

THE SURROGATE

by

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FADE IN

INT. LESLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

LESLIE (late-20s, black) and BRAD (late 20s, black) are finishing having sex. They are in the missionary position and we can see Leslie's face over Brad's shoulder. This is not a graphic scene, but they do both orgasm.

Leslie angrily pushes Brad off of her. Again, not a graphic scene, no nudity.

LESLIE

What the fuck? Are you not wearing a condom?

BRAD

Oh shit, it broke!

LESLIE

It broke?!?

BRAD

But you're on the pill, right? IUD? Something?

LESLIE

(shaking her head)

No, no, NO! Goddamnit, Brad!

BRAD

Aight, aight, chill, aight? I'll run to CVS, grab you a Plan B pill.

LESLIE

I am not taking a Plan B pill.

BRAD

Damn, girl, you religious or something?

LESLIE

(angry but measured)

Plan B delays your period by like a week.

BRAD

Yeah, so?

LESLIE
(still angry)
I'm supposed to get my period next week, and the week after...

BRAD
What? What happens the week after?

LESLIE
Just forget it. Get yourself an Uber, I gotta figure this shit out.

BRAD
What's gonna happen in two weeks?

Leslie sighs.

LESLIE
(matter of factly)
I'm becoming a surrogate.

BRAD
A surrogate? What's that?

LESLIE
(spoken like she means it)
You are such an idiot.

Brad puts up his hands as if to say, "but what is it?"

LESLIE
I'm going to carry a baby for a couple.

BRAD
Carry it where?

LESLIE
Goddamnit. They're going to implant an embryo in my uterus. Get it?

BRAD
(confused)
An embryo?
(a light bulb goes off)
OH! Oh shit! How you not gonna tell me about that?

LESLIE
Excuse me? This is like our fifth date. You think that because I let you

put your dick in me a couple times you get to weigh in on me getting an embryo put in me for a boatload of money?

BRAD

Surrogates be getting *paid*, huh? Right on, right on. Game respect game.

Leslie stares at him, seething.

LESLIE

If I can't show the doctor next week that I got my period, on time, no embryo. If I don't get an embryo shoved up there, no money. This is on you. You feel me?

BRAD

I think so?

LESLIE

Let me put it to you this way. You better do a goddamn voodoo period rain dance, because if that shit don't flow next week, you owe me \$50,000.

BRAD

Damn, girl! Surrogates get *paid*! I'm saying!

LESLIE

Not if they don't have a fucking baby, they don't! Now dance!

Brad pulls his pants on, and starts awkwardly doing a sort of rain dance.

LESLIE

Dance better!

Brad tries, in a half-assed kind of way. Leslie puts her head in her hands.

LESLIE

Oh, I'm so screwed.

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Brad is sitting in front of his computer at work. He's wearing a button-down shirt and slacks. His work area is in a

cubicle, but he can see over the walls.

He pulls out his cellphone, looks around, and sends a text to Leslie, consisting only of an emoticon of a man holding his hands up as if to say, "well?"

He looks around again as he waits for her reply. We hear a ding.

She has texted: "It's like the scene in The Ten Commandments when Charlton Heston let the Red Sea splash together again."

Brad considers the text for a few beats, trying to make sense of it.

Then he texts: "I was asking if you got your period."

He bobs his head for a minute, moving his mouse and looking at his computer screen. We hear another ding.

She has texted: "Moron. The water from the Red Sea was period blood."

Brad makes a grossed out face.

BRAD
(under his breath)
I clearly did not understand that
bible story.

We hear another ding.

She has texted: "Yes, I got my period, idiot."

He smiles and does a little dance without getting up, as he texts: "My girl fenna get PAID!"

We hear a quick ding.

She has texted: "Not your girl."

He disregards the text and increases the enthusiasm of his dance.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Leslie is sitting on the couch reading a magazine. Her cellphone is sitting on the coffee table and begins to ring. She picks it up.

