage.

INT. LOCAL HOSPITAL/ WAITING ROOM

Reginald, Dene', Amy, Tiara, and all the kids are sitting and waiting.

Dene's eyes are streaming with tears.

DENE'  
Are we seriously back here again?

Her eyes dart directly at Reginald. Reginald looks guilty.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
What the fuck were you thinking!?

Reginald is silent.

REGINALD  
I just snapped...I'll pay for the expenses.

Amy looks terrified.

AMY  
Honey...

Reginald looks at his wife.

AMY (CONT'D)  
When we get back, please see if Dr. Lane can adjust your medication.

Reginald looks questionably at his wife.

REGINALD  
What!? I'm not crazy. He just kept coming at me. What was I supposed to do?

Everyone is silent now.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
What was I supposed to do!?

Everyone remains silent.

DR. DAVIS (55) walks in. Everyone rises from their seats and walks towards him.

DR. DAVIS  
He's going to be okay. A few  
fractures and bruises but  
everything should be healed in a  
couple weeks. We'll run some more  
tests tonight to make sure. He  
should be released tomorrow. You  
all can come in. He's in Unit B 23.

Dene' and Tiara continues to walk toward the unit.

Reginald begins walking. Dr. Davis stops him. Reginald is confused.

DR. DAVIS (CONT'D)  
He prefers if you stay away from  
him.

Reginald is caught off guard.

REGINALD  
What?

DR. DAVIS  
He said he doesn't feel safe with  
you around and the hospital has to  
abide by his request.

Dene' listens to what is going on. Dene' and Reginald lock eyes for a minute.

REGINALD  
Dene', do you hear this!? This is  
ridiculous!

DENE'  
You're lucky if he doesn't press  
charges.

Reginald doesn't believe what is going on.

REGINALD  
He threatened me with a gun!

Dene' looks at Reginald. She's has no sympathy for him right now. Reginald gets the message.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

I see...

A beat. Reginald looks at Amy.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Come on, let's grab the kids and go.

Amy is reluctant but does as she is told.

AMY

Come on Lillian.

Lillian follows her mother. The whole family walk towards the front door. Dene' looks back in tears.

INT. REGINALD'S CAR/ HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Reginald speeds through the highway, his eyebrows furrowed. Amy is silent and worried.

AMY

Please slow down.

Reginald continues to speed. Amy sees a red light ahead.

AMY (CONT'D)

That's a red light! Slow down!

Reginald quickly stomps on the breaks and abruptly halts the car.

SCURRRR!

The abrupt stop jerks everyone forwards then backwards. Amy takes several deep breaths, calming herself. Reginald face doesn't change, he is still livid.

REGINALD

I can not believe Kendricks...and Dene' takes his side!?

He shakes his head in disappointment.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

After everything I've done for them. This is how they repay me.

He laughs a bit. Amy remains silent. The light turns green and Reginald continues to drive.

Amy suddenly breaks down.

AMY  
You scared me...you scared me and  
the kids...

A beat.

AMY (CONT'D)  
What kind of example are you  
setting!?

Her cries continue.

REGINALD  
I'm so sorry baby, I really am. It  
won't happen again.

Reginald looks back at Amy, she can't even look him in the eye right now. She's continues to sob harshly.

Reginald looks in the rearview mirror and sees his daughter Lillian in the reflection looking at him fearfully, shedding a tear.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Daddy's sorry princess...

INT. PUBLICIST'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Reginald is dressed in a suit and tie. He sits across his publicist Matthew. He doesn't look happy.

REGINALD  
Why did you call me in? What's  
going on? More interviews coming  
up?

There is a long pause.

MATTHEW  
You came to me, looking for a  
publicist correct?

REGINALD  
Yes.

MATTHEW  
And have I ever let you down?

REGINALD

No, not at all.

MATTHEW

You have a pristine image. Your audience looks at you as the American Dream. You have the wife, the kids. You're a church going, God fearing man. You're articulate, educated, rational. Your audience loves you. You're like a Wayne Brady for Republicans...

REGINALD

What is this leading to?

MATTHEW

Let me show you something.

Matthew grabs his phone from his pocket and shows Reginald the content.

A VIDEO plays. It's a video of Reginald and Kendrick's fight

AUDIO:

REGINALD

WHAT!? WHAT!? I AIN'T NIGGA ENOGUH FOR YOU!?

Matthew fast-forwards it.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Nah! Nah! I'm sick of this little tired nigga coming for me. You want a nigga!? Nigga here now!

Matthew fast forwards the video again.

Reginald is on top of Kendricks, ragefully punching his face.

PUNCH!

PUNCH!

PUNCH!

Matthew stops the video. Reginald is embarrassed.

MATTHEW

What the fuck is this?

Reginald is in shock.

REGINALD  
I didn't think anyone recorded  
that...

MATTHEW  
Welcome to the 21st century.

REGINALD  
I am so sorry.

MATTHEW  
You're a face for the Republican  
Party not Love and Hip Hop!

REGINALD  
Listen...my mother died last week  
and as you can see, my brother and  
I aren't getting along. I've just  
been feeling...on edge lately...

MATTHEW  
Yeah, the whole world is on edge...

A beat.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)  
This is on CNN, Fox News, Twitter,  
YouTube, Instagram! This is going  
viral fast!

Reginald flushes, he is ashamed.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)  
This is not a good look at all. You  
went from Wayne Brady to Tupac. How  
do you think the Republicans are  
going to take this!? And then you  
used the "n" word!?

REGINALD  
Why does it matter? That's how most  
of them see me anyway.

MATTHEW  
Do you know what their thinking!?

Reginald collects his thoughts.

REGINALD  
We knew his "nigger side" was going  
to come out some day.

Reginald is defeated. Matthew has a tiny bit of sympathy.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
What do we do now?

MATTHEW  
What do we do now!? Are you serious!? I advise you to make no public appearances or to do any interviews. Just lay low until this flies over.

Reginald signs deeply.

REGINALD  
Is this the end of my career?

A beat.

MATTHEW  
I'm not going to lie to you. It's not looking good. Let's just hope this thing dies out soon.

REGINALD  
So, pretty much I'm jobless.

MATTHEW  
Think of it more of a laying off.

REGINALD  
Thank you for your time.

Reginald abruptly rises from his seat, walks towards the front door and slams it shut.

INT. REGINALD'S MANSION/ LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Amy is in the living room watching the news. Reginald's fight with Kendricks is plastered on the screen.

Amy watches in awe. She hears the front door open and quickly turns off the television.

Reginald walks in shortly afterwards.

REGINALD  
Hey, honey.

AMY  
(awkwardly)  
Yes?

REGINALD  
What are you doing?

AMY  
Watching TV.

REGINALD  
Usually you a watch TV when it's  
turned on.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I'm sure you've seen it by now.

Amy is sadden for him. Reginald sighs.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I've lost all my gigs.

AMY  
What!?

REGINALD  
My publicist is telling me to lay  
low for awhile.

AMY  
What are we going to do!?

REGINALD  
Honey, it'll be fine. I have a lot  
of money saved up. We'll be fine.

AMY  
Maybe I can pick up something. I  
have a little clerical experience.

REGINALD  
Honey, shhhh...

Reginald kisses Amy.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Don't you worry. We got this. I'm  
the man, I provide okay? You relax.

Reginald smiles at her but it's faint. Amy nods her head  
concernedly.

EXT. LOCAL LAKE - EVENING

Reginald looks out over a luminous lake. The amber sunset  
reflects off the lake's surface. He's lost in its beauty.  
He's serene and escaping everything.



He sits on the bare grass with his feet in the water. There's a half bottle of whiskey besides him.

Right beside the whiskey bottle is his phone. It begins buzzing, he looks at the caller ID. It's DENE'.

He picks up the phone reluctantly.

REGINALD  
Hello?

DENE (O.S.)  
Hey.

A beat.

REGINALD  
What do you want?

DENE' (O.S.)  
Well sorry...I was just calling to check in on you. The video is all over social media.

Reginald's face balls up.

REGINALD  
Yeah, I know.

DENE'  
Are you okay? Is this affecting your work?

REGINALD  
I have to lay low for awhile. No interviews or appearances...I don't know what to do...

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
How is Kendricks?

DENE'  
He's good. He's not all the way healed but there is no permanent damage...

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
You should call and check up on him.

REGINALD

I'm good.

