

THE FORTY-YEAR OLD REJECT

By

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FADE IN:

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Cleanliness is next to Godliness.

INT. MADAM CLARK'S OFFICE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Leslie is a black woman, divorcee, 40 years old. She's a heavier set woman with long thick hair. She's sitting on a blue sofa with lots of pillows. Madam Clark, a 5-year therapist, is sitting across from her at a desk. She has her laptop open and her notepad and pen ready for notes. This is Leslie's first therapy session.

MADAM CLARK
Hello Ms. Brown. It's a pleasure to meet you. How's your day so far?

LESLIE
It's good. So far.

Leslie gives a slight phony smile.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
How's your day coming along?

MADAM CLARK
Well, so far so good. I am eating healthy, and drinking enough water...went jogging this morning. You know...doing my best to stay on the right side of the dirt.

Both ladies let out a little giggle.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)
So, umm, Ms. Brown...

LESLIE
Please, call me Leslie.

MADAM CLARK
Leslie...tell me a little about yourself.

LESLIE
I am a mother of three - two boys and a girl. All away at college. I'm a writer and I work for a laboratory but in a call center. I'd like to one day quit my nine to five and write full
(MORE)

LESLIE (CONT'D)
 time. I've been divorced for a little
 over a year. I'd like to start dating
 again, but... I dunno. Ummm...I also
 work in a call center.

MADAM CLARK
 what do you do for fun?

LESLIE
 Fun?

MADAM CLARK
 Yes, fun.

Madam Clark stops scribbling on her notepad and looks at
 Leslie; anticipating an answer.

LESLIE
 (stammering)
 Wha, well, I...I like to read. Write
 poetry. Hang out with the kids when
 they come to visit. Go on trips...with
 the kids.

Madam Clark, scribbling in the notepad, glasses hanging off
 the tip of her nose.

MADAM CLARK
 How are the dynamics of your ex-
 husband in relation to you and the
 kids?

LESLIE
 It's great. It's just me...I'm left
 out. Struggling to pick myself up and
 move on. You know, go out on dates.

MADAM CLARK
 So you think moving on involves going
 out on dates?

LESLIE
 Of course not! Well, maybe just a
 little. I'm ready to date, to have
 male companionship. I haven't given up
 on love. It seems love has given up on
 me.

MADAM CLARK
 What do you mean?

LESLIE
 (voice trailing off)
 Well, about six months ago...

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - GAS STATION - EARLY MORNING

Leslie's Teal Volkswagon Beetle sped into the gas station and pulled up next to the pump. Leslie unclicks her seatbelt and quickly exits the vehicle and runs to the front of her car to pump gas. Seconds later, an old-school glossy light blue Lincoln enters the parking lot on 22-inch rims. Loud rap music blared from the car.

A tall, slender black male exits the driver's side and quickly runs towards Leslie. Leslie quickly grabs her pepper spray and sprays the man in the eyes.

MAN
 Aaaaaah! Aaaaah! OH...MY...GOD!!!

He falls to the ground gagging, coughing, and screaming.

LESLIE
 You were trying to rob me! Fuckin
 psycho!

Leslie starts to make a run for it. Looks back and sees the guy on the ground hollering and holding his eyes.

MAN
 Please...I was gonna help you pump
 gas...

LESLIE
 I know how to pump my own damn gas!

MAN
 (coughing and rubbing his eyes)
 But you're a lady.

SPANISH STORE CLERK
 What the hell is goin' on round here?!

LESLIE
 I thought he was going to rob me! I
 made a mistake! Please...please...Can
 I get a towel and some water?

30 MINUTES LATER...

Leslie is sitting on the pavement dabbing the Man's face with a cold towel. He has a cup of cold water sitting on the ground next to him. He's pinching his nose with his right hand.

LESLIE

My God, I am so sorry. This is so messed up. You must think I'm crazy.

MAN

A little.

LESLIE

Are you going to be okay?

MAN

Yeah.

LESLIE

I have to go...I'm late for work.

MAN

So that's it?

LESLIE

What do you mean?

MAN

You spray me in the eyes and scurry off?

LESLIE

It ain't even like that. I said I was sorry. And I brought you water and basically doctored you.

MAN

(chuckling)

True. May I get your name?

LESLIE

Leslie.

MAN

My name is Ronald. But you can call me Ronnie.

LESLIE

Nice to meet you, Ronnie. Is there

(MORE)

LESLIE (CONT'D)
anything else you need before I go?

RONNIE
No ma'am.

LESLIE
Ma'am?!

RONNIE
Hey! Before you spray me again, I was only trying to be respectful.

LESLIE
Would you like to pump my gas, Ronnie?

RONNIE
You really are crazy!
(sigh)
I'll pump your gas...and may I have your number? I'd like to take you out. You seem to be stressed.

LESLIE
(raising an eyebrow and folding her arms)
I don't owe you anything...

RONNIE
I never said you did. But, I'd love to take you out on the town. But, only if you want to. No pressure. I just like what I see and would like to get to know you better.

LESLIE
(blushing)
After I tried to kill you with pepper spray? Sure, why not?

Ronnie placed the pump back into its holster and they exchanged numbers.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - EVENING (TWO WEEKS LATER)

Leslie is in her bathroom looking in the mirror as she places the back to her earring on her right lobe. Slow music is playing in the background on the music player.

The doorbell rings.

Leslie slips on her heels, tugs at her mini dress, and rubs her hair down with her right hand before opening the door. Ronnie was standing on the porch with a jogging suit on. And he was empty-handed.

RONNIE

Damn!

Ronnie rubbed his beard, looking at Leslie from head to toe.

LESLIE

What?

RONNIE

You look good!

LESLIE

(chuckling)

Oh! Thank you!

RONNIE

Ready?

LESLIE

Yes.

Ronnie and Leslie left the building and walked to his Lincoln. Ronnie walked around the car and slid into the driver's seat. Leslie stood outside the car for a second. Ronnie got out of the car and ran to the passenger side.

RONNIE

My bad! Where's my manners? It's been a really long day.

They rode in silence for a few minutes listening to loud rap music. Meanwhile, the car seemed to bounce at every curve in the road.

Pulling up at the gas station where they met, Ronnie hopped out of the car and walked towards a crowd of people. Slapping hands as they met.

Ronnie got back into the car a short while later with two juice bottles.

LESLIE

I feel like I'm overdressed.

RONNIE

Nah...I'm underdressed.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
You look beautiful.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Leslie walks in holding her heels in her hands. Ronnie is behind her, closing and locking the door behind him. They're drunk and they start to kiss. Leslie leads him into her bedroom where D'Angelo's, "Untitled" is belting from the music player.

LESLIE
Oh my gosh! I love this song.
D'Angelo's so fine!

RONNIE
Oh really?

Leslie drops her heels and lay across her bed.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
I can do a better job than D'Angelo.

LESLIE
(waving him off)
Man, please!

RONNIE
Watch me...

Ronnie walks to the end of the bed and joins D'Angelo singing.

Ronnie starts to strip slowly, sensually...moving his head from side to side to side as he sings the lyrics on key, to "Untitled". Leslie, slightly blinded from the liquor, leans forward for a better view.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
(singing)
How does it feeeel...

Ronnie moves his head from side to side in a winding motion as he kicks off his shoes and unzips his pants. Leslie licks her lips and moves forward to the edge of the bed.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
(singing)
Wanna take you away from here...How
does it feel?

Leslie squints, mouth slightly open. Something is flashing behind Ronnie.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
(singing)
Tell you all the tricks I know...

Ronnie is completely naked and something is flashing behind him more noticeable than before. Leslie leans closer.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Do you know what I'm talking about,
baby?

Leslie quickly scurried back across the bed. Ronnie came after her.

LESLIE
(arms outstretched)
No, no, no, no, no!

RONNIE
(sounding concerned)
What? What?!

As Ronnie moved, it waved behind him.

LESLIE
Please...I don't feel good. I feel
like I'm going to throw up.

RONNIE
Huh?

LESLIE
(making a gagging sound)
I feel like I'm going to vomit!

RONNIE
You need anything? Baby?

Leslie pulled away, clutching her stomach. As Ronnie came closer, so did the thing behind him.

LESLIE
Unh unh... maybe you should just go.

I don't want you to catch whatever I
have. I really don't feel good.

Ronnie stepped back off the bed. He turned to grab his pants.

His butt in full view, A long piece of tissue is hanging out his rear.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

(wailing)

Oh my God! Ohhh my Gawd!!!! Please hurry! I don't you to see me this way!

Ronnie races into the bathroom in the hallway. After a few minutes, the bathroom door yanks open. There are stomping sounds in the hallway. The front for to the apartment is yanked open and then slammed. Leslie runs to the door and locks it.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Whew!

Leslie then enters the bathroom and looks at herself in the mirror. In her peripheral, she sees the lid to the toilet up. She reaches to close it and sees the tissue from Ronnie's ass with a bit of brown on the tip.

INT. MADAM CLARK'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Leslie looks up at Madam Clark who is staring at her, mouth slightly open, for what seems like forever.

LESLIE

Yes?

MADAM CLARK

That is uh...that is something. But, here's what I want you to do...

Madam Clark scribbles on a sheet of paper from her notepad and rips it off. She stands and walks across the room. Her fit physique is in full view. Leslie stands up from the sofa to meet her.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)

I want you to date some more.

LESLIE

Are you sure?

MADAM CLARK

Of course! You can't stop after one. You must keep going. Have you heard from him again?

LESLIE
Nope. Not ever again.

MADAM CLARK
That's not a bad thing. Not at all!

Madam Clark hands Leslie the paper.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)
See you in a month?

LESLIE
See you in a month.

Leslie leaves Madam Clark's office and looks at the sheet. It read:

Madam Clark. Stay in your lane. Cleanliness is next to Godliness.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
D is for Diphallia!

INT. OFFICE PARTY - EVENING (TWO WEEKS AFTER)

pink, yellow, and light green streamers and balloons are hanging from the ceiling. there's finger food, chips, and dip on various tables around the room. A few pitchers of juice and liquor on each table. There are people conversing with one another around the room. Everyone is dressed in business casual attire.

Leslie is standing with her work buddy, Brandy. Brandy resembles Michelle Obama. They're eyeing the room, eating a piece of cake from small paper plates.

BRANDY
(laughing)
Girl, I'm glad you came. Because if you hadn't of, I sure as hell wasn't.

LESLIE
I wasn't gonna leave you hanging. besides, I need to get out as much as possible.

BRANDY
How's everything? How was your therapy session? If you don't mind me asking.

LESLIE

Girl, you're fine. Yeah, I went about two weeks ago.

BRANDY

How'd it go?