LESLIE

Hello?

SPLIT SCREEN - LESLIE'S APARTMENT AND SURROGATE OFFICE

We see LUCY on the phone in her office.

LUCY

Hello, Leslie, this is Lucy from the surrogate office.

LESLIE

(glowing)

Hi Lucy, how are you?

LUCY

Good, good. Listen, I have some important news. Marissa and David just told us they have successfully conceived.

Leslie angrily mouths "fuck!"

LESLIE

How wonderful! They must be over the moon!

LUCY

It really is! Marissa's quite far along, in fact. They were holding off telling us because of her previous miscarriages, but now that they are confident things are off to the races, so to speak, they wanted to loop us in.

LESLIE

Uh huh...

LUCY

As you can imagine, this puts a bit of a kink in our plans. Obviously David and Marissa no longer need your services. Now, couples usually like to take some time to get to know the surrogate a bit before committing. However, we have a brand new couple that is eager to get started. They can meet you at the office tomorrow afternoon at two o'clock if that works for you. And if all goes well, we'll

implant the embryo right then and there.

LESLIE
Okay, I guess I'll see you then...

LUCY
Great, the couple will be thrilled!

They both hang up.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

LESLIE
(quietly)
Well, that sucks balls.

She gets up and meanders over to a wall mirror, and looks at her reflection. Confidence overcomes her.

LESLIE
Well Lez, time to charm the fuck out of a couple more wanna be parents.

She does a little dance, while watching her reflection.

LESLIE
Cuz I gots a primo uterus, uh huh. Got that primo ute, mmm hmmm, that's right. Primo ute, you heard me, uh huh. Primo primo primo ute. Break it down now.

She continues dancing.

INT. SURROGATE OFFICE - DAY

Leslie and Brad are in a patient examining room. Brad is wearing another button down shirt and slacks. Leslie is dressed casually, in a sweatshirt and jeans.

LESLIE
(much more pleasant than before)
Listen, thanks for being here. I'm a little nervous.

BRAD
Egg day. Wouldn't miss it.

LESLIE
(correcting him, patiently)
Embryo day.

They sit in silence for a couple of beats, looking at different medical informational signs hanging on the walls.

BRAD
So, this is probably a stupid question, but are you going to have sex with the guy or is he going jerk off into a cup or something?

Leslie stares at him in disbelief, blinking a couple of times.

BRAD
(nodding)
Cup. Got it. Shoulda figured that out on my own. Stupid.

Leslie takes a deep breath to calm herself.

LESLIE
I am going to carry an embryo--one of the woman's eggs fertilized with the man's sperm--in my uterus until it turns into a baby and I squeeze it out.

BRAD
Embryo. Right, right.

They sit in silence for a couple more beats.

BRAD
So...are they gonna come in here and fuck?

Leslie stares at him in disbelief again.

BRAD
They already fucked?

LESLIE
No, they didn't already fuck. I mean, I'm sure they've fucked before. It's all done in a lab. They fertilize the egg in a lab, I mean.

BRAD

They fucked in a lab? That's some kinky shit. Scientist sex, y'know?

Before Leslie can say anything, there's a knock at the door.

LESLIE

Come in.

Lucy walks in with PARKER and MACKENZIE (both Caucasian, early 30s). They are very WASPY looking.

LUCY

Leslie, this is Parker and Mackenzie, and they are super excited to meet you. Guys, this is obviously Leslie, and this is...

Brad realizes she's addressing him and pops over, hand out.

BRAD

Oh, sorry, Brad. Brad. How y'all doing?

Parker shakes Brad's hand with a confused look on his face.

PARKER

(to Lucy)
I didn't realize she was...

LUCY

Was what?

Parker tries to regroup.

PARKER

I guess...I'm just curious, if Leslie here is our surrogate, will the baby be...you know?

Parker does an inexplicable gesture circling his two pointer fingers. Mackenzie elbows him.