DENE'

What is wrong with you?

REGINALD

Nothing...he's messing up my  
career!

Dene' sighs.

DENE'

Seriously, you've been so weird  
lately.

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

Is it mom's death?

REGINALD

Please don't go there.

DENE'

I've never seen you act this way  
before. I'm here if you want to  
talk.

REGINALD

Why is everyone coming at me!?

DENE'

I'm not. I'm just --

REGINALD

Listen, are you done!? I'm having  
some me time right now and you're  
fucking it up!

DENE'

Sorry I --

Reginald is perturbed and suddenly hangs up the phone. He  
takes another swig of his whiskey.

FADE OUT

ONE MONTH LATER...

Reginald's cell phone rings. He wakes up groggily, unaware of  
his surrounding. He reaches for his cell phone on his  
nightstand, knocking a few bottles of whiskey over.

He finds his cellphone and looks at it with half open eyes.  
He sees Matthew is calling, he's confused but answers.

REGINALD

Hello?

MATTHEW

I have great news!

REGINALD

What?

MATTHEW

You're yesterday's story.

REGINALD

Huh?

MATTHEW

There's a new video of one of those  
ditzzy pop stars puking on an  
interviewer. No one cares about  
your fight now!

REGINALD?

Okay...so I can start doing  
interviews again?

MATTHEW

Not so fast. That video is still  
fresh in people's minds.

REGINALD

Okay? What should I do?

MATTHEW

A public apology.

Reginald thinks on this.

REGINALD

I can do that.

MATTHEW

You have to build your audience's  
trust again, let them know nothing  
like this will happen again. Put on  
your best Mr. Rogers you know?

REGINALD

Got it.

MATTHEW

Write up something. Maybe about two minutes. I'll review it and set a date and time with the studio. I'll let you know when capeesh?

REGINALD

Capeesh.

MATTHEW

Alright, talk to you soon. We're back in action!

Reginald smiles and hangs up the phone. He turns to his wife Amy who is besides him. He taps her.

REGINALD

Honey?

She wakes up processing her surroundings.

AMY

Yes?

REGINALD

I'm back!

AMY

What?

REGINALD

I'm back, my publicist just called and told me that video of me is old news.

AMY

That's great!

REGINALD

All I have to do is a public apology and I can start doing interviews and appearances.

Amy rises from bed and hugs him happily.

AMY

I'm so happy for you, really!

He hugs her back smiling but there is something in Reginald that is not settled.

INT. TV STUDIO/ BACKROOM - AFTERNOON

Reginald is in a room, in front of a vanity mirror taking swigs from his whiskey bottle.

Someone opens the door. Reginald quickly hides the bottle under the vanity. Matthew enters the room, he's giddy.

MATTHEW

You're up in five minutes!

Reginald smiles back weakly.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Everything's okay?

Reginald forces a wider smile. A beat.

REGINALD

Yeah, let's do this.

INT. TV STUDIO - AFTERNOON

Crew members scurry around getting cameras, lights, and other equipment ready.

Reginald sits down behind the news podium. He's looking through his notes and taps his foot anxiously. Beads of sweat drip from his forehead. Matthew notices.

MATTHEW

You sure you're okay?

REGINALD

Yeah, I'm good...

MATTHEW

Smile, your career is coming back.

Reginald gives a weak smile again.

DIRECTOR

Alright, we'll be on soon.

The director looks at Reginald.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

You ready?

Reginald nods nervously.

REGINALD

Yeah.

DIRECTOR  
Look straight at the camera.

Reginald focuses on the camera.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
Okay... we're going live in 3, 2,  
1...

The director signals Reginald. A beat.

REGINALD  
Hello everyone Reginald Lewis here.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I'm sure you've all seen the  
altercation between my brother and  
I. I do sincerely apologize... I  
don't know what I was thinking. It  
was a stupid mistake...

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I've been secretly grieving the -  
the - the lost of...

Reginald goes blank, his eyes are wide open again. He shakes  
and sweats.

MATTHEW  
(whispering)  
Reginald! Reginald!

Reginald snaps back to reality. He looks around the room  
alertly, gaining consciousness again.

REGINALD  
The lost of...

He sighs disparagingly. A long beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
You know what..fuck this...

Matthew's face drops.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Why the hell am I even explaining  
myself!?

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
What you all saw was an honest  
reaction when my brother called me  
a coon and you know what he was  
right...

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I'm tired of putting on this front  
for ya'll! People back at home call  
me "Reggie", I get into fights, I  
use the word nigga...

Matthew is about to have a panic attack.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Why the fuck am I apologizing for  
being me!? I'm tired of cooning for  
ya'll white people! All you do is  
cower when I walk by and call me a  
nigger when I'm not around no  
matter how nice I am to you! This  
shit is exhausting!

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Why a black man got to apologize  
for having a fight with his  
brother!? That's what brothers do!  
Fuck this shit!

He rips the microphone attached to his collar off and walks  
off stage.

A beat.

Everyone's face has dropped. The crew members stare around at  
each other blankly. Matthew faints.

INT. REGINALD'S MANSION/ HALLWAY - NEXT DAY EVENING

Reginald walks inside his home clumsily. He closes the door  
behind him and locks it.

Amy storms towards him with her arms crossed, she is  
completely flabbergasted.

She just stares, speechless. It's uncomfortable. Reginald  
looks guilty.

Amy is still silent, completely baffled. She finally speaks.

AMY  
What the hell was that?

Reginald sighs.

REGINALD  
Listen...you don't know what it's  
like.

AMY  
Don't know what what is like?

REGINALD  
See what I mean?

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Amy, I am tired.

AMY  
I hope you mean tired of  
embarrassing yourself, embarrassing  
us!

This strikes a nerve.

REGINALD  
Us?

AMY  
Yes, us.

REGINALD  
This is my career Amy. There is no  
us when it comes to that.

AMY  
I am in the public eye just like  
you! I influence how the public  
sees you too!

Reginald laughs.

REGINALD  
Really!? Try being a black man in  
the eye of the white public! Can  
you tell me about that!? Everyone  
scrutinizing you for every single  
thing! Waiting for you to act like  
a stereotype! Do you know that  
pressure!?

Amy is in tears. A beat.



REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I endure all of that to support you  
and the kids!

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
And let's be honest, you would  
still be in that trailer park if it  
wasn't for me. So, I need you to be  
a little more grateful.

Amy slaps him. Reginald takes it submissively but he is holding back. His eyes gets wide, he moves closer to Amy.

She backs away terrified. He points his index finger directly into her face, almost touching her. Amy cowers before him, trembling. He looks unhinged.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Don't you ever put your hands on me  
again...

She whimpers, smelling the whiskey on his breath. A beat.

AMY  
You've been drinking again haven't  
you?

Reginald stares guiltily. Amy boils internally.

AMY (CONT'D)  
All I do is support you and submit  
to you! And you keep disrespecting  
me!

A beat.

AMY (CONT'D)  
All you do is make me feel like a  
pawn in your game!

REGINALD  
What game!?

AMY  
Did you only marry me because I am  
white!?

REGINALD  
Are you serious!?

AMY

It's apart of your image right!? A black Republican with his white wife! They got to see you're one of them right!?

REGINALD

Amy, I love you for you! Do you know how many white women I was with in the past!?

Amy looks offended.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

But you're the one I chose to marry!

Amy cries. She doesn't believe him anymore.

AMY

I don't even know who you are anymore! You're literally a different person!

A long pause.

AMY (CONT'D)

I don't feel valued or safe!

Another beat.

AMY (CONT'D)

I can't do this anymore!

This strikes Reginald, he's bamboozled.

REGINALD

What are you saying!?

AMY

I packed up my stuff already.

A beat.

AMY (CONT'D)

And the kids -

Reginald's eyes are wide again. Amy jumps a little. Reginald walks closer.

REGINALD

What about the kids?

AMY  
Just know they're safe...

He suddenly grabs Amy's head with his two hands, and forcefully pulls her head directly to his, yanking her. She yelps in terror. They are face to face. He looks directly into her eyes, shaking feverishly, grunting.

REGINALD  
Where are my kids!?

Amy is silent, she just continues crying.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
WHERE ARE MY KIDS!?

Amy screams and fights to escape Reginald's grasp. He is holding on to her too tight.

AMY  
YOU'RE HURTING ME! STOP IT!

