

"BY THEIR FRUITS"

by

Kevin Minton

FADE IN:

EXT. CURRY BACKYARD (1998) - DAY

Josh looks at the old basketball on the side of the garage. He picks it up, takes a shot at the basket, it goes in with ease.

CIARA (O.S.)

Josh. Josh, you there?!

Josh walks around the side of the house, sees Ciara in the driveway kneeling by a window.

JOSHUA

What are you doing here Ciara?

CIARA

What do you mean baby?

JOSHUA

Don't baby me. I told you not to come around here.

CIARA

I'm sorry Jazz. I don't want to make trouble for you.

JOSHUA

Stay away from my mother's house.

Josh grabs Ciara by the arm, and pulls her down the driveway.

EXT. FRONT OF CURRY HOME - DAY

Josh walks Ciara to the curb giving her a slight push to send her on her way.

JOSHUA

Now get out of here. I don't want her to see you.

CIARA

I know Jazzy, I know! I just wanted to make sure you was coming by later.

JOSHUA

I already told you I was. Now, I want you to go home.

A convertible pulls up to the curb with Hezekiah Walker's "Let's Dance" blaring loudly. Two women, Paula and her girlfriend are the passengers. Moses sits in his drivers seat.

MOSES

What's up Jazz?

He picks up a ball from the car and fires it to Josh.

JOSHUA
I'm coming Mo, let me handle this.

MOSES
What's going on Ciara?

CIARA
(mumbles)
What do you want?

Paula with stunned look on her face.

PAULA
Is that Ciara?

Josh grabs her arm, moves down the block.

CIARA
What he smilin' about Jazz? Ain't
nothing funny.

JOSHUA
Don't worry about him. You better
start worrying about yourself.

CIARA
I'm trying. Aren't you going to
give me a chance?

JOSHUA
That's all I've been doing. I've
always been there for you, but
even I get tired.

CIARA
I'm going to do better, I promise.

JOSHUA
We tried it as out-patient, I got
you in a in-patient program, and
you, you walk out.

CIARA
I told you what they was trying to
do to me in there, I had to leave.

JOSHUA
It's always something with you.

CIARA
But Jazz--

JOSHUA
Look, we'll talk about it later.

CIARA
But-

JOSHUA
I said, we'll talk about it later.
Now, go home.

CIARA
You comin' over right?

JOSHUA
Yes. Now go.

Ciara goes down the street, Josh walks over to Moses.

JOSHUA
(continuing)
What's up Mo?

MOSES
Chillin' bro, you ready to rock?

JOSHUA
Yeah man, what's up with the
ladies?

MOSES
Paula and her girl Alana are going
shopping. Let me introduce you.

JOSHUA
Nah man. That scene was a little
embarrassing, maybe another time.

MOSES
This is a nice girl.

JOSHUA
She's fine, I'm just not in a good
mood right now.

MOSES
Alright, another time.

Moses walks over to car, gives Paula a kiss, she pulls away from the curb, Alana looks back at Josh, their eyes meet briefly.

EXT. AJAX PARK/PARKING LOT - DAY

Josh pulls into lot, a number of cars parked along the fence, noise coming from the courts.

MOSES
Looks like we are going to have
some nice run down here today.

JOSHUA
Yeah, a lot of brothers out here
early.

EXT. AJAX PARK - DAY

They walk onto the court where some of their former high school teammates are warming up. Josh is wearing a jersey from his church team.

SMOOTH

(teasing)

Praise the Lord Jazz.

Josh just smiles, but Moses thinks the brother is saved so he acknowledges him.

MOSES

Praise the Lord brother.

Smooth shakes Moses hand but is confused by the greeting. He was only kidding around.

SMOOTH

What's up Mo?

MOSES

Nothing man, I didn't know you was saved.

SMOOTH

I'm not, just messing with Jazz.

MOSES

(disappointed)

Oh.

SMOOTH

What's up Jazz? You ready to get busy?

JOSHUA

You know it. What up Phil?

PHIL

I'm coolin'. How's business, yo?

JOSHUA

What do you mean kid?
Everything's, everything.

PHIL

Word on the street is you are getting pushed out of your territory.

JOSHUA

My territory? I'm on Wall Street kid!

PHIL

Yeah okay, you keep saying that.

Kasiem comes out on the court.

KASIEM

You fellas already chose up?

PHIL

Yeah, so pull it to the curb
Kasiem.

JOSHUA

Hey Bobby, let Kasiem take your
spot.

BOBBY

Come on man, we're ready to start.

JOSHUA

I was holding the spot for him--
you got winners.

KASIEM

Thank you. Now, can I get a check?

PHIL

You always got to check the ball.
Here we go again.

KASIEM

What's the problem with me
checking the ball?

PHIL

Well for one thing, you don't have
that much game that you need to be
checking nothing, but the score.

Everyone laughs.

JOSHUA

Dag. That's cold.

KASIEM

Oh, so it's like that?

MOSES

Guys, forget the talk show, let's
play ball.

KASIEM

Yeah, let's play ball.

They chose up sides and the game begins. One of the guys on the sidelines waiting to play turns up a radio boombox, to jam the music during this jam session.

They played four hours straight, game after game. The sun ends up the reigning champion of the summer, and the fellows eventually seize up to it's power. They run to the sidelines looking for shade.

KASIEM
(continuing)
Hot out this piece now dog.

JOSHUA
Pass me my water bottle, Mo.

KASIEM
Yo Phil, I know you not drinking my gatorade.

PHIL
Chill man, here.

KASIEM
Boy, you better be cool.

PHIL
Yo son, why you talking to me like that? Don't you know I love you kid?

Phil tries to hug Kasiem, but he ducks underneath him and sits down on the bench.

KASIEM
(laughs)
Okay man, okay. Just don't love me too much.

PHIL
Yo Jazz, Mo, lets sit in the bleachers.

JOSHUA
Alright.

KASIEM
Yeah, you better go some where. Drinkin' my daggone gatorade.

Moses, Phil, and Josh go over to the bleachers and sit with towels over their heads and drinking whatever is left in the cooler.

PHIL
Yo Jazz, what's up with your girl Ciara?

JOSHUA

First of all she's not my girl no more, but what are you talking about?

PHIL

My bad, I thought you two were still together. I guess it doesn't matter then.

JOSHUA

Yo fam, you know what I mean. We're not together anymore but I still care about her. So what's up?

MOSES

Something happen?

PHIL

Nah, my girl saw her down at the OB/GYN last week. You expecting too?

JOSHUA

Not me player, she hasn't mentioned anything to me.

PHIL

Hey man, you don't have to hide it from me. Crystal's having my baby and I can't be prouder.

JOSHUA

I'm glad for you, but I'm not hiding anything.

PHIL

Alright, hey well maybe it was for something else.

JOSHUA

Whatever it is, I don't have nothing to do with it.

Josh gets up from the bleacher.

JOSHUA

(continuing)

Mo, let's get out of here.

MOSES

Okay man.

PHIL

Mo, I hear you're hanging out at the club tonight. Slumming with us huh?

MOSES

Yeah, I'm hanging.

PHIL

Think your pastor will mind?

MOSES

Jesus didn't do all of his work in the temple, he had to go out amongst the people.

JOSHUA

That's right, now can we get out of here. See you tonight Phil, one.

PHIL

One.

MOSES

One.

INT. CIARA'S CONDO/LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Ciara is asleep on the couch when Josh comes in. He goes over to the table across the room and sorts through the mail he has brought in. He sees a letter from the rehab center that Ciara had been in. He opens it, reading the contents, he goes over to the couch to wake Ciara up.

JOSHUA

Ciara wake up. Come on Ciara wake up.

She doesn't move, Josh turns her over.

JOSHUA

(continuing)

Ciara! get up!

Ciara opens her eyes and lifts herself up. She attempts to put her arms around Josh's neck.

CIARA

Oh Jazzy, you came.

JOSHUA

Stop, I want to talk to you.

CIARA

What you want to talk about now?
Why can't we just have fun no more?

JOSHUA

Look, you have to get better first.

CIARA

I am better. I did everything I was supposed to do at the program. I know what to do now?

JOSHUA

How can you say that? What's with this letter? They say you walked out of the program.

CIARA

You don't know what it was like being stuck in that room? I hated being in that place. Why can't you understand that I can handle this on my own.

Josh gets up from the couch.

JOSHUA

You can't handle it. Why can't you see that you are killing yourself?

CIARA

I'm not killing myself.

JOSHUA

Woman, I have tried and tried but you are making it so hard. This is getting ridiculous.

Ciara gets up from the couch.

CIARA

Well go on then, I don't need you around if you're going to act like that.

JOSHUA

You can't handle this place by yourself. Who's going to pay the bills, stupid?

CIARA

(yelling)

Forget you Jazzy, I don't need you. Get out of my--

JOSHUA

You want me to go? Cool, take care of your self. They'll put you out of here in a month's time.

CIARA

(crying)

Why can't you believe me? Why
can't you understand?

JOSHUA

It's hard for me to understand.
I'm not walking in your shoes.

CIARA

That's right, you're not. If you
we're, you wouldn't treat me like
this.

JOSHUA

Look Cee, you know I love you. I
want us to be able to do things
again, have a life together.

CIARA

That's all I want too.

JOSHUA

You have to get better. I know
you think you can handle it, but
this thing doesn't just disappear.
I want to believe in you, but you
have to understand the seriousness
of the situation.

CIARA

I do Jazzy.

JOSHUA

This thing has a clamp on you, no
matter what I do for you, it's not
going to help unless you help
yourself.

CIARA

Honestly Jazz, I really want to
change. I don't want you to leave
me, so I'm going to try to do
better.

JOSHUA

No Ciara, you can't do it for me.
It's not going to work.

CIARA

You said you're not walking in my
shoes. So how can you say what
it's going to take for me to get
better?

JOSHUA
Alright, I going to give you
another chance.

CIARA
Thank you. I won't disappoint you.

JOSHUA
Don't disappoint yourself.

CIARA
Okay Jazz.

JOSHUA
I'm going to take a shower, I have
something to do tonight.

INT. CIARA'S CONDO/BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Josh pulls his clothes from the closet to prepare for his evening out, Ciara follows behind him.

CIARA
You not staying?

JOSHUA
No, I'm going out with Moses. I'll
be by tomorrow to check on you.

CIARA
Why you have to go out with him?!

JOSHUA
That's my man, and my business.

CIARA
I don't like him.

JOSHUA
You used to like him.

CIARA
He is always condescending with
me. Always judging me.

JOSHUA
That's your own guilt. Moses has
never judged you. When you sang
on the church choir together, you
were best friends with him.

CIARA
He gives me the creeps.

JOSHUA

That's cause you messed up, you think everybody's watching you. You're just a little paranoid.

CIARA

I'm not that paranoid. That brother is on my butt, and I don't like it.

JOSHUA

Like I said, he's my man and we'll leave it at that.

CIARA

(squealing)

I don't want you going out with him.

JOSHUA

What's that got to do with you?

CIARA

He doesn't want us together.

JOSHUA

He doesn't get into our affairs, trust me.

CIARA

I'm tellin' you, he's bad news.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE/DRIVEWAY - DUSK

Josh pulls into the driveway, blows his horn. Moses comes to the door with his mother. She gives him a kiss and waves to Josh. Moses gets in the car and Josh pulls out the driveway. The neighborhood kids run up to his car before he can pull out.

KID #1

Hey Jazzy!

JOSHUA

Hey little man, what's up? You guys doing alright?

KID #2

This car is phat, Yo.

JOSHUA

Thanks. Stay in school, and you can have one too.

KID #3

You a dealer Jazzy?

JOSHUA

No. I don't want to hear anything like that from you guys. Stay away from drugs. You can't have it both ways guys. Now be cool.

KID #1

Okay, Jazz.

JOSHUA

Here guys, here's a couple of dollars, make sure you split it.

Josh hands the young boys a ten dollar bill then speeds off.

KID #2

Jazzy's the man Yo.

KID #1

I'm gonna get a car like that.

EXT. JOSH'S CAR - DUSK

Josh and Marvin are riding down the road talking and listening to music.

JOSHUA

I figured we would get something to eat before we go to the club.

MOSES

That's cool... You know that those shorties look up to you?

JOSHUA

Yeah, but I'm no role model.

MOSES

You could be you know. Those kids don't have anyone to look up to.

JOSHUA

That's your thing my man, you walkin' the straight and narrow.

MOSES

Can you imagine how many more kids you can reach that I can't, because of how many circles you roll in?

JOSHUA

What's that supposed to mean?

MOSES

Come on Jazz, you're bling-blinging all over the place, these kids see that, and they want a part of that.

JOSHUA

Sounds nice, but there's enough pressure making my own money. I'm nobody's mentor.

MOSES

You're good with kids, and aside from throwing them money. I think they're honestly watching you.

JOSHUA

For the record, I'm not interested. Is this why you wanted to hang out?

MOSES

No, I haven't seen you in a while.

JOSHUA

You don't have to compromise yourself to get me to come to church.

MOSES

I would never compromise myself. If I have nothing else, I will always have my integrity.

JOSHUA

I'll come through those doors whenever I get ready, my heart is still there. I was thinking about coming to the gospel concert anyway.

MOSES

This isn't a tit for tat. I don't mind hanging out with you.

JOSHUA

We haven't done this in years. You uncomfortable?

MOSES

I'll be alright. You know having your heart in the church and being in the church are two different things.

JOSHUA

So what are you saying, God
doesn't love me anymore?

MOSES

Nah, I'm not saying that. It's
just that it easier for him to
bless you when you're in his will.

JOSHUA

Okay preacher take it easy on me.
I'm well aware of God's blessings
and he's doing a good job by me.

MOSES

It's not that simple.

JOSHUA

I don't want to talk about it any
more. I don't need you preaching
to me. Let's just enjoy the
night.

EXT. CLUB NV - NIGHT

Josh and Moses go to the door, they are searched by the bouncers. The doorman recognizes Josh as a regular and comps the two of them in. The corridor into the club is dark, but once they get inside the club is colorful and pulsating lights bounce all over the room. The d.j. is mixing hip-hop and r&b sounds. The crowd is moved by the mixes, and the people are dancing up a storm.

MOSES

I think I'll get something to
drink.

JOSHUA

I'm going to find something to
freak.

Mo goes over to the bar, and orders a ginger ale. A young lady bumps into him trying to get the bartender's attention.

YOUNG LADY

Excuse me.

The young lady looks Mo in the face and recognizes him as her choir director.

YOUNG LADY

(continuing)

Oh, he-- hello.

MOSES

What are you doing here?

YOUNG LADY

Um, I was just... wait a minute,
what are you doing here?

MOSES

Never mind that. You can answer
me tomorrow in choir rehearsal.

YOUNG LADY

But...

MOSES

We'll straighten this all out
then. Oh, and tell Cindy and Trish
I see them hiding behind that pole.

YOUNG LADY

But Moses.

MOSES

Talk to the hand baby.

Mo is quite upset to see his choir members in this secular setting, but he laughed to himself thinking "who am I to talk, I'm out here too".

Josh is on the dance floor with a woman dancing. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees Ciara standing on the side watching him.