MACKENZIE

Parker! You're being rude!
(to Leslie)
I'm so sorry. He's not...we're not...you know.

LESLIE

Of course.

MACKENZIE

(to Lucy)

But...will the baby? You know, be...

LUCY

No. The race of the surrogate has no impact on the race of the baby. In a word, the uterus is colorblind.

MACKENZIE

That's good.

PARKER

Great.

MACKENZIE

Colorblind, like us.

PARKER

Yup.

BRAD

(skeptical)

Mmmm hm.

PARKER

(a little defensive)

It was an honest question.

BRAD

It was honest, I'll give y'all that.

Leslie laughs, then catches herself, and smiles warmly at Brad.

SURROGATE OFFICE - DAY

It's later the same day. The embryo has been implanted. This is a scene with no dialogue, only happy/serious instrumental music playing.

Parker thanks Leslie and shakes her hand.

Mackenzie starts to shake Leslie's hand, but the excitement gets the best of her and she pulls her in for a big hug, which Leslie accepts with a smile on her face.

Lucy hands Leslie some paperwork and tells her a few things as Parker stands with his arm around Mackenzie watching. They're both smiling pleasantly.

Brad puts his arm around Leslie as they turn to leave. He puts his hand on her belly as if expecting to feel a kick. Annoyed, she flicks his hand away. He puts his hands up as if

to say, "sorry, sorry."

INT. LESLIE'S BOSS'S OFFICE - DAY

Leslie's boss, DAMON (white, 40s) sits behind a large desk, deep in thought, scratching his chin. Leslie sits in one of two chairs in front of his desk, waiting to see what he'll say. NICOLE (black, 30s) sits in the other chair.

DAMON

So, you want to take maternity leave?

LESLIE

That's right.

DAMON

For a baby that's not really yours,
that you're not going to take care of?

LESLIE

Well, it's not my DNA but like I said,
I'm growing the thing. You know,
(sing-songy)
baking the bun.

(back to normal)

And I'm going to be pumping breast
milk for awhile afterwards to give to
the parents.

DAMON

You know about our new breast pumping
suites, right? They've been a hit so
far. Very popular with the new moms.

Nicole huffs.

NICOLE

Didn't have em when I was pumping.

DAMON

But we listened to your feedback,
Nicole, and incorporated it.

NICOLE

Yeah. Three years later. Good looking
out.

A short awkward silence ensues.

DAMON

Leslie, I just don't think this falls

under our poli--

LESLIE

Oh come on, Damon! What's the difference if I'm keeping the kid or not?

Nicole huffs again.

NICOLE

Girl, come by my house and babysit for the twins any night this week. Shit. What's the difference? You tripping.

LESLIE

Damon...

DAMON

She might be right, Leslie. You might be tripping a little bit.

LESLIE

This is complete bullshit.

DAMON

Look, I talked to HR and this is the best we can do. If you have a vaginal delivery, you can take paid sick leave the day you deliver and the following day.

Nicole huffs again.

NICOLE

Vaginal delivery? With them little ass hips. Now you tripping, D.

DAMON

And if you have a C-Section, you can use one more day of sick leave. Anything beyond that, you have to use vacation time.

LESLIE

(incredulous)
Vacation time, really?

DAMON

(defensive)
Look, I'm not the bad guy here. If you wanted to know, you should have asked,

before...

He trails off.

LESLIE

Before what, Damon?

DAMON

You know...

LESLIE

Before I got this thing stuck up
inside me.

DAMON

Yes. Before that.

LESLIE

Well that's just great. Really. I look
forward to using the lovely breast
pumping suites two days after this
baby rips my vagina in half.

Damon grimaces. Leslie huffs.

NICOLE

Girl, ain't no baby ripping your
little ass vagina in half. They
cutting yo belly open. You'll see.

LESLIE

(to Damon)

Why is she here?

DAMON

She's head of the new mom action task
force.

