

"UNCONDITIONAL"

FADE IN:

EXT. COZY HOME -- DAY

Brilliant sunlight illuminates this white suburban house. Thick, green trees line the front yard as birds chip a tune in the limbs above.

INT. COZY HOME -- DAY

RICHARD LINKARD (38) strolls into the kitchen wearing a tailored (and quite expensive) three-piece suit with his hair slicked back to perfection. He takes a seat at the breakfast table.

DIANNA LINKARD (35) is busy frying eggs on the stove.

RICHARD

Those eggs sure do smell good, hon.

Dianna doesn't acknowledge him. She just continues to methodically stir the eggs.

Richard opens up a newspaper and skims the pages. He doesn't notice as his wife takes the pan off the stove and moves towards him.

Suddenly, a spatula slams burnt eggs onto his plate. He studies the charred food before looking up at his wife.

Her hair is all matted up. Red lipstick is smeared around her mouth, missing most of her lip. She snarls at her husband.

RICHARD (cont'd)

(nervous)

Honey?

Dianna drops the skillet onto the breakfast table. The RING echoes through the house.

DIANNA

Do you have any idea what happened to me this morning?

Richard stands and slowly backs away.

RICHARD

Have you taken your medication yet?

DIANNA

There was no hot water in the shower, I'm having a bad hair day and I come down stairs to see that the garbage disposal is broken again! You said you would fix it last week!

RICHARD

And I will, my precious. But let's remember what the doctor said. You don't need to get too excited --

Dianna leans in towards Richard. Her face mere inches from his.

DIANNA

Too excited? I'll show you too excited!

(motions to eggs)

Now eat your breakfast!

Fearfully, Richard puts the black eggs in his mouth, slowly chews and fights back a grimace. He nods and fakes a grin.

RICHARD

(with food in his mouth)

This is delicious.

DIANNA

Liar!

Dianna grabs an empty chair from the table and hurls it across the room. It splinters against the wall.

Richard ducks. He falls to his knees and crawls to sink, opening up the cabinet underneath it. He reaches in for something.

Dianna runs after him. She grabs one of his legs and pulls.

DIANNA (cont'd)

No you don't!

Richard makes one last stretch into the cabinet, withdraws his hand holding a huge syringe filled with a green syrup.

He stabs Dianna in the leg with it. Releases the liquid. She shrieks in torment.

Richard cradles his wife as she slowly slips into unconsciousness.

RICHARD
That's right. Sleep it off. We
wouldn't want another incident.

He pets her hair like a dog.

EXT. COZY HOME -- DAY

Richard exits the house. He steps off of the porch and heads toward the black BMW parked in the driveway.

Halfway there a football hits the ground in front of him.

ZEKE EVANS (10) runs across the street, nearly causing several accidents as cars swerve to miss the boy.

ZEKE
Hey there mister. I'm Zeke. I
live across the street.

Richard is not amused.

RICHARD
I know, Zeke. You've lived across
the street from us your entire
life.

Zeke picks up his football.

ZEKE
Sorry about the football. I wanted
to see how far I could throw it. I
guess I can throw it pretty far.

RICHARD
How bout you keep the ball in your
yard from now on? You know we
don't like you playing over here.

Richard walks towards his car. Zeke follows him.

ZEKE
Momma says that nice folk always
welcome strangers onto their
property.

Richard opens his car door, turns to look at the boy.

RICHARD
Your momma is wrong.

Zeke stands in shock as Richard gets in the car and starts it up.

INT. RICHARD'S CAR -- DAY

RICHARD
Little brat...

INT. FIRST FLOOR, JOHNSON AND JEFFERSON FINACIAL -- DAY

Richard bursts through the doors. Makes a cut to the elevator in the corner.

A SECRETARY looks over.

SECRETARY
You're late again, Linkard.

Richard steps in the elevator. The doors begin to close.

RICHARD
I know.

INT. SECOND FLOOR, JOHNSON AND JEFFERSON FINACIAL -- DAY

The doors open and Richard steps into a bustling work room. Cubicles sit in neat little squares across the expanse of the floor.