Reginald snaps out of his rage. He sees the terror in her eyes and lets go.

Amy breaks down. She runs for the front door, Reginald runs after her.

REGINALD  
Baby, listen I'm sorry.

Amy opens the front door, slams it shut, and runs for her car.

Reginald grabs a nearby vase and slams it against a wall, it shatters effortlessly. He yelps in agony and drops to his knees.

We hear Amy's engine crank and the sound of a vehicle driving away.

INT. COURT ROOM - AFTERNOON

Reginald sits down besides his attorney. To the right of him on the other side of the court room, sits Amy and her attorney.

JUDGE BARFIELD (50) sits elevated in the center of the room. He's a stern, no nonsense, white man. He looks through his notes meticulously.

JUDGE BARFIELD  
Mr. Lewis...

Judge Barfield has Reginald's attention.

JUDGE BARFIELD

When I reviewed your records. I see that you have PTSD and you're currently taking Zoloft. I understand that you are seeking help and I wish you well on your journey...

A beat.

JUDGE BARFIELD

But as a judge I can not ignore the amount of alcohol in your system that your records show. Mrs. Lewis here has accused you of increasingly erratic behavior. Even though we can not prove that. Your public behavior recently has not been great. We will have to take these into consideration in court. There are technically evidence.

A beat.

JUDGE BARFIELD

With the combination of the PTSD, alcoholism, and your recent behavior. We will have to allow Mrs. Lewis to take full custody of your two children Lillian Lewis and Reginald Lewis The Third.

Reginald remains stoic.

JUDGE BARFIELD

Please get help Mr. Lewis. Court dismissed.

Judge Barfield bangs his gavel. Amy hugs her attorney crying. Reginald continues to stare into space, processing the hearing. His attorney pats him on the back for support.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Reginald lies down on a couch with a flustered mind.

DR. LANE

What are you thinking about?

A beat.

REGINALD  
It's like I'm losing everyone...

Dr. Lane looks sympathetic and passes a box of tissue.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I don't need that.

Dr. Lane takes the box away from him.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
My brother hates me, my wife...well  
my ex wife left me and took my  
children away from me...

DR. LANE  
I'm so sorry...you lost your mom  
too right?

A beat.

REGINALD  
Yes.

DR. LANE  
I've seen a switch in character  
ever since her death...

A beat.

DR. LANE (CONT'D)  
I don't think you're coping. You're  
bottling up your emotions. When you  
don't deal with them, you will lash  
out. It sounds like your brother  
was a victim and also your ex-wife.  
Unfortunately, she took your kids  
to keep them safe. You're  
becoming...a danger...

Reginald is offended.

REGINALD  
A danger!?

DR. LANE  
I have to be blunt.

REGINALD  
If I'm a danger then help me out!

A beat.

DR. LANE

Listen, I'm trying the best I can but you have to let me in more. There's something with your mother that is not settled, causing this behavior. You're bottling up something. I can't help you if you don't trust me.

Reginald knows she's right, he looks at her, wanting to trust her but he can't.

DR. LANE (CONT'D)

So tell me, what happened between you and your mother?

Reginald ponders on the question. There's something deep in his mind but he quickly pushes it away. He abruptly stands up.

REGINALD

I appreciate your time today. But I have to get going...

Dr. Lane looks disappointed.

DR. LANE

I understand.

Reginald is about to leave out the door.

DR. LANE (CONT'D)

Mr. Lewis...

Reginald turns around stoically, not wanting to be vulnerable.

DR. LANE (CONT'D)

Eventually, the truth always comes to the surface...

Reginald nods his head.

REGINALD

Thank you...

He's thinking hard on something.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

But I will no longer be needing your services.

Dr. Lane is stunned.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

You take care.

He remains stoic and closes the door behind him.

INT. LOCAL LAKE - EVENING

Reginald is by the local lake again, standing and looking over the sunset. There are several bottles of whiskey near his feet.

He's peaceful and serene, even though his eyes look slightly disturbed...

He has zoned out again, he's contemplating something deeply...

He continues to stare off for five seconds...

Then, he slowly begins to unbutton his shirt. Once he is finished with the last button, he removes the shirt from his body.

He then unbuckles his belt and whips it off. He unbuttons and zip down his pants and pulls them down. Then takes them off his ankles.

He is stripped down to his underwear but quickly pulls them down as well and throws them off to the side.

He's completely nude now. He slowly walks to the shore letting the water touch his feet.

He slowly steps forward in the lake. Reginald trembles a bit but he stays committed.

He steps further and further into water. The water is up to his hips now.

He takes a deep breath and waits five minutes...

He begins swimming now, moving further and further from the shore, deeper and deeper into the lake...until he disappears...

BLACK OUT

We hear the sound of a cooking pot hit something with blunt force.

CLUNK!

We hear a man scream in excruciating pain...

Gun shots sound off.

BANG! BANG!

We hear the terrified screams of a teenaged male...

INT. HOSPITAL BED - MORNING

Reginald wakes up suddenly. He automatically begins coughing. Water escapes from his mouth, he harshly gasps for air.

His vision is blurred. He sees two white and undefined figures hovering over him, he can't tell if they are angels or not.

Reginald feels pressure on his chest and more water seeps from his mouth. Reginald give an elongated gasp, coming back to full consciousness.

Now that his vision is clearer. He examines his surrounding. He notices that he is in a hospital room. There are TWO NURSES in white scrubs looking over him.

A flash of light flashes into his left eye and then his right eye. Then the light flashes into his eyes again.

NURSE

He's alive.

Reginald is in pure shock and is still. He continue gasping for air softly...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

DR. GIVENS (45) stands next to Reginald lying in the hospital bed, she looks concerned.

REGINALD

So, what happened?

DR. GIVENS

Someone found you in Blue Ridge Lake unconscious. They pulled you up in their boat and tried CPR. They had no luck and sent you here.

Reginald looks ashamed.

DR. GIVENS (CONT'D)

It wasn't looking good, you're quite lucky.



A beat.

DR. GIVENS (CONT'D)  
What were you doing in that lake?

Reginald thinks hard on this question. A beat.

REGINALD  
I was just taking a swim...

Dr. Givens looks at him questionably. Reginald notices.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I guess I went too far in the lake.

Dr. Givens sighs a little.

DR. GIVENS  
Well, I thank God someone found  
you.

A beat.

DR. GIVENS (CONT'D)  
We still have to run some more  
tests to make sure there is no  
permanent damage or infections. Is  
there anyone we should contact so  
they can know you're alive?

A beat.

REGINALD  
Yes, my sister.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Dene' comes bursting into the hospital room in tears. She runs straight towards Reginald's hospital bed. She hugs him and constricts Reginald in her arms.

DENE'  
Don't you ever scare me like that  
again!

Reginald hugs her back, she let's go.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
What happened!?

A beat.

REGINALD

I was just taking a swim and I went too far in the water...

Dene' looks at him questionably.

DENE'

You swim!?

REGINALD

Yeah...on occasion....

Dene' takes this in.

DENE'

Does Amy know what happened!?

REGINALD

I don't know...we're not together...

Dene gasps.

DENE'

What happened!?

REGINALD

I don't know what her problem is...

Reginald is in deep thought.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

She took the kids too, didn't tell me where they are going...

Dene' is sympathetic.

DENE'

I'm so sorry Reginald...I had no idea..

Dene' tears up watching her brother being so vulnerable. Dene' goes in for a hug again. He hugs back desperately.

DENE' (CONT'D)

You may feel like you've lost everyone but you still got me...

REGINALD

Thanks...

Dene' continues to hug him. She let's go. She's contemplating everything he just said. A thought comes to mind.

DENE'  
Why don't you stay with me for  
awhile?

Reginald is confused.

REGINALD  
What?

DENE'  
You can stay with me. I have plenty  
of room. I could use the company.

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
I think we both could.

Another beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
You can just chill a moment to get  
your mind off things.

REGINALD  
I couldn't, you have your own  
life...

DENE'  
Reggie, you are my brother, you are  
my life. You've helped me more than  
you could ever imagine. Let me  
return the favor.

A beat.

REGINALD  
Alright...

They both smile at each other lovingly.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I'll rent my house out since a  
brotha ain't got no job.

They chuckle briefly. Then, Dene's face turns somber all of a  
sudden. She is getting teary-eyed again.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
What? What is it?

A beat.

DENE'  
I'm just happy you're alive.