NICOLE

I'd ask you to join, but it's only for
bitches that keep they kids. None of
this catch and release hustle you got
going on.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Some time has passed and Leslie is showing. She walks past a
woman on the street.

WOMAN

Hey, congratulations!

LESLIE

Oh, thanks. I mean, I'm a surrogate,
so it's not what you think.

WOMAN

I am so sorry! That was so rude of me
to just assume!

LESLIE

Don't be ridiculous! How could you
know?

WOMAN

Really, you're not offended?

LESLIE

Of course not!

WOMAN

Okay, good.

They smile at one another.

WOMAN

Well, take care of that little peanut,
you hear?

LESLIE

Will do!

They both walk away smiling.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Leslie is about to order. The female barista sees her belly
and bursts out in excitement.

BARISTA

Oh my god, congrats! Babies are the
BEST!

LESLIE

Thanks, thanks. I'm actually just the
surrogate, so I won't be hanging on to
this particular baby, but I agree,
they are pretty great.

BARISTA

Oh god. I am such an asshole! I'm so
sorry!

LESLIE

It's fine, it's fine. No worries.

BARISTA

I just didn't mean to
imply...anything.

LESLIE

It's really okay. No need to make a
big deal out of it.

BARISTA

I mean, a baby is a pretty big deal.

LESLIE

Okay, let's not make it weird.

BARISTA

Oh, I see. You have a complete
stranger's fetus inside you, but I'm
the weird one?

LESLIE

She's not a *complete* stranger. I mean,
I met her.

BARISTA

Well I guess if you've met her,
there's nothing at all weird about
growing her baby for her...

LESLIE

Can I just have a vanilla latte with
an extra shot of espresso please?

BARISTA

You know, you're really not supposed
to drink coffee when you're pregnant.
How would your best buddy who gave you
her egg feel about that?

LESLIE

I'm gonna go.

BARISTA

Yeah, I think you should.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Leslie is looking at some clothes on a rack when an older
saleswoman approaches her.

SALESWOMAN
 May I help you...oh my goodness,
 congratulations!

LESLIE
 Thank you so much! As you can clearly
 see, I am pregnant, with my own baby.
 Very exciting indeed!

The saleswoman notices something and her mood becomes more serious.

SALESWOMAN
 No ring though, huh?

LESLIE
 (resigned to dealing with
 strangers)
 Nope, nope. No ring.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leslie is curled up on the couch, talking on her cellphone.

LESLIE
 I'm just...I'm scared, mom.

INT. LESLIE'S MOM'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leslie's mom is sitting at the kitchen table on the phone.

LESLIE'S MOM
 (gently)
 I was too, baby. But I found my
 courage, and so will you.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LESLIE
 Thanks, mama. I hope you're right.

INT. LESLIE'S MOM'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

LESLIE'S MOM
 Don't worry, I know what I'm talking
 about. I've known you your whole life.
 If there's one thing you have, it's
 grit. When the going gets tough,
 Leslie Williams gets going!

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LESLIE

I love you.

INT. LESLIE'S MOM'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

LESLIE'S MOM

I love you too, honey.

(beat)

I have to ask you something though...

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leslie sits up.

LESLIE

What is it?

INT. LESLIE'S MOM'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

LESLIE'S MOM

The papers you signed...

SPLIT SCREEN - LESLIE'S APARTMENT AND LESLIE'S MOM'S KITCHEN

LESLIE'S MOM

Did you read the fine print?

LESLIE

The fine print?

LESLIE'S MOM

Yeah, did you read it? Carefully?

LESLIE

I don't know, I guess not, why?

LESLIE'S MOM

(speaking slowly and deliberately)

Because there might be a clause in there that says you can keep the baby.

LESLIE

What? What are you talking about?

LESLIE'S MOM

I haven't had the heart to tell you, but you're not going to want to give this baby up without a fight.