JOSHUA

What in the world?

He scans the floor to find where Mo is camped out. When the record changes he excuses himself from the woman.

JOSHUA

(continuing)

Thanks for the dance beautiful, I
hope to see you again.

Josh goes to the bar grabs up Mo, who spills his ginger ale. They head out the back door.

MOSES

What's the deal yo?

JOSHUA

Ciara, what is she doing here? I
hate that stuff, she's starting to
get on my nerves.

MOSES

Why didn't you ask her?

JOSHUA

Forget that, I need a break.

EXT. JOSH'S CAR - NIGHT

They get to the car in a hurry. Josh hit's the remote alarm, and they're off. They ride uptown to find another outlet for the evening.

MOSES

Go pass the Odeon theater. Paula is down there with a couple of her friends.

JOSHUA

You just want to see if one of those friends is a guy.

MOSES

Nah, I'm not worried about that.

JOSHUA

Why you clocking your girl like that yo?

MOSES

I'm not clocking her.

JOSHUA

You are clocking her. You whipped or something?

MOSES

Don't start that. You know me better than that.

JOSHUA

I don't know now.

MOSES

Remember the female she was with earlier? I want you to meet her.

JOSHUA

Oh really?

(laughs)

That's the last thing I need right now. Another female sweating me.

MOSES

So cool out for a while.

JOSHUA

I don't need you to tell me how to handle my business.

MOSES

Lay low, clean out your system. Then when you come up for air, I've got the lady for you.

JOSHUA

Whoa! You've got the lady for me?
Yo, Paula's a treasure, but some
of the others you had growing up,
I don't know.

MOSES

So now you're questioning my taste?

JOSHUA

No, not really. Over the years
some of what I taught you had to
rub off.

MOSES

When you see Paula's girlfriend,
you're going to gag.

Josh pulls up across the street from the movie theater. He
pulls into the Burger King parking lot.

JOSHUA

Let's kill two birds with one
stone. We get some burgers and
watch for Paula from the window.

MOSES

You never get tired of eating do
you?

INT. BURGER KING/COUNTER - NIGHT

They get their order, but Josh is feeling a little leery
about seeing Ciara.

JOSHUA

You know what? Let's eat in the
car.

MOSES

Not you letting someone eat in
your car.

JOSHUA

I know you won't mess up my ride.

EXT. BURGER KING/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

They settle down in the car with their food. Mo breaks the
silence.

MOSES

Yo I'm really excited about the
concert. I never put anything
this awesome together before.

JOSHUA

I'm sure it's going to be great.
You've done enough concerts at the
church. This is just larger
scale, I know you can handle it.

MOSES

The Theater at Madison Square
Garden. I'm a little nervous, yo.

JOSHUA

Don't be, you're the man in this
town when it comes to a gospel
concert.

MOSES

Thanks man.

JOSHUA

I'm kind of looking forward to it
myself. I know some of our oldest
friends are going to be there. I
sure miss the old crew we used to
hang out with.

MOSES

So just come on back to church.
They miss you too. The Lord is
still with you and he loves and
misses you too.

JOSHUA

I'll never stop loving the Lord
yo, it's just going to take time.

MOSES

The time is now, you've taken a
long enough break. He's waiting
for you.

JOSHUA

(distracted)

Yo duke, there's Paula.

EXT. ODEON THEATER - NIGHT

Josh blows the horn, makes a u-turn over to where Paula is
walking with two other ladies. Mo gets out the car to a
greeting of a pleasant kiss.

GIRLFRIEND

(giggles)

Oh boy! She's happy now!

Both of her friends laugh. Paula rolls her eyes at them, then
turns back to Mo.

PAULA

Hi Josh.

JOSHUA

Hey Sweet Pea.

PAULA

Excuse us for a minute.

She pulls Mo down the block a short way to speak in private.

MOSES

Yes sweetheart, what's so private?

PAULA

Well, what happened? I thought you guys were going to a party?

MOSES

We did. We just left early.

PAULA

(sharply)

Yeah right. Knowing Joshua, there probably was a run in with one of his girlfriends.

MOSES

I didn't have to come down here for this stuff. I thought you would be happy to see me.

PAULA

Oh Mo I am, as a matter of fact you can ride with us to the shut-in.

MOSES

I'll get Jazz to drop me by later. Maybe he'll come in with me.

PAULA

(sarcastically)

Wouldn't that be something.

Mo gives her a pained look.

PAULA

(continuing)

Okay. That would be very nice. I just don't see it.

Paula gives him a kiss and he walks her back to her girlfriends. Mo goes back in the car, he turns goes back over to Paula.

MOSES

What happened to Alana?

Paula walks up to him slowly.

PAULA

Her father asked her to open the shut-in with some praise songs, and she agreed to do it.

MOSES

I wanted her to meet Josh.

PAULA

No Mo.

MOSES

Pea listen

PAULA

No, I don't want to talk about it!

MOSES

(quietly)

Listen, we'll talk later, I'll see you at the church.

Mo get's back in the car in a huff. Josh pulls off passing Paula and her girlfriends. He blows the horn and accelerates out of their sight.

EXT. JOSH'S CAR - NIGHT

Josh is smiling about what just transpired. He knows his friend is upset and wants to change the mood. Josh starts laughing.

MOSES

What's so funny?

JOSHUA

When you told me that Pea's girlfriend would make me gag, you were right. Ha ha!

MOSES

(proudly)

My man, Alana wasn't there.

JOSHUA

Yeah right, you tried to turn me on to a bugga bear.

(laughing)

What'd you say here name was, Ivana?

MOSES
(quietly)
Alana.

JOSHUA
Like Trump right? She couldn't
keep her man either.

MOSES
Her name is Alana Faulkner. She's
fine yo, if I wasn't with Paula I
would push up.

JOSHUA
Okay, okay, I'm sorry. Those two
with Paula were real winners.

They ride down the strip where everybody is hanging out, and
cruising the boulevard to the "Silky Soul Supper Club".

EXT. SILKY SOUL SUPPER CLUB - NIGHT

A line is going down the block of people waiting to get
inside. A sign reads "LADIES NIGHT, ladies get in free until
one, free drinks all night". So the majority of the line is
of the female persuasion. Josh pulls across the street from
the club.

JOSHUA
Oh my God. They are out here
tonight.

MOSES
I know you love women, but this
isn't what you're looking for.
I've got a great lady for you dog.

JOSHUA
Okay, but she's not here now.

Josh and Mo walk over to the line, Josh is consumed with all
the fine women in the line.

JOSHUA
(continuing)
Hey lady, I can't just walk past
you without a word. You are
beautiful.

The woman just smiles. Mo grabs Josh's arm.

MOSES
Come on man.

JOSHUA
Um um um.

A car pulls up to the front of the club. It's windows are tinted and you can't see who is occupying the vehicle.

KASIEM

Yo Jazz.

JOSHUA

Kasiem, what's up yo? You caught me off guard. This a new whipp?

KASIEM

You've seen my car before.

JOSHUA

No, I haven't seen this one before.

KASIEM

Sorry man, didn't mean to startle you.

JOSHUA

Yo, look at the work in this line.

KASIEM

Yo kid, what did you do to Ciara? She was at N.V. buggin', looking all over for you.

JOSHUA

Yeah we were over there, I saw her and bounced. I don't know why she's sweatin' me.

KASIEM

Watch your back kid, she looked pissed.

JOSHUA

Kasiem, good looking out man.

KASIEM

Hey Mo, what you doing out here man, slummin'?

MOSES

Nah, just chillin' with my man. Haven't been out in a while.

KASIEM

Yeah, I know this ain't your stick, so you watch yourself out here too.

MOSES

Alright brother, you be cool. One.

KASIEM

One.

Kasiem pulls out. Josh and Mo start walking back to the car.

MOSES

Why don't you just come with me to the shut-in?

JOSHUA

Alright, that's cool. I know Ciara won't look for me there.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

They come into the sanctuary, the church is dimly lit. A young woman is at the bottom of the steps of the pulpit singing a song. The congregation is under dressed for a long night of prayer and praise to God. They are rocking in the spirit singing along in the praise song with the woman at the front.

JOSHUA

This is cool, a come as you are. These people are here for the long haul, huh?

MOSES

All night man. This is our all night party, giving God his due praise.

Josh sits down behind the congregation. Mo stands next to him and gets into the praise service. Josh with pained look stands next to Moses.

JOSHUA

I haven't been in one of these since I was a kid. Makes me miss my father.

(sorrowfully)

I... I don't know if I can stay.

MOSES

It's okay, I'm not going to stay all night. We'll leave in a little while.

Josh nods his approval.

MOSES

(continuing)

That's Alana up there singing.

JOSHUA

Oh yeah? She's alright.

(smiles)

I'm not gaggin' or nothing, but she's alright.

MOSES

Oh course she's not at her best, this is a shut-in.

JOSHUA

I understand, that's cool.

Alana is relieved of her devotional duties by her father, the pastor. He taught from the word for a while, then called for souls.

PASTOR FAULKNER

Will you come back to the Lord? He holds no condemnation, please come.

JOSHUA

Yo Money, that's my cue. It's time for me to break out.

MOSES

You can't move now. We have to wait for the pastor to finish.

JOSHUA

Mo, I'll be in the car, don't be long.

MOSES

You can't go now.

Josh rises from his seat to leave, Mo tries to pull him back into the pew. The pastor sees Josh stand.

PASTOR FAULKNER

Young man. The Lord has a word for you. Please, come here.

Josh looks back at Moses with a smile. He goes to the front, the pastor speaks into his ear. Josh responds, then the pastor lays his hand on Josh's shoulder and prays for him. When he is finished, Josh is overwhelmed with emotion. He leaves the sanctuary in tears, followed closely by Moses out into the street.

MOSES

Jazz. You alright?

Josh keeps walking up the block.

MOSES
(continuing)
What happened? What did he say to
you Jazz?

EXT. AJAX PARK - DAY

Josh is trying to relieve some of the tension of the past weekend.

YOUNG KID
Mind if I shoot around with you?

JOSHUA
Nah, little man. I'd rather be
alone right now. Need some time to
myself.

YOUNG KID
Okay then.

Josh shoots around for a while, snapping the net with each shot dropping in. He lets the young kid who was waiting on the sidelines shoot around for a while. He takes a break on the bench. The kid is trying to get accustomed to the big ball. He is having trouble reaching the rim. The ball comes off the court and he chases it down again and again. The ball rolls past Josh one time too many for him, and he runs it down for the little kid.

JOSHUA
Hold on little man, I'll get it.

The ball rolls onto the walkway. An older woman tries to stop it from running past her, almost dropping her bags.

MRS. McCOY
Oh.

JOSHUA
Take it easy Miss, I'll get it.

MRS. McCOY
Sorry, I tried.

JOSHUA
That's alright. You have your
hands full.

MRS. McCOY
I've done a lot of shopping today.

JOSHUA
You have a familiar face. Do I
know you from somewhere?

MRS. McCOY
I think maybe it would be church.

JOSHUA
Church?

MRS. McCOY
Well I don't go out much, it would
have to be there.

JOSHUA
I haven't been there for a while
but, maybe that's it.

MRS. McCOY
You never know who knows you or
your business. It's a small
world.

JOSHUA
True, true. Well you take care.
I won't hold you anymore.

Josh heads back to the court where the young kid is still
waiting.

YOUNG KID
You think I could use your ball
now?

JOSHUA
Yeah go ahead.

Throws the ball over to him, and takes a swig from his water
bottle. Rain starts to fall lightly.

JOSHUA
(continuing)
Hey kid, time to go. Give up the
pill.

Young kid throws the ball. Josh runs to his car and puts the
top up. He turns up the tunes, pulls out the lot and heads
down the block. He spots the old woman trying to get
protection under a tree. He blows his horn.

JOSHUA
(continuing)
Hey Miss, can I give you a lift?

MRS. McCOY
I don't know.

JOSHUA
It's raining and I can take you
wherever you have to go.

MRS. McCOY

No sense getting soaked if I don't have to. Thank you.

JOSHUA

My name is Josh.

MRS. McCOY

Amanda McCoy.

JOSHUA

Now we're not strangers anymore. How far are you going?

MRS. McCOY

Down to Park and Underhill.

Josh helps her put her things in the car, and takes off.

JOSHUA

I hope you don't mind the music.

MRS. McCOY

Music is good for the soul. It's just that some of it goes way too far. If you know what I mean.

Josh turns the music down, with an accommodating smile.

JOSHUA

So you think it was church we saw each other?

MRS. McCOY

Quite possibly young man.

JOSHUA

What church do you attend?

MRS. McCOY

Christian Love Tabernacle.

JOSHUA

That's Pastor Morgan's church. Well, I mean Pastor Faulkner now.

MRS. McCOY

Yes, yes you do know it. We sure do miss Pastor Morgan. It's so hard to move on when your pastor dies, but Pastor Faulkner is doing a great job.

JOSHUA

I was down with Pastor Morgan when I was a kid. I used to sing in the choir there.

MRS. McCOY

What happened? We still have a wonderful choir.

JOSHUA

My man is the choir director.

MRS. McCOY

Moses Miller?

JOSHUA

Yeah, that's my man.

MRS. McCOY

He's a credit to the church. For a young man who could be doing anything out there in the streets, he is committed to the young people of Christian Love.

JOSHUA

Yep, that's him.

MRS. McCOY

So, why did you stop singing with the choir?

JOSHUA

Oh that's been a long time. Before we lost Pastor Morgan.

MRS. McCOY

You can't sing anymore? Lost your voice?

JOSHUA

Nah, I just have been through a lot of stuff, and I took a break from it.

MRS. McCOY

I didn't know you could take a break from God.

JOSHUA

I just had a rough time when my father passed away. I needed a little time to myself.

MRS. McCOY

Oh, I'm sorry, when did you lose your father?

JOSHUA

I was thirteen.

MRS. McCOY

A little time turned into a lot of time. I think you need some closure on that situation.

JOSHUA

I just think that when you lose someone that close, it's hard to be involved with things that remind you of your loss.

MRS. McCOY

Do you think your father would be proud of the way you are living your life?

JOSHUA

I think, for the most part I have done a good job of staying out of trouble.

MRS. McCOY

But, are you the kind of man you should be?

JOSHUA

Well I'm not in and out of jail. I do have a good job and all.

MRS. McCOY

You took God out of your life because?

JOSHUA

I think God still loves me.

MRS. McCOY

How can you be sure?

JOSHUA

God loves us all.

MRS. McCOY

Sure he loves you, but he gives you freedom of choice. You are judged by the choices you make.

JOSHUA

So I guess there's no blaming God if I make a bad choice.

MRS. McCOY

That's right. You're responsible for you and the company you keep.

JOSHUA

Let me ask you something. If you just meet someone like you just met me, how do you know when someone is, you know, on the up and up?

MRS. McCOY

You mean how did I know it was safe to get in this car with you?

JOSHUA

Yeah, I guess so. How can you tell you're dealing with a righteous person?

MRS. McCOY

The bible says, you can tell a tree by the fruit it bears. Every good tree bears good fruit. Every bad tree bears bad fruit. The same thing with people, by their fruits you know them.