Reginald is eerily quiet. A beat.

REGINALD  
Yeah, me too...

Dene' catches his late response. A beat.

DENE'  
So, when did you start swimming  
again?

Reginald is caught off guard.

REGINALD  
Oh, ummm...I just started a couple  
of weeks ago...

Dene's nods her head curiously.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Reginald and Dene' enters her home. Reginald carries a suitcase. Dene' closes the door behind her and locks it.

DENE'  
I'll show you to your room.

Dene' begins walking and Reginald follows her down the hallway.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ JACKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dene' and Reginald walks near a bedroom door. Dene' opens it and cuts the light on. Reginald is still.

DENE'  
Go in already.

A beat.

REGINALD  
This is where mom stayed.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I can't stay in here.

DENE'

What?

REGINALD

I can't stay in here, please. It won't be good for me.

DENE'

This is the only spare bedroom I have.

REGINALD

I would rather take the couch honestly.

Dene' sighs.

DENE'

Just take my bedroom. I can sleep in here.

REGINALD

You're already allowing me to stay with you. I can't take your bedroom too.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

I'll sleep on the couch, I'll be alright. I promise. Thanks again.

Reginald walks out of the bedroom and towards the living room. Dene' is dumbfounded.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Reginald is resting on Dene's couch. A quilt lies over him.

Suddenly the front door opens. It wakes up Reginald. Kendrick walks in and spots Reginald lying down.

KENDRICKS

Bro!

Kendricks quickly closes the door, locks it, and runs towards his brother on the couch. He has a brace over his nose. He hugs him tightly, tearing up. Reginald hugs back. They're taking in this moment...

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ DINING ROOM - MORNING

Reginald, Dene', and Kendricks sit at the dining room together. They have pancake, eggs, sausage, and orange juice together.

They are digging into their plates and talking.

KENDRICKS

If I got Dene's message earlier I would've been here sooner...

REGINALD

It's okay, I'm just glad you're here now...

They continue to eat. A beat.

Reginald notices the brace on Kendrick's nose. Reginald looks guilty and sighs.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Is your nose okay? I thought that would be off by now...

KENDRICKS

They keep finding other fractures. The doctor said it should be fixed in two weeks but who knows that can change...

A beat.

REGINALD

I'm sorry Kendricks. I've been a complete ass. I had no right putting my hands on you.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

You didn't deserve that...everything you were saying was right...I just couldn't handle the truth...

KENDRICKS

You were throwing some truths out there too...

A beat.

KEDNRICK

And I ain't gonna lie, I didn't  
think your white ass could throw  
hands like that.

They both laugh lightly. A beat.

Kendricks tears up, he's trying to hold them back.

KENDRICKS

Why do we keep fighting man?

A beat.

REGINALD

I don't know...

Tears fall out of Kendricks eyes.

KENDRICKS

Just know if you need anything. I  
got your back bro...

REGINALD

I got yours too...

They continue to eat. Dene' tears up as well, happy to see  
her brothers get along.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Reginald and Dene' lounge leisurely on the couch. They share  
a blanket and watches the TV.

A LAUGH TRACK plays through the TV.

Dene' laughs but Reginald remains detached, not a smile on  
his face.

A beat.

DENE'

Are you okay?

REGINALD

Yeah, I'm good...

Dene' tries to find something else to talk about.

DENE'

It was good to see you and  
Kendricks make up today. Mom would  
be happy...

Reginald want to change the subject. A beat.

REGINALD

Do you think dad really loved us?

Dene' thinks on this question solemnly.

DENE'

I don't know but he was our  
father...so I loved him anyway...

Reginald continues to stare at the TV blankly.

REGINALD

I'm getting kind of tired...

DENE'

Oh, no problem...

She grabs the remote and turns the TV off. She hugs her  
brother, he hugs back half-heatedly...

DENE' (CONT'D)

Goodnight, see you tomorrow after  
work.

REGINALD

Okay, good night...

Dene' rises from the couch and walks out of the living room.

Reginald continues to stare at the blank TV for about ten  
seconds...

DENE' (O.S.)

Reggie?

Reginald snaps out of his trance and looks over to Dene. She  
stares at him puzzled.

REGINALD

Huh?

DENE'

Aren't you going to bed?

REGINALD

Yeah, I am...

He grabs at one of the table lamps and turns the switch off.  
He lies down with the quilt over him, getting comfortable.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

Good night.



DENE'  
Good night.

She continues to stare at Reginald with concerned eyes.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ DINING ROOM - MORNING

Reginald is on his laptop, typing away, applying for jobs. He hears the doorbell ring.

DING DONG!

Reginald is alert, rises from his seat, and walks towards the front door.

EXT. DENE'S HOUSE/ FRONT DOOR - LATE MORNING

Reginald opens the front door, there stands Amy. She holds Reginald The Third and Lillian stand besides her.

Reginald is completely baffled and Amy immediately smiles.

AMY  
Hey.

Without a second thought, he hugs Amy lovingly, constricting her.

REGINALD  
Oh my God...what are you doing here? I've missed you..

Amy is in tears. A beat.

AMY  
I've missed you too. Can we come inside please...?

REGINALD  
Of course.

The whole family enters the house.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ DINING ROOM - LATE MORNING

Reginald sits down with Reginald The Third on his lap, he plays with him making his son laugh and smile. Amy takes this in and smiles with them too.

Reginald sees Lillian sitting by her mother. Reginald smiles at his daughter.

REGINALD  
Lilly...

Lillian looks over to her father.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
How's school?

LILLIAN  
Good.

REGINALD  
You're being good? Making friends?

LILLIAN  
Yes.

REGINALD  
Making good grades?

LILLIAN  
Yes.

AMY  
She's already reading at a 2nd  
grade level.

Reginald is proud.

REGINALD  
That's because she's a Lewis. My  
girl. I'm proud of you.

Lillian smiles. A beat.

LILLIAN  
Daddy...

Lillian has her father's undivided attention.

REGINALD  
Yes, sweetheart?

LILLIAN  
Why aren't you with me, mommy, and  
Reggie?

Tears continue to fallout of Amy's eyes. Reginald softens up  
for his daughter.

REGINALD  
Daddy has some things to work  
out...

LILLIAN  
Will you comeback?

Reginald and Amy looks at each, the question catches them off guard. Amy can't take it.

AMY  
Lilly, why don't you go in the living room and watch some cartoons, okay...

LILLIAN  
Okay...

Lillian delicately gets up from her chair and whimsically walks away.

Amy continues to cry. A beat.

AMY  
It's good to see you Reginald, really.

REGINALD  
Likewise...

AMY  
Dene' told me what happened.

Reginald looks ashamed.

AMY (CONT'D)  
I can't believe the last time I could've seen you was in court...

A beat.

AMY (CONT'D)  
What were you doing just swimming in a random lake?

REGINALD  
It just relaxes me...

Amy breaks down silently.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
It's okay, God had his hands on me...

A beat.

AMY

And to think I was trying to keep  
you away from your children.

REGINALD

You had every right to...

A beat.

AMY

No, not forever. They need their  
father...

Reginald furrows his eyebrows.

AMY (CONT'D)

I can split the custody.

Amy has Reginald's attention.

AMY (CONT'D)

Maybe you can see them on the  
weekends or you can have them every  
other week. You tell me...

Amy continues to wail. Reginald's face is sympathetic but he  
doesn't cry. He thinks long on her offer.

REGINALD

Amy, I am so happy you came by so  
that I could see you and the kids.  
Really, thank you.

Amy nods.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

But I can't...

Amy is confused.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

My drinking was out of control, I  
was out of control...

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

I need more time to work on  
myself...

AMY

I understand...

REGINALD

As long as I can see them one time a week, that's good enough for me right now. Once, I'm better I would love to have some type of custody...

Amy nods. A beat.

AMY

Do you think we can ever work out again?

REGINALD

Time will tell.

Reginald and Amy smiles to themselves lightly.

INT. DENE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Reginald and Dene' are washing and drying pots, pans, silverware, and etc. They just finished dinner.

Reginald is at the kitchen sink scrubbing a plate.

REGINALD

Amy, came over today.

Dene' looks over to him.

DENE'

Really?

Reginald turns around. They eye each other. He's not angry but maybe a little annoyed. Dene' looks guilty.

REGINALD

Yeah, she told me you told her what happened.