Richard eyes his cubicle: The only empty one left. He then looks over at his boss: MISTER ASHCROFT refills his cup of coffee across the room.

As Mister Ashcroft turns, Richard ducks down. He runs toward his empty cubicle.

Mister Ashcroft's gaze falls to the empty cubicle. He starts walking towards it.

Richard reaches the corner, tucks his shoulder under, barrel rolls into his cubicle. He quickly slides into his chair. He leans on his desk and tries to catch his breath.

MISTER ASHCROFT
Well, well. So glad that you could
join us this morning.

Mister Ashcroft stands over Richard's shoulder. He grins slyly.

RICHARD
I'm not late. I just got back from
a much needed bathroom break.

MISTER ASHCROFT
If that is true then you obviously
haven't done any work. Your
computer is off.

Richard turns to see that his computer is indeed off.

RICHARD
Well, I've got one of those stinky
e-mail viruses. I think Mac from
the third floor sent it to me.
Anyway, I was in the process of
rebooting.

Mister Ashcroft nods.

MISTER ASHCROFT
Interesting. So interesting, in
fact, I think we should take this
discussion to my office.

Richard smacks his forehead, gets up and follows his boss.

INT. MISTER ASHCROFT'S OFFICE -- DAY

Mister Ashcroft sits behind his huge oak desk. Richard sits
in a chair opposite him.

MISTER ASHCROFT
You've been late, what, three times
this week? How do you explain
that?

RICHARD
My wife...she has this condition.

MISTER ASHCROFT
Condition?

RICHARD
Yeah, it's a pretty rare disease.

Mister Ashcroft reaches to his side, pulls up a folder.

MISTER ASHCROFT
You've been shooting me the
"condition" line for a few months
now so I decided to do a little
research.

The color from Richard's face drains.

MISTER ASHCROFT (cont'd)
I've checked all your health files.
The only thing that shows up for
your wife is that she had a nervous
breakdown about two years ago.
Nothing since then.

RICHARD
I can explain --

MISTER ASHCROFT
I don't need an explanation. You
are constantly late for work. Your
production has been mediocre at
best. I'm sorry, but your job has
been terminated.

Richard jumps up in shock. He hops back and forth.

RICHARD
No, no! Please no! You can't do
this to me!

MISTER ASHCROFT
I just did. You left me no choice.
You have shown your self as nothing
but a hinderance to this company.

RICHARD
But my wife...she will kill me.

Mister Ashcroft smiles.

MISTER ASHCROFT
Then I guess you have a problem.

Richard plops back down into the chair. He puts his hands in
his hands.

RICHARD
You have no idea...

EXT. COZY HOME -- NIGHT

Richard slowly gets out of his car. He stares at the front yard in horror.

RICHARD

Oh no.

The grass has been ripped up, exposing dirt. One of the trees have been up rooted and turned over. Even shingles from the roof lay strewn about the yard. It is a mess.

INT. COZY HOME -- NIGHT

The house is even worse. Every piece of furniture has been torn apart. There are holes in the walls.

Richard slowly pokes his head in the kitchen door. He enters quietly, surveying the scene with each step.

He gets to the kitchen table where a huge butcher knife stands straight up, piercing a piece of rubber. Well, a piece of pigskin. It is Zeke's football. Now in shambles.

RICHARD

My honey, sweetie, baby cakes.
Where are you my love?

A loud SCREAM echoes as Dianna charges into the room like a crazed animal.

She has ripped most of her clothes off. She leaps onto Richard and takes him to the ground. Dianna sits on top of him.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Dianna, what are you doing?

DIANNA

You won't believe what happened to me today. First, you drugged me and then, that little bastard kid from across the street came playing in our yard.

RICHARD

Please tell me you didn't eat him.

DIANNA
Wait...what is that smell?
(she sniffs Richard)
Have you been drinking?

RICHARD
I had a few after work.

DIANNA
You never drink after work. What's
wrong?

RICHARD
Nothing, honey --

And in a split second, Dianna leaps off of Richard, grabs the
butcher knife and points the sharp steel at his throat.

DIANNA
Tell me!