JOSHUA

Yeah, I remember that scripture. That's an old one.

MRS. McCOY

Old, new, God's word is always true.

Josh pulls over to the curb at Mrs. McCoy's destination.

JOSHUA

True, true.

MRS. McCOY

I don't want to disrespect your memory of your father, but at some point in your life you have to start living for you, and for God.

Josh gets out to help Mrs. McCoy with her bags to the door. He didn't realize at first he was helping the woman into the same building Ciara lives in.

JOSHUA

You live here?

MRS. McCOY

Yes, been here for years. They turned this into condo's now, but I still pay my old rate. Thank God.

Josh hands the bags to Mrs. McCoy.

JOSHUA

Well, here you go. I have to get going now. Take care alright.

MRS. McCOY

Thank you so much. You didn't have to do this, but I really appreciate it... and son, please remember God is good, and he loves you.

JOSHUA

Thanks Mrs. McCoy, I'll remember, take care.

INT. MOSES' HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Moses shows tiredness of the week on his face. He sits on couch with a glass of iced tea, picks up phone.

MOSES

Hi, Mrs. Curry how are you doing?

MRS. CURRY

Hi Moses.

MOSES

Have you heard from Josh? I've been trying to reach him for a while.

MRS. CURRY

I did see him yesterday. He hasn't been by here today though.

MOSES

Is he doing alright? He had me a little worried the last time we were together.

MRS. CURRY

He was fine. How are your parents doing?

MOSES

They're fine Mrs. Curry. When you talk to him tell him to get in touch, it's important.

MRS. CURRY

No problem Moses, I'll let him know.

MOSES

Thanks.

INT. CRACK DEN - DAY

An old brownstone with boarded windows, the street lamp out front has it's light knocked out. There is garbage in the front yard from a bad fire that damaged the building but did not destroy it. The door is solid, and triple bolted, and has a bar across the inside of the door from each end of the pane. Ciara comes here to fuel her urges.

DEALER

What's up girlfriend? Haven't seen you around for a while. You holdin' up pretty good there.

CIARA

Why we got to have all this chatter? Why every time I come to this dump you got to talk to me?

DEALER

Wait a second. You in my establishment, the one you call a dump, asking me for my product? You have a bad attitude.

CIARA

Look man just give me my stuff, so I can take care of my business.

DEALER

What are you doing here anyway, hiding from somebody? I thought you took your stuff home?

There is BANGING on the door. The dealer looks through the peep hole.

DEALER

(continuing)

Hold on a minute.

The dealer turns back the dead bolts, removes the bar from the hooks. He opens the door and lets in a crack head. He is sweating and very agitated. He has a vcr under his arm. He steps in front of Ciara and pushes her back out of his way. The dealer bolts the door back then turns to his attention to his new customer.

CRACK HEAD

Hey man, I'm back. Now give me my stuff.

DEALER

What you got here my man?

(takes vcr)

This ain't bad, but what do you expect me to give you for this?

CRACK HEAD

That should be good for at least five rocks.

DEALER

Five? What makes you think this used vcr is worth that.

CRACK HEAD

I took it from my momma. I bought it for her for christmas, and I paid good money for it. I knew you was going to screw me.

DEALER

Take it easy. I'm a fair man. Look, I'll give you three rocks for the vcr. You come back with something else later, a cd player, a car stereo... I'll hook you up.

CRACK HEAD

Okay, okay man, just give me what's mine for now.

DEALER

Alright, put that back in the room on top of that other vcr.

The dealer opens the door to an adjacent room. There are all types of appliances and stereo equipment. There is someone inside the room cataloging all the items and recording them in a ledger.

DEALER

(continuing)

Good, good. I like your attitude. Unlike some people. Go to the third floor, back room, take your time.

The dealer turns his attention to Ciara.

DEALER

(continuing)

Now back to you. What do you want to do? I don't have the time or patience for no bull.

CIARA

Here, take this check and tell me where I can go.

DEALER

Oh no!!

CIARA

What?

DEALER

Who do you think I am? I am an excellent business man, but I don't take credit cards or checks. Get out of here.

CIARA

You got to do something for me, this is all I got. The check is good.

Ciara begins to cry.

DEALER

Well I think I might take a chance on you. You still got a good job right? I mean how could you have that condo...

CIARA

(interrupts)

That's right! That's right! My check is good.

DEALER

I'm going to give you a chance to prove yourself. Give me the check.

Ciara hands him the check and grabs the vials and heads up the stairs.

DEALER

(continuing)

Hey. Nah, you have to go in the basement.

She comes back down the stairs, and runs past him.

INT. CIARA'S CONDO/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Josh comes into the apartment and looks over the mail. He goes into the kitchen and gets something to drink from the refrigerator. He hears a NOISE in the back.

JOSHUA

Ciara? You home?

No answer, he turns on the STEREO and goes into the bathroom to take a shower.

INT. CIARA'S CONDO/BEDROOM - NIGHT

He is very meticulous in choosing what to wear from the closet. Josh takes his time getting dressed.

Unbeknownst to him Ciara is in the closet, shaking and sweating. He makes a couple of phone calls, and when he is finally ready, he leaves the apartment for the night. She CRIES profusely remained the rest of the night in the closet.

INT. MOSES' HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Moses, getting dressed for the gospel concert. He is on the phone with someone down at the Theater.

MOSES

So have the groups finished sound check yet?

The bell RINGS.

MOSES

(continuing)

I don't have time for this. My door bell.

(off answer)

No, I'll be there in a short while.

Then there is a KNOCK at the door. He goes into the bedroom and comes back out with a different tie. KNOCK KNOCK. He goes to the door, and opens it.

JOSHUA

Yo Mo, what's the deal dog?

MOSES

What's up with you, my man? Where you been?

JOSHUA

Yo duke, I had some things on my mind, needed a little time to think things through.

MOSES

All you had to do was let a brother know what was up.

JOSHUA

I called your job a couple of times.

MOSES

Yeah I can bet you did. They never give me my messages. I can't wait to open my own business. I already know how not to treat my employees.

JOSHUA

You're always talking about black entrepreneurs, and starting your own business.

MOSES

(fixing his tie)

And I'm going to dress like this everyday. Ow! Don't touch me I'm on fire.

JOSHUA

That sounds good, but you know you're going to be a preacher. You won't have time for a business.

MOSES

Well if that's the case, then you should consider starting a business.

JOSHUA

Me?

MOSES

Somebody has to get the ball rolling for these brothers.

JOSHUA

I'm for investing, but a business might be a little far fetched.

MOSES

Our people need businesses of our own, and should support each other. Instead we pull each other down with this black on black crime.

JOSHUA

Must be working for the Klan man. They act just like crabs.

MOSES

We as a people, have a low self esteem. We don't realize how rich our heritage is. We need to turn back to God, not turn our backs on Him. He would bring us out, the days of the Kushite's are at hand.

JOSHUA

Whoa. Now you've lost me.

MOSES

God truly want's to bless our people, if we would just turn from our wicked ways.

JOSHUA

Whew, yo preacher, you're the man. Take it easy on me, ha ha ha.

MOSES

Ha ha ha. Cut it out, you got me going again.

Josh turns pensive.

JOSHUA

Mo, are you sure you want me to go with you?

MOSES

What are you talking about now?

JOSHUA

I'm here right? Ready to go-- but, now that I think about it, I haven't been to one of these concerts in years.

MOSES

So what?

JOSHUA

A lot of people will be there that hold influential positions in the church.

MOSES

So what are you having trouble with?

JOSHUA

A lot of people will be wondering what you're doing hanging out with me.

MOSES

You think I worry about what people say? A lot of people that will be there have their own skeleton's falling out the closet. I'm not worried about them, and neither should you.

JOSHUA

How do you say that? You can't be judging people.

MOSES

People in glass houses can't throw stones. I don't judge those people, God will judge them.

JOSHUA

True, true. This lady told me, you don't have to judge a man, you will know him by the fruit his tree bears.

MOSES

By their fruits you know them. So we won't concern our selves with no talk. So we are out. You like this tie?

INT. THEATER AT MSG/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Josh and Moses arrive at the Theater in the midst of the influx of groups arriving for the show. Props are being set up on stage, and being tested. Moses is the catalyst to getting this gospel spectacular together. He rolls up his sleeves right away and gets involved where ever he can lend a hand. The acts who are performing tonight are a steady stream coming into the backstage area. Mo directs them to their dressing rooms, then runs over to the stage manager to go over the sequences for changes between acts. Alana comes through the back door with two large suit-bags practically covering her. Josh noticed her immediately, but didn't recognize her from the shut-in. She is tall, very elegant, very confident. Before Josh can think his feet are moving forward instinctively. He approached Alana with a bright smile. She finds him attractive, but his height intimidating.

JOSHUA

Can I help you with those bags Miss?

ALANA

I think I can--

Josh takes her bags.

JOSHUA

Here, let me help you.

Alana directs him to the dressing room area. Her room was on the first level. The dressing room had her name on the door, "Alana Faulkner". She takes the bags from Josh at the door.

ALANA

Thank you so much.

JOSHUA

You're quite welcome.

ALANA
You didn't tell me your name.

JOSHUA
Jaz... Josh, Josh Curry.

ALANA
Mine is Alana...

JOSHUA
(nods to door)
Yeah, Alana Faulkner.

ALANA
How did you...
(looks at door)
oh yeah, silly me. Well thanks
again Josh.

JOSHUA
Are you singing tonight?

ALANA
No, no. I'm the M.C. for the show.

JOSHUA
Oh, okay. Well maybe I'll see you
after the show.

Josh leaves Alana's room in a hurry to find Moses. He finds him down near the lighting booth. When Moses is done with the lighting technician, he comes over to his friend.

JOSHUA
(continuing)
Mo, money, you're not going to
believe who I just ran into.

MOSES
What's her name?

JOSHUA
Oh, so you know it's a female?

MOSES
Of course. Who was it?

JOSHUA
Alana.

MOSES
Alana Faulkner?

JOSHUA
Alana Faulkner.

MOSES
You're kidding?

JOSHUA
Alana Faulkner, yo. The girl is
off the hook.

MOSES
That's the sister I wanted you to
meet. You go and do it on your
own.

JOSHUA
What can I say. Hey man, you have
to hook me up!

MOSES
Wait here. I have to take care of
something, but we have to talk.

Moses runs off to handle last minute things, the concert is about to begin. The doors are opened and the crowd is filing in, the place is buzzing. Once everything is situated, Moses get's a breather and pulls Josh out the back door, and down into the parking area where all the limo's were parked.

EXT. THEATER AT MSG/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

MOSES
Alright Josh, I know you probably
don't want to hear this, but you
can't treat a christian woman just
any kind of way.

JOSHUA
What do you mean? A woman is a
woman, and you know I've dated
sister's in the church before.
They're all the same once the
temperature rises.

MOSES
Yes that's true, and that's just
my point. The virtuous woman of
God, the true woman of God, needs
a man who will respect her and her
dignity. They don't need to be put
to the test.

JOSHUA
I'm not trying to test her.

MOSES
It's unfair to put a person under
pressure. Anyone, no matter who,
could fall.

(more)

MOSES (cont'd)

We're all human, and it should be understood that some things you should just wait for. There is no dishonor in waiting.

JOSHUA

Dog, I just met her. You're putting me down already.

MOSES

This sister is special, just like Paula is special. All true women of God are special. This is the sister I wanted you to meet for a long time, but you've got to go slow.

JOSHUA

(irritated)

Check this out yo, I know how to act. Brother!

MOSES

Josh, saved sisters are looking for men, no doubt. But they need true men of God, mighty men of valor. Men who will come boldly and declare the works of the Lord.

JOSHUA

Okay preacher, take it easy.

MOSES

Yo Jazz, this ain't no joke.

They are interrupted when the stage manager comes out back looking for Moses.

STAGE MANAGER

Moses, we need you inside.

The show is gets underway, Moses escorts Alana on stage to introduce the first act. Josh is watching from the wings, with one of the acts getting ready to perform. The concert is going great. There are some of the greatest contemporary gospel performers in history. Hezekiah Walker and Love Fellowship, Kirk Franklin brought every incarnation in his stable, Mary- Mary, Kurt Carr and The Kurt Carr Singers, Donald Lawrence and Tri-City Singers. Even the gospel rapper B.B. Jay showed up. There is a who's who in the audience also. This is an exciting night for gospel music. The crowd was very enthusiastic, and animated. Alana is doing a wonderful job as M.C., she is getting the crowd worked up for each group coming on stage. When she came back to the wings Josh steps up to her.

INT. THEATER AT MSG/WINGS - NIGHT

JOSHUA

You're doing a great job Alana.

ALANA

Thank you.

JOSHUA

May I have a word with you when the show is over?

ALANA

(thinking)

Um, okay. You know where my dressing room is. So when the show ends, give me about twenty minutes, then come on back.

JOSHUA

Okay, cool. I'll see you then.

As the concert ends Moses goes about his duties of getting the groups back to their buses, and on their way. Josh helps Mo pack the buses. Everyone's spirits are lifted and it's not really a chore. People out in the audience can still be heard shouting and praising God.

INT. THEATER AT MSG/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

After everything has settled down, all the people who worked on the show in any capacity went in a room to have prayer together. Josh joins them in prayer and is really touched by the powerful prayer and begins to cry. After the prayer Alana pulls Josh away by his hand, leading him back to her dressing room. Paula watching this, pushes Moses in the other direction, to get an explanation.

PAULA

Alright Moses, what's that all about?

MOSES

What?

PAULA

You know what I'm talking about.

MOSES

I really don't know Paula.

PAULA

What do you mean Moses, I told you I didn't--

MOSES
(interrupts)
Wait a second motormouth.

PAULA
Motormouth?

MOSES
(calmly)
Look Sweet Pea, I'm sorry, but
you're going on and on. I had
nothing to do with them meeting.

PAULA
Yeah right.

MOSES
I didn't. They met on their own,
he came and told me about it just
before the show.

PAULA
I can't believe that.

MOSES
Why are you so down on Josh anyway?

PAULA
I sincerely love Josh like a
brother, just like you do, you
know that. The fact that his
lifestyle has changed, has not
changed that love.

MOSES
But, you have a dislike for the
way he's living now.

PAULA
Of course. You have to understand,
Alana's the Pastor's daughter.

MOSES
Like I don't know that.

PAULA
What happens if she falls for the
club hoppin' friend of ours-- and
you and I are to blame for
bringing them together.

MOSES
It's not as bad as you make it
seem. Jazz has changed a lot
since he got that word.

PAULA

Great.

(mimicking)

Pastor Faulkner this is Jazz, oh it's just a nickname, what's in a name?

MOSES

Cut it out Paula.

PAULA

You know, I would really like to see Josh get it together. We could hang tough, just like the old days when he and Ciara were in the choir. Now with Alana, we would be quite the foursome.

MOSES

Now you're talking sweetheart. That's what I've been trying to say.

PAULA

Okay, okay.