LESLIE

It was good. Girl...her name is Madam Clark.

BRANDY

Say, who?

LESLIE

Yep...Madam Clark. Lil Boujee something. She's allegedly french...by way of some great, great, great, great on her auntie sister's cousin's side or whatever

They both start laughing.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

But all of that aside, she's alright. I feel like I could talk to her.

BRANDY

You know you can always change therapists?

LESLIE

Uhhh...yeah...I know. But, I'll wait a little bit. She didn't come off funny actin. And after I told her the story about the dude I met in the parking lot at the gas station, she gave me some good advice.

BRANDY

What's that?

LESLIE

to keep going. that it was only one date. And, cleanliness is next to Godliness!

They're both laughing hard.

BRANDY

Yeah, homeboy did have tissue stuck in
(MORE)

BRANDY (CONT'D)

his ass!

Male Co-Worker stands in the front of the room, talking loud so that everyone in the room can hear.

MALE CO-WORKER

Hey everybody! I'm so glad that all of you could join us! Welcome to our annual Spring Party!

Loud cheering from everyone throughout the room.

MALE CO-WORKER (CONT'D)

Let's have a little fun! I need about ten people to gather around in a circle. We're gonna play the alphabet game! But, you must use words that are work-related!

We hear groaning throughout the room. Another male co-worker speaks out.

ANOTHER MALE CO-WORKER

What happens if we fail to choose a word on time?

MALE CO-WORKER

I don't know...uh...take a shot of vodka?

We hear cheers throughout the room

BRANDY

I want no parts of this. I'm not about to be nobody's designated driver.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Girl look...

Brandy points at an unknown man, standing to our right. He's Caucasian, medium build, approximately 5'6''.

He's standing with a few of our co-workers, who, just like us, are not in on the alphabet game. Meanwhile, letters and the corresponding words are being yelled at one after another. Drinks are being downed as laughter ensues.

LESLIE

Who is he?

BRANDY

That's Scott. He started about two weeks ago... I think that was the day you were gone for therapy. He works in accounts and billing.

As she smiles and waves in his direction. All the coworkers, including the new co-worker, SCOTT PATTERSON, late-30's, short, medium build caucasian man waves back.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

(voice trails)

He's cute, ain't he? My husband is lucky, because, girl...

LESLIE

He's cute, but...short. He's a little man.

BRANDY

He's taller than you! Besides, he seems nice. Like I was saying if it weren't for the fact

Brandy stops mid-sentence as Scott walks towards them

SCOTT

Hey ladies. Are you enjoying yourselves?

LESLIE

Yes.

BRANDY

Yes.

SCOTT

I don't believe we've met.

Scott extends his hand to Leslie. They shake hands.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

My name is Scott Patterson. I'm in accounts and billing.

LESLIE

(sounding surprised)

Nice to meet you, Scott. My name is Leslie Brown. I'm in the records department. So... Are you a newbie or raised here in LA?

SCOTT

(slight chuckle)

I'm a newbie. Born and raised in Iowa.
Got sick of the bipolar weather.
Needed a change of scenery.

BRANDY

What? You changed weather conditions
for polluted air?

(chuckling)

I'm just joking. Welcome! We're happy
to have you here.

SCOTT

(facing Leslie)

Thanks, I'm happy to be here. Hey,
would you mind showing me around?

LESLIE

Oh, well it is difficult to navigate
here. It's like one big circle, and
the numbers run funny. But, all you
really need to know is where the
cafeteria, restrooms, and your office
are located. I can show you a quick
way so that you don't get lost. After
that, it'll get easy.

Scott and Brandy both stared at Leslie.

SCOTT

I mean around town. That's if you're
interested and have time. I don't mean
any disrespect.

BRANDY

Ain't no disrespect, she ain't seeing
nobody.

Leslie slightly pushes Brandy.

LESLIE

Yes, I'd love to.

SCOTT

May I give you my number?

LESLIE

Sure.

Scott holds his hand out for Leslie's cell phone and dials his number in, saving it.

SCOTT
There you go. Call me anytime. Nice to meet you ladies.

Scott returns to the group of coworkers he was standing with.

V! Is being yelled in the background amongst laughter and conversations.

INT. SCOTT'S SUV - EVENING

Scott is driving and looks over at Leslie.

SCOTT
You are absolutely beautiful.

LESLIE
(blushing)
Thank you.

SCOTT
No... Thank you.

Scott grabs Leslie's hand, kisses it, and holds it in his hand as he drives.

30 MINUTES LATER...

They turn right onto a wooded path and stop almost at what seems like the edge of a cliff.

There are a couple of other vehicles there, but otherwise, the area's pretty secluded. there's a huge movie screen in the air, hanging outward, past the cliff's edge.

SCOTT
Do you want anything?

LESLIE
Raisinets and water?

SCOTT
Raisinets and water it is!

Scott exits the SUV headed for the pathway to the concession stand.

Leslie unfolds her blanket, lays it out across her lap, and lays the seat back a little.

Scott returns a short time later.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Hey there.

He places the water in the cupholder and hands the Raisinets to Leslie.

LESLIE

(sweetly)

Come here.

She gestures to Scott with her index finger,

Scott leans towards Leslie and kisses her. Leslie grabs the back of Scott's head to hold him in place and they kiss heavily.

SCOTT

Whoa...

Scott falls back into his seat. Leslie pulls her seat up and comes towards Scott. She starts kissing him again. She lifts up his shirt and starts to caress his chest.

Then she moves her hand downward but receives resistance by Scott grabbing her hand, his belt, and his button.

LESLIE

Please...I want you...

Leslie leans over and they kiss again...

SCOTT

I want you too...but...

Leslie leans further over...almost into the seat with Scott. She's kissing and licking his stomach seductively.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Baby...

LESLIE

Yes...

All Scott sees is the back of Leslie's head as she's trying to work herself into his pants.

SCOTT
(moaning)
Baby...

Leslie gets his pants undone. Scott lays his head back on the headrest...his eyes roll into the back of his head...

Leslie is moaning and smacking sounds from kissing and licking Scott's stomach. Leslie places her hand inside Scott's boxers. She feels his stiffness...she gently, yet firmly attempts to pull it out.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
(moaning)
Oh...oh... wait... wait!

Leslie pulls Scott's penis out, noticing it is a twin. She jumps back into her seat and starts to scream uncontrollably.

Scott simultaneously tries to stuff his penises back into his boxers and calm down Leslie. Leslie grabs the handle to the passenger door, but she is falling out of the SUV backward. Scott notices Leslie seems to be falling out the door. He lunges at her to try to catch her. Only for them both to fall out of the vehicle and onto the grass. Only Leslie fell on her head with Scott, pants unbuttoned, lands on top of her.

INT. MADAM CLARK'S OFFICE - DAY

Leslie enters Madam Clark's office for therapy and stands close to the door, where the sunlight cannot reach. Madam Clark stands to greet her.

MADAM CLARK
(smiling)
Come on in!

Leslie walks towards Madam Clark until she was visible. There was a Medium-sized knot on the right side of her forehead, a purplish bruise, and scratches on the right side of Leslie's face.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)
Whaa...

Madam Clark plopped down in her seat.

LESLIE
I've been dating...

AN HOUR LATER...

Leslie left Madam Clark's office with notes written on a prescription pad:

Diphallia.

Either a blessing or defect, depending on who you ask.

In your case, he had two much, two many.

With the next guy, take it slowly.

See you in a month.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Blasted from the past!

INT. LESLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (ONE WEEK LATER)

The long silver curtains are blowing as cool nighttime air enters the bedroom. Leslie is sitting on her bed in her pajamas. She's bent over her laptop, typing intensively. A CHYRON appears above Leslie's head.

Bobby: What are you wearing?

Leslie: I just got out of the shower. Does a towel count?

Bobby: Ooooweee!

Leslie: Hahaha! Quit it! How have you been?

Bobby: Good, I suppose. Just working, home, work again. How about you?

Leslie: Same. Nothing too spectacular over here.

Bobby: I'd love to see you. I mean, it's been almost 30 years, since I've last, saw you.

Leslie: Wow, that's a long time. I'd absolutely to see you.

Bobby: How's your Saturday afternoon?

Leslie: I'm open.

Bobby: How about 3?

Leslie: 3 is good.

Bobby: Okay, okay! Do you like picnics?

Leslie: Yes, I love picnics!

Bobby: I'll pack a basket...well, a bag lunch. lol

Leslie: lol okay! I'll bring a blanket.

Bobby: John Nolen, by the bicycle shop at the lake?

Leslie: Absolutely perfect!

Bobby: Nite.

Leslie: Nite.

Leslie closed the chatbox and went to Bobby's profile. She scrolled through his pictures.

LESLIE
(smiling)
Just as I remembered...

Bobby has an athletic build and is about 5'6". Smooth chocolate skin and goatee, even at 16. Fast forward almost 30 years, he looks about the same...although his pictures are outdated.

Leslie closed her laptop and pulled the lever on her lamp, turning off the light.

INT. LESLIE'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Leslie is in her car, facing the lake.

Moments later, a yellow mini electric car zooms into the parking lot and swoops into a parking stall several spaces down from Leslie's car.

A tall, obese man exits the little car. He seems to be wearing pants that are two sizes too big because they are falling off his waist and he has to keep them up with one hand. He's wearing worn brown boots in 90-degree weather. Long, bushy facial hair covers his top lip and chin. His scalp is bald and shiny.

He places his right hand over his eyes to shield his eyes from the sun in order to search for Leslie.

He turns his head to the left and then he shifts his body to the right, revealing a belly that appears to be carrying a baby full term.

LESLIE
(whispering)
Oh my God... Please don't be him...

Leslie's cellphone rings beside her. She turns her head and sees the name "Bobby". She sits up and answers the phone.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Hello

She turns her head to the left and sees Bobby glance around for a quick second and then notices her. He walks to the car happily.

BOBBY
Long time no see!

Bobby pulls at Leslie's door handle. The door was locked and Leslie was staring at Bobby dumbfounded. Leslie suddenly unlocked the door.

LESLIE
(smiling)
Hi Bobby!

EXT. JOHN NOLEN PARK - AFTERNOON

Leslie walks right into Bobby's arms, with much resistance from his belly. Bobby pulls Leslie back to take a better look at her and spins her around by her left arm like a ballerina.

BOBBY
You are absolutely beautiful! I mean, you've always been. But you look even better than before. How did you do that?!

LESLIE
(giggling awkwardly)
I was wondering the same thing! Like, Bobby, you didn't age a bit!

Leslie looks off to the left to avoid eye contact.

BOBBY

So, I got our lunch. I'm ready to sit down, eat lunch, enjoy the scenery with a beautiful woman.

