

MY DEAR BRUTE - A TRAGEDY

An Original Screenplay

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MY DEAR BRUTE

FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY - METROPOLITAN DETROIT

A chilly day towards the end of winter. DEWAYNE COLTRANE, cool and calm tough guy, dark-brown skin (late twenties), athletic and formidable, is kneeling at the gravesite of his parents. His face indicates complete distress. He addresses his buried parents.

DEWAYNE

Fuck, mom, dad - I wasn't prepared for this. I feel so bad. I feel cursed. You were so perfect to me. And, I was just a disaster in your lives. I feel so sorry. But I've been thinking of how to turn my life around and change for the better. Mom, you always told me that I was special, that I had so much potential. Well I'm about to use the last of my hope to find out. But first thing, I've got to get away from here. I'm thinking I can hunt down plenty of opportunity in California. I wish that you two didn't have to leave for me to come to my senses. But watch me though. I'ma do good. And I'll always think of you. God bless your souls.

He closes his eyes and lowers his head, as if to pray.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

18 months later. Saturday, end of September. Las Cruces, New Mexico. Traveling I10 east to El Paso Int'l Airport.

Dewayne is dressed inconspicuously in all black with dark shades and a fitted cap pulled low over his brow. SIMONE BLANC(24), a French white woman with unmistakable mystique, is seated next to him. At the sound of Simone's soft accent his eyes open, he raises his head, removes his shades, and peers out the window.

SIMONE

(to driver)

Are you a Native American Indian?

THE DRIVER, a middle aged man, glances at her in the rearview mirror, with a grin.

DRIVER
Yes, from Arizona.

SIMONE
Let me guess. I have studied the Indian cultures, somewhat. The Southwest, New Mexico, Arizona - Navajo or Apache?

The driver grins wider.

DRIVER
My ancestry is from the Zunis. They are located here in New Mexico, west of Albuquerque. Though I was born in Arizona. The word, Apache, is a Zuni word however. It translates to enemy, or alien.

SIMONE
Is one allowed to choose the meaning that they would prefer to describe them?

DRIVER
Well, because the Apache were such a dangerous people, it pretty much stood for enemy. But since you are a French woman, you would not be regarded as hostile, and if you elected to be addressed as Apache I imagine you would only be considered alien.

SIMONE
(kidding)
I could be hostile.

DRIVER
I suppose you could. But I have studied French culture too. And in the early stages of Europeans settling these lands, the French were far more likely to be accepting, and uh, compatible. It seems as though they never had a problem with mixing it up.

The driver shifts his stare from Simone to DeWayne. Simone notices that look from the driver and shifts her attention to DeWayne as well. DeWayne appears oblivious to their discussion. Simone sits back and reaches over to hold DeWayne's hand.

SIMONE
(in French)
Are you dreaming?

DeWayne faces her and stares into her eyes. His eyes are watery.

DEWAYNE
I was just thinking about the
people who made my life happy.

Simone acknowledges the emotion in his eyes and all over his face. She raises her hand to caress his cheek. The driver notices this in his mirror. He is pleased by their display. He divides his attention between their interaction and the road. Simone lays her head on DeWayne's shoulder and they both gaze out the window.

DRIVER
So why have you two come to New
Mexico - Las Cruces?

DeWayne looks at the driver in the rear view mirror.

DEWAYNE
We have friends out here.

The staring between DeWayne and the driver persists for about two seconds.

SIMONE
If we could only stay.

The driver allows a moment after Simone's comment. Then he glances back into the mirror to study the sincerity of their chemistry as Simone resumes her position with her head on DeWayne's shoulder and her arms around his waist. The driver is again touched by the apparent presentation of love.

EXT. EL PASO INT'L AIRPORT, DEPARTURES - NIGHT

The taxi pulls along the curb and stops in front of the terminal check-in point. The driver is just about to announce the fare.

DEWAYNE

Hey you can leave the meter
running. I'll need you to take me
back.