After checking out front to make sure all was quiet, they head back to Alana's dressing room. Paula knocks on the door, then pushes it open. Josh and Alana are sitting down drinking juice relaxing. Alana has already changed into another outfit. Josh stands to hug Paula.

JOSHUA

Hey Sweet Pea, how you doin' love?

Paula playfully punches Josh in the stomach.

PAULA

Don't be in here trying to put the moves on my girl Jazzy. That's my main girl man.

JOSHUA

Hey, hey. I wouldn't try anything.
(glances at Mo)
So how is everything Paula? Great show huh?

PAULA

Yes it was, Thank God it was a success.

JOSHUA

I had a ball. Has there ever been that much talent under one roof at one time?

MOSES

It was a masterpiece if I must say
so myself.

(brushes knuckles on
lapel)

Don't you think.

PAULA

(joking)

I don't know about all that.

ALANA

Yeah, it was alright.

JOSHUA

Yo dog, you're the man, don't let
them fool you. You are the man,
you put on a spectacular here.

MOSES

Thank you, thank you!

PAULA

Well, let's get down to the
restaurant, a lot of people are
waiting for us down there. If we
stay here any longer we won't be
able to get past your big head.

JOSHUA

Are you going too Alana?

ALANA

Yes. Aren't you coming with us?

Paula and Moses look at each other, then at Josh.

JOSHUA

Sure, I'll hang out for a while.

MOSES

Cool, let's go.

They take the ride back to downtown Brooklyn and arrive at
Junior's Restaurant.

INT. JUNIOR'S - NIGHT

They walk into the restaurant, there is a banner in the
dining area, CONGRATULATIONS MOSES, GREAT SHOW. He smiles
but is embarrassed by the extra attention. They have a good
time all over again with friends and cheesecake.

They break up for the night everyone says their goodbye's and
head for home. Josh gives Alana a lift home.

EXT. ALANA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He pulls up in front of her building.

ALANA

This is it right here. Thank you so much for the ride, I really appreciate it.

JOSHUA

No problem.

ALANA

No really you didn't have to. I'm sure I could have coerced Moses into a drop off.

JOSHUA

Well, thank you for letting me bring you home. Being that we just met, I didn't think you would let me.

ALANA

Well--

JOSHUA

I'm just glad you did. I've enjoyed talking to you. I really had a great time tonight. The concert was a blast.

ALANA

Wasn't it, my God. We had fun at the restaurant too. I know Moses didn't expect that.

JOSHUA

You have some crazy friends, they're a lot of fun. It was nice hanging out with them.

ALANA

Josh, why is this the first time I'm seeing you with Moses? I hear you guys have been friends for years.

JOSHUA

Best friends.

ALANA

Yeah, best friends. What's that all about?

JOSHUA

Well that's hard to say.

ALANA

Why is that?

JOSHUA

Well have you got about five hours? I mean, it's a long story.

Alana looks at him with a serious look.

JOSHUA

(continuing)

Well, if we get to know each other better, maybe you will find out.

ALANA

(disappointed)

I don't know if that's possible.

JOSHUA

Why not? I think we are getting along great. I was hoping to see you again.

ALANA

I get pretty busy, I don't have a lot of free time. I have to help my father out around the church. Then there's choir rehearsals.

Alana opens car door.

ALANA

(continuing)

Look Josh thanks for dropping me off. I'd like to get my things.

They get out the car. Josh opens the trunk.

ALANA

(continuing)

I don't think you get it Josh. You're a nice guy, but there's more to life than just being a nice guy.

JOSHUA

What do you mean by that?

He takes the suit-bags from the trunk and closes it back.

ALANA

To be quite frank, I've heard some things about you, and I don't think things could work between us.

JOSHUA

What's this all about? We just met.

ALANA

And already you're trying to smooth talk me.

JOSHUA

You don't seem like the type of person who would listen to "hear say".

ALANA

I'm not, but this person is very credible. We have two different lifestyles and an unbalanced relationship is out of the question.

JOSHUA

I can't believe this. I didn't know any of your friends before tonight, and you only know two of mine. Paula, it had to be her. What did she say?

ALANA

It doesn't matter who it was or what they said. I'm saved brother, and if we can't meet on those terms, we can't meet on any terms.

JOSHUA

You're not even going to give me a chance?

ALANA

Tell me why I should. You haven't done anything special to prove that person wrong.

JOSHUA

Have I done anything to prove them right?

ALANA

No, but--

JOSHUA

But what? Give me a chance and I'll show you the theory "talk is cheap" is for real. You can't judge a man on "hear say". If Paula's right about me, I'll step off, no problem.

(more)

JOSHUA (cont'd)

Now if she's wrong, you've got yourself a good man.

ALANA

Why do you keep saying Paula? I didn't say it was her.

JOSHUA

You don't have to, I know her. Well, what do you say?

ALANA

What do I say about what?

JOSHUA

Oh now it's memory lapse time.

ALANA

(laughs)

No, I don't know what you mean. There is a way to address a lady.

JOSHUA

Miss Faulkner, I had a wonderful evening. I would love to go out with you again, if you can fit me into your "Presidential" like schedule.

ALANA

You know what, for being sarcastic, no.

JOSHUA

What?

ALANA

Just kidding, here's my number. Call me sometime, maybe we'll set something up.

JOSHUA

You know, you drive a hard bargain. Are you an attorney?

ALANA

No.

JOSHUA

Well, you ought to be. Look I want to be totally honest with you. I haven't been around the church for a long time, but I grew up in a good christian home. I guess I just need to be reclaimed.

ALANA

I know.

JOSHUA

You do?

ALANA

You and I have a mutual friend who would speak on your behalf.

JOSHUA

Moses.

ALANA

Don't worry, if you're going out with me, God will reclaim you. I teach at the Sunday school every Sunday at nine o'clock. You can join my class.

JOSHUA

That would be very nice. Yeah, that's great.

The next Sunday Josh shows up at the Sunday school bright and early. He sits in with the children who are delighted to have a guest in their class. He sits at a small desk in a just as small chair, struggling to keep his balance. Alana laughs at the effort Josh is making to maintain his balance.

Over the next few weeks Josh spends less and less time at Ciara's place. He and Alana talk regularly. They take a lot of walks in the park, holding hands, laughing, getting to know each other better. Romance is in the air, they go out to restaurants, holding hands at candle lit tables while they wait for their meal.

EXT. AJAX PARK - DAY

Josh brings Alana down to the basketball courts, they shoot around together.

ALANA

What is so funny? Don't laugh at how I shoot.

JOSHUA

I'm not laughing at your shot. I just can't believe you came down here with me.

ALANA

Why not? I enjoy being with you, no matter what we're doing.

Alana takes a shot.

JOSHUA

I'm glad to hear you say that.

ALANA

If you bring me out here enough,
I'll probably start beating you.

Alana grabs the ball away from Jazz and tries to take a shot.
Josh chases after her laughing.

JOSHUA

Come on, give me your best shot.

ALANA

No. I didn't say now! I'm not
ready for you yet.

Alana runs down to the other end of the court.

JOSHUA

Where are you going?

ALANA

I'm not going to let you block me.

She fakes him out and runs for the basket carry the ball
under her arm screaming.

JOSHUA

I'm coming for you!

Josh rushes up and grabs her. Alana drops the ball and runs
into his arms. They embrace and kiss as the ball rolls away.
Josh goes after the ball, then they go sit in the bleachers.

EXT. AJAX PARK/BLEACHERS - DAY

Along the perimeter of the park along the fence, Ciara is
passing the park in a very hurried and frantic state. She is
disheveled and dirty. The crack is taking a toll on her
physically now as well as destroying her characteristics.
This once stunning young woman with beauty queen looks is now
a shell of her former self. She doesn't notice or doesn't
care at the moment, her former beau is only a few feet away.
Josh is busy gazing into Alana's eye's to notice anything
else.

JOSHUA

Whew, you gave me a workout.

ALANA

Well, you know. Ahem.

JOSHUA

I'm glad I had this opportunity to
see Michael-- oh excuse me, I mean
Michelle Jordan in action.

ALANA

More like Cheryl Swoopes thank you. Want an autograph?

JOSHUA

Sure. You know, Mo and Paula won't believe that you came out here playing ball with me. Paula probably won't like it.

ALANA

Not that it matters but, why do you say that?

JOSHUA

When I left the church, she wanted Moses to stop hanging out with me, but that's impossible. We were practically born together. Not that she stopped trying.

ALANA

Wow, I didn't know that it was like that with you two.

JOSHUA

Don't get me wrong, she doesn't mean any harm. She just thinks I'm a bad influence on Mo.

ALANA

I don't think your influence is that strong.

JOSHUA

He's his own man, and always has been. I don't think she gives him enough credit for being the man he is.

ALANA

What has her so hung up on you?

JOSHUA

I have been around some crazy type brothers. Not mass murderers or nothing, but you know, dealers and ballers.

ALANA

No, I don't know.

JOSHUA

Well, guys just trying to do better for themselves, but don't know how. So they sell drugs to find a better life.

ALANA

Do you think that is a better life?

JOSHUA

No, but these cats don't know any better.

ALANA

So why don't you show them a better way. A real better way.

JOSHUA

Who am I? I can't tell those guys how to live their lives.

ALANA

Somebody needs to. My father does his outreach work, but these type of guys need someone on their level to help guide them.

JOSHUA

Won't be me, I'll tell you that. I am happy right here with you. I don't need that kind of pressure.

ALANA

I thought you said you hung out with them?

JOSHUA

I did, but going to clubs and balling that's all. I don't go around telling anyone how to live.

ALANA

How can a man truly live without someone reaching out to show him?

JOSHUA

Well, that's nice, I'll set up an appointment for you to sit in with them.

ALANA

Not to change the subject, but if I'm taking you out tonight, you should take me home to get myself together.

JOSHUA

You taking me out tonight?

ALANA

Yes, I think it's about time for that. You've done it enough.

JOSHUA

Oh my goodness, let's go! I don't want to delay this. I don't want you changing your mind.

EXT. ALANA'S APARTMENT/WALKWAY - NIGHT

Josh and Alana walk up to the building after a wonderful dinner. They are immersed into each other.

JOSHUA

So at this point, you're saying you just haven't found the right guy. So marriage hasn't ever been on your mind?

ALANA

Is that so strange?

JOSHUA

You're a beautiful woman. I can't understand how come some brother hasn't swept you off your feet.

ALANA

That's just it, "some brother" won't do. Besides if I was dealing with someone, where would that leave you?

JOSHUA

True, true.

Alana takes her keys from her handbag.

ALANA

Would you like to come up for a while?

JOSHUA

Well-- I'm not sure.

Alana pulls him by the hand.

ALANA

Come on. If you're any trouble, I'll use my Tai-bo on you.

INT. ALANA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Josh is hesitant, Moses' cautions are ringing in his head. They are sitting on the couch, smiling at each other.

ALANA

Would you like something to drink?

JOSHUA

What are you offering?

ALANA

Soda, water, kool-aid, or orange juice.

JOSHUA

What kind of kool-aid do you have?

ALANA

Berry blue.

JOSHUA

That one will work, I'll take that.

ALANA

Okay, I'll be right back.

Alana gets up and Josh gets up behind her. He looks at some of the photo's on the wall over the television. There is a picture of Alana with her mother and father, along with other family photo's of them individually.

JOSHUA

This has to be your mother in this picture over your t.v.

ALANA (O.S.)

Yes, it is.

JOSHUA

You look just like her, she is beautiful.

Alana comes back with two glasses of kool-aid from the kitchen.

ALANA

Thank you.

JOSHUA

Have you told her about me? When do I get to meet her?

ALANA

She passed on a few years ago. But, I have told her about you.

JOSHUA

I'm sorry about that. I lost my father too, when I was still very young. I told my mother about you though, she can't wait to meet you.

ALANA

I can't wait to meet her too. We have to set that up.

JOSHUA

We will. How do you deal with losing someone so close? My father was my hero.

ALANA

It's a situation that takes a lot of patience from the other parent.

JOSHUA

I lacked a lot of guidance growing up, because he wasn't there. My mother tried her best with me, but I guess there's just things you need a man around for.

ALANA

It's tough at first, you look for that regular phone call. You expect to see them when you turn the corner coming up to the house, but they're not there. I had to do a lot of praying to try to ease my pain. My mother and I were very close. She taught me so much, she was the perfect compliment for my father, they were great together.

JOSHUA

We have the memories, but what about emotionally? Those feelings?

ALANA

To answer your question, I don't know how you deal with it. I just prayed. I prayed a lot, prayed for her soul, prayed she was right with God, and prayed for God to comfort my emotions. Then I had to realize life goes on. I had to continue to grow in my own way, knowing she would be disappointed if I didn't do something with my life.

JOSHUA

That's interesting.

ALANA

I think what you have to do is take a positive thing about a person, that they wanted to accomplish and work as hard as you can to build on their legacy.

JOSHUA

What if you don't know what their goals are?

ALANA

I think you have to look at your life and see what you could do to make yourself the best you can be to leave your mark. Something that would make your parent proud.

JOSHUA

I see what you're saying. I don't think that I have done anything to make my father proud.

ALANA

Don't look so down. You're a successful broker, I'm sure your father would back you with the way you've turned out.

JOSHUA

Thanks.

ALANA

Okay it's time to change the subject... tell me why you haven't gotten married?

JOSHUA

Oh that's a good one. You're just turning those tables on me.

ALANA

Come on now, we're sharing.

JOSHUA

Well, I thought about it once, but things just didn't work out.

ALANA

Were you in love?

JOSHUA

To tell you the truth, yes. Did Paula tell you something about this?

ALANA

No. What happened? What did you do?

JOSHUA

Why did I have to do something? It's not always the man. I didn't do anything, it was a forced break.

ALANA

What does that mean? Sounds like a cop out.

JOSHUA

Not really. We're talking about a serious relationship. We grew up together, most of the years as classmates and friends. She used to sing in the school chorus. Man, she could blow.

ALANA

Okay, a singer.

JOSHUA

I started bringing her to church with me. I told you that was my thing, and she wanted to be where I was. Moses knew her from the school chorus, and when he saw her at the church he jumped on her right away to sing with the choir. She was reluctant, but Mo was persistent. I guess since I was singing too, she joined up with us.

ALANA

You sang in the choir?

JOSHUA

Yeah, my pipes aren't so bad.

ALANA

So go on, what happened? Remind me to get back to that.

JOSHUA

Nah, I think I said too much already.

ALANA

Come on, this is all apart of our getting to know you process.

JOSHUA

So we sang on the choir together and traveled all over the east coast. Singing and building a relationship with God as well as ourselves. The choir was much better with her singing leads and carrying us. I don't know if her heart was in it though, because singing was a natural gift for her. The congregation was moved by her singing, they would definitely feel the spirit. God works in mysterious ways. I don't know if she felt the spirit herself, but God sure used her to move the people. I think she just sang in the choir to be close to me and get Moses off her back. I can't speak for her but the way things turned out, you might think so.

ALANA

Well, how did things turn out?

JOSHUA

Not too well. Ciara and I started slipping in and out of church.

ALANA

Wait a second, who's Ciara?

JOSHUA

Ciara's the girl I've been talking about all this time.