A beat.

DENE'

I'm sorry...I didn't mean to over step...

Reginald stares at Dene'. She can't tell if he's angry or not.

REGINALD

Don't worry about it.

Dene' looks relieved.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I got to see my kids.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Reginald is growing, Lillian is  
reading at a second grade level.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
She offered me partial custody of  
the kids.

Dene' is stunned.

DENE'  
What did you say?

A beat.

REGINALD  
I told her no...

DENE'  
Why?

REGINALD  
I just don't feel ready.

Dene' is silent. A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I just need to sort some things  
out...

DENE'  
You have a psychiatrist right?

REGINALD  
No, she wasn't any good...

A beat.

DENE'  
You can always talk to me.

REGINALD

You're doing enough already.

Reginald dries the plate and hands it to Dene'. It's the last dish.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

I'm getting tired, I'm going to couch soon...

They both laugh a little.

DENE'

Well, you have a good night.

REGINALD

You too.

They come together for a sibling hug. They let go.

DENE'

See you tomorrow, after work.

Reginald is eerily silent again.

REGINALD

Yeah, see you tomorrow...

Reginald dries his hands with a nearby hand towel. Then he walks towards the living room.

DENE'

Have a good night.

REGINALD

You too.

Dene' stares back wishing to breakthrough to her brother.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ BATHROOM - EVENING

Reginald turns the faucet on for the bathtub. The water runs seamlessly into the tub.

Reginald begins to undress himself. He takes off all of his clothes, then carefully steps over the tub and lies down in it while the water is still running.

He relaxes himself in the tub and gets comfortable.

The water running into the tub catches his eye...it's hypnotic...it's like he's under a spell...

He prolongs his stare for about ten seconds...

INT. DENE' HOUSE/ HALLWAY - EVENING

Dene' walks in with her nursing uniform on. She closes the door and locks it.

DENE'  
Reggie?

She walks down the hall towards her room.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ HALLWAY - EVENING

MOMENTS LATER...

Dene' slowly walks down the hallway. She continues to step forward.

She notices a water puddle in the middle of the hallway. She's confused and looks for the origin. The water trails back to the bathroom. She rushes towards the bathroom and knocks on the door.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

DENE'  
Reggie, is the toilet overflowing?

Dene' doesn't hear anything. She knocks louder.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

DENE' (CONT'D)  
Reggie! What going on in there!?

Silence...

Dene' tries to open the door but it is locked. She slaps the door louder with her hands.

BAM! BAM!

DENE' (CONT'D)  
Goddammit! REGGIE! REGGIE!

She then lunges herself against the bathroom door repeatedly, tackling it, trying to break the lock.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

No luck...



THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

The lock breaks a little, getting weaker...

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

The door flings open and Dene' almost trips herself over.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ BATHROOM - EVENING

Dene' is in the bathroom now, catching her breath and panicking.

Water is all over the floor. She looks at the bathtub and sees a horrific sight...

Reginald is slumped over in the bathtub with his face downward. His head floats on the surface of the water, air bubbles float to the surface. The faucet continues to run, overflowing the bathtub...

DENE'

REGGIE!

Dene' dashes towards Reginald and immediately lifts his torso up, sitting him up in the bathtub, water splashing every where. Reginald gasps desperately for breath.

DENE' (CONT'D)

OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD!

Reginald continues to huff and puff, looking alarmed. Dene' constricts Reginald in her arms, holding him dearly. She breaks down.

Reginald is in shock, not responding to his sister's cries.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Reginald and Dene' sit together at the dining room table. They are both silent...

Dene' stares at Reginald, her eyes are full. Reginald tries to avoid eye contact...

The silence persists...

DENE'

What was that?

Reginald is silent. Finally he speaks, it's almost a whisper.

REGINALD  
I was taking a bath...

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
And I must've fell asleep...

Dene's face turns cold.

DENE'  
Bullshit! Don't you fucking lie to  
me!

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
You look me right in the eye and  
tell me that's true.

Reginald avoids eye contact with her.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
LOOK AT ME!

Reginald stares at Dene' directly in the eyes. Dene' is on edge, her eyes rattle back in forth, tears falling out like water falls.

A beat.

REGINALD  
(calmly)  
I tried to commit suicide...

Dene' yelps in horror.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I tried it at the lake too.

Dene' completely melts. Reginald watches his sister break down. He feels sympathy for her. He walks over and wraps his arms around her.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I can't continue to hurt  
myself...or you...

Dene' continues to sob.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I'm a danger to myself...

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I think it's time to check myself  
in...

Dene' looks up at Reginald with her red and puffy eyes.

DENE'  
Where?

A beat.

REGINALD  
A ward...

DENE'  
What? No...there's nothing wrong  
with you...you just been through a  
lot...and...

REGINALD  
No, you listen to me...

Dene' listens to her older brother.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
If I stay here unattended...I'm  
going to continue...is that what  
you want?

Dene' shakes her head desperately.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I have to...I have to heal...

Dene' grasps her brother in her arms and Reginald  
reciprocates. She moans in despair.

TIME CARD: TWO WEEKS LATER...

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL/ VISITATION ROOM - AFTERNOON

Dene' sits down in a visitation room. She's the only one in  
the room at the moment.

The front door to the room opens up. Reginald walks through  
dressed in an all white scrub. He's got a guard behind him.

Dene' looks at her brother, she is relieved to see him even  
in these conditions.

Reginald reaches Dene's table and they both hug each other  
tightly, not wanting to let go.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL/ VISITATION ROOM - DAY

Dene' smiles at her brother.

DENE'  
You're looking good.

REGINALD  
Thanks you too...

A beat.

DENE'  
How has it been?

REGINALD  
Good...

DENE'  
I miss you...

REGINALD  
I miss you too...

DENE'  
Amy is coming by, wanting to drop  
the kids off for you. Kendricks is  
asking about you too. I told them  
you went off on a trip to escape  
everything. Not sure how long I can  
keep that up...

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
Do you feel like you're making any  
progress?

REGINALD  
No...

Dene' looks disappointed.

DENE'  
You're still having those thoughts?

REGINALD  
Yes...

Dene' tears up but respects his honesty.

DENE'

That's okay. There's no need to rush it. You do what you have to do.

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

But I must ask...and excuse me if this is intruding...

Dene' has Reginald's undivided attention.

DENE' (CONT'D)

These urges that you're having...is this stemming from mom?

Reginald's eyes widen, he is silent.

A beat.

For the first time, Reginald's eyes gets full. He shed tears, he nods his head.

DENE' (CONT'D)

You do know that you can tell me anything right?

Reginald continues to nod.

DENE' (CONT'D)

Then what's the problem? I'm all ears.

REGINALD

I can't...I promised her not to tell anyone...

DENE'

Reginald, look at you...it's eating you alive...release yourself...this will be a step towards your healing...

Reginald yelps.

REGINALD

Oh God!

He breaks down, he knows she's right. Then, he wipes his tears, quivering...

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Dene'...please don't look at me any  
different...

DENE'  
I promise...

Reginald sighs, trusting his sister, feeling a huge weight  
off his shoulders...

Tears are still running, he takes a deep, deep breath...

He sighs, not sure if this is a good idea, but then he  
releases...

REGINALD  
It all started....when I got  
accepted to Harvard....

EXT. JACKIE'S HOUSE/ BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

The backyard is full of people. Someone is grilling hot dogs  
and hamburgers.

There are speakers outside playing old school music, everyone  
is dancing and having a good time.

We see a banner hanging up saying "CONGRATULATIONS REGINALD  
JR".

MOMENTS LATER...

TEEN REGINALD, 17, stands over his cake that says  
"CONGRATUALTIONS". Then, he blows out the candles and  
everyone claps.

INT. JACKIE'S HOME/ KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jackie is washing dishes and drying them. Teen Reginald walks  
into the kitchen, with some more plates and silverware.  
Jackie looks at him and smiles proudly.

JACKIE  
My special boy...

They smile at each other and hug.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
I'm so proud of you son. My little  
genius.

REGINALD SR 40's, walks into the kitchen. He looks disturbed and antagonistic, he has a bottle of whiskey in his hand.

Teen Reginald and Jackie looks alarmed.

REGINALD SR.

This boy about to make us bankrupt.

Teen Reginald looks guilty. Reginald Sr eyes his son. Teen Reginald's spine shivers.