The driver affirms. DeWayne places back on his shades and pulls his cap back over his forehead, and exits the vehicle. Simone tells the driver a pleasant farewell. DeWayne arrives at the other side of the car to open the door for Simone.

DRIVER

You two are a wonderful sight.

SIMONE

(smiling)

It was a pleasure.

Simone exits. DeWayne pushes the door shut and faces her.

DEWAYNE

So call me as soon as you get off
the flight in Los Angeles, okay.
And good luck with the last of your
work out there.

SIMONE

How much longer before this is
over?

DEWAYNE

I talk to the people tomorrow, and
it's just a matter of details, and
setting an exact date.

SIMONE

I just want this to all disappear.

DEWAYNE

Hey. You've been so impressive the
way you've stayed composed and
maintained your affairs. You can be
proud. And you definitely make me
feel so much better.

DeWayne pulls her close to embrace.

DEWAYNE

You make my life feel good.

They hold each other strongly. The shades hide the tears building up in DeWayne's eyes. But Simone's flow, slowly but freely. They compose themselves.

SIMONE

So we will not see each other again
until you are in France?

DEWAYNE

Most likely.

SIMONE

(in French)

Then, until then, my love.

Simone reaches out to place her hands on DeWayne's cheeks, in desire of a kiss. They kiss, as if they would never see each other again. Simone finally breaks the contact and takes a step back. She smiles faintly. DeWayne picks up her one piece of luggage and hands it to her. They stare at each other for a moment. DeWayne initiates the good-bye.

DEWAYNE

Go on.

Simone takes another step back. She blows him a kiss, and she turns and walks away.

DeWayne watches her until she is through the doors. He re-enters the cab.

Sade's NO ORDINARY LOVE becomes audible.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

DEWAYNE

I'm going to Sunland Park, near Los
Ranchos Del Rio.

The driver pulls away. DeWayne looks to relocate Simone. Once he is out of range to see her at all, he lays his head back against the seat and sighs. The driver peeks at DeWayne in the mirror. There has not been any change in DeWayne's mood, but his intensity is all the more noticeable with Simone absent. The driver chooses to let him be. DeWayne's eyes close once again. During the drive, DeWayne recalls episodes of his upbringing detailing the kind of rearing he received from his father.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREETS OF HIGHLAND PARK, DETROIT - DAY

It is a cool morning and DeWayne, age 9, is accompanying his FATHER on a jog through some of Detroit's mean streets. The father is a serious looking Black man, aggressive and fit. DeWayne is sweaty and tired. He has fallen behind. DeWayne chooses to stop and relax. The father looks back and notices that DeWayne has stopped and is hunched over, trying to catch his breath. The father turns around to go and retrieve him, and encourages him to continue.

FATHER

Come on boy. Let's go. One day, eventually you gonn' have to run with the big boys. Now, ain't no bigger, badder boy than me in the world. So if you can manage to hang with me at your age right now, then when you get to be a man - life'll be a walk through.

The father grabs DeWayne's shirt at the collar and assists him to continue running.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

The sun is setting, so there are still hints of light, but there are clouds in the sky and a slightly heavy rain is falling. DeWayne, age 11, and his father are standing at a heavy bag suspended from a tree in their backyard. The father is coaching DeWayne at boxing, and denying DeWayne the opportunity to get out of the rain until he punches the bag hard enough.

INT. GYM - DAY

DeWayne, age 13, and his father are in the customized gym inside their now reasonably luxurious home. They are both in great spirits, having a good time working out, joking and laughing. Before they end their session, The father tells DeWayne to show him what he can do on the speed bag, and allows him to demonstrate. The father coaches him on. With pure intensity on his face, the young DeWayne gives an impressive performance on the equipment. DeWayne's father begins to laugh, indicating that he is impressed and proud. He pulls DeWayne back from the equipment, hugging him tightly.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

DeWayne stands on the sidewalk in front of the safehouse and watches as the taxi leaves, until it turns the corner. He makes his way to the front door, rings the doorbell, knocks twice, and rings the doorbell once more. In a matter of seconds the door opens and we see the SAFEHOUSE HOST, a Mexican (late twenties), shaven head, numerous tattoos. The host nods his head to DeWayne and allows him to enter. The host takes a look outside for anything unusual. He shuts the door and directs his attention to DeWayne.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

DeWayne stands with his back to a life-size portrait of Geronimo.