ALANA

I'm sorry, you didn't mention her name, and I didn't want to assume. So continue.

JOSHUA

You never really see yourself slipping back. It starts with missing a rehearsal here, a Sunday service there, and before you know it you're on permanent vacation from church. You find other things to occupy your time on Sundays, most of the time it's sleep. It could be anything though.

ALANA

Anything but being in church.

JOSHUA

Yeah. At first we would go out to breakfast or something. Eventually we started catching up to other friends. She went her way I went mine. I started noticing gradual changes in her. Her eyes would be glassy, she said it was allergies. I don't remember her having allergies, but I let it pass. I started seeing her less and less.

ALANA

Is that when you ended it?

JOSHUA

No, I really cared for this girl, and I tried to find out what was wrong. She never came clean with me, and that made things tough. I started hearing rumors about drugs, and her hanging out with dealers.

ALANA

That's how it starts.

JOSHUA

I would talk to her and she would always deny everything. I tried to believe her, I wanted to believe her and that was that. But there comes a time when you can't hide anymore. I would ride downtown and see her in the area of a crack spot, it didn't cross my mind. She would just get in the car, saying she was out for a walk and was on her way home. When she lost her job that put another straw on the camel's back.

ALANA

That is really an intense experience. What did she do after she lost her job?

JOSHUA

She started singing at the clubs, the people loved her voice. It was her looks that started to change first, she wasn't keeping herself up and then the voice started to crack. She was looking bad, and she started losing jobs all over town.

(more)

JOSHUA (cont'd)

I could no longer deny what was right in front of my face. I tried to get her help, but there's no helping an addict. I had to cut her off.

ALANA

Why do you say that? They need our help just like anyone else.

JOSHUA

They have to help themselves. They have to admit they have a problem. It's the first step. As long as an addict stays in denial, they can't get any help.

ALANA

Well, that's true, I guess you're right.

JOSHUA

It's a real shame, because I know she loved me, but she lusted the pipe more. I would have done anything for her.

ALANA

That's sad. I guess you really loved her.

JOSHUA

She could have done whatever she wanted with that voice. Secular or gospel music, she was definitely a recording artist, with big money waiting for her. A record executive heard her sing at a club before she fell off and said her voice was so good, she could sing nursery rhymes and sell a million copies.

ALANA

I'm sorry to hear that. It's a shame anyone has to go through that. There is enough bad in the world already. The devil is always trying to come into the church and steal one of God's children.

JOSHUA

Let's change the subject, I think we discussed my old relationship enough. What about my new one?

ALANA

I'm sorry about what happened, but I'm glad we had a chance to meet. I hope we can continue to get to know each other better and can build something meaningful.

Josh stands and offers his hand to Alana to stand with him. He puts his arms around her and she does the same.

JOSHUA

Now that's what I'm looking for, something meaningful. I think I've had enough negatives in my life. I want to get on the positive tip, and be with positive people. I just want to do the right thing, and being with you is the start of it.

They kiss.

EXT. CINO'S RESTAURANT

Kasiem and Josh finish dinner, at one of the finest Italian restaurants in New York, Cino's. They are walking up Adelphi toward Lafayette avenue, where they are parked.

KASIEM

That was some good eating man.

JOSHUA

Yeah, I always like coming to this place. What are you going to do now?

KASIEM

I'm thinking about going to Metronome or Cheetah. What's up? You're not hanging out with me?

JOSHUA

I was thinking about heading in.

KASIEM

I wanted to talk to you for a few. You know we haven't hung out for a while.

JOSHUA

Hey man, that's how it is sometime.

KASIEM

It's not like you to be so distant from your boys. What's the deal brother? That new chick got your nose open?

JOSHUA

Slow down Kasiem, that new chick is special, she's not like these other women.

KASIEM

Hey brother, take it easy. I didn't mean no harm. What's the deal with her Jazz, you getting serious about this girl or are you just playing cool to get the skins?

JOSHUA

I'm way serious about her man, this ain't no game.

KASIEM

I hear you talking, but I think I heard you say that before.

JOSHUA

This is different yo. You would have to see her duke. I'm telling you, she's all that.

KASIEM

I hear things man, and I realize you're a little motivated by this sister. She's in the church right?

JOSHUA

What's that have to do with anything?

KASIEM

Pastor's daughter, right? When you make a move you go right to the top huh?

JOSHUA

What are you driving at?

KASIEM

What does her father think of your relationship?

JOSHUA

He hasn't said much to me. I mean we chat from time to time, but our conversations are limited. I think we're cool.

KASIEM

He hasn't been giving you speeches and all that?

JOSHUA

No, he knows his daughter is intelligent enough to handle her own affairs.

KASIEM

You'll see, before long you'll be a subject from the pulpit.

JOSHUA

You're acting like you know a lot about this, but I don't think you do. Who's brain you been picking?

KASIEM

Doesn't matter, like I said, I hear things. I can't believe you, messing with a church girl.

JOSHUA

There's nothing wrong with that man.

EXT. KASIEM'S CAR - NIGHT

They arrive at Kasiem's Lexus. Kasiem leans against the hood continuing the conversation.

KASIEM

There's nothing wrong with that, if you're into that scene, but you're not into that scene.

JOSHUA

How do you know what I'm into? We haven't hung out for a while, things may be changing in my life.

KASIEM

True. I'll give you that. Hey, I wish you the best, but change takes time.

JOSHUA

Not if you're focused, which I am. I really want this to work. I think she's the best thing for me. I needed a positive influence in my life, after all I went through with Ciara.

KASIEM

Sounds like a good move. I mean how long can a brother run the streets before the streets start running him.

A car passes them, hits the brakes hard, then reverses back up the block to where they are talking.

KASIEM

(continuing)

Who the devil is this? You strapped?

JOSHUA

No.

KASIEM

Get behind me.

The car windows are tinted and the occupants roll the windows down. They are wearing masks, pointing tec-nines in the direction of Kasiem and Josh. Josh ducks behind the car, Kasiem pulls out a glock from his shoulder holster.

SHOOTER

Kasiem, we know what you're tryin' to do yo!!

KASIEM

I don't care what you know, you run up on me, you die!!

SHOOTER

You and your partner's the one's whose dead!!

The shooter fires the tec-nine, unloading the clip as the car speeds off. Kasiem returns fire.

JOSHUA

Oh God!

KASIEM

What? Jazz, you hit? Jazz!!

Josh curls up on the ground, and rolls over. Kasiem turns him over checking him for blood.

KASIEM

(continuing)

Jazz, are you hit? Are you all right?

Josh pushes Kasiem off.

JOSHUA

Yeah man! What was that all about?

Kasiem is disturbed by the attempted hit. Thinking out loud.

KASIEM

Why can't these fools just take no for an answer?

JOSHUA

What was that about man? Those cats are out for blood, our blood? How did I get mixed up in your mess?

KASIEM

Don't worry about it duke I got you covered. They won't try that nonsense again.

JOSHUA

How do you know that? Why are they shooting at us in the first place?

KASIEM

I'm trying to get out the game Jazz, and everybody on the street knows it.

JOSHUA

What does that have to do with me?

KASIEM

They all want a piece of my territory. I made a deal with a cat named Little Tokyo, I guess I offended a few people by that decision.

JOSHUA

What does that have to do with me?

KASIEM

They probably think you're down with my operation because we're so close.

JOSHUA

We're not that close! Dag! I don't want to have to watch my back every second.

KASIEM

Don't worry Jazz, I'll take care of it. No one is going to bother you.

JOSHUA

Yeah whatever!

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Pastor Faulkner is sitting in on choir rehearsal and Josh comes in to meet Alana, Moses, and Paula for a double date when rehearsal is over. Josh sees the pastor and goes over to where he is sitting.

JOSHUA

How are you doing Pastor?

PASTOR FAULKNER

Hey Jazz, how are you doing?

JOSHUA

(surprised)

Sir, please, I'd rather you didn't call me that.

PASTOR FAULKNER

Why are you so troubled?
Everybody's got a nickname, even I do.

JOSHUA

You?

PASTOR FAULKNER

Sure, a lot of pastor's have nicknames. Most of them call me "Doc", and I think Jazz is kind of smooth for a young man like yourself.

JOSHUA

Thanks I guess. I just think I've outgrown it. The choir sounds good.

PASTOR FAULKNER

Yes they do. They work very hard, and if they're hearts are in the right place the anointing will fall and they'll sound angelic.

JOSHUA

Yeah, the anointing.

The choir is singing with all their hearts, Moses is pushing their voices to go higher. Josh begins to reminisce about Ciara singing with the choir. He smiles, then turns his attention to Alana and Josh's smiling face becomes serious. When rehearsal ended Pastor spoke to the choir briefly, then returned to his office. Josh walks over to Alana and Paula.

JOSHUA

(continuing)

Hi Alana, how are you?

ALANA

I'm fine, and how are you doing
Mr. Curry?

JOSHUA

Cool, you sounded great up there.
You to Pea.

PAULA

Thanks. Are you alright Josh?

JOSHUA

Yeah, I'm fine. I need to speak
with Mo, before we leave.

PAULA

Okay. But you look kind of tense.

ALANA

Jazzy, is everything okay?

JOSHUA

(irritated)

Yes, but I need to talk to you
about something later on.

ALANA

Tell me now Jazz.

JOSHUA

No. Now is not the time.

ALANA

No? I can't understand why you
say we have to talk, then say wait
until later.

JOSHUA

You can't understand that now is
not the time. Can you trust me?
Let me grab Mo, and we can get out
of here.

Josh goes to the front of the sanctuary where Moses is
talking to the organist.

ORGANIST

Hey Jazzman, what's up brother?
Long time no see.

JOSHUA

What's up man? Yeah, long time.

ORGANIST

I've been seeing you coming through a lot lately, but I haven't had a chance to talk. What you been doing?

JOSHUA

Coolin'. Check it, I need to borrow Mo, from you for a minute.

ORGANIST

Alright brother, be good. Moses we'll speak later tonight. Call me after one, I'll be up late.

MOSES

Cool, talk to you then.

JOSHUA

Alright duke, you be easy.

Mo and Josh walk up the aisle.

MOSES

Okay, where are we going? I know they told you they want to go out to eat. We should make them cook.

JOSHUA

They didn't say. Check it out, I want you to do me a favor.

MOSES

What is it?

JOSHUA

I want to run downtown to take care of something real quick. Take Alana with you and Pea, and wait for me at my mom's house. She is expecting us to stop by before we go out. We'll make our plan's when I get back.

MOSES

Are you sure you want to take care of this now?

JOSHUA

Yeah, it's time to get rid of all my excess baggage. I can't have this hanging over my head anymore, if I'm going to move on with my life.

MOSES

But are you sure you should do this now?

JOSHUA

It'll be alright. Just chill at my mom's until you hear from me. I'll call you when I'm on the way there.

MOSES

Okay, but what about them? What do I tell them?

JOSHUA

Tell them nothing. I just had some business to tend to. I'll talk to Alana about it later.

Moses goes over to the ladies, giving Josh a head start downtown.

MOSES

Okay ladies, let's get going, there's been a change of plans.

PAULA

What's that all about?

ALANA

What's the matter with Jazzy? Where did he run off to?

MOSES

I'll explain on the way. We're going to stop by his mother's.

PAULA

Why are we going over there? I'm hungry.

MOSES

Can we just go please? Girls, I see you are going to make me take off my belt.

PAULA

What?

MOSES

Got you. Ha ha.

They all laugh.

PAULA

Boy, you better stop

Josh, at Ciara's building, the lights are left on, but she's not in. Some items around the apartment are noticeably missing, but Josh doesn't stop moving. He leaves a card in the frame of her front door. He goes down to the area of the crack den. He waits around for a few minutes, then checks in with Moses on his cell phone.

JOSHUA

Yo Mo, what's the deal player?

MOSES

(whispering)

Hey Jazz, what are you doing?

JOSHUA

I'm in Bed-Sty looking for this woman. I went passed the crib she's not there, so I came passed this crack spot.

MOSES

Get from down there yo.

JOSHUA

I am, I just want to find her and get this over with.

MOSES

Another time would be better. They all want to know what's up.

JOSHUA

Alright I'll be there shortly. I'm going to run past her place one more time then I'm out.

MOSES

Alright Jazz, be careful. See you in a few.

INT. CIARA'S CONDO/KITCHEN/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josh goes back to Ciara's apartment and the card is missing from the door. Josh goes into the apartment and he finds the water running in the kitchen.

JOSHUA

Ciara.

No response, he cuts off the water. He goes in to the bedroom, not here either. He pulls out his cell phone and calls Moses.

JOSHUA

(continuing)

Yo Mo, I just got back here. She had to come in, but I guess she went back out.

MOSES

Well I think you better come on. I can't keep entertaining like this.

JOSHUA

Alright Mo, I guess I have to talk to her about the break up later.

Ciara comes SCREAMING out of the closet.

JOSHUA

(continuing)

What the--

CIARA

No! How are you going to leave me? I need you Jazzy.

Startled, Josh drops the cell phone.

JOSHUA

Hey, calm down! What are you doing in the closet?

CIARA

Waiting for you. So you just gonna up and leave me, huh?

JOSHUA

Hold on a second, let me get off the phone.

Josh tries to pick up his phone. Ciara shows a kitchen knife, backing him up to the wall.

CIARA

(aggitated)

Leave it there!

JOSHUA

Hold it baby, take it easy.

CIARA

Don't tell me to take it easy, and don't call me baby!

JOSHUA

Okay. What do you want me to do?

CIARA

I told you I could get it together. You don't want to give me a chance.

JOSHUA

Ciara, listen.

Ciara LUNGES at Josh with the knife, Josh JUMPS back.

CIARA

No! You listen. You have done me wrong for the last time, I've had it with you. You don't want to be with me? Okay, you won't be with nobody.

JOSHUA

Ciara, let me explain.

CIARA

There's nothing to explain!

Moses leaves the house in a hurry. Feverishly trying to redial Josh on the cell phone as he heads down to Ciara's building. The cell phone goes to voice mail again and again. Moses is racing the lights to get to his destination. Finally there is an answer on the cell phone.

MOSES

Hello?! Hello?!

CIARA

Who is this? Is this your new woman? Huh, you punk! Is this your new skeezer on the phone?

JOSHUA

Yo, whoever is there, call the police. She's crazy.

CIARA

Shut up.

Ciara hangs up the phone, Moses is blown away and now very nervous. He is running lights trying to get to his life long friend. He misses his turn and takes an alley way and comes out the other side in front of Ciara's building. Mo jumps out of his car and runs into the building.

INT. CIARA'S CONDO/HALLWAY - NIGHT

His face is etched with horror when he sees Josh stumbling toward him.

MOSES

Jazz!

JOSHUA

She shanked me. I can't believe it.

MOSES

I've got to get you to a hospital.

JOSHUA

She needs a hospital more than me--

MOSES

Where is she?

JOSHUA

(laughs weakly)

Knocked her out, when she cut me.
One punch baby, knocked her out.