Bobby and Leslie both smiled.

LESLIE

Allow me to grab the blanket out of the car.

BOBBY

Yeah, I need to grab our lunch.

Bobby walks to his car and Leslie to hers.

They return almost at the same spot, on the driver's side of Leslie's car.

LESLIE

Oh, what did you get?

Leslie pointed to two greasy paper bags Bobby was carrying.

BOBBY

I stopped over at the chicken shack at picked up some gizzards, okra, and cornbread.

LESLIE

(sarcastically)

Yum...

Bobby and Leslie start to walk together through the park.

BOBBY

Do you know where you want to sit?

LESLIE

(glancing around)

Next to the lake, but in a shady spot.

Finding a shady spot not too far from the lake, Leslie unfolds the blanket and spreads it. They both sit down on the blanket. Bobby opens the bag, brings it close to his nose, and takes a whiff of the aroma, he smiles.

BOBBY

This is going to be so good. You ever been to the chicken shack before?

Bobby is on his knees, bent over the bags of food, ripping the folds of the greasy bag, food still inside, creating a makeshift plate.

Leslie observes Bobby as he starts separating the food, and licking his fingers. Leslie notices Bobby's pants down, midway. Exposing, no underwear, just his bare naked ass.

Bobby removes two cans of soda from one of the bags, wipes the tops off with the bottom of his shirt, pops the top, and places a can in front of Leslie and in front of himself.

He plops down on the blanket and they both start to eat, facing the lake.

LESLIE

Thank you so much for lunch. This is very nice.

BOBBY

Welcome.

45 MINUTES LATER...

Leslie had tried numerous times to spark a conversation, but Bobby has been preoccupied. He's sitting straight, legs stretched out, seemingly very busy pressing buttons on his phone, while it rests upon his belly.

LESLIE

Are you okay?

BOBBY

Yeah, why you ask that?

LESLIE

Oh, well, nothing... What're you up to?

BOBBY

Playing a game.

Leslie looks at Bobby incredulously then out at the ocean, then back at Bobby. Bobby is so engulfed in his game that he does not notice.

Leslie watches Bobby for half a minute longer, before she breaks the silence.

LESLIE

Hey...I better get home.

The sun is going down and the
mosquitos are coming out with a
vengeance.

Leslie stands then swats a mosquito that tries to fly in her mouth. And then she smacks a mosquito on her shin. Leslie wipes her leg where the mosquito bit her before it was killed by her flying hand.

Bobby stands, bends over to grab the garbage leftover from lunch, and walks towards a neighboring trash can.

Bobby waves the back of his pants.

Leslie stops folding the blanket and her left hand slowly covers her nose and mouth.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Leslie is sitting at her vanity, wrapped in a towel.

She is rubbing alcohol on the red spots where the mosquitoes tasted her.

Ding!

Leslie grabs her phone. A CHYRON appears above her head. She reads a message from Bobby:

Bobby: Hey you... You looked amazing! Let's do it again...

Leslie: Thanks. You as well. Do what exactly?

Bobby: Sit, eat, and enjoy each other's company.

Leslie: Sure. But, next time, let's do it virtually.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Check Please!

INT. LOCAL MALL - AFTERNOON (TWO WEEKS LATER)

Leslie is leaving a perfume store carrying a bag filled with lotion and perfume. As she turns the corner towards her favorite clothing store, she sees Jamal. Jamal is a stocky, dark-skinned male, with short neatly cut jet black hair. He is in his early 40's and is 5'9".

He's wearing white pants, a white button-down shirt, white shoes. Leslie when she sees him, he smiles at her.

JAMAL

Look at you, looking stunning!

LESLIE

(blushing)

Hey, Jamal!

They hug briefly but intensely.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

You know you a trip!

JAMAL

Stop it, you know you like it.

Leslie blushes hard.

LESLIE

Have you seen my sister and Dan?

JAMAL

Of course, I have. I must see my bro
and favorite soon-to-be sister-in-law.

Leslie giggles and shakes her head.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

Are you still with what's his name?

LESLIE

Who, Kane?

Jamal shakes his head yes,

LESLIE (CONT'D)

No, we're divorced now.

JAMAL

(Placing his hands together in a
praying position and whispers
loud enough for Leslie to hear)

Thank you, Lord.

Leslie is laughing loud.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

I'm in town to stay. Take my number.
Let's meet up.

LESLIE
Okay! I'd like that.

Jamal pulls Leslie's right hand up to his lips and plants a kiss on it.

JAMAL
Goodnight, Madame.

Jamal turns and walks away. Leslie smiles and watches him as he walks away until he's out of view.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Leslie is busy working in her home office. She's typing notes and drinking coffee. Her ringtone, classical music, is playing. She sees the name, "Jamal". She accepts the call.

LESLIE
(sounding as sweet as possible)
Good morning.

JAMAL
Good morning! How're you?

LESLIE
I'm good. Just doing a little work.
Hoping this coffee does its job.

JAMAL
Oh yeah? Decaf?

LESLIE
Of course not. I must have
caffeinated. Otherwise, I'd be no
good. Liable to fall asleep.

JAMAL
You be careful with that caffeine.
It's no joke, trust me. It's like a
drug.

LESLIE
I keep hearing that. But, it's not
like I have several cups a day. I just
have one, in the morning to get my day
started. That's it.

JAMAL
I get it. I'm saying just be careful.
I don't wanna see you on the corner
(MORE)

JAMAL (CONT'D)
somewhere, foaming at the mouth,
asking for a fix of caffeine. I don't
want to grab your head and push it
into my chest and scream, "NOOOOOOOO!"
Like, Wesley Snipes did in Jungle
Fever, that's all.

Leslie laughs hysterically.

LESLIE
Something is seriously wrong with you!

JAMAL
Maybe...just maybe... But, hey, I
care. I mean, you can't even drink a
quarter of a wine cooler. You don't
need any addictions.

LESLIE
No one needs any addictions. I got it
under control.

JAMAL
Mmmhmm...that's what they all say
until-

LESLIE
(Leslie cuts Jamal off)
Jamal!

JAMAL
Okay, okay! Do you have any plans this
Saturday?

LESLIE
No, not at the moment.

JAMAL
Well, if you don't mind, can you leave
several moments free?

LESLIE
Huh?

JAMAL
Can I take you out to dinner?

LESLIE
Sure.

JAMAL

Would you like to meet me at LeMarcs?
At six?

LESLIE

LeMarcs? The new restaurant on the
west side? Yes, I've always wanted to
go there. And six is great.

JAMAL

Cool! I'll meet you at LeMarcs at six.

LESLIE

Yes, meet you there at six. Have a
good day.

JAMAL

You as well.

Leslie and Jamal disconnected the call.

INT. LESLIE'S CAR - EVENING

Leslie is in the LeMarcs parking lot. She pulls into a free spot, puts the car in park, and unlatches her seatbelt. She then turns off the engine, places her keys and phone inside her clutch.

Leslie then exits her car and walks towards the entrance of the restaurant. Once inside, Leslie approaches the hostess.

A chubby Caucasian woman, with brown hair, dressed in a tuxedo with a red tie. She appears to be in her late 20's, 5'5", cherry red lipstick, and a huge red circle on each cheek. Her name tag says, "Peggy".

PEGGY

Welcome to Lemarcs! Dine-in or carry
out?

LESLIE

I'm here to meet someone. Jamal
Gentry?

Peggy looks at a sheet, scrolling down with her right index finger.

PEGGY

I don't see a Jamal Gentry. Does he
have a reservation?

LESLIE

I'm not sure.

She pauses and glances to her right and left at the people seated in the restaurant.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Thank you so much for looking.

PEGGY

No problem! Come again.

Leslie leaves the restaurant and looks at the time on her phone. It is currently 6:15 pm. She quickly glances around before entering her car. A CHYRON appears above her head. She sends Jamal a text:

Leslie: I'm at LeMarcs.

FIVE MINUTES LATER...

Leslie pulls out her phone, sending out another text.

Leslie: Are we still on?

Leslie waits another few minutes before putting the key into the ignition and starting the car. Classical music begins to play from her phone. She answers.

LESLIE

(sounding sweet, yet agitated)

Hello?

JAMAL (V.O.)

My bad, man. I got caught up working.

LESLIE

Oh...

JAMAL (V.O.)

But, please don't leave. I'll be there in thirty minutes. Please stay.

LESLIE

(sighing)

Okay.

Leslie looks at the time in her car: 6:23 P.M.

40 MINUTES LATER...

Leslie sees a black Nissan Altima pulling up to one of the parking spaces about four spots from her.

Jamal exits the car and walks a few steps towards Leslie's car. Leslie notices Jamal and exits.

EXT. LEMARCS - PARKING LOT - DAY

Leslie exits. Jamal greets her.

JAMAL
Hey, how're you?

LESLIE
(giving a slight smile)
I'm fine and you?

JAMAL
Good, good. Just got caught up in a family emergency.

Leslie stares at Jamal with a curious look on her face.

Jamal and Leslie walk towards LeMarcs. Once they arrive at the entrance, Jamal opens the door for Leslie

INT. LEMARCS RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Leslie and Jamal approach the host booth where Peggy is patiently waiting.

PEGGY
Welcome to Lemarcs! Dine-in or carry out?

JAMAL
Dine-in.

Jamal and Leslie followed Peggy to a booth near a window.

After sitting across from each other, Peggy placed a menu in front of both of them, smiled, and walked away.

Within a few seconds, a Caucasian, much taller, thinner, and older-looking woman than Peggy walked up. She is wearing an apron, carrying a white pad and pen. Her name tag reads, "Brenda".

BRENDA

How y'all doing this evening? My name is Brenda, I'll be your waitress this evening. What can I get for you?

JAMAL

You can get me some damn answers. I thought this was an upscale restaurant.

Leslie and Brenda both looked at Jamal in disbelief.

BRENDA

(batting her eyes and holding her chest in shock)

Well, I'm sorry...we, are more exclusive on Saturdays and Sundays.

JAMAL

(raising an eyebrow)

Exclusive?

BRENDA

Upscale and having to make reservations instead of walk-ins.

Jamal and Brenda eyed each other. Neither one looking away. There was an awkward silence until Leslie spoke.

LESLIE

Thank you, Brenda. I appreciate you coming over. May I get a water, with extra ice?

BRENDA

(smiling)

Yes, of course! And for you sir?

Brenda faces Jamal.

JAMAL

(looking in his menu)

Let me get the banging double mushroom with swiss burger with bacon, hold the onions please, fries, and a coke.

Jamal glances at Leslie and Brenda; who both appeared confused.