HOST

Javier called dawg. He said that he knows your lady was out here to talk things over with you, but that you don't need to be going out in public.

DEWAYNE

What else did he say?

HOST

He told me to call him when you came back. But I'll wait until after America's Most Wanted. I think this is your lucky night holmes.

The host CACKLES. DeWayne curls his lips in disagreement that that last statement was funny.

HOST

(walking away)

It should be coming on in a few minutes. Let me grab some cerveza, I'll meet you in the room.

INT. LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

DeWayne is situated comfortably in a reclining chair, searching for the channel. Host enters the room holding two bottles of Mexican beer in one hand and a 750ml bottle of tequila & a bucket glass in the other. He sits in another recliner. As America's Most Wanted commences, he opens one beer and has a swallow. He pours a double or triple shot of tequila.

From the television, the VOICE of AMW host John Walsh is heard in the background.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION

INT. FBI OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

JOHN WALSH

(to camera)

... I'm John Walsh. And tonight we're counting on you to help us hunt down a murderous brawler, a scumbag serial rapist, and a coward who shot an elderly man in the back of the head in a senseless carjacking...

INT. LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

The voice on t.v. becomes indistinct.

The host gets out of his seat to go pick up an ashtray with $\frac{3}{4}$ of a joint sitting in it and a lighter.

HOST

(to DeWayne)

Yep. I believe that's you homie - murderous brawler. Congratulations!

DeWayne does not appear appreciative, or honored.

HOST

You know, I think you're like the ninth guy that I've known personally to be on this show. You're like the fourth one who's stayed in this house. That's why we keep that picture of Geronimo at the front door, to summon the spirits of the riders. And hey, if you do get caught, don't worry - Geronimo possessed the spirit to get away too. But, anyway, it's too late for a nice life homeboy - you have to be a rider now.

The host grins devilishly. Then lights his joint. DeWayne stares at him for a moment, with fury in his eyes. Then redirects his attention to the television.

BACK TO T.V. SCREEN

JOHN WALSH

...But first - the LAPD says that he is a vicious brute who used his expert skills in pugilism to assault three young men, killing one of them in the process. His name is DeWayne Johnathan Coltrane, and he is also wanted for questioning as the prime suspect in another murder that same night, that of a man who is said to have been a good friend to DeWayne. In that particular incident, Coltrane is believed to have also killed a trained guard dog with his bare hands. He is considered highly dangerous.

The program commences to show a re-enactment of the circumstances for the crimes to which DeWayne is associated.

BACK TO SAFEHOUSE HOST

The host is sunk quite comfortably in his seat. He is just as intrigued with the program as he is soothed by the intoxicants. He looks to DeWayne.

HOST

You just blanked out that night
huh?

DeWayne resists removing his eyes from the screen. Then he lays back as far as the recliner will go, and his eyes shift to his lap.

DEWAYNE

Man this is too wild. I didn't ask for none of this. I didn't want for nothing like this to happen. Everything was supposed to be good. I fell in love. But, it seems like hell was predetermined for me.

DeWayne looks at the screen and points to it. Then he turns to look at his host.

DEWAYNE

And now, they want people to remember me as a monster.

DeWayne turns back to the television and picks up the remote.

DEWAYNE

I don't even want to see any more
of this.

HOST

No. Hell no. Don't change that
channel. It's policy that we watch
America's Most Wanted, these type
of shows. We like to see how the
agencies function, how they
operate. You gotta study your
opponents dawg.