Josh collapses, BLOOD SPEWING from his abdomen. Moses guides him to the floor, then runs to the super's apartment for help. He returns moments later to his fallen friend. He leans over Josh trying to keep him conscious. Suddenly Moses' back EXPLODES with a piercing pain.

MOSES

Aaahh!!

CIARA

Creep! This is all your fault!!

He never sees her coming, but Ciara's kitchen knife finds its mark in his back. She pulls the knife from his back, the BLOOD SPLATTERING the wall. The knife PLUNGES in again.

MOSES

Aaahh!!

Moses' SCREAMS are heard above the nearing POLICE SIRENS. The crack in Ciara's system does not allow her any mercy on her old friend, who acted as a pin cushion. Ciara hears the SIRENS close in on the building. She pushes Moses over like a bag of laundry, and runs frantically out the back door and down the back alley.

The police arrive on the scene to find Josh and Moses crumpled on the blood soaked carpet. The paramedics arrive minutes after and rush them off to the hospital.

INT. KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL/I.C.U. - NIGHT

Paula, Alana, Mrs. Curry, and Moses' mother Mrs. Miller are in the waiting area, nervous, frantic.

MRS. CURRY

We have to find someone who can answer some questions. I want to know what happened to our boys.

MRS. MILLER
How could this happen? What is
taking the doctor so long in there?

A nurse comes into the waiting area.

NURSE

We don't have any new information
right now. They are both still in
surgery right now.

MRS. MILLER
We don't even know what is wrong
with them.

NURSE

They were brought in with multiple
stab wounds to the back and
abdomen.

MRS. MILLER
Oh my God.

MRS. CURRY
Oh no, not my baby.

NURSE

These types of operations are very
delicate and take a lot of time.
We can only wait for the doctors
for the results.

ALANA
Thank you very much nurse.

PAULA
I don't believe this.

Two detectives walk into the waiting room.

DETECTIVE 1

Excuse me ladies, are you here for
the two young men they brought in,
Miller and Curry?

MRS. CURRY
Yes, we are their mothers.

DETECTIVE 2

And the younger ladies?

MRS. CURRY
That's their fiance's.

DETECTIVE 1

I would like to talk to you two ladies, my partner will talk to the other two ladies.

MRS. CURRY

No, not at all.

DETECTIVE 1

Do you know if they were involved with drugs in any way?

MRS. CURRY

Listen detective, our boys are not involved in any type of drug mess.

MRS. MILLER

My son is saved, the director of his church choir. He would never be involved in anything like that.

DETECTIVE 1

We found both of their cars double parked at the scene. We think they didn't plan on staying there long. Do you know anyone living at Underhill and Eastern Parkway?

MRS. CURRY

No-- wait, Josh has a friend that lives down there on Eastern Parkway, but he wouldn't have been over there.

The other detective is giving the girls a similar questioning?

PAULA

What was that address?

DETECTIVE 2

890 Eastern Parkway corner of Underhill. You know someone who lives there?

PAULA

That's Ciara's building.

DETECTIVE 2

What's her last name?

PAULA

Minor, Ciara Minor. That's her building, but she can't know anything about this or she would be here.

DETECTIVE 1

There's no Minor on the list of people we talked to.

DETECTIVE 2

Must not have been home. What is her relationship with the fellows?

PAULA

Well-- she--

ALANA

She's Josh's ex-girlfriend. She probably would be here, if she knew.

DETECTIVE 1

Can you tell me about the cars, they're pretty expensive. Where did your son's work at?

MRS. MILLER

I'm tired of this. Where is the doctor?

MRS. CURRY

You mean, where they do work at.

DETECTIVE 1

Excuse me, where they do work at.

MRS. CURRY

My son works for a financial services company and her son works for the telephone company.

DETECTIVE 1

I'm sorry we had to do this at this time ladies. We just want to find out who did this. Mrs. Curry, Mrs. Miller I wish the best for them.

MRS. CURRY

Thank you detective.

Kasiem comes off the elevator, walking toward the waiting area. He sees the detectives with Josh and Mo's parents. He tries to duck into a room, but is spotted by the detectives and he knows it. So he just comes forward to where everyone is standing.

KASIEM

Good evening, any news yet?

DETECTIVE 1
Mr. Davis, and what might your
role be in all this?

KASIEM
Do I know you?

DETECTIVE 1
Let's just say I know of your
work. Now, what brings you down
here?

KASIEM
Those fellas in there, are friends
of mine. Of course I'm concerned.

DETECTIVE 2
I've never seen you so concerned
for one of your lieutenants
getting knocked off before.

KASIEM
I don't know what you think of me
and I don't care. But those guys
are genuinely good people.

DETECTIVE 2
You don't know anything about what
happened, do you Davis?

KASIEM
Not a thing.

DETECTIVE 1
Davis, if you hear anything don't
hesitate to give us a call. Okay?

KASIEM
I hear anything, it will be taken
care of. I'll take care of it my
way, someone is going to pay.

MRS. CURRY
Kasiem Davis, I know you're upset.
We all are, and we want whoever
did this to pay. Just not the way
you're talking.

DETECTIVE 1
Davis, don't do anything stupid--
just give us a call, okay?

MRS. CURRY
Kasiem, please.

KASIEM

It's alright Mrs. Curry, I'll respect that-- okay man.

The detectives leave to continue their investigation.

PAULA

You know if I didn't know any better, I would think you had something to do with this.

KASIEM

Watch yourself girl.

PAULA

You might fool the cops, but I know about you.

KASIEM

You don't know me and you better watch what you say when you don't know. Look, I just came here to check on my boys, if it's a problem I'll go.

PAULA

That's good.

ALANA

Paula.

PAULA

No. We don't want you around here.

Kasiem directs his attention to Mrs. Curry and Mrs. Miller.

KASIEM

Ladies, I don't mean any harm. If at all possible could I check in with one of you about what's going on?

MRS. CURRY

You can call me Kasiem, it's probably better if you go for now.

KASIEM

Okay. okay.

Kasiem leaves and the ladies all sit in the waiting area holding their collective breath to get word from the O.R.

MRS. CURRY

You know Margaret, when the boys were small they were inseparable. Every weekend one of us had to have the other child stay over.

MRS. MILLER

I know. Those boys were a mess,
but they were fun times.

MRS. CURRY

They would drive Dionne crazy, but
it was all in love. When Josh's
father passed away, I didn't know
what I was going to do. Dionne
was getting married, leaving me to
raise him by myself. I never felt
so alone. You know what he told
me?

MRS. MILLER

No. What did he say?

MRS. CURRY

He came to me and said " Mom, I
don't want you to worry, I'm going
to take care of you now. I'm going
to walk Dionne down the aisle for
her wedding, I'm going to be the
man of the house. I will never be
a burden to you, or give you
reason to worry" and he never did.
I was sure I would lose him
without a father figure to be
there for him, but he became a man
that day.

MRS. MILLER

He sure matured fast, I know that.

MRS. CURRY

Your Moses was such a great friend
to him, I think he kept him
straight in their high school
years.

MRS. MILLER

Moses loves him like they came
from the womb together. He would
always say " blood of my blood ",
talking about Joshua.

MRS. CURRY

I don't know what happened, but I
do know Josh would never
intentionally put Moses in harms
way.

Mrs. Curry breaks down in tears, Mrs. Miller hugs her to
comfort her.

INT. CHURCH - SUNDAY MORNING

The service is going on as usual but certain members of the choir are noticeably missing. Moses wouldn't miss a service unless it was an emergency. The pastor comes from his office during announcements to speak to the congregation.

PASTOR FAULKNER

Excuse me sister, I have a special announcement to make.

The sister doing announcements excuses herself, the pastor takes the mike.

PASTOR FAULKNER

(continuing)

Children of the most high God, I come before this morning with some very disturbing news. Someone very dear to me has been injured, along with another young man some of you may know. He is a former member of the choir and church. Moses Miller, and Josh Curry were very badly hurt last night. I would like for you all to take time now to pray a special prayer for these young men that they may be healed. We know that God is able to do it if he wills it so.

INT. KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL - SUNDAY MORNING

Paula and Alana are sitting with the boy's families in the waiting area. The guys are on the critical list, but Josh is making improvement and his condition may be upgraded by the evening. Moses' condition is much worse because his operation was more difficult. The multiple stab wounds damaged vital organs and he spent a lot of time opened up on the operating table, and lost a lot of blood.

The detectives arrive at the Hospital. Josh's condition is upgraded and moved to a private room. The parents ask to have Moses moved to the same room. Paula and Alana are in the hallway just outside the room when the detectives come down the hall.

DETECTIVE 2

Excuse me Miss Taylor, have you seen Ciara Minor down here as of yet? We haven't been able to catch up to her at home.

PAULA

What would she have to do with this?

DETECTIVE 2

We need to question everyone that lives in the building.

PAULA

(suspiciously)

She obviously doesn't even know about this.

DETECTIVE 1

Where is she then?

PAULA

I have no idea, but I don't think she can help you.

DETECTIVE 1

We just want to talk to her.

PAULA

If you ask me, it was probably somebody after Jazz.

DETECTIVE 1

What do you mean? Who's Jazz?

PAULA

Josh Curry. He's tight with Kasiem Davis, you know what he's into. There's no telling what they were involved in, and he got my man involved in it too. Now look what happened.

Paula starts to cry.

DETECTIVE 1

Sorry to upset you. Maybe we should talk later.

Later in the evening Paula and Alana are sitting in the hallway near the pay phones. They haven't had much sleep since the ordeal began and tensions are beginning to run high.

ALANA

How could you say those things about Josh?

PAULA

Girl, don't mess with me. My man is laying in there dying because of him.

ALANA

How do you know what happened? You were sitting at the house with me laughing and talking. We didn't know why Moses left the house, or where he was going.

PAULA

Alana, you don't know Jazzy.

ALANA

No, you don't know Jazzy.

PAULA

You just met him. I've known him for years. I know we've been having a good time together, but you don't really know him.

ALANA

First of all, Josh is laying in there too. Which hasn't crossed your mind. Secondly, Jazzy told me how you cut your ties with him and tried to keep Moses away from him too.

PAULA

That was a long time ago.

ALANA

You haven't been around him in so long, you can only wonder what he's about. I know the real deal.

PAULA

Excuse me?

ALANA

Instead of criticizing him, and alienating him, you should have been praying for him. Just like you should be sitting here praying for both of them right now, instead of running your big mouth.

Paula is speechless.

INT. KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL/PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

The hospital is being cleared after the last visiting session of the day. Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Curry, Paula, and Alana are asleep in the waiting room. Moses and Josh lay unconscious in their dark room. A moonbeam dimly lights the room, the only noise is the quiet HUMMING of the machines they are hooked up to. Josh is semi-conscious, but in a serene state. He hears the TONE of the heart monitor (STEADY TONE).

He thinks it is his alarm clock. Moses' spirit stood before Josh in the darkness. In his present state, he is unaware of what has taken place with his friend in the next bed.

JOSHUA

What are you doing here so early Mo?

MOSES

It's almost midnight.

JOSHUA

What are you talking about? My alarm just went off.

MOSES

Why did you run from the church that night?

JOSHUA

I was scared. I wasn't ready to commit to his will.

MOSES

You received a prophesy right?

JOSHUA

Yeah.

MOSES

What was the prophesy?

JOSHUA

God wants to use me, but I must turn from the path I'm on. I am the one God will use to bring the people to another place in him. I can't use losing my father as a crutch any longer. I must stand up and give an account for myself.

MOSES

That's heavy, can you handle that kind of responsibility?

JOSHUA

I don't know man, it is heavy and I figure you're the man to do that not me.

MOSES

God has given you the task and the means to do it, you just have to look to him.

JOSHUA

What about you, that sounds like
it's more up your alley.

MOSES

God has other work for me. I love
you Josh, God bless you.

JOSHUA

I love you too. What's wrong?

MOSES

Goodbye.

JOSHUA

What do you mean goodbye? Where
are you going? What's going on?

The light of the room comes into focus and the spirit fades from his eyes. Josh sees the heart monitor FLAT LINING, and the nurses and a doctor working over Moses' body trying to bring him back. Josh is confused, but he is putting two and two together, he sees his best friend laying lifeless in the next bed.

JOSHUA

(continuing)

Nooo!

INT. CIARA'S CONDO/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ciara returns to her apartment to shower and get rid of the bloody clothes she is wearing. After hiding for twenty four hours she figures the coast is clear for now.

INT. KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL/PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Josh is groggy from the sedative that he was given after the initial shock of seeing Moses die. He is trying to fight sleep and grogginess to speak, but his voice is very shaky and soft.

JOSHUA

Ciara, Ciara.

Alana hears him struggling to speak, but is not too happy about who he is calling.

ALANA

Josh sweetheart, it's me, Alana.

JOSHUA

Ci-- Ciara.

ALANA

Josh, what's wrong? Can't you see
me?

JOSHUA
Ciara, Ciara.

Josh continues to babble incoherently. Alana buzzes the nurse.

NURSE (V.O.)
Yes?

ALANA
Nurse, Josh is having trouble sleeping, and he seems to be delirious. Can you give him something?

NURSE (V.O.)
It's almost time for his shot anyway. I'll be there in a minute.

ALANA
(crying)
Thank you.

Alana leaves the room and goes down to the waiting area.

INT KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL/WAITING AREA - DAY

Paula is there still in shock at Moses' passing. Mrs. Curry is comforting her. Alana comes over, pulls her to the side and walks with her down the hall.

ALANA
Listen, Paula I think we need to talk.

PAULA
No, I don't think so.

ALANA
Paula, please. We can't go on like this.

PAULA
Your man is still in there, mine is gone. You can get out of my face.

ALANA
Paula, I'm sorry about Moses.

PAULA
You know, he should never have gone down to that building. He had to go follow behind Jazzy.

ALANA
He was his best friend. You don't give up on your best friend.

PAULA

But was it worth it, he's dead now. Do you think it was worth it.

ALANA

I don't know.

PAULA

You don't know? My man is dead. Moses is dead and you think it's okay.

ALANA

I didn't say that. We all want Moses to be here, but God has a bigger picture for us that we are unable to comprehend.

PAULA

I don't want to hear that. You're a pastors daughter you are super spiritual. I wonder how you would be acting right now if Jazz had died.

ALANA

That's not fair Paula. I love Moses like a brother. When my mother died, I felt the same way you do right now. My father had a way of carrying it like it was alright. He made me sick, but one night I heard him crying like a baby to get it all out. I let him be, but I knew he really cared for my mother. I feel your pain, but right now someone has to be strong. I know if Josh could trade places with Moses right now, he would.

PAULA

I don't think so.

ALANA

I know you're angry, and I understand. If you think anger is the best way to handle this, so be it. I don't think Moses would want to be mourned in anger.

PAULA

Don't tell me what Moses would want.

ALANA

He was a man of great compassion.
I would think some of it would
have rubbed off on you, after all
these years.

PAULA

It hurts. Okay! It hurts so much!

Paula collapses in her arms crying uncontrollably.

ALANA

I know Pea, I know, let it out.

INT. KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL/PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Paula and Alana are standing in the hallway, just outside
Josh's room.

PAULA

This is all so terrible. I can't
believe my baby is gone.