REGINALD SR. (CONT'D)

If you're so smart, why don't you figure out how we're gonna pay for this shit!

Teen Reginald looks down.

JACKIE

Reginald, I already told you. I'm going to work three jobs.

REGINALD SR.

Girl, that don't make no sense! How you gonna balance that and being a mother and a wife!

JACKIE

Baby, its a sacrifice for Jr's education. Your son will be a Harvard student.

REGINALD SR.

I don't give a fuck about a damn Harvard! That boy needs to work and pay for it himself!

Reginald Sr scolds at Jackie.

REGINALD SR. (CONT'D)

And you over here showing off, throwing parties, and smiling like we can actually afford this shit!

JACKIE

We can! His scholarships are covering half of the tuition. We just need to make up the other half.

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
And maybe if you would put your  
drink down and start applying for a  
job that would help!

Reginald Sr eyebrows furrow, he menacingly steps closer to Jackie.

REGINALD SR.  
What did you say to me?

Jackie recoils and trembles.

JACKIE  
Nothing...nothing...

Reginald grasps Jackie's right arm forcefully and snatches her. She doesn't even fight back, Jackie is used to it. Teen Reginald doesn't like it.

TEEN REGINALD  
Get your hands off of her!

Reginald Sr looks over to Teen Reginald with rageful eyes.

JACKIE  
Junior, it's okay baby. Just  
continue washing the dishes.

Reginald Sr slowly walks towards Teen Reginald. He makes direct eye contact.

REGINALD SR  
You think you a man now!? You think  
you better than me!?

A beat.

TEEN REGINALD  
Don't get mad at me because you  
dropped out of 9th grade!

This triggers Reginald Sr he immediately punches Teen Reginald to the ground.

Reginald Sr gets on top Teen Reginald and punches him repeatedly.

PUNCH!

PUNCH!

PUNCH!



Teen Reginald yelps in pain and holds his bleeding nose.

REGINALD SR.  
LEARN SOME RESPECT!

Jackie gasps and runs towards Teen Reginald.

JACKIE  
Baby! Baby!

Reginald Sr stops her in her tracks.

REGINALD SR.  
I ain't done with you yet!

Reginald Sr quickly gets back on his feet and yanks Jackie again and drags her away towards their bedroom. Teen Reginald is still on the ground holding his nose.

Two children walk in the kitchen, YOUNG DENE' (12) and YOUNG KENDRICKS (6), and sees Teen Reginald lying on the ground. Young Dene' looks concerned.

YOUNG DENE'  
Reggie...why are you on the ground?

TEEN REGINALD  
I fell...

Teen Reginald rises from the ground. The kids sees his nose bleeding. They both gasp.

YOUNG KENDRICKS  
Blood!

Young Dene' rushes over to the kitchen table, grabs a paper towel and hands it to Teen Reginald. Teen Reginald takes it.

TEEN REGINALD  
Thank you.

He wipes the blood off. Then, they all hear their mother screaming in the distance.

KENDRICKS  
Why is mom screaming...?

TEEN REGINALD  
She's just talking to dad...

YOUNG DENE'  
That don't sound like talking to me.

Teen Reginald wants to change the subject.

TEEN REGINALD

Dene', I got to finish washing the dishes. It's getting late, can you take Kendricks to bed?

Young Dene' wraps her arm around Young Kendricks's shoulder.

YOUNG DENE'

Come on Kendricks, let's go to bed.

YOUNG KENDRICKS

Oh man!

Young Dene' walks away and leads Young Kendricks to bed. Teen Reginald breaks down.

INT. JACKIE'S HOME/ KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jackie and Teen Reginald sit together at the kitchen table. Teen Reginald's nose is bruised and Jackie has a black eye. Teen Reginald looks concerned.

TEEN REGINALD

Are you okay mom?

JACKIE

Yes, I'm fine.

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

And you.

TEEN REGINALD

I'm okay...

A beat.

TEEN REGINALD (CONT'D)

Where's dad?

JACKIE

He's "out".

Teen Reginald knows what this means.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Listen baby...I wanted to talk to you about something...

Teen Reginald is all ears.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 I know throughout your time in high school, I've pushed you hard. It's because you're gifted, I just want you to be the best.

TEEN REGINALD  
 I understand momma.

JACKIE  
 Now, that hard work is paying off. You're going to the Harvard! This has to happen no matter what.

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 What did I tell you about some of the keys to success. There is hard-work, discipline, dedication, and...

TEEN REGINALD  
 Sacrifice?

JACKIE  
 Sacrifice right...

Jackie smiles, there is something sinister about it. Teen Reginald notices.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 I want to breakdown something for you, you're smart you'll understand...

Teen Reginald nods.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 Did you know your grandfather on your dad's side owned a coal mining company.

TEEN REGINALD  
 No...

JACKIE  
 Yeah he did, made quite a lump sum.

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 Your father used to work for him  
 but his drinking got out of  
 control. His father fired him.  
 But...

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 When he died last year. He granted  
 your father 250,000 from his life  
 insurance policy.

Teen Reginald's mouth gapes open.

TEEN REGINALD  
 Why aren't we using it?

JACKIE  
 Your father said he's going to open  
 up his own coal mining  
 business...still waiting on that  
 day. The money is just sitting  
 there and he's wasting it...he  
 won't let me have access to it...

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 With your scholarships included,  
 you do know that will cover your  
 tuition right?

TEEN REGINALD  
 Yeah...but Dad isn't going to let  
 us have it...

JACKIE  
 Oh yes he will.

TEEN REGINALD  
 How?

A long beat.

JACKIE  
 What did I tell you about  
 sacrifice, dear?

The way she said it makes Teen Reginald's spine shiver, her  
 sinister smile returns.

Teen Reginald realizes what his mother is asking. His mouth  
 gapes open, he's aghast, and tears up.

TEEN REGINALD

Mom!? How could you even think of that!?

JACKIE

Now you listen to me! I did not push you for four years for you to not take this golden opportunity! I will do whatever it takes!

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Your father is a low-down dirty son of bitch!

A beat.

TEEN REGINALD

I won't do it!

JACKIE

He knows he has the money but he won't help! He's jealous of you, trying to keep you from your blessing!

Teen Reginald cries.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Stop all that crying and be a man! Claim what's yours!

Teen Reginald continues to sob. Jackie realizes she's being erratic. She kneels down towards him and wipes the tears from his eyes.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Awww...

Teen Reginald can't look at his mother right now.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

I know this may seem a bit frightening but you have to trust mommy on this one. It will all be worth it. Do you want to go to Harvard?

TEEN REGINALD

Yes...

JACKIE

Do you trust mommy?

A beat.

Teen Reginald nods his head slowly but he doesn't seem too sure.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
Good...

She smiles again. A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
Now...here is the plan...

INT. JACKIE'S HOME/ KITCHEN - NEXT NIGHT

Teen Reginald, Jackie, and Reginald Sr are eating at the kitchen table.

REGINALD SR.  
Where are the kids?

JACKIE  
They're spending the night with my sister.

Reginald Sr looks over to Teen Reginald.

REGINALD SR.  
You didn't want to go?

Teen Reginald looks at his father, shaking a little. Jackie is concerned.

REGINALD SR. (CONT'D)  
Boy, what is wrong with you?

TEEN REGINALD  
Nothing...nothing...I didn't want to go...

A beat.

Jackie eyes Teen Reginald, reminding him to calm down. Teen Reginald stops shaking. Jackie notices that Reginald Sr's plate is empty.

JACKIE  
Let me fix you another plate dear.

Jackie grabs the plate and walks towards the stove. At the stove she sees a large pan filled with rice and cabbage.

She empties the rest of it unto the plate, scraping at the bottom.

Instead of grabbing the plate, she grabs the large pan...

She slowly walks towards her husband, holding the pan like a baseball bat. Teen Reginald notices, then quickly looks away pretending not to notice.

Teen Reginald shakes and trembles again. Trickle of sweat pours from his forehead.

REGINALD SR.

Boy, what is wrong with you!?

Jackie is getting closer and closer to Reginald Sr...

A beat.

REGINALD SR. (CONT'D)

Woman, what is taking so long!?

Reginald Sr turns around, he sees his wife holding the pan over his head. He gasps.

Before he could say anything else - BAM!

Reginald Sr yelps in excruciating pain. He falls heavily to the ground. The front of his forehead bleeds, he shakes uncontrollably on the ground, like a seizure...