RICHARD
I was late at work again and Mister
Ashcroft fired me.

Dianna leaps up.

DIANNA
What?!

Richard stumbles to his feet. He tries to comfort his wife.

RICHARD
It's okay. I can find another job.

Dianna starts slashing the walls with the knife.

DIANNA
No one treats my husband that way!

Richard moves towards the sink. He opens the bottom cabinet
slowly...

Dianna sees him. She grabs him by the throat and pushes him
against the wall.

DIANNA (cont'd)
What are you doing? You want to
hurt me?

RICHARD
 You need your medication. You
 could really hurt someone when
 you're angry.

Dianna smiles, licks her teeth.

DIANNA
 Oh, people will be hurt. But
 you...you will only try to stop me.

She leaps at Richard. Richard SCREAMS.

INT. COZY HOME -- DAY

Richard has passed out, tied with ropes to a chair. A scarf
 gags him. He wakes when he hears someone banging at the
 door.

ZEKE (O.S.)
 Hello! Anybody home? This is
 Zeke. You know, the boy from
 across the street.

Richard fights to get the gag off. He finally does.

RICHARD
 Zeke, I'm in here! Come inside!

The boy enters through the front door. He looks at the mess.

ZEKE
 Did a tornado come through here?

RICHARD
 You could say that. Listen, my
 wife tied me to this chair so could
 you go home and get some tools to
 cut these ropes?

ZEKE
 I just came over for my football.

RICHARD
 Help me cut this rope and I'll buy
 you a million footballs. Okay?

Zeke nods.

INT. ZEKE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Zeke's MOTHER and FATHER sit on the couch watching Price Is Right. They are both overweight and both very ugly.

Zeke walks by with some hedge clippers and his mother notices.

MOTHER

Hey, where you going with those?

ZEKE

The man from across the street. He said his wife tied him up last night and he wants down.

The mother winks at the father.

MOTHER

Just leave them alone. They are just... playing "house." Don't bother them again until they are done.

Zeke nods.

INT. COZY HOME -- DAY

Richard uses his leverage to hop around the kitchen in his chair.

Something on the ground catches his attention. It used to be a leg of the kitchen table. Now a measly piece of wood with a jagged edge at one corner.

Richard scoots over. Tips his chair over, crashing him to the ground. He grabs the piece of wood and uses the sharp section to cut away at the ropes.

EXT. COZY HOME -- DAY

Richard runs out of the house towards the driveway, but his car is nowhere to be seen.

He looks around hopelessly for some form of transportation. Any form of transportation.

He sees an old bicycle leaning against the side of his house.

INT. RICHARD'S CAR -- DAY

Dianna drives crazily down the highway. She is going at least 90 MPH and is slaloming between cars.

DIANNA
(to herself)
Nobody embarrasses my husband.

EXT. SIDEWALK, LINKARD'S NEIGHBORHOOD -- DAY

Richard uses all of his effort to pedal the rusted bicycle down the side walk. Sweat pours down his forehead.

An OLD LADY going 30 MPH passes Richard. She gives him a mean look.

EXT. TOLLBOOTH, JOHNSON AND JEFFERSON FINACIAL -- DAY

A SECURITY GUARD leans lazily out of the tollbooth. A business man drives up and flashes his pass. The security guard doesn't even look up.

SECURITY GUARD
Yeah yeah. Just go on.

He presses the button and the gate raises. The business man drives inside.

An engine ROARS close by. The security guard looks up wide-eyed as Dianna commandeers the vehicle right at the tollbooth. The security guard dives out of the way as Dianna crashes through the tollbooth and drives into the parking lot.

INT. JOHNSON AND JEFFERSON FINACIAL -- DAY

The secretary types on her computer.

The butcher knife whizzes by her head and sticks into the wall behind her. The secretary looks up at Dianna, who foams at the mouth.

SECRETARY
May I help you?

DIANNA
Mister Ashcroft! Now!

SECRETARY

I'm sorry, but he is by appointment only.

Dianna YELPS and punches the secretary in the face. The secretary passes out. Dianna retrieves her knife from the wall.