ALANA

This is all happening so fast. I
think we both said some things
that we regret. I'm sorry.

PAULA

Yes, I think we let our emotions
get out of hand. I'm sorry too,
you know how I really feel.

Ciara comes down the hall toward the room. She is
unrecognizable to Paula.

ALANA

I know. I am truly sorry about
Moses, he was a true friend to me.

Ciara tries to walk past them into Josh's room.

PAULA

Excuse me, you can't go in there.

Ciara looks up at Paula who still doesn't recognize her. The
crack infested Ciara tries to put on her best look. Her
clothes are ratty and she is sporting a black eye courtesy of
Josh's blow when she stabbed him. Paula looks deep into her
eyes and sees a familiarity to them.

PAULA

(continuing)

Ciara?

Ciara primps her hair from under the hat she is wearing, and
gives Alana a sordid look.

CIARA

Yeah, how you doin' Paula? I haven't seen you in so long. I just wanted to see how Jazzy was doin'. You been in there yet?

PAULA

Yes. Um, Ciara, what are you doing here?

CIARA

I jus' came to see Jazzy, I heard about him getting hurt.

PAULA

Um Ciara, do you know the police are looking for you?

CIARA

I don't know what for. What they want wit' me? Girl I ain't worried about them.

PAULA

Ciara, this is my girlfriend Alana. Alana this is Ciara.

ALANA

How are you?

CIARA

Heh.

PAULA

Well, do you want to see Josh? I mean, he is sedated but you can look in on him.

CIARA

Yeah, I would like that.

ALANA

Come on, we'll come with you.

Paula and Alana look at each other behind Ciara as she opens the door to go into the room. They follow close behind her. The detectives returned to the hospital after getting word that Josh had regained consciousness, only to find out that he had been sedated. The detectives are waiting in the hall when the girls come out the room.

CIARA

Well, I'll be going now. It's good seeing you Paula.

PAULA

Alright, take care... oh there they go right there. Detective, this is Ciara Minor, see she came as soon as she found out.

DETECTIVE 2

Miss Minor, can we have a word with you please.

CIARA

(nervous)

Um, no problem.

They walk down the hall just to the right of the waiting area. Paula is very interested to hear what they have to say. She grabs Alana and they sit in the waiting area so they can overhear what is being said.

DETECTIVE 1

Miss Minor, how well do you know Moses Miller?

CIARA

I grew up with him, but I haven't seen him for a long time.

DETECTIVE 1

Do you know any reason he would have been in your building on the night he was hurt?

CIARA

Oh he got hurt too? I didn't see him in there.

DETECTIVE 2

He's dead Miss Minor.

CIARA

Oh my God.

DETECTIVE 2

What is your relationship to Josh Curry?

Ciara looks at Alana as she speaks.

CIARA

That's my boyfriend. We're having a baby.

DETECTIVE 1

Do you know any reason that Josh Curry would have been in your building on that night?

CIARA

He got a key, he comes and goes as he pleases.

DETECTIVE 1

Where were you on Saturday night?

CIARA

I was at my sister's house in Queens on Saturday. She needed me to watch her kids for her.

DETECTIVE 2

Do you know of anyone who would want to hurt Josh or Moses?

CIARA

No, can I go now?

DETECTIVE 1

Thank you Miss Minor. Please take my card, if you think of anything call me.

CIARA

Alright.

INT. KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL/PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Alana is standing over Josh's bed fighting back tears. She is holding his hand, he is unaware of her presence. The hysteria of the last two days is still fresh on her mind, and she begins to bow to the pressure. She goes to the window and hides her tears from the rest of the people in the room. Mr. Bobby Miller is staring at the bed his son once occupied. It is empty now, his body had been moved to the morgue awaiting arrangements.

PASTOR FAULKNER

Bobby, I took care of all the arrangements. You will have to send something over to the funeral parlor.

With that statement, a tear presents itself in Mr. Miller's eye.

MR. MILLER

Thanks so much pastor. I appreciate you being here to help.

PASTOR FAULKNER

That's what my job is all about Bob. If there's anything else I can do...

MR. MILLER

No... I, better go check on my wife.

PASTOR FAULKNER

I'll come with you. I want to see how Paula and Betty Curry are doing too.

He turns to his daughter.

PASTOR FAULKNER

(continuing)

Sweetheart, we're going to check on the ladies.

No reply.

PASTOR FAULKNER

(continuing)

Sweetheart. Alana?

ALANA

Okay daddy.

Pastor Faulkner and Mr. Miller leave. The detective 2 stops by the room.

DETECTIVE 2

Miss Faulkner?

ALANA

Look detective, this is not a good time. I really can't talk right now.

DETECTIVE 2

How is he doing?

ALANA

He's been sedated. He regained consciousness just to see his best friend die. He was in shock.

DETECTIVE 2

Did he say anything?

ALANA

They had to sedate all of us, it was terrible. We were praying so hard. I can't believe this is happening.

DETECTIVE 2

Miss Faulkner, did he say anything?

ALANA

No, he was delirious.

DETECTIVE 2

When he wakes up, please call us right away.

ALANA

They say he will be out most of the day. The sedative is pretty strong.

DETECTIVE 2

As soon as possible. We aren't getting anywhere with this investigation. He holds the key.

EXT. CRACK DEN - DAY

Three days later, Kasiem pulls up to the crack den. He gets out the car, the dealer is carrying garbage out the basement door as he comes into the gate.

DEALER

What's up Kasiem?

KASIEM

What's the deal baby? Where's your boys at? They got you cleaning up now.

DEALER

Nah man, I just found all this stuff in the basement.

A patrol car pulls past the building slowly.

DEALER

(continuing)

What are they lookin' at?

KASIEM

Don't worry about them, they're on the way to the donut shop.

DEALER

Yeah. So what you want down here. I thought you was leaving me to a new daddy?

KASIEM

I am, that's why I'm making my last pick ups myself. I don't need anybody lining their pockets with my cheese.

DEALER

Somebody got messed up downstairs man. There's blood all over this bag. There's bloody clothes and a knife in there. Somebody got messed up.

They look at the bag as the dealer tosses it into the can.

KASIEM

Who's been down there, yo?

DEALER

I don't know, that chick Ciara been down there a few times. I don't let her go upstairs.

KASIEM

Ciara. Have you seen her, yo?

DEALER

Nah, not today. That was a couple of days ago.

KASIEM

She's going to be fiending soon.

Kasiem takes the bag out the can and heads out the gate.

KASIEM

(continuing)

She comes by here yo, you keep her here. Don't give her no rock, just keep that chick here!

Kasiem puts the bag in the trunk of his car.

DEALER

Iight, yo.

Kasiem leaves in a hurry. He gets in the car and dials up the car phone to Mrs. Curry.

MRS. CURRY

Hello.

KASIEM

Hello, Mrs. Curry, this is Kasiem Davis, how are you doing?

MRS. CURRY

I'm fine Kasiem, I was just going to head back down to the hospital in about an hour.

KASIEM

How is Josh coming along?

MRS. CURRY

He's doing a lot better. They are letting him come home soon, maybe tonight.

KASIEM

That's great news.

MRS. CURRY

He'll probably stay here for a few days, so I can keep an eye on him.

KASIEM

He needs some good home cooking and his mothers love.

MRS. CURRY

That's right. Is there something you want me to tell him?

KASIEM

Did he say anything about what happened?

MRS. CURRY

No, he's not talking about that. It's like he's trying not to remember.

KASIEM

Do you think I could stop by to see him at your house?

MRS. CURRY

I don't think he will feel like company.

KASIEM

I understand, I'll call again tomorrow to see if he feels better.

MRS. CURRY

Okay, that will be alright. Thanks for calling.

KASIEM

Alright Mrs. Curry, you have a good day.

INT. CURRY HOME/BASEMENT - DAY

Kasiem comes down to the basement where Josh has been staying. Josh is watching the television with his back to the doorway.

KASIEM

Hey Jazzy, what's up yo? How you feeling?

JOSHUA

What's up Kasiem? I'm alright, still a little sore, I got this cane.

KASIEM

What are you watching? Looks like an old game.

JOSHUA

It's a tape of me and Mo' in the state semi-finals.

KASIEM

Looks like you guys are getting down.

JOSHUA

Yeah. What do you want, yo?

KASIEM

You're my man Jazzy, I just wanted see how you were doing.

JOSHUA

I can't believe this mess, I got my boy killed.

KASIEM

It wasn't your fault yo.

JOSHUA

It wasn't? And it was my ex that did it.

KASIEM

I knew that trick had something to do with it.

JOSHUA

Yeah, and the cops want a statement from me. I can't give her to them.

KASIEM

Forget them, but she needs to bleed for this. I got my boys looking out for her. When we get her it's lights out.

JOSHUA

I don't want no more killin' yo, I've had enough.

KASIEM

She has to pay Jazz, Moses was good people. I never really liked her anyway with her stuck up self, now she's a crack fiend.

JOSHUA

No more killing Kasiem. Let the police do their job. If they get her so be it, but I'm not helping them. And I don't want or need you getting into it.

KASIEM

I'm not promising nothing, one of my soldiers sees her, she's through.

JOSHUA

Then I have to live with that on my conscious too. Let it go man.

KASIEM

We'll see how the story closes.

JOSHUA

My father once told me "sometimes you have to lose to gain". I don't know what that means now.

KASIEM

I heard she was down at the hospital.

JOSHUA

Can you believe that? She had the nerve to come down there, like it was alright.

KASIEM

What do you have to do with her man, what were you doing down at her building?

JOSHUA

I went to break it off with her.

KASIEM

Break what off? You said you was down with this other lady. What did you have to break off?

JOSHUA

I was still looking out for her. She wasn't working and I had to cover her bills, plus the condo, I co-signed for that.

KASIEM

What? You was financing that skeezer?

JOSHUA

It wasn't always like that. You know that Kasiem.

KASIEM

Yeah, I guess. Can we talk some place else?

JOSHUA

Yeah, let's go out back.

EXT. CURRY BACKYARD - DAY

Josh and Kasiem sit on the back porch.

KASIEM

What's this your mom is saying about you not going to Moses funeral?

JOSHUA

Man, I can't go up in there. Not when I'm the reason that he's in that box.

KASIEM

That's your main dog. You can't go out like that man.

JOSHUA

You know what Kasiem, this whole thing goes back to when you gave me and Ciara that rock.

KASIEM

What are you talking about?

JOSHUA

I financed your whole operation with my father's insurance money. That was where it started.

KASIEM

You helped me, when my girl got kicked out her mom's crib, so what. I used the money to start my drug business. I had to take care of my girl, she was pregnant. what choice did I have?

JOSHUA

There's always another choice
Kasiem, you just never looked at
the alternative.

KASIEM

What alternatives are there in the
hood Jazz? What?

JOSHUA

I don't think it had to go down
the way it did. Once you became a
success, you gave me back my money
and that small token of
appreciation.

KASIEM

The crack vials?

JOSHUA

Yeah, I was curious but, I didn't
know what it would do. So Ciara
and I did it together. That was a
crazy high, I couldn't deal with
it. I left it alone after that.

KASIEM

That's when she got hooked?

JOSHUA

Yeah, and I have to take
responsibility for what happened.
You should take some too.

KASIEM

Me? Why? She did it to herself. I
can only lead a horse to water, I
don't make them drink.

JOSHUA

You knew how potent that stuff
was, and you didn't care. That
could have been me hooked on that
thing.

KASIEM

But it wasn't. And I can't help
that she did either. Look, I never
wanted to be in the game in the
first place. I did what I had to
do to survive. Now I'm getting out.

JOSHUA

That's bull man!

KASIEM

Those cat's shooting at us that night, remember that? They wanted a piece of my territory. They have to take it up with Little Tokyo now. I got bought out dude, it's over. I invested my money on the stock market and now I'm rich. I don't need that stuff no more. The game weighs on you Jazz. I saw so many young black people, girls from the neighborhood getting on their knees to get a hit. You get tired of it.

JOSHUA

That's very touching, but if you wanted to invest on the market I'm sure you would have come to me.

KASIEM

Maybe in the future you can handle my portfolio, but at the time, it wouldn't have been in your best interest to launder drug money.

JOSHUA

Oh so you call yourself protecting me? Who was protecting me when Ciara put a hole in me? Who was protecting Moses?

KASIEM

God.

JOSHUA

What do you know about God?

KASIEM

More than you think. You're still here for a reason my man. You could have easily been taking a dirt nap too.

JOSHUA

Watch your mouth yo. Don't disrespect my man.

KASIEM

Why not? You are! Forget it.

JOSHUA

Nah, you forget it!

JOSHUA

I've never known you to be fearful.

KASIEM

You know what? I got my position by not showing fear or emotion, being hard and callous. I missed my first child being born, because I was out there hustlin'. When my second, Aisha was born, I was there-- there's no feeling like that in the world.

JOSHUA

I'm sure your wife feels that for different reasons.

KASIEM

(laughs)

Yeah, I bet. But seeing that little girl holding her in my arms, I was scared yo. It made me see life differently, made me see how precious it is. You know?

JOSHUA

Yeah man.

KASIEM

Right then I knew for the first time, that I could die in an instant, and never see her again. That's real yo.

JOSHUA

So you got out, that doesn't change anything for me.

KASIEM

This isn't about you Jazz. It's about Moses. I wish I had what he had yo.

JOSHUA

What are you talking about?

KASIEM

The brother had an even flow, you know. He never changed on you and he never let no one influence him. I'd see him once in a while downtown, he knew I was hustling and never once did he condemn me. He'd just say "I'm praying for you bro".

JOSHUA

That's him, always praying for someone else. Well, what about him God? What about my man Moses?!

KASIEM

He kept it real Jazz, the brother was true to himself 'till the end. I don't know anyone like that.

JOSHUA

I know Kasiem, and I let him down.

KASIEM

Just don't let him down now yo. You have to go to that funeral and make peace with the brother.

JOSHUA

I'll think about Kasiem, I need to clear my head.

KASIEM

Alright Jazz, but there isn't much time. I'll go with you if you want.

JOSHUA

Alright, I'll give you a call later.

KASIEM

Okay yo, call me. Oh and hey, when you get yourself together and go to work, talk to Dave Burke. I'll let him know you'll be handling my portfolio.

JOSHUA

You let Dave build your portfolio?

KASIEM

Yeah why?

JOSHUA

We'll he's okay but--

Kasiem heading toward the door.

KASIEM

He's no Josh Curry, Josh Curry is the man. Peace.

JOSHUA

Peace.

INT. CURRY HOME/BASEMENT - DAY

Time passes slowly, Jazzy sits in the darkened basement, illuminated only by the light of the television. The tapes continue to run of games Moses and he played in. The PHONE RINGS repeatedly, but he doesn't answer. The cell phone RINGS repeatedly again he doesn't answer. Josh checks the messages on his cell phone. They are from Alana.

ALANA (V.O.)

Josh this is Alana, I know you're there, I hope you're listening. I am coming by to take your mother to the funeral. I hope you have the decency and respect for Moses to come. You don't have to come with me, but I do hope you show up. His parents would be very hurt if you don't show up, so would your mother, and so will I. Please reconsider what you are doing. Goodbye.