JAMAL (CONT'D)
(shrugging)
May as well go ahead and order.

LESLIE
That was quick. Just a quick
minute...my apologies, Brenda.

BRENDA
Don't worry, take your time.

JAMAL
While she's taking her time, I'll be
right back.

Jamal got up and went around the corner where the restrooms
are. While he was away, Leslie placed her order.

ALMOST 15 MINUTES LATER...

Jamal is just now returning to the table.

LESLIE
Are you okay?

JAMAL
Yeah, my apologies.

Brenda appeared with platters of food on a folding miniature
table with drinks within a matter of seconds.

Jamal immediately slid from his seat and scurried in the
direction of the restrooms. Leaving Leslie and Brenda
watching confused.

10 MINUTES LATER...

Jamal returns to the table where Leslie is sitting eating her
food very slowly.

Leslie puts her fork down and looks at Jamal.

LESLIE
What is going on?

JAMAL
What do you mean?

Leslie noticed Jamal's nose was running, he was sniffing,
and his eyes were red.

LESLIE
 (sounding concerned and placing
 her right hand on his)
 Are you sure you're okay?

JAMAL
 (sniffing and rubbing his nose
 with the palm of his hand)
 Yeah! Why do you ask that? You don't
 like your food or something?

Jamal grabbed his burger and took a bite.

JAMAL (CONT'D)
 This shit is cold!

LESLIE
 Well, you've been gone for a while.

Brenda walks up.

BRENDA
 How's everything going? Is there is
 anything I can get for you two?

JAMAL
 Yeah this sh-

Leslie cuts Jamal off.

LESLIE
 Yes, please..ummm... Can you please
 heat this?

Handing Brenda the plate.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
 It got cold while my friend was away.

BRENDA
 (smiling and grabbing the plate)
 Absolutely! I'll be right back.

Leslie turns to face Jamal, but he had his head down,
 seemingly under the table.

LESLIE
 Hey! Are you okay?

JAMAL
 Why'd you keep asking that?

LESLIE
You're acting weird.

JAMAL
I don't like this place.

LESLIE
Well, we're here now, and-

Brenda returns and places the heated plate gently in front of Jamal. Smiles and walks away.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
(whispering)
why didn't say sooner that you didn't
want to come? Instead of having me
here by myself?

JAMAL
By yourself? I'm here with you.

LESLIE
(frowns and cocks her head to the
side)
Seriously?

Jamal put his head down again, seemingly under the table. Leslie puts her head down to see what is under the table but realizes she is unable to see.

Leslie and Jamal lift their heads up almost simultaneously.

JAMAL
(sniffing and hawking)
Jesus, Leslie! Why don't you just eat
your food?

Jamal puts his head back down and Leslie attempts to stand to look over the table. Brenda walks over.

BRENDA
Is everything okay?

JAMAL
(sitting up)
DAMN, BITCH!

Brenda and Leslie glared at Jamal in disbelief.

BRENDA
That's it! It's time for you to leave.

Brenda is facing Jamal and has her arms folded.

LESLIE

Oh my God... Oh my God. I'm so sorry.
May I get a to-go container? And
here...

Leslie places a twenty-dollar bill in Brenda's hand and closes Brenda's hand within her own. Brenda takes a deep breath and walks away. Leslie looks at Jamal and notices powdery crumbs upon the tip of his nose and upper lip.

TWO MINUTES LATER...

Brenda returns with the manager, a tall husky man, and two to-go trays. Brenda hands Leslie two to-go containers.

LESLIE

Thank you.

Leslie starts scooping her food neatly into her container. Jamal reaches across the table, starts dumping his food on top of hers, closes, and grabs the container.

Scoots from behind the table, gestures for Leslie to come on. Leslie scoots from behind the table. Leslie and Brenda both give each other an apologetic look.

Jamal walks Leslie to her car and hands her the container. Leslie unlocks and opens the door. Bends over the driver's seat and places the food on the passenger seat. She leans out and faces an awaiting Jamal.

JAMAL

(laughs a little)
I guess I get no kiss?

Leslie stares at him.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

I guess we're not going out again?

Leslie gives Jamal a slight smile. She comes closer to him and gives him a friendly hug. Leslie turns around on one foot, got into her car, and pulled away.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leslie is in her nightclothes, sitting at her vanity. While talking on the phone to her sister, Simone.

SIMONE

Girl! Why the hell you didn't call me first? I could've told you he was on that shit!

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Creme de la Creme.

INT. MADAM CLARK'S OFFICE - DAY (A WEEK LATER)

Madam Clark sat in her seat, listening to Leslie, who sat on the sofa across from, talk about Jamal and the date from hell.

LESLIE

I don't know what to do. Like, what's wrong with me? I don't understand why I keep finding no good dudes.

MADAM CLARK

Maybe it's not time for you to date. You ever thought about that?

Madam Clark stood from her desk and walked around to the chair placed in front of her desk, but facing Leslie. She took a seat and pushed her glasses off the edge of her nose.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)

In order to find what is meant for you, you must find yourself instead.

Leslie looked at Madam Clark in disbelief.

LESLIE

I know who I am. I'm ready. Maybe I have some film on me.

MADAM CLARK

What do you mean?

LESLIE

I mean maybe I have to change my choices in men. I thought I have, but obviously, I have not.

MADAM CLARK

Well, changing your choices in men definitely has to happen.

LESLIE

I have zero clues as to where I'm
(MORE)

LESLIE (CONT'D)
going wrong.

MADAM CLARK
well, for starters...

The timer went off indicating their session was over.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)
Just a minute.

Madam Clark stood and walked to the timer, turning it off. Leslie stood and walked to Madam Clark. Facing each other, the women held each other hands.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)
I'm here for you. Although I still believe you should take time out to get in tune with yourself. But, if you must date... find someone who matches your future, where you're going. Not your past.

LESLIE
But, I've never dated-

Madam Clark interrupts.

MADAM CLARK
It doesn't matter. You were a different person back then. You are evolving, moving forward. Find someone that is in your future, not your past.

Madam Clark walked to the desk sitting beside the door, opened the drawer, grabbed a notepad, and scribbled on it. Turning around and walking towards Leslie with her hand outstretched, she places the note within Leslie's hand.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)
(smiling)
See you in a week?

LESLIE
(shakes her head in agreement)
Yes.

Leslie walked out of the office and opens the yellow note as she walks. It reads.

MADAM CLARK (V.O)
Find someone who fits your future, not
your past.

INT. MUSEUM IN SAN DIEGO - EVENING (TWO WEEKS LATER)

Leslie walked by herself through the museum observing the abstract art section. There were some sculptures encased in the center of the room. Then there were the paintings high up on the gold-colored walls.

Leslie stopped from painting to painting, appearing to be interested. She turned around from viewing a painting and was met by a flash. Then another. And another.

Leslie holds her hands in front of her face as a shield.

LESLIE
(screaming)
STOP!

THE CAMERAMAN
My apologies. I thought you were a
piece of art?

LESLIE
(forced smile)
I wish, but no, I'm not.

THE CAMERAMAN
That was rhetorical.
(slight laugh)
You look fancy to me.

Leslie blushes and drops her head down for a few seconds.

LESLIE
Merci. Merci Beacoup.

THE CAMERAMAN
Ohhh a French lady!

Leslie looked at the Cameraman confused.

THE CAMERAMAN (CONT'D)
You're welcomed?

LESLIE
(laughing)
Oh!

The Cameraman looked at Leslie confused. Leslie caught his look.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I don't really speak French. Well, I don't speak French at all. It just sounded good to say. I'm sorry I kind of tricked you. My name is Leslie Brown. I'm a writer and a five-time published author.

Leslie extended her right hand to the Cameraman for a handshake.

THE CAMERAMAN

(extending his right hand)

My name is Michael Battle, but everyone calls me Mike. I am a photographer and videographer.

Michael Battle is a black male in his early forties. Medium brown completion, 6' tall, medium build. He wears his hair in a short mohawk, that is naturally curly. He looks more like a model than a cameraman.

MIKE (CONT'D)

And, no, I don't know French either. I just know how to say 'thank you', and 'you're welcomed.

They both laughed. For the next hour, they walked and talked about the paintings. Leslie took more pictures in front of various paintings and art, courtesy of Mike. They exchanged numbers and said their see you later.

INT. ART STUDIO IN BURBANK - MIDDAY - (ALMOST A MONTH LATER)

Leslie enters the art studio to catch Mike's show. She's running about 30 minutes late.

She's still wearing her work clothes. She sees Mike speaking to a few patrons about his work. She approaches Mike and waits until the patrons walk away.

LESLIE

(reaching to hug Mike and kiss him on his cheek)

I'm sorry honey, the meeting ran over and I was stuck in traffic.

MIKE

(stiff-necked and pulling away)

I see how you do me.

Mike walks away to greet other patrons on the other side of the studio. Leslie watches in a distance, before joining the other patrons.

OLD MAN PATRON

You have some decent pieces. Why are they so expensive?

(pointing at a photo of geese upon the wall)

I mean that one is \$750!

MIKE

It's rare. And you see the detail? Do you see the look in their eyes? The raised feathers? I caught parts that people rarely see.

OLD MAN PATRON

What you caught was forced copulation That's a lone female goose and several male geese surrounding her.

MIKE

What?

OLD MAN PATRON

The look that you speak of in her eyes is fear. You see?

(Pointing at the female goose eyes)

Then look at his eyes, his eyes, his eyes...

The patron's finger darts from one male goose eyes to another male goose eyes then another.

OLD MAN PATRON (CONT'D)

They don't look fearful! Wanna know why? They are having a pretty darn good time. They a chugga chugga choo chooing her!

Mike stared at the picture, incredulous.

MIKE

What are you trying to say, sir?

OLD MAN PATRON
I'm saying they are rap-

An old woman patron quickly places her hand over the old man patron's mouth.

OLD WOMAN PATRON
(whispering sternly)
Now you know better than that. Leave
that young man alone dear.

She places her hand on Mike's shoulder as he stares at the photo confusingly.

OLD WOMAN PATRON (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry, sir.

OLD MAN PATRON
Well, I'm not. I didn't say anything
wrong. I was just trying to teach the
poor boy something! I mean, dear, he
has this lewd photo hanging up for all
to see. She's being taken advantage
of. She's probably dead from all that
banging by those geesy assholes. And
now, he's selling a photo of her
attack for all the world to see. And
then for \$750! No wonder why it's
still sitting here! Look at the tag...
(pointing at the label under the
photo.)
It's been here since September, uh,
2019. No wonder why no one's bought
it. They didn't have the heart to tell
the poor fella...

OLD WOMAN PATRON
Just let it go. Let's just leave.