Teen Reginald watches his father squirm like a worm, desperate for help. Even though Reginald Sr is half conscious, his eyes never leave Teen Reginald.

JACKIE

Shoot him Junior! Shoot him!

Teen Reginald is frantic as he digs in his pocket. He pulls out a pistol. He holds it with both of his hands. He points it directly at Reginald Sr, he shakes frantically...

Reginald Sr is frightened of his son. His stare pierces Teen Reginald's soul, haunting him. Teen Reginald begins to sob uncontrollably.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

What are you doing!? Shoot him!

Teen Reginald is conflicted.

TEEN REGINALD

I can't!

JACKIE

Do it now!

TEEN REGINALD

This is evil mom!

JACKIE

Do you want to go to Harvard?

Teen Reginald is frozen.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Do you want to go to Harvard!?

Teen Reginald is silent.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

He is useless! All he does is  
drink, yell, and hit!

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

He wants to keep you from your  
dream!

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Shoot him!

Teen Reginald stares at his desperate father. Tears are  
falling like a waterfall.

TEEN REGINALD

(whispering)

I am so sorry...

Teen Reginald closes his eyes...

BAM! BAM!

Teen Reginald jumps at the sound and immediately drops the  
gun like it is made of hot coal. He opens his eyes now and  
sees his father's corpse lying on the ground. There are two  
bullets through his heart. Blood seeps from his body.

Teen Reginald runs towards his father's corpse and caresses  
his body sobbing despairingly.

Jackie stands over Reginald Sr. No regret in her face.

Teen Reginald's sobs elongates for about 5 seconds, his cries  
gets louder and louder...



He shakes feverishly...making guttural sounds...

TEEN REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I'M SORRY! I'M SO SORRY!

Jackie does not console Teen Reginald. She remains cold.

JACKIE  
The story to the police is self  
defense...

FADE OUT

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - DAY

Teen REGINALD sits in the psychiatrists office. He's completely zoned out, he's far out in the distance.

DR. GRAHAM (40) tries to connect with him. She waves to him, trying to see if his eyes will follow her hand, they don't.

DR. GRAHAM  
Hey there Mr. Lewis...

Nothing.

JACKIE  
He's been like this for over a week  
now.

Dr. Graham continues to wave at him. Still nothing.

DR. GRAHAM  
This could be a trauma response...

JACKIE  
Well...his father did recently pass  
away...

DR. GRAHAM  
I'm so sorry to hear that...

Jackie musters up fake tears.

JACKIE  
He was a drunk, died in a car  
accident...we're doing the best we  
can...

She switches moods.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 But the good news is Junior got  
 accepted to Harvard!

DR. GRAHAM  
 Wow, congrats Mr. Lewis!

Teen Reginald is still. Jackie smiles. A beat.

JACKIE  
 So this worries me...what if he  
 isn't speaking when it's time to go  
 to school?

DR. GRAHAM  
 I understand your worry but I will  
 work with him. This is a very rare  
 condition but usually patients heal  
 in about a month with therapy and  
 medication.

REGINALD (V.O.)  
 A month later, I began talking. Two  
 months after that. It was time for  
 Harvard.

INT. HARVARD DORM - AFTERNOON

Jackie looks around the dorm in awe. Young Dene' and Young  
 Kendricks is in the room too.

JACKIE  
 Would you look at this?

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 You are one lucky boy...I never had  
 this opportunity...

Teen Reginald is silent, Jackie is concerned.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 Junior!?

TEEN REGINALD  
 Yes?

Jackie is relieved.

JACKIE

Just making sure you're still here.  
Don't forget to take your meds when  
you're here!

She smiles and walks closer to her son, she is teary eyed.  
She hugs him tightly. Reginald hugs her back but barely.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

We did it son...you're a Harvard  
student...

Jackie cries, she breaks down. Young Dene' notices.

YOUNG DENE'

Mom, why are you crying?

Jackie sniffles.

JACKIE

I just wish your father was here to  
see it.

Jackie continues to cry, looking for sympathy. Young Dene'  
hugs her.

YOUNG DENE'

It's okay mommy. He's looking down  
from heaven.

Teen Reginald stares at her, not buying her performance. He  
has no sympathy in his eyes. Jackie looks back at Teen  
Reginald.

Jackie looks at Teen Reginald's hair. There's nothing wrong  
with it but she doesn't approve.

JACKIE

Don't walk around Harvard with a  
nappy head now. You get your hair  
cut soon.

Teen Reginald tries to pat his hair down a bit.

TEEN REGINALD

Yes ma'am.

A beat.

JACKIE

Now...you go out there, study, and  
be successful...

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 And one day, when you're all  
 successful and rich. You will be  
 able take care of me and your  
 siblings...

A beat.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 You're the man of our family now...

She smiles at him again.

JACKIE (CONT'D)  
 My special boy...

Teen Reginald stares at his mother in vulnerable tears.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL/ WAITING ROOM - AFTERNOON

We transition to adult Reginald in the same vulnerable tears.  
 We are back in the psychiatric hospital waiting room.

We see Dene's reaction. Both of her hands are over her mouth  
 she sobs despairingly. This is hard for her and she doesn't  
 take it lightly. She makes rough guttural sounds. She's  
 angry, sad, confused, scared...it's too many emotions at  
 once. She can't look at Reginald right now.

Reginald knows his story is hard on her and gives her time to  
 process it. Reginald cries with her...

Her sorrowful cries lingers for an extra five seconds...

Reginald opens up his lips slowly.

REGINALD  
 You said you wouldn't look at me  
 any different...

Dene' tries to gather her thoughts to speak. Nothing comes  
 out...

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
 You don't have to talk...

A beat.

DENE'  
 How - how - how could mom do that?

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
How could you do that!?

REGINALD  
That woman manipulated me my whole  
life...no one ever knew! People  
only look at me as the guy who went  
to Harvard! The guy on TV! They see  
my car, my clothes, my mansion...

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
But all these decades I've been  
hurting...feeling guilty...wanting  
to die...

Reginald lips tremble he can't control the tears falling.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Just don't turn your back on  
me...you're all I have...

Dene's mind is in a tornado. She is not sure how to look at  
Reginald anymore. Reginald can tell.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
Now, you listen to me. I didn't do  
all of that for you to just abandon  
me...

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
If I didn't do it, you wouldn't be  
a nurse right now! Kendricks would  
still be in jail! I did it to help  
out the family like mom said!

A beat.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
All dad did was drink, yell, and  
hit...

Dene' sobs harder.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
He deserved it, didn't he!?

Reginald is trying to convince himself it was justified.  
Dene' is bamboozled, her mind is on overdrive.

DENE'  
I have to go...

She rises from her seat. Reginald's face turns menacing.

REGINALD  
Don't you leave here!

DENE'  
I just need time to process  
everything...

REGINALD  
You promised me!

DENE'  
I'm sorry...

Dene' walks away. Reginald watches her, trying to remain calm.

REGINALD  
Dene'...Dene'...

She is getting closer and closer to the exit. Reginald is in hysterics now.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
DENE'! DON'T YOU FUCKING LEAVE ME!  
DON'T YOU FUCKING LEAVE ME!

The guards hurry towards Reginald and drag him away towards a different unit.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
I DID IT FOR THE FAMILY! DONT YOU  
LEAVE ME! DON'T LEAVE! YOU PROMISED  
ME! YOU PROMISED! I LOVE YOU DENE'!  
I LOVE YOU!

Dene' turns around and sees the guards struggle to drag Reginald away. Reginald is putting up a good fight. He has completely lost it.

REGINALD (CONT'D)  
GET OFF ME! GET THE FUCK OFF ME!

They finally drag Reginald out the room and into a corridor, they close the door.

Dene' breaks down again.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dene' lies in her bed and continues to sob herself to sleep. She holds a picture of Teen Reginald, Young Dene', Young Kendricks, and Jackie.

The image of the family she thought she knew is shattered...

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ BEDROOM - MORNING

Dene' continues to somberly lie in bed. Then her cell phone rings.

RING! RING!

She looks at the phone number. She is not sure of the number but answers anyway.

DENE'

Hello?

NURSE WILLIAMS

Yes, is this Dene' Lewis?

DENE'

This is she, who is this?

NURSE WILLIAMS

I'm Nurse Williams from the Bedford Psychiatric Hospital. How are you today?