LESLIE
Mom, what in God's--

LESLIE MOM
Just hear me out, child, hear me out.
The way I see it, they just gave you
an otherwise worthless lil' pod. They
probably got dozens of them lying
around in the lab. You growing that
baby. You gonna birth that baby. Might
could be the case that, legally
speaking, you can just refuse the
money afterwards and keep the baby.
Gotta check that fine print though.

LESLIE
I'm hanging up.

LESLIE'S MOM
Cause otherwise, they're going to have
to pull that baby out your hands with
a damn pry bar.

LESLIE
That's not remotely true.

LESLIE'S MOM
Cute little white baby. You ain't
gonna want to let go. Probably comes
with a trust fund.

LESLIE
Goodnight, mom.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leslie and Brad are sleeping in bed, with the light off.

LESLIE
Oh my god!

Leslie flicks a lamp light on.

BRAD
What? What is it?

LESLIE
I think my water just broke.

Brad springs into action, jumping out of bed with his shirt
off.

BRAD

All right, here we go! Just like we practiced, we got this. The hospital bag is sitting by the front door, let's go have a baby!

Leslie gets out of bed, taking labor breaths and getting ready to go.

BRAD

Shirt, shirt...just need my shirt. It's somewhere on the bed.

He starts patting around before recoiling in horror.

BRAD

What is that?!?

LESLIE

I told you, my water broke.

BRAD

That is pretty much the grossest thing I've ever seen.

LESLIE

(between labor breaths)

Brace yourself, boy. You're about to see something way grosser.

BLACK SCREEN

Words on screen: Several Gross Hours Later

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Leslie is sitting in the bed holding the baby and weeping softly. Her mom is rubbing her back and shoulders.

LESLIE'S MOM

You're not ready to let him go, are you?

LESLIE

It's not that.

LESLIE'S MOM

Then what?

Leslie wipes her tears and stops crying.

LESLIE

I'm proud of myself. Proud for seeing this through until the end. For having a vaginal delivery. For getting this little vampire to latch and nurse. All of it.

LESLIE MOM

I'm proud of you too, baby. But I want you to know it's okay if you're feeling sad about having to give him up. Having to let go.

Leslie nods to Brad, who is off screen. She holds up the baby and he momentarily leans on screen to take it from her.

LESLIE

I tried to do right by him. In every way I tried. I took care of myself to take care of him. I didn't eat the stuff I wasn't supposed to eat. I didn't drink alcohol. When that trifling ass barista bitch told me not to drink coffee, I stopped. I tried to do a good job, I really did. I want him to have a great, full life. They told me they would send me pictures of him as he grows, and I hope they do.

Leslie's mom nods, understanding, but still not sure if Leslie is in touch with her own emotions.

LESLIE

But my god am I happy that I don't have to go home and take care of a newborn baby. Maybe I'll be ready one day, but not today.

Leslie's mom gets it now. It's not that Leslie doesn't want to be a mother, it's that she has the privilege of choice and self-determination that her mother never had. She's happy for her daughter and it shows. She squeezes Leslie's shoulder.

LESLIE

And when I am ready, I just might have found the right guy to help me through it.

The shot pulls back and we see Brad, totally in love with the baby. Mackenzie and Parker come into the room. Mackenzie reaches for the baby, and Brad is comically reluctant to give

it up. He eventually does.

MACKENZIE

Thank you, Leslie, from the bottom of our hearts.

LESLIE

Thank you, both. It was an honor. It really was.

PARKER

We'll be in touch.

Mackenzie and Parker leave with the baby.

LESLIE'S MOM

What do you want to do now?

LESLIE

I guess I'd like to go home, grab a shower, eat a pound of unpasteurized cheese and sushi, drink a bunch of wine, go to the bank, withdraw all the new money in there in one dollar bills, and then just like roll around in it forever.

BRAD

We can fill up an inflatable pool with it and swim!

LESLIE

(dead serious)

That is a fantastic idea.

LESLIE'S MOM

(shaking her head)

Y'all crazy.

THE END