Josh looks at the cell phone and throws it across the room. He hears Alana's voice as well as his mother upstairs, they are having a conversation. There is a knock at the door.

MRS. CURRY (O.S.)

Josh.

Josh goes to the foot of the stairs. His mother steps down a few steps into the light.

JOSHUA

Yes mom, what do you need?

MRS. CURRY

I want you to come with us to Moses' funeral.

JOSHUA

Mom, I'm really not feeling well right now. I don't think it's a good time for me to leave the house.

MRS. CURRY

Josh, please come with us. The Miller's held up the funeral until you got out of the hospital, because they knew you would want to be there. What will I tell people?

JOSHUA

Don't worry about the people. I don't feel good, tell them that.

INT. CURRY LIVING ROOM - DAY

Josh follows his mother upstairs into the living room. Alana is sitting on the couch sadly looking up at him. Mrs. Curry goes upstairs to finish dressing.

JOSHUA

Hi Alana

ALANA

Hi. What is it Jazzy? What's really the root of the problem?

JOSHUA

There is no root to the problem. I just don't feel good, I'm not up to going out.

ALANA

This is not just going out. This is so important, how can you make light of it?

JOSHUA

I'm not making light of it.

ALANA

What happened to the man I fell in love with?

JOSHUA

Alana, I'm sorry. I--

Mrs. Curry comes back down stairs.

MRS. CURRY

I'm ready Alana.

(turns to Josh)

I just want you to know, I'm ashamed of you.

JOSHUA

Mom, I'm sorry.

MRS. CURRY

Let's go Alana.

Mrs. Curry and Alana leave the house. Josh watches from the window as they get in the car, and drive off. Josh sits in the living room for a few minutes reflecting on his life and the loss of his friend. He paces the floor, goes over to the mantle and wipes it clean of all that was on it, letting out his frustrations on the family photo's. His father's picture looks up at him. He lays down on the couch for a while with the picture in his lap, thinking about his dad. He sits up, goes to the phone, calls Kasiem.

KASIEM

And you're just a stock broker.

JOSHUA

A good one mind you, but it's like you can't even have nice things without people putting labels on you. I'm just a guy, not a baller, not jiggy, not a dealer, not a player. Just a guy, who was just trying to fit in.

KASIEM

Man, forget fitting in. I figured that out, I guess just a little late in the game, but I'm glad I did. Hey, my wife told me some good news.

JOSHUA

What?

KASIEM

We are going to have another little one. She's seven weeks.

JOSHUA

That's great yo.

KASIEM

Yeah, I think this is the culmination of my new life. Starting anew, man I can't wait. There's nothing better than new life.

JOSHUA

Yeah.

KASIEM

Suck it up, big man. Let's get inside.

JOSHUA

Okay.

They come into the foyer of the church and they hear Pastor Faulkner speaking from the pulpit.

PASTOR FAULKNER (V.O.)

Again to the parents, Mr. and Mrs. Miller, I am truly sorry for your loss. The other young man involved in this untimely and senseless tragedy, is at home convalescing.

(more)

PASTOR FAULKNER (cont'd; V.O.)

He couldn't be here at this home going service. I really don't want to call it a going home service, but a celebration of life. I know the other young man, Josh Curry, well. If he could be here, I'm sure he would be.

Alana lowers and shakes her head. Josh and Kasiem come through the back door into the sanctuary. Josh moving nervously on his cane. Pastor Faulkner looks up but says nothing. Kasiem holds Josh under his arm to support him as he walks.

KASIEM

Let's squeeze in back here.

JOSHUA

Nah, Kasiem let go. I have to go up front.

KASIEM

You sure Jazz?

JOSHUA

Yeah, I'm sure.

Everyone in the congregation turns to him as he passes row after row moving toward the front slowly. He sees the flower arrangements surrounding the casket, and his legs begin to shake. He moves closer and sees his best friends body in the casket and quickly turns away.

PASTOR FAULKNER

Could you people on the front pew please move over a little to make room for this young brother.

Josh reaches the front pew tears welling up, Alana turns to him with surprise and helps him to his seat.

JOSHUA

Thanks.

PASTOR FAULKNER

Well. God is truly working in our midst. This young brother was seriously injured, critically injured. Laying up in that hospital for over a week at death's door. Here he sits before you now a walking miracle. And we thank God for that miracle, and we Praise God, Praise God!

(more)

PASTOR FAULKNER (cont'd)

I think there is more to be thankful for today. Amen? Yes. Amen, much more. Brother Moses was a special young man and I will miss him dearly. I want to thank God just for the opportunity to know him and work with him on the choir. His father told me he named him after Moses Malone the famous basketball player. Moses was quite a basketball player in his own right, but that's not what sustained him. I think his name reminds me of that other Moses, because he was a great leader. Our Moses was a great leader too, in this church and in the community, wasn't he?

CONGREGATION

Yes!!

PASTOR FAULKNER

I don't know what direction God is going to take us in, but I know he will raise up a new leader in this church and in this community. Right now we will have a song from Nadine Middlebrooks.

Nadine comes from the choir loft and belts out a wonderful, touching song.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The service ends, the cars are filling to go to the burial site. Joshua and Kasiem are talking by the back of Kasiem's car.

KASIEM

Hey brother, you were strong in there.

JOSHUA

Thanks for the support man.

KASIEM

Anytime Jazz, you're my man.

JOSHUA

Hey, you coming with us to the burial?

KASIEM

Nah bro, I think you can make it from here. I know your girl will give you her shoulder.

They notice the detective car across the street.

JOSHUA

You going to be alright yo?

KASIEM

Don't worry about them Jazz, they have a penchant for ataxia.

JOSHUA

What?

KASIEM

Don't worry kid, I got this. You get going, give your mother, and Mo's parents my best.

JOSHUA

Okay man, I'll give you a call later. They're having food at the Miller's house later.

KASIEM

Nah dude, that's all right. I'll catch up to later.

JOSHUA

Alright man, holla.

Kasiem gets in his car, heads in the opposite direction of the convoy following the hearse. The detectives follow behind his car, pull along the side of Kasiem at a red light.

DETECTIVE 1

Davis, can you pull over?
We'd like a word with you.

KASIEM

How can I help you detective?

DETECTIVE 2

Just pull over and we'll let you know.

They pull to the curb, and get out the cars.

KASIEM

What's up?

DETECTIVE 1

Davis we are having a hard time coming up with a suspect for this murder.

DETECTIVE 2

I say we have been looking in the wrong place, and need to look into a drug deal gone bad.

KASIEM

You can look into whatever you want. I don't know nothing about it and can't help you.

DETECTIVE 1

I think you can. Has Josh Curry said anything to you that you think might help us.

KASIEM

No, he hasn't said anything to me, that might help you.

DETECTIVE 2

Well, let's say we take a look in your car maybe check, for blood samples or carpet fibers.

KASIEM

I ain't O.J., but I will get Johnny Cochran on your ass.

DETECTIVE 1

Okay, okay!

KASIEM

You got a warrant? Huh?

DETECTIVE 1

Take it easy, Davis.

KASIEM

No, you take it easy. You have no right to be harassing me with your b.s. I have rights too.

DETECTIVE 1

Okay Davis we won't be riding your butt on this. Can you give us a call if your friend says anything? He's not cooperating with us, and like I said we're not getting anywhere with this investigation.

KASIEM

And like I said, I can't help you.
Can I go now?

The detective sticks a card in Kasiem's top pocket.

DETECTIVE 1

Okay Davis, go on.

KASIEM

Thank you.

EXT. FRONT OF CURRY HOME - DAY

Two days have passed and Kasiem goes to the Curry home to check on Josh. Josh is on the front steps.

JOSHUA

What's up yo?

KASIEM

Chillin' kid, how are you feeling?

JOSHUA

Better, I got rid of that cane.
I'll probably be going back to my place on the weekend.

KASIEM

That's good man. How's the family doing?

JOSHUA

I don't know, as well as can be expected, I guess.

Kasiem's cell phone RINGS.

KASIEM

Hold on a second Jazz. Yeah?
what's up?

(off answer)

Really. Did you get the van like I told you?

(off answer)

Good, pack up everything in the store room and put it in the van.

(off answer)

Well get some help. I'll be there later.

(off answer)

Nah, leave that in the basement, and don't leave it loose, tie it good. Alright, see you then.

Kasiem closes the cell.

KASIEM

(continuing)

So anyway, what were we saying?

JOSHUA

Nothing important, what was that about?

KASIEM

Um, nothing. Just cleaning out one of my old dens. I'm thinking about renovating it and renting the apartments.

JOSHUA

Sounds good yo, that's a good investment.

KASIEM

Yeah. I got some things to do, maybe you can come check it out later. You know, let me know what you think.

JOSHUA

Alright, I'll be here yo, I'm not doing nothing today, just taking it easy.

KASIEM

That's peace, see you later, iight?

JOSHUA

Holla.

INT. CURRY FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Later that night, Kasiem stops by. Paula and Alana are sitting with Josh.

PAULA

Hmm, what's he want?

ALANA

Take it easy Paula.

KASIEM

Yeah, take it easy Paula.

ALANA

We can't be sure he had anything to do with what happened.

JOSHUA

Will you all just give it a break. Kasiem didn't have anything to do with it. It was Ciara.

PAULA

Ciara?

JOSHUA

Yes, Ciara. She stabbed me when I went past her house and I guess she did the same to Moses when he found me bleeding in the hallway.

ALANA

Why didn't you tell the police?

PAULA

You knew that all this time and you didn't say anything?

JOSHUA

I didn't know what I was doing, I was confused and now she's skipped town.

PAULA

Confused?

JOSHUA

If I could make it right I would.
If it would bring Moses back--

Paula SLAPS Josh across the face.

PAULA

Forget you Jazz!

ALANA

Paula! Jazzy? Stop!

KASIEM

Yeah, cut the bull!

Paula SOBBING.

PAULA

I can't believe you.

Josh reaching over to her.

JOSHUA

Paula, I can explain.

Paula pulls away.

PAULA

Get off of me. I'm out of here.

Paula storms out the room, SLAMS the front door as she leaves.

JOSHUA
Go after her Alana.

ALANA
Okay, but you have some explaining
to do.

Alana runs out after Paula.

JOSHUA
What was that all about?

KASIEM
Look man, let's get out of here.
I have to show you something.

JOSHUA
I don't have no time for that
right now.

KASIEM
Trust me duke, this will put this
whole thing in perspective.

JOSHUA
Man please, I don't know what
you're pulling.

KASIEM
Come on.

They leave the house and Kasiem jumps on the cell phone.

KASIEM
(continuing)
Buddha, make the call. Then get
out of there.

JOSHUA
Where we headed?

KASIEM
I told you, I want you to see a
piece of property.

EXT. CRACK DEN - NIGHT

They arrive at the crack den, but park a few houses back.
Kasiem tries to draw Josh's attention.

KASIEM
So what do you think of the
neighborhood?

JOSHUA

It doesn't look too bad. You don't expect me to live here though, right?

KASIEM

Nah, this isn't the place for you, but what if we partnered up on this building. You know we could buy a few of these and make some good money.

JOSHUA

I don't know if I want to be a landlord, but it is a good idea. It would help build up this community, I do want to be a part of that.

Police cars cruise into the block with lights and sirens going. They pull in front of the crack den and rush up to the door. They check the door, it's unlocked they cautiously enter the premises.

JOSHUA

(continuing)

What's that all about?

KASIEM

I don't know yo.

The detective car arrives and the two detectives enter the building.

JOSHUA

Yo, isn't that those detectives that have been trying to talk to me?

KASIEM

I don't know yo.

INT. CRACK DEN - NIGHT

The detectives are looking around the upstairs, a uniform officer calls them to the back room.

OFFICER

Detective, we found something. There's a note attached to the rear room door addressed to you.

DETECTIVE 1

To me?

OFFICER

Yes.

The detectives come to the rear of the house.

DETECTIVE 1

What's it say?

The officer hands him the note. It reads " DETECTIVE, NEXT TIME, DO YOUR OWN JOB!!". They open the back room door with guns drawn. Ciara is tied and gagged and sitting on a chair with the bag of bloody clothes and knife taped to her chest.

EXT. CRACK DEN - NIGHT

Outside Josh and Kasiem are still sitting in the car but are intently watching the brownstone. The detectives bring Ciara out and put her in the car.

JOSHUA

Oh my God! That was Ciara!

KASIEM

Yeah dog. I bagged her, you didn't want her dead so she's not dead. But this story needed an ending, and I wanted to see you doing good when it did.

JOSHUA

Dag.

KASIEM

It was best for everybody.

A year has past and there is still some salty feelings between Paula and Josh. They are on speaking terms because of Alana, but she has kept her distance. Josh has asked everyone, his mother, the Millers, Paula, Alana, and Pastor Faulkner to meet him at a construction site at two o'clock that afternoon. They all show up. Some more reluctant than others.

JOSHUA

Wow, I'm glad you all could make it.

MRS. CURRY

What did you want us all down here for son?

ALANA

Yes Josh, you said it was important, and it had something to do with Moses.

PAULA

That's the only reason I'm here.

They walk into the construction site, there are engineers and workers putting together a three story T-shaped building. Kasiem is standing with them looking at the plans.

PAULA
(continuing)
What's he doing here?

JOSHUA
He's a part of the plan here.

ALANA
What is, here Josh? Wasn't this a loft at one time.

JOSHUA
Yes.

One of the engineers comes over with a bright yellow bow and a scissor.

ENGINEER
Are you ready Mr. Curry?

JOSHUA
Yes I am, thank you... ladies and gentlemen you are looking at the site and are privileged to be here at the belated ground breaking of the future home of the Moses Miller Recreation and Computer Youth Center!

PAULA
What?

KASIEM
Ya heard!

JOSHUA
Pastor Faulkner got us support from the community board.

ALANA
Daddy?

PAULA
When did you guys get so chummy?

KASIEM
When my wife miscarried, I was devastated. Josh got me together with "Doc"... Pastor Faulkner to help me get my head together. He counseled me and my wife.

PAULA

So, you have changed your life?

KASIEM

A lot of what "Doc" has... I mean, Pastor Faulkner has been saying, made a lot of sense to us. About lifestyle and empowerment and all that.

JOSHUA

Kasiem and I pooled our money and got a loan for the rest. We wanted to honor my brother and best friend in a way that he would have been proud of.

MRS. MILLER

I think he would love this.

MR. MILLER

Yes he would.

PAULA

Oh my God! Joshua... Jazz,... I don't know what to say.

JOSHUA

Don't say nothing. This is something I had to do, for me as well as him.

PAULA

I know Jazz.

JOSHUA

I need you Paula... I need you to be my friend. You are my connection to Moses.

PAULA

Okay Jazz. You're my connection to him too. He loved you.

JOSHUA (NARRATOR)

Today I got rid of a lot of guilt, but I'll never get over the death of my best friend Moses. He lives inside me now, just like my father. The type of man he was, is the man I have become. How do you know for sure, you ask?

By Their Fruits You Will Know Them

FADE OUT:

The End.