Dene' seems worried.

DENE'

I'm good what's the problem?

A beat.

NURSE WILLIAMS

Reginald left you as an emergency contact.

Dene's heart sinks.

DENE'

Oh God! What happened!?

NURSE WILLIAMS

Don't worry, he didn't try anything...he's still alive...

DENE'  
Oh thank God...

NURSE WILLIAMS  
But...

DENE'  
But what...?

NURSE WILLIAMS  
When he had his meltdown, we  
sedated him to calm him. Once he  
woke up he stopped responding...

DENE'  
What do you mean...?

NURSE WILLIAMS  
He's conscious but we're not sure  
by how much. He can blink and walk  
if you lead him, but that's about  
it...

Dene' is confused.

NURSE WILLIAMS  
He's not talking. He can't use the  
restroom or bathe without an aide.  
He's in a catatonic state...

Dene' closes her eyes, tears sneak out.

DENE'  
I'm coming over.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL/ REGINALD'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Dene's walks through the door, Nurse Williams is behind her.  
Nurse Williams closes the door behind her.

The room is all white and padded. She sees Reginald sitting  
up on his bed. Staring at nothing...

Dene's eyes are full of tears. She steps closer and closer to  
her brother...

She's face to face with him now.

DENE'  
Reggie?

He's blank...



DENE' (CONT'D)

Reggie?

Nothing...

Dene' is about to shake him...

NURSE WILLIAMS

Please don't touch the patients.

Dene' lowers her arms. Dene' breaks down again, feeling guilty.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME/ OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Nurse Williams sits at her desk, looking through files. Dene' sits across from her.

NURSE WILLIAMS

It seems like he's done this before at the age of 17, for about a month.

DENE'

Yeah, when my father died.

Dene' wipes her tears.

NURSE WILLIAMS

He was taking Zoloft for his PTSD, then stopped...

A beat.

NURSE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

But it just doesn't make any sense. I've never seen a PTSD patient like this, even without meds. He must have some form of psychosis as well...

A beat.

NURSE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Well, we're not quite sure how long this is going to last. We'll have to run more tests on him.

Dene' nods her head.

NURSE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

DENE'

Yes.

NURSE WILLIAMS

Is there anyone else that should  
know the condition he's in?

Dene' nods her head again.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL/ VISITATION ROOM - AFTERNOON

Dene', Kendricks, and Amy are waiting in the visitation room.  
Everyone has tears in their eyes.

The door to an adjacent corridor opens. A guard leads  
Reginald as he walks, dragging his feet. He looks like a  
zombie, completely brain dead.

The guard has to guide him on where his seat is. When they  
reach the seat. The guard pushes down on Reginald's shoulder  
to signal to seat.

Reginald robotically sits. His eyes are wide open but he's  
not there...

Amy and Kendricks looks fearful...

AMY

Re - Reginald...?

Nothing...

KENDRICKS

Bro...?

Nothing....

Reginald just stares...permanently in his own world...

Amy and Kendricks breaks down and hold each other tightly,  
consoling each other. Dene' sheds a tear with them.

FADE OUT

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL/ OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Dene' sits across from Nurse Williams again. Nurse Williams  
looks through some files.

NURSE WILLIAMS

So, it's been two months now...and  
still no response...

Dene' nods her head, it doesn't surprise her.

NURSE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
I'm not sure how long this is going  
to last. We tried every medication  
and procedure. I guess, we will  
have to keep him here a bit  
longer...

A beat.

DENE'  
Can I just take him home?

Nurse Williams looks puzzled.

NURSE WILLIAMS  
Well, I do know that you're a nurse  
yourself. I know that he would be  
in good hands.

Nurse Williams smiles and Dene' smiles back.

NURSE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)  
But we will still need one of our  
home nurses to come in and help  
you. That's a requirement if he  
goes home with you.

DENE'  
Got it.

A beat.

NURSE WILLIAMS  
Do you think you can handle it?  
Emotionally, I mean...

Dene' doesn't have a doubt.

DENE'  
Yes I can. We're family, family  
takes care of each other...

Nurse Williams smile.

INT. DENE'S HOME/ HALLWAY - EVENING

Dene' leads Reginald into the door. He drags his feet and  
Dene' has to lead him. She gets him in the house, closes the  
door and locks it.

DENE'  
Welcome back...

She leads and guides him down the hall.

INT. DENE'S HOME/ MASTER BEDROOM - EVENING

She leads him inside the room.

DENE'  
Welcome to your new room!

She pushes his shoulder down to sit on the bed.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
I'll let you take my bedroom...I'll  
sleep in the other room...

He stares off...silence...

DENE' (CONT'D)  
Well I'm hungry, I'm going whip us  
up something!

She exits the room.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dene' made rice, collard green, mac and cheese, and some  
fried chicken.

She sticks a fork inside of the Reginald's plate and moves  
the fork towards his mouth. He opens it, chew it, and  
swallows it.

DENE'  
That's good, you're doing good.

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dene' bathes Reginald, slowly scrubbing his body as he is  
dazed...

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ BATHROOM - NIGHT

Moments later, she struggles to put on his night clothes...

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Reginald is finally in bed, staring off...

Dene' looks over him...

DENE'  
Have a good night.

She gives him one more look and walks out of the room.

INT. DENE'S HOME/ SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dene's cries herself to sleep, completely distraught. She reaches for the lamp on her night stand and lunges it across the room, shattering it against a wall.

She covers her hands on her face...

DENE'  
God help me please!

INT. DENE'S HOUSE/ MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Dene' peeps in the door. She sees Reginald lying there looking into space...

She tears up again. She walks inside the room. She looks at her brother staring at nothing.

Dene' kneels down...

DENE'  
Hey bro...

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)  
I know you can hear me...

Nothing...

DENE' (CONT'D)  
I just want to say...I didn't mean to abandon you...I was just scared and flustered...

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

I am so sorry mom manipulated you  
this whole time...I had no idea...I  
thought you were just being a  
dick...

She laughs a bit.

DENE' (CONT'D)

Mom sure had a knack for getting  
her way...I always saw her as the  
perfect women...

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

But you we're just a child, you  
didn't deserve that...

A beat.

DENE' (CONT'D)

I'm here to let you know...you  
don't deserve to be alone. I'm your  
sister, I will take care of you  
until the end...I love you bro...

She tears up and hugs his half conscious body. When she let's  
go, she notices her brother has a tear rolling down his left  
cheek.

Dene' notices, she smiles faintly while wiping tears.

TIME CARD: 20 YEARS LATER...

EXT. CEMETARY - AFTERNOON

We are in front of a TOMBSTONE with the name REGINALD LEWIS  
JR engraved in it...

Standing over it is a woman dressed in all black. She is  
OLDER DENE' (55). She stares at the tombstone contemplating,  
shedding a tear...

Older Dene' hear foot steps coming closer and turns towards  
the sounds.

She sees OLDER KENDRICKS (49), OLDER AMY (57), OLDER LILLIAN  
(25), and OLDER REGINALD THE THIRD (22).

They walk wistfully towards the gravesite and Older Dene'...

The family reaches the gravesite and stares at it in disbelief...

A beat.

OLDER KENDRICKS  
Rest in power bro....

Dene' pats his back. He tears up.

OLDER KENDRICKS (CONT'D)  
(to Older Dene')  
You did an amazing job taking care  
of him for the past 20 years...

OLDER DENE'  
Thank you...

OLDER KENDRICKS  
Brain cancer must runs in the  
family...

Older Kendricks sobs harder.

OLDER KENDRICKS (CONT'D)  
This man inspired me to get my life  
together...I wouldn't be a teacher  
without him...

Older Lillian walks towards her uncle and hugs him for support.

OLDER LILLIAN  
I don't have much memory of him  
talking but I do remember him being  
proud of me, always wanting the  
best for me...that's one thing he  
wanted for everyone...

She cries and holds her uncle...

OLDER REGINALD THE THIRD  
What made him stop talking for 20  
years?

Amy tries to get it together.

AMY  
He just stopped...

Amy sobs and Reginald the Third consoles her.

Dene' looks over to Amy, wanting to tell her more but subsides her instincts.

She then looks back at Reginald's grave, buried adjacent to his grave lies REGINALD LEWIS SR and JACKIE LEWIS...

Dene' sheds a final tear...

FADE OUT

THE END