OLD MAN PATRON
What if it was a photo of our Sally?
Being forced into copulation and left
mangled? And whether she lives or
dies, some dude took photos and placed
them on the wall for others to see-buy
for almost a grand?

The old woman patron turned to look at Mike with the most
disgusted look he's ever seen.

The rest of the patrons start talking amongst each other, pointing at the photos and then glancing around at the other photos within view from where they stood.

MIKE

I knew all along what it was. But, what was I to do? Get into the lake and save the poor darling?

(shrugging his shoulders)

I. Am. A. Photographer. I take all types of photos. I capture life.

OLD WOMAN PATRON

Oh yeah?! Well, I can't wait to see photos of poor girls who have been captured and forced into the sex trade!

Everyone in the group talking and protesting his art in agreement.

MIKE

I wouldn't dare! And I must add the photo you see here was placed on the floor about a week ago. I kept it in my bedroom until I was ready to part with it.

In unison, the patrons gave Mike a stunning look.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Look, my lady here...

Mike walks towards Leslie, placing his arm around her shoulders and bringing her close

MIKE (CONT'D)

...Was strongly considering buying it herself. She is the reason it is on the floor. It inspires her so much that she wanted me to share it with the world. Isn't that right sweetheart?

Mike looks down at Leslie. Leslie looks up at Mike and then at the awaiting patrons. They glared at her.

LESLIE

(stammering)

I...Well, I... I thought uh...

OLD WOMAN PATRON
Inspires you, huh?

Leslie looks at The Old Woman, then the rest of the angry patrons.

Then she looks at Mike's awaiting frowned face. Then back to the Old Woman Patron.

OLD WOMAN PATRON (CONT'D)
You can't be serious?

Leslie stood there, all eyes on her, seemingly frozen.

OLD WOMAN PATRON (CONT'D)
(grabbing the arm of the Old Man Patron)
Let's go, honey!

OLD MAN PATRON
Told ya!

ANOTHER FEMALE PATRON
(yelling)
Harlet!

As Leslie walks away.

INT. LESLIE'S CAR - DAY

Leslie is driving Mike home, in complete silence. Mike is angry and antagonizing Leslie.

MIKE
I can't believe you. First, you come late as hell. Then you stand far away as if you don't want to stand next to me...and then, and then, you didn't even defend me! What kind of woman does that? Man! What the fuck did I get myself into?!

Leslie pulled in front of Mike's apartment complex.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Are you coming up?

LESLIE
No, I'll pass. I have some work to do.

MIKE

(humph!)

I'm glad you showed me who you are!

Mike got out of the car, slamming the door behind him. Leslie pulled off like a bat out of hell. Crying all the way home.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Leslie is at her desk typing on her laptop, when she receives a text. A CHYRON pops up over Leslie's head.

Mike: What are you doing?

Leslie: I'm writing.

Mike: We need to talk. In-person.

Leslie: Okay. But, maybe tomorrow. I have so much work to do.

ABOUT TWO HOURS LATER...

Leslie finishes writing and gets into the shower. Afterward, she gets dressed for bed. About an hour later, she gets a text.

Mike:?

Leslie: I'm in bed. I'm tired.

Mike: I know you're mad. We will have our squabbles like any other couple. Come see me.

Leslie: I'm in bed. I'm drained.

Mike: Baby, I need you.

Leslie. Fine. I'm on my way.

INT. MIKE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Mike is sitting on the edge of his pants, in his pajama bottoms, playing a videogame. His back is turned to Leslie. Old school music is playing in the background.

MIKE

(waving over his shoulder)

You can have a seat.

Leslie sits in Mike's recliner watching him play his game. After about 15 minutes, Leslie stands up to leave.

LESLIE

Mike, it's getting late and I'm sleepy. I'm going home.

MIKE

Dang, you can't wait until I'm done with this game?

LESLIE

I came because I thought you wanted to talk.

MIKE

My bad. I thought I could get a game in quick...you came so fast.

Mike shut the game off and faced Leslie.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I know I could be a bit much sometimes...maybe all the time...

Mike becomes silent and stares off into space.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(giggles nervously)

Truth is, I'm in love with you. I love you. I want you so bad.

(shaking his head)

I haven't had sex in a while. I was saving myself for the one. Leslie...I know you're the one.

Leslie stares at Mike in disbelief. Mike stands up and walks towards Leslie who is still sitting in the recliner. He grabs her hands and pulls her up and towards him. Wraps his hands around her lower waist. They kiss intensely. Within minutes, they were in bed, fully undressed having sex.

INT. MIKE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Leslie climbs out of Mike's bed and searches for her clothes with the flashlight from her cellphone. Mike is still asleep. She quickly dresses and shakes Mike.

LESLIE

(whispering)

Mike...Mike.

MIKE

Hmmm...

LESLIE
I'm about to leave.

MIKE
Okay.

LESLIE
Mike, did you hear me?

Silence.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Mike!

MIKE
Yes! What do you want? I said okay.

Mike turns over and goes back to sleep. Leslie leaves his bedroom and shuts the door behind her.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Leslie is laying in bed for a few hours trying to get some rest before she gets up to clock in for work. She is staring out the window from her bed.

LESLIE
(whispers to herself)
Damn...how could I be so stupid? He
didn't even walk me out to my car.

She glances at her cellphone. She realizes there are no missed calls or texts from him. She closes her eyes and falls to sleep.

INT. GROCERY STORE - LATE AFTERNOON (WEEKS LATER)

Leslie is at the grocery store to purchase Mike a frozen pizza.

CASHIER
That'll be \$7.29.

Leslie pulls out the coupon she received from purchasing pizza for Mike a few days ago. She then swipes her member card. Which lowers the price to \$5.17.

Leslie then inserts her credit card into the reader. Once done, the cashier hands her the receipt and bags the pizza. Leslie then heads for the exit.

INT. LESLIE'S CAR - DAY

Leslie puts her car in gear when her phone rings.

LESLIE

Hello?

MIKE

Hey baby, you're on your way?

LESLIE

Yes.

MIKE

Can you stop by the store and grab some film and a new bulb for my camera? I'm low and my freakin' bulb just blew out.

LESLIE

(sigh)

Mike...I'm around the corner from your house. Plus, I'm low on cash.

MIKE

Come on, babe. You know I'm good for it. Just pick it up. I got you when you get back.

LESLIE

Well, I mean, why don't you just come with me? That way you could buy it yourself.

MIKE

You act like you don't trust me, or something.

LESLIE

That's not the case. I'm just low on funds, Mike.

MIKE

Didn't I tell you I was going to pay you? When you get back. I can't go with you because I'm about to get in the shower. Besides, baby, you're already out there...dang...my stroke game must be off.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I thought I be putting it on you real good?

LESLIE

(sigh)

Whatever...

MIKE

Come on baby. Don't be like that! I got you when you return.

LESLIE

But that's what you said last time.

MIKE

There you go! Nevermind! If you're going to give me a hard time, just forget it! I've had a long day as it is. I don't need this shit.

LESLIE

Mike, I'm not trying to make your day harder. I'm just saying I don't have it. But, fine, I'll pick it up.

MIKE

Hey!

LESLIE

Yeah

MIKE

Drop the pizza off first. Daddy is hungry.

Mike and Leslie hung up. Within minutes, Leslie was pulling up in front of Mike's apartment building. Mike met Leslie at the curb and grabbed the pizza from the passenger seat of her car through the passenger window.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Leslie is walking back and forth down the aisle, comparing the prices for bulbs. The lowest price being \$69.74 and the highest is \$119.74. Leslie reads the box of the \$69 bulb. Then she reads the box of the \$119 bulb. Leslie decided to dial Mike.

MIKE

Hello?

LESLIE

Hey...

Leslie hears water running and a slight echo in Mike's background.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

What size bulb do you need?

MIKE

What?

LESLIE

What size, I mean watt, do you need?

MIKE

700 Watt.

Leslie realizes the 700 watt is the one that cost \$119. Sighing, Leslie places the more expensive one in her cart.

LESLIE

Alright.

Leslie tried to hang up quickly before Mike could ask for anything else.

MIKE

Hey baby!

LESLIE

Yes.

MIKE

Grab me a Pepsi, pleeeeeeeese. Daddy's thirsty.

LESLIE

Fine.

Leslie went down another aisle and grabbed some film. Noticing the price, she realized the film was just as expensive, if not more than some of the bulbs. She grabs a box and then stopped at one of the coolers on her way to checkout to grab a Pepsi.

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Mike answers the door, clad in a long bathrobe. There are candles lit, incense burning, and the smell of men's body wash and cologne.

The smell tingled Leslie's nose, gave her a slight headache, and made her stomach turn within all within seconds.

MIKE
(grabbing the bags)
Hey, baby girl.

LESLIE
Hi.

MIKE
Make yourself comfortable. Would you like some pizza?

LESLIE
No, thank you. Maybe just some water?

MIKE
Okay, cool. Water coming right up.

A little over 15 minutes later, Leslie and Mike are cuddled on the futon, watching television. There is a plate with nothing but pizza crust and crumbs upon it. Mike looks over at Leslie.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(grinning)
Hey girl...with yo sexy self.

As Mike bits his bottom lip. Leslie leans in for a kiss.

But Mike gently grabs the back of her head and guides her down to his already waiting dick.

LESLIE
(pulling her head back)
Why can't we kiss? It's always head and sex? Me giving the head.

MIKE
Awww baby don't start this. You gonna ruin the mood. I don't like anything going in my mouth besides food. And you...you do it so good.
(pauses)
You know you like it. And I be breaking my back. Daddy gets you right. You know this.

LESLIE
Baby...I need monogamy.

MIKE
(looking confused)
Monogamy? What's that?

Mike bursts into laughter. Leslie looks at Mike annoyed.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Baby, what do you think we're doing? I
am here...with you. Isn't that
monogamy? You get all my time and
attention.

Leslie blushes.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Now come here...

Leslie places her mouth upon the tip of his penis and starts to perform fellatio. As she's stroking his tool with her mouth, Mike moans intensely.

But, the overwhelming smell from his cologne, body wash, candles, and incense inside the room makes her head swarm. Every time she goes down, she feels like she's ready to hurl. Upon going up, her head spins. Leslie goes up and down a few times.

She tastes the acid from vomit in her mouth. She tries to pull her head up.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Nah, baby, please don't stop. It feels
so goooood. You feel so warm.

Mike pushes her head back down. Leslie is struggling to get up. But, Mike is holding her there.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Don't stop...baby, please don't
stop...

His shaft pushes to the back of Leslie's throat. Her nose burns. Then all of a sudden...