DIANNA

I'll find him myself.

EXT. SIDEWALK, LINKARD'S NEIGHBORHOOD -- DAY

Richard is struggling to get the bike up a tedious hill. He finally loses his balance and teeters over the sidewalk, falling into the road. A car SCREECHES to a stop, narrowly missing Richard.

It is a taxi cab.

RICHARD

Oh, thank God.

INT. ELEVATOR -- DAY

Dianna rides alone. The doors open and a YOUNG NERD steps inside. The elevator continues upward.

He glances over at Dianna, snickers.

YOUNG NERD

Nice outfit. I thought casual day wasn't until Thursday.

Dianna spits on the floor. She slowly raises her knife...

INT. SECOND FLOOR, JOHNSON AND JEFFERSON FINACIAL -- DAY

BING!

The elevator doors open...the young nerd falls out bloody (and very dead).

Dianna leaps out in a crouch, her knife raised high.

DIANNA

Which one of you worthless sacks of trash can tell me where Mister Ashcroft is?

Every person is starring at Dianna in horror. In almost exact unison, they all raise their arms and point to a set of double doors at the back of the room.

Dianna HOWLS and runs off.

EXT. JOHNSON AND JEFFERSON FINACIAL -- DAY

The taxi cab pulls to a stop beside the shattered tollbooth. Richard jumps out, tosses a twenty to the Hispanic man driving the vehicle.

RICHARD
Keep the change, Pedro.

INT. MISTER ASHCROFT'S OFFICE -- DAY

Mister Ashcroft smiles at himself in the mirror.

MISTER ASHCROFT
You're fired! No...how bout?
You're fired!

He chuckles to himself.

Dianna kicks in the door.

DIANNA
Are you Ashcroft?

MISTER ASHCROFT
Depends on who is asking.

Dianna holds up her knife.

DIANNA
My little friend here is asking.

MISTER ASHCROFT
In that case, you just missed him.
He left about ten minutes ago. Let
me go get him.

Mister Ashcroft starts edging towards the door. Dianna cuts him off.

DIANNA
Oh no you don't.

She shoves him against the wall, brings the knife up to his face. Mister Ashcroft stares down in horror.

Dianna gently runs the blade against his cheek. A small cut forms and it oozes blood.

DIANNA (cont'd)
 Just a little blood is enough to quench my appetite. But a lot of blood? Well, I could feast on that for an entire year.

Dianna jerks back the blade, ready to stab. Mister Ashcroft's eyes grow huge, ready to wet himself.

RICHARD (O.S.)
 NO!!!

Richard runs in and grabs his wife's arm. He twists it backwards until Dianna's arm SNAPS and she drops the knife.

RICHARD (cont'd)
 Didn't I tell you to take your medication? Honey!

MISTER ASHCROFT
 Wait...this is your wife?

RICHARD
 She got a little angry after you fired me yesterday.

MISTER ASHCROFT
 I suggest you get her a leash. It always works when I have unruly women.

Dianna GROWLS. Richard looks down. Dianna opens her mouth, sharp teeth now protrude from her gums.

DIANNA
 I was doing this for you, but you refuse to accept my help. Now I will just have to kill you both.

Dianna extends her jaw, opening it wider than humanly possible. She leaps at Richard, about to bite his face --

INT. BEDROOM, COZY HOME -- NIGHT

Richard jerks up in bed. He pants, grabs his chest to calm his racing heart. He looks beside him. Dianna is peacefully sleeping. She is completely normal.

Richard eases out of bed and walks out of the room.

INT. KITCHEN, COZY HOME -- NIGHT

Richard looks around in amazement. The room is completely normal. Nothing is broken. Everything is in its place.

Breathing a SIGH of relief, Richard turns the sink on. He splashes cold water on his face.

RICHARD
So it was all a dream?

He shakes his head in disbelief.

RICHARD (cont'd)
It seemed so real...

He reaches into the cabinet under the sink, pulls out the large syringe filled with green syrup.

RICHARD (cont'd)
Better be safe than sorry.

He walks back towards the stairs.

FADE OUT.