LESLIE
BLAARGH! BLAARGH!

Mike's hand leaves Leslie's head and his arms immediately shoot into the air.

MIKE
(screaming and yelling)
OH MY GOD!!!!!! OH MY GODDD!!!!

Mike quickly raises off the futon and runs left then right, confused as to which way to go. Then he rushes out the bedroom door to the bathroom. Running water is heard along with the bathroom fan.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Oh my god...oh my fucking god...Man!
Damn! I just got out the tub!

Leslie stands up and walks weakly to the bathroom where Mike is.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(disturbed)
Why didn't you tell me to stop? That
you feeling sick or something?

LESLIE
I didn't at first but then it happened
so quickly...and that time I was
trying to raise my head up but you
kept pushing my head back down.

MIKE
For real? Oh my God, man...oh my
God... I just washed up, Leslie! I was
smelling good...fresh! Who wants to do
that all over again?!

LESLIE
I didn't do it on purpose, Mike. I
apologize.

Mike takes off his robe and tosses it in the laundry bin.

MIKE
Damn!

LESLIE
I'm about to leave. I need to get home
and get myself together.

Leslie stares at an angry Mike.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
I need to wash my face.

Mike leaves the bathroom and returns with a washcloth. He hands it to Leslie. He leaves the bathroom, closing the door behind him. Leslie heard Mike through the bathroom door.

MIKE

Boy, boy, boy! Vomit shit done seeped
onto my futon!

Leaving the restroom, Leslie returned to Mike, who is sitting on the futon, which is now covered in towels. She collects her purse, her keys, and slides her feet into her shoes. She stops and stares at Mike, who sitting down, scratching his head.

LESLIE

Mike, I need the money.

MIKE

What money?

LESLIE

The money from the film and the bulb.

Mike rubs his head with his hands. Leslie stares at him.

MIKE

You've got to be kidding me? After you
threw up all over my futon? On me?

LESLIE

Yes, I'm serious as a heart attack. I
spent almost \$200 on your things. I
told you I didn't have it, to begin
with.

Mike walks over to his wallet and looks inside. Then he walks to his pants and pulls the insides of the pocket out. Receipts and lint plummet to the floor.

MIKE

Damn, baby. I don't have it. I thought
I did, but I didn't. I need to stop at
the atm.

LESLIE

Okay, let's go now.

MIKE

Baby, you're sick. And I'm not going
anywhere stinking.

LESLIE

Mike, I don't have time for this! I need my money!

MIKE

Chill out! You act like I'm some sheisty-ass dude! I wouldn't do you like that. Come over tomorrow, I got you. Besides...I can't believe you asking for it and you ruined my shit.

LESLIE

Whatever.

Leslie leaves Mike's bedroom and exits the apartment.

EXT. THE PARK - DAY

Leslie and Mike are walking side by side in the park. Mike is agitated. He's talking to Leslie about a problem he's been having, as Leslie is listening.

MIKE

I swear this dude is taking all my damn clientele!

LESLIE

What do you mean?

MIKE

All my customers are going to him for their pictures and videos. They used to come to me. But, now...

LESLIE

What is he doing differently?

MIKE

(voice trails off)

I don't know...

Mike stops walking and Leslie stops with him. Mike stares at nothing in particular. Mike starts walking, with Leslie walking alongside, trying to keep up with Mike's speed.

MIKE (CONT'D)

With his corny ass! He didn't even want to be a photographer until he saw me doing it.

INT. LESLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Leslie has received several text messages and calls from Mike about the new photographer that is taking all of his work. A CHYRON appears above Leslie's head as she checks the latest text:

Mike: I know what it is. I've finally found out. Baby, pick me up asap. I've got to make a run.

Leslie: I have some work to do. I can't stay long.

Mike: It won't be long. Trust me.

INT. ELECTRONIC STORE - NIGHT

Leslie and Mike enter the electronics store. Leslie follows closely behind Mike as he makes a beeline to the camera section. Mike approaches a salesperson and discusses the best cameras.

Mike and the salesperson walk over to a screen, where the salesperson is showing Mike a clip of a certain camera and all its benefits and tricks. Leslie quickly ducks into the printer and ink aisle to hide.

LATER...

Leslie is in the videogame aisle when she hears a familiar voice behind her.

MIKE

Hey now. Where'd you go?

LESLIE

Just window shopping.

MIKE

Well, I've been looking for you. Come here, let me show you something. I want you to see the camera that I want...

Mike walks in the direction of the camera equipment, on the far left side of the store. Leslie is following slowly behind him.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 (looking from side to side)
 I got's to have it. That mother is
 bad!

Mike sees a salesperson nearby. He stops him to ask a question.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Hey. Do you know where I can find
 Phil? He was showing me some cameras
 and I want my lady to see it before we
 purchase them.

SALESPERSON
 (glancing around)
 I don't have a clue. Wait right here,
 sir, I'll be right back. I think he's
 on the clock for another hour or so.

The salesperson walks away to search for Phil, leaving Mike and Leslie to wait. After a few minutes, the salesperson returns.

SALESPERSON (CONT'D)
 He's with a customer at the moment.
 Are you able to wait a while?

MIKE
 Sure.

LESLIE
 Mike...

MIKE
 Man...dang... My lady has to go. May I
 give you my contact info to give to
 him? Ask him to please contact me.
 Please let him know that I'm very
 interested in purchasing the camera
 and equipment.

SALESPERSON
 I can help you.

MIKE
 Uh...well...he put together such a
 great package for me. And he put a lot
 of time into me. So, I'd rather
 just...

SALESPERSON

I totally get it. Let me take your name and contact information to give to him.

The salesperson removes a pen from his shirt pocket and writes Mike's name and contact info on the back of it.

SALESPERSON (CONT'D)

Alrighty! I'll shoot this over to him right away! Have yourselves a great evening.

LESLIE

You too!

MIKE

You too!

Leslie and Mike exit the store. Leslie walks quickly in front of Mike.

INT. LESLIE'S CAR - EVENING

Leslie is parked outside of Mike's apartment building, about to exit the car, when Mike suddenly appears at the passenger door, knocking on the window, signaling for her to unlock the door. Leslie unlocks the door and Mike gets in.

LESLIE

(looking at Mike confusingly)
What's going on? I thought I was coming up?

MIKE

Nah, baby, we got to get the camera. Now. Before the price goes up.

LESLIE

What do you mean we? Mike...

MIKE

Man, come on. Don't start this shit. I'm in a good mood today. I see promise up ahead. I don't need you nagging. So, come on, let's go.

Leslie turns from Mike and looks straight ahead. She turns around and faces Mike, again.

LESLIE

Mike... I refuse to buy a camera.

MIKE

What do you mean?

LESLIE

I'm not buying a camera.

MIKE

Come on, baby. Come on! I thought you believed in me?

LESLIE

I do, but I don't have it. And you still owe me almost \$200 from the film and the bulb that I bought a couple of weeks ago.

Mike quickly gets out of the car and slams the door. Mike leans against the car door. After a few seconds, Mike gets back into the car.

MIKE

Baby...you know I'm a starving artist. I'm starving! All I need is that camera...and I won't ask for anything else. You know I got you. Besides, it could be an early Christmas or Birthday present. That and some strippers...an orgy...with you too, of course.

Leslie stared at Mike in disbelief.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(hitting the dashboard with his palms)

Come on, man, damn!

Complete awkward silence.

LESLIE

I'm not doing it. And I want my money.

MIKE

So, you had me believe that you had my back?

(shaking his head)

You know I'm struggling and that's all I really want. And you gonna do me like this?

(getting loud)

I know what this is! You are just like
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

everyone else! The naysayers! I'll prove all of you wrong! Watch me handle my business and rise to the top! Like in the Bible, it says I'll make your enemies your footstools!

LESLIE

(yelling)

I don't know what you're talking about! I've been having your back! Every step of the way! I want my money back! I couldn't afford to give it to you!

MIKE

I trusted you. Gave you my body-my temple. And this is how you play me? This how you gonna do, Mike? You're lucky to be fucking with me! And since I've allowed you to be with me...to be fucking you, you gotta make sure I'm straight! You hear me!

(Mike is banging on Leslie's dashboard)

I like the finer things in life! I must have the crem la la la crem!

He places his five fingers together and quickly kisses them.

There is silence. Leslie is frowning at Mike and Mike is looking confused.

LESLIE

(very softly)

It's "Creme de la Creme".

MIKE

Man, fuck you!

Mike gets out of the car and slams the door behind him; storming off. Leslie gets out of the car.

LESLIE

Mike, I need my money back! MIKE!!!

Mike continues to walk away.

INT. MADAM CLARK'S OFFICE - DAY

Madam Clark sits in the chair across from Leslie, who's sitting in her usual place, upon the couch. Madam Clark raises from her chair, unbuttons her collar, and goes to her desk.

She sits down and reaches underneath. She returns to Leslie, and places a bottle of wine and two glasses between the two of them, upon the table. She pulls her chair closer. Madam Clark pulls out a pack of cigarettes, enclosed in a gold metallic pouch.

MADAM CLARK

Want one?

LESLIE

(looking down)

Yeah...

MADAM CLARK

Pick your head up.

Madam Clark lights the cigarettes and pours them both half a glass of wine.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)

You just ran into a user. An opportunist. Don't worry dear. He won't go far. They never go as far as they want.

Leslie sips her wine and takes a long pull off her cigarette.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)

This too shall pass. Don't give out any more money, to anyone.

Madam Clark studies Leslie's face.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)

I still say take the time to date yourself. The money that you gave out, could've gone on you.

LESLIE

You're right.

MADAM CLARK

Of course, I am!

Both ladies laugh.

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)

Look at it this way, it cost you
\$200.00 to get rid of him!

They toasted.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Offensive Rebound

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Leslie is on her exercise bike, pedaling fast, but steady. A rerun of Girlfriends plays on her mounted tv. "Breaking News" flash across the screen interrupting the program.

WOMAN REPORTER

Just a little over an hour ago, a
gunman opens fire on a group of men,

Leslie slows down pedaling.

WOMAN REPORTER (CONT'D)

severely wounding two and killing
three.

The names of the murder victims are...

As the names are read, she stops.

WOMAN REPORTER (CONT'D)

Michael Ellis...Tracy Brown...Robert
Reed...Deangelo McGinnis.

Leslie folds her arms on the bike, lays her head upon them,
and cries.

The phone rings continuously in the background.

INT. SERENITY FUNERAL HOME - AFTERNOON

Leslie stands in front of her cousin's casket, silently
crying. She is amongst many family members and friends. But,
she stands alone.

MAN

(shaking his head)
This is absolutely horrible.

Leslie looks to her immediate right at the man standing next to her. His head was down and he had a lonely tear resting upon his left cheek.

LESLIE

Yes, it is.

(nodding in agreement)

What a cruel world we live in.

MAN

I agree.

LESLIE

Friend?

MAN

Something like that. Brother of one of the guys that were wounded.

LESLIE

Oh.

Leslie turns her head away from the man forward stares at her cousin's lifeless body.

MAN

I'm sorry.

Leslie nods her head. The man places his left hand on Leslie's back.

MAN (CONT'D)

My name is Martin.

They shake hands. Martin is an African American man, with a dark brown complexion. He's 6 feet tall, stocky, but semi muscular, with long thick dreads down his back.

LESLIE

(crying)

My name is Leslie. I'm...I was his cousin.

MARTIN

Hey...it's okay. You are his cousin. Always.

(sadly looking at her)

Will you be okay?

LESLIE

I hope so. I can't imagine life

(MORE)

LESLIE (CONT'D)
without him. He was more like a
brother to me.

MARTIN
(shaking his head)
Oh no...

LESLIE
But, I will...be okay. I have to. I
have no choice.

Martin watches her.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
(looking Martin in the eyes)
Seriously...I will be...I am okay.

MARTIN
Okay. But, if it's okay, May we keep
in touch? I'd love to check on you. As
a friend.

LESLIE
(a slight smile forms on her lips)
I'd like that.

They exchange numbers. Stand together for a few short minutes
before Martin excuses himself.

Leslie stands alone for a while more. People are leaving
little by little. Then it's Leslie and her cousin alone.

INT. LESLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Leslie is at her computer typing when classical music starts
to play. She picks up her phone and sees the name, "Martin".

LESLIE
Hello?

MARTIN
Hello.

LESLIE
Ummm

MARTIN
Please don't tell me you forgot who I
was.

LESLIE

Uhhh...

MARTIN

The guy you met at your cousin's service?

LESLIE

Oh! Martin! My apologies! Well...

MARTIN

No apologies...I mean, it has been a few months.

LESLIE

Yeah, it has.

MARTIN

I didn't want to intrude. And I wanted to give you time.

LESLIE

Thank you.

MARTIN

How have you been?

LESLIE

Meh...so so. I have my good days and my bad days.

MARTIN

I understand totally.

LESLIE

How is your brother?

MARTIN

He's alright. He's receiving physical therapy. And seeing a mental therapist. He's traumatized. And he's suffering from depression.

LESLIE

Ohhh...I'm sorry.

MARTIN

No, I'm sorry.

Short awkward silence.

LESLIE

So, how was your day?

MARTIN

It was great. I rode my bike, took my son to pick up his newest Chinese Fighting Fish, uh...stayed away from swine. How was your day?

LESLIE

(lol)

That sounds like an excellent day. I don't know how I'd top that. But, lessee...I meditated at the lake for a full 15 minutes. No interruptions. Didn't doze off. I had only one latte. I took my son driving. We're still alive. No red meat! Easy peasy!

Leslie and Martin share a laugh.

They talked and even video chatted every night for about two weeks straight.

EXT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - LATE MORNING

Leslie is walking her dog, Moe. Whose an English bulldog is pulling Leslie down the sidewalk. when her phone starts to ring. She looks at the screen and sees Martin. She instantly smiles.

LESLIE

Good morning!

MARTIN

Good morning! How're you?

LESLIE

I'm great. Enjoying the morning air. Walking Moe.

MARTIN

Ohhh... are you sure you're walking Moe, or is Moe walking you?

LESLIE

Hahaha...

(laughing dryly)

Oh, shoot...

Leslie becomes entangled in Moe's leash.

MARTIN
What's going on? Are you okay?

LESLIE
Uh, yeah...

MARTIN
(Laughing)
No, you're not!

LESLIE
(talking to Moe)
Stop!

MARTIN
Hey...

LESLIE
(Panting)
Hey...

MARTIN
Should I give you two some alone time?

LESLIE
Still with the jokes, huh?
(giggling)
I'm going to take him in the house.

Leslie picks up the pup and starts to walk.

MARTIN
Hay...

LESLIE
Bee...

MARTIN
Do you have any plans this Friday?
About 6 pm?

LESLIE
Not at the moment. Why do you ask?

Leslie stops in midstride.

MARTIN
Well, the Clippers are playing the
Hawks. Would you like to go?

LESLIE
Watch basketball with you?

MARTIN
Not just watch basketball. But
actually, go see it in person. I have
two tickets.

LESLIE
Cool! I have never been to a
basketball game before, only baseball.

MARTIN
So, is that a yes?

LESLIE
Yes! I'd love to.

MARTIN
Cool. Call me tonight.

LESLIE
Okay.

EXT. JOUN NOLEN PARK - EVENING

Leslie pulls into the parking lot by the lake. Martin gets out of his car and walks towards the driver's side of Leslie's car and waits for her to open the door. Leslie steps out and they hug.

MARTIN
(smiling)
You look beautiful!

LESLIE
Oh, this?
(looking down at her clothes)
It's just a Clipper's jersey.

MARTIN
(laughing)
Exactly!

LESLIE
(shaking her head and smiling)
You're so silly. So, you're ready?
Don't drive too fast, I may not be
able to keep up.

MARTIN

I was hoping you'd hop in my car and we ride together.

LESLIE

Okay, well, follow me back to my apartment so I can park.

MARTIN

Your car would be fine here. Just lock your doors.

Leslie glanced around suspiciously.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Come on!

(waving his hand inward)

You'd be fine.

LESLIE

I'm not worried about me. I'm worried about Betsy.

MARTIN

Betsy?

Leslie nods at her car.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Oh, your car! Betsy would be fine. Trust me.

Glancing around once more, Leslie walked to the passenger side of Martin's car. Martin opens the door, and on the passenger's seat is a box of girl scout cookies, a bottle of wine, and a bouquet of flowers.

Leslie places her hands over her mouth.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

You said you liked Thin Mints.

LESLIE

(blushes)

Th...thank you.

MARTIN

You're most welcomed. All set?

LESLIE

Yes!

Leslie picks up the items, sits down, buckles herself in as Martin closes the door.

INT. MARTIN'S CAR - DAY

Martin is driving and searching for a station.

MARTIN

You know, all that talking we've been doing, I've never asked you what genre of music you're into.

LESLIE

I like R&B, Neo-Soul, maybe some pop and a little rap...it depends.

MARTIN

Okay. I got something for you. I have a nice little playlist.

Martin turns on his music and turns up the volume. Familiar singers, singing different songs belt through the car.

LESLIE

That's Kehlani? I love her! I've never heard this before.

Song after song played, different artists.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I'm really digging your list.

Leslie looks at Martin smiling. Suddenly she stops. Martin has a very serious look on his face.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Is everything okay?

MARTIN

Yeah...well, this song reminds me of my ex.

Leslie bats her eyes.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

As a matter of fact, all the songs do. Every last one.

Leslie turns her head from Martin and stares straight ahead at the road in front of the vehicle. There was silence for some time, then...

MARTIN (CONT'D)
 Man...if only I could go back.

LESLIE
 Then why don't you?

MARTIN
 I messed up with her. I didn't pay her any attention. Took her for granted. Didn't even care when she left. Until she moved on. Then, I realized what I had lost.

Leslie's hands loosened their grip on the gifts Martin gave her that was now resting in her lap.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
 (bangs the dashboard)
 DAMN! MY BABY!

Leslie jerks causing the wine bottle to tumble off her lap to her feet. Instead of picking it up, she gently kicks it to the side. Martin starts wailing. Leslie gives him the side-eye.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
 Oh shit!
 (turning the radio up)

Aaron Hall's, "I Miss You", belts from the radio.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
 (singing loudly and crying)

We used to talk, and laugh all night girl! What happened to those days? Did they all just fade away?

LESLIE
 Martin?

MARTIN
 (singing loudly and crying)
 Holding you in my arms...
 (banging on the steering wheel)
 Oh my God! Oh, My Fuck! God!!!!

LESLIE
 (shouting over the music)
 Martin!

MARTIN
 Wait!
 (turns the volume up higher)
 (MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Then you said you had to goWhat's
wrong? Debra!!!! I need to know!

LESLIE
(shouting louder)
MARTIN!!!!!!!!!!!!

Martin turns off the radio and sits back. Tears stains upon his face. Leslie stares at him.

MARTIN
I'm sorry. I had to get that out.

Leslie sighs and looks out the passenger window. At this point, all the items are on the floor.

INT. STAPLES STADIUM - EVENING

Martin and Leslie are sitting in the stands watching the Clippers play the Hawks. The players run up and down the court. The Hawks have possession of the ball but loses it to the Clippers. Clippers fans go wild.

MARTIN
(standing up and clapping)
YES! YES! YES!

THE ANNOUNCER
(over the loudspeaker)
WOAH!!! OFFENSIVE REBOUND!!

Martin cuts her with his eyes. Leslie slides down in her seat.

INT. MARTIN'S CAR - NIGHT

Martin is driving. Leslie has gathered everything off of the floor and it is sitting in her lap. She is staring out the passenger window.

MARTIN
How're you?

LESLIE
Huh?

MARTIN
How are you?

LESLIE
I'm alright.

MARTIN
Did you even watch the game?

LESLIE
Yes, I did. There was an offensive rebound.

MARTIN
I'm sorry. But, look...

Leslie looks at Martin.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Do you see what she made me do?!

He let go of the steering and raised up his sleeve showing old cuts across his left wrist. The car swerved a little.

LESLIE
Martin, please keep your hands on the steering wheel, Be careful, I don't wanna die.

MARTIN
I don't want to either. I don't think.

Martin turns on his playlist, turns the volume up, then sings and cries for the entire ride back to Leslie's car.

EXT. JOHN NOLEN PARK - NIGHT

Martin parks beside Leslie's car. Leslie exits the car and leaves the items on the seat.

MARTIN
Hey, you forgot something.

LESLIE
(fake smile)
Oh! My bad. I forgot.
(picking up the wine, cookies, and flowers)
Thank you for the gifts.

MARTIN
(firmly)
They are not gifts. They were given to me as a friend! Ms. Offensive Rebound!

LESLIE
What? What was that for?!

MARTIN
(angrily)
I got these tickets to take you out on a nice date and you didn't even watch the game. Damn, did you even enjoy it?

LESLIE
(calm, yet firm)
No. No, I didn't enjoy it.

MARTIN
Say no more!

LESLIE
(yelling)
You are an ass! You changed up on me. You were not the same as you have been! Then we get to the stadium, you didn't even open my door and you walked ahead of me!

MARTIN
Is something wrong with your hands?!
Huh?! Is something wrong?!

LESLIE
(throwing her hands up)
I digress! Give it to Debra or Aaron Hall! Hell, pass it out amongst the Clippers!

Leslie quickly walks back to her car, enters, and slams her door. She locks it, buckles up, and pulls off.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leslie opens the front door, dropping her jacket and purse on the floor. She makes a run for the restroom, pulls up the dress, and sits on the toilet. As she pees, she bends over and cries.

LESLIE
(sobbing)
I'M TIRED!!!!

Moe runs into the bathroom and licks Leslie's ankles. She cleans herself up and walks into the kitchen. Pours herself a glass of wine. And goes into her bedroom. Her phone goes off.

She sees it's a message with a link from Martin. She presses the link and

AARON HALL (V.O)
 (singing and music)
 I MISS YOUUUU! I'M TALKING TO YOU
 BAAABAY! I MISS YOUUU!!!

LESLIE
 Ahhh!

Leslie jumps and her glass of wine falls upon the floor. Staining her white carpet a beet red color. Suddenly Moe runs to the wine stain and starts licking it.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
 No!
 (clapping)
 No! Moe, getttt!
 (clapping)
 Stop it, dammit!

Martin: I thought you'd enjoy the playlist. And I hope you made it home safely. Friends?

Leslie grabs a rag and some cleaner and is on her hands and knees, carefully scrubbing the carpet. Moe is watching Leslie across the room. Moe sniffs the carpet and walks a few steps. Leslie watches him.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
 (shaking her head)
 Unh, Unh... you better not!

MOE
 (stoops)
 FRAAAP! POOT!

Liquid dog poop squirts out onto Leslie's carpet

LESLIE
 Oh no! MOE!

MOE
 ARF!

EXT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - MORNING

Leslie is outside walking Moe. Moe is still pooping liquid Poop. Leslie sprays the grass with spray each time he goes. Leslie's phone rings.

She looks at the screen and sees Martin. She declines the call and places her phone in the pocket of her cardigan. Leslie's phone goes off again, but this time it is a text message.

Martin: Good morning.

Leslie rolls her eyes and places the phone back into her pocket.

LESLIE

Moe! Moe, don't eat that!

Moe is gnawing at something he found on the ground. Leslie sprays Moe with the spray bottle several times. Moe yelps.

INT. LESLIE'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Leslie is driving when she receives a call from Martin. She accepts his call and speaks to him through the car speaker.

LESLIE

Leslie Brown.

MARTIN

hmmm... Formal, aren't we?

LESLIE

Martin, what is it that you need?

MARTIN

Have I ever asked for anything?

LESLIE

Wha-...look I don't have time for this.

MARTIN

Don't hang up, don't hang up!

LESLIE

What do you want, Martin?

MARTIN

I wanted to apologize for last night. I really screwed things up, huh?

LESLIE

Yeah, well...

MARTIN

What can I do to make it up to you?

LESLIE

I don't want anything.

MARTIN

Can we at least be friends?

LESLIE

Sure.

For the next couple of weeks, Martin sent random texts with heart emojis. Saying hello. Even asking for sex. None of which Leslie responded to.

INT. LESLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Leslie is at her desk typing when she receives a notification that a message has been sent to her social media. She opens the message and sees the hundredth penis picture this month.

Disgusted, she blocks the perv and changes her relationship status from "single" to "in a relationship".

LESLIE

That should do it!

Leslie slams the laptop shut.

EXT. MICHAELANGELO'S PIZZARIA - AFTERNOON

Leslie and Brandy sat at the tables outside, on the patio of Michaelangelo's Pizzeria, eating lunch.

LESLIE

If I get one more dick pic, I'm going to scream!

BRANDY

(laughing)

Girl...it's not like dick's are cute anyway. I don't why they send them.

LESLIE

Right! I guess to show what they're working with.

BRANDY

Yeah, but with them sending them like that, it's like he's trying to give

(MORE)

BRANDY (CONT'D)
you something.

LESLIE
Yeah, dick!

Both of them start laughing.

BRANDY
Try an STD! Community dick! All that!

They start laughing again.

A FAMILIAR VOICE
What's so funny?

BRANDY
What?

LESLIE
What... Hey, Martin.

MARTIN
Hay is for horses

BRANDY
Martin? OH!

LESLIE
Okaaay...so, what's up with you?

MARTIN
So...you're in a relationship?

LESLIE
A relationship? No, but if I was, it's none of your business. I don't owe you anything.

MARTIN
You don't?

LESLIE
(stating matter of fact)
No, I don't.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
And where did you get that? As if I really care, but...

MARTIN

Facebook...

LESLIE

I only did that because...whatever. I don't owe you anything.

BRANDY

I'm going to make a phone call. Be right back.

Brandy stands up, grabs her purse, and leaves the table.

MARTIN

It matters because I don't want to be around a woman that has a man.

LESLIE

I didn't have a man then. And I don't plan on being out with you anymore.

MARTIN

Really? That's shitty.

LESLIE

I can't believe you're surprised! That night was horrible! You basically traumatized me!

MARTIN

I traumatized you?! Seriously?! I was the one crying, showing you my scars...I opened up to you. And I shared my music, wined and dined you... How could...? Nevermind. I get it. You are a narcissist!

LESLIE

(incredulously)

What?! I'm a narcissist? Are you serious? Please tell me you're joking?

MARTIN

You need some serious help, Leslie. For real!

Leslie started laughing.

LESLIE

Good one! That's a real good one! I must be on Candid Camera!

LESLIE (CONT'D)
(glancing around)
HEY...YOU CAN COME OUT NOW!

MARTIN
Why are being so loud?

LESLIE
Don't tell me how to be when you
crashed my lunch date. Besides, we've
been loud the entire time. So, what's
the problem?

As Leslie shrugs her shoulders.

MARTIN
The problem is, after our date, we
were still talking.

LESLIE
We were texting. And we're only
friends.

MARTIN
Yeah, but I don't fool with women that
have men.

LESLIE
That doesn't make sense.

MARTIN
Well, it does to me. And you should've
told me.

Martin gets up from the table and walks away. Brandy walks
past him and sits down in her original seat.

BRANDY
Is everything okay?

LESLIE
(shaking her head)
I need to take a spiritual bath or
something.

Brandy laughs.

INT. MADAM CLARK'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Leslie is in Madam Clark's office, sitting on the sofa. Not
saying anything. There is silence for a while. Until...

MADAM CLARK

Are you okay?

LESLIE

No. NO, I'm not okay. I'm pissed off.
I'm hurt.

MADAM CLARK

Would you like a tissue?

LESLIE

No, thank you. I'm so hurt that I
cannot cry. I'm fresh out of tears. I
don't understand.

MADAM CLARK

What don't you understand?

LESLIE

How... How come everyone is doing so
good in their relationships? I'm the
only one with all the crazies. I mean,
damn! Everyone is lucky in love. All
hugged and happy. Meanwhile, I'm
alone! I'm tired!

MADAM CLARK

Who's everyone? You don't even know
everyone.

LESLIE

You know what I mean! Like, my
husband, my bad, EX husband. He's
moved on so fast. Like I never
mattered. I was never there. He
actually found the broad while we were
together!

Leslie throws her arms in the air.

MADAM CLARK

(speaking dryly)

Yeah... I hear ya... You're a forty-
year-old reject, that's all!

Leslie looks at Madam Clark stunned.

LESLIE

What?

MADAM CLARK

I mean, someone has to be the reject.
In this case, it's you.

Leslie lays back on the sofa holding her stomach, laughing hysterically.

LESLIE

(wiping her eyes)

Like, who says that?! You are my therapist!

MADAM CLARK

What? What I do?

LESLIE

I mean...you're my therapist!

MADAM CLARK

Oh quit. I told you to hold off. But, noooo, I must find my boaz! Look here...

(leaning forward in her chair)

It's going to be this way until you either (A) succumb to the bs and pretend to be happy, or you (B) learn yourself and learn to love yourself.

(standing up and walking over to Leslie.)

You are an attractive girl.

(placing her hand underneath Leslie's chin and looking her squarely in the eyes)

Of course, you would find someone. But, you must find yourself first. And not a second sooner.

(walking over to her seat and sitting back down)

Then, you will find all types of guys that fit you. Because if you keep going the way that you are...you're bound to get worn out and give up just out of not wanting to be alone. Therefore, you either wait and work on yourself. Or keep running yourself ragged with all those nuts. You can either choose the penthouse

(leaning her right outward to the right)

or the crackhouse.

(leaning her left hand to the left)

(MORE)

MADAM CLARK (CONT'D)

The choice is yours.

INT. LESLIE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Leslie walks in the front door and places her purse down on the end table. Her cellphone goes off, notifying her she has a message on social media.

Opening the message, she sees it's from a doctor in India, that she has been chatting with off and on for the past week.

She reads:

Doctor: Baby. I miss you so much. Let's get married. Please come to me now!

Below is a picture of her own mother. She quickly texts back.

Leslie: That is NOT me. That is my mother. We don't look that much alike! And, she has a beauty mark over the left side of her lip.

Doctor: That's your mother? She's not old.

Leslie quickly blocks him. She puts her phone face down. Grabs Moe and places him in his cage. She goes to the wine cabinet, pours herself a glass of wine. And then turns on the music player. Otis Redding sings from the speaker...

OTIS REDDING

(singing)

Oh she may be weary.

Them young girls they do get wearied

Wearing that same old shaggy dress,
yeah, yeah

But when she gets weary

Try a little tenderness,

yeah, yeah

Leslie sits her glass down and slips off her shoes...starts pulling down her skirt

OTIS REDDING (CONT'D)

(singing)

Just anticipating

OTIS REDDING (CONT'D)

The thing that you'll
 never, never, never, never possess,
 yeah, yeah
 But while she's there waiting
 Without them try a little tenderness
 That's all you got to do

She slips her shirt over her head and tosses it across the room, then her bra and panties come off. She removes the band from her hair and shakes her hair free from the bun.

OTIS REDDING (CONT'D)

You got to know how to love her, man
 Don't be surprised, man
 You got to squeeze her,
 don't tease her, never leave
 You got to hold her, brother,
 something, man
 Try a little tenderness, yeah, yeah,
 yeah

Leslie is massaging the bone structure of her face...her breasts, then the door opens...Leslie's children walk-in..

SON #1

Oh my God!
 This is gross! What the hell are you doing?!

DAUGHTER

Mom...oh, God, mom...my eyes...

SON #2

You didn't get my text? I called three times!

DAUGHTER

Help! I'm dying! I'm dying!

The kids continue to yell and Moe starts to bark.

FADE OUT:

THE END...