DeWayne tosses the remote to the host. He glances once more
at the portrayal of his story being shown on television.
He's seen enough. He lays his head on the cushiony back of
the recliner to occupy himself with his own thoughts. He
stares at the ceiling. With a voice barely audible to the
other person in the room, he speaks.

DEWAYNE

My mother and my father know I
ain't a monster. Simone believes
me, that I'm good. I'm a beast. But
I ain't a monster. I was tryin' to
stay away from hell.

DeWayne closes his eyes to recall the actual account of his
arrival in California through to the occurrences that have
brought about his current predicament.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUNSET BLVD. - DAY

A very nice day, end of spring/beginning of summer. People
are everywhere. DeWayne, in a brand new, new-model American
muscle car, is driving west on Sunset. He is dressed in a
simple, but stylish, manner. His clothes are moderately
expensive - nice t-shirt, pants, and shoes. He's wearing a
nice watch, and matching diamond encrusted gold bracelet and
chain; suspended from the chain is a pendant designed in the
image of "Black Jesus." He is in the area of Sunset &
Normandie. He is being directed by navigational system to
Downtown Hollywood.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BLVD. - DAY

DeWayne is still driving west. He is in the area between Gower and Vine. Everyday-people are moving about on the street. DeWayne appears dissatisfied with what he sees. He makes it to the Hollywood & Highland intersection. The crowd has become denser at this point. DeWayne decides to look for parking and stroll around.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD & HIGHLAND CENTER - DAY

DeWayne exits the mall area onto Hollywood Blvd. He takes some time to observe the masses of tourists, the various street performers, and the commonality of the crowd's majority - the evidence of poverty and misfortune among the people young and old. He appears confused by this part of Hollywood. He notices the stars on the Walk of Fame, but does not pay much attention to them. DeWayne stops to observe some performers. At this time an adult Mexican man strolls along with his daughter by his side. This is JAVIER, an LA native with a considerable rep and connections throughout the city's illegitimate circuit. His daughter decides to stop and watch the performers as well. Javier steps back beside DeWayne. The two men glance at each other. Javier eyes DeWayne's jewelry. After watching to make sure that his daughter does not disappear into the crowd, Javier turns to speak to DeWayne.

JAVIER

That's a nice piece and chain you got there.

DeWayne quickly sizes up Javier. Then he takes a look at his own jewelry before responding.

DEWAYNE

Oh, yeah. Thanks for noticing.

Javier does this brief rap recital from the Notorious B.I.G.'s Hypnotize:

JAVIER

So I just - speak my piece - keep
my piece - Cubans with the Jesus
piece...

DeWayne becomes cheerful upon recognizing Javier's rendition.

DEWAYNE

Okay. All right. Good taste
recognize good taste. Hey let me
ask you - what is this?

DeWayne indicates their surroundings.

JAVIER

What d'you mean? What's what? This is Hollywood dog.

DEWAYNE

Yeah I know but, this looks like somebody just dropped a carnival on Woodward Ave.

JAVIER

Woodward, where's that at?

DEWAYNE

That's Detroit. That's where I'm from.

JAVIER

I'm familiar. Things happen in Detroit.

DEWAYNE

Yeah. Of course. But, if this is Hollywood - what's so glamorous about this?

JAVIER

I think I know what you're looking for. You're trying to find the people with that flashy kind of money.

DEWAYNE

I guess - something sort of like that.

JAVIER

Well if you wait 'til the sun goes down then you'll see some players come out around here. But I should probably suggest that you go on Sunset and head west. The farther you go that way, the more they got money to throw around.

DEWAYNE

I'm just looking to have a conversation with some decision makers.

JAVIER

Okay. Good luck with that. But hey homie be careful out here. This is Hollywood - but don't think that these people aren't hustlers. That money, you know - it's a beacon for all the slicksters.

DeWayne acknowledges that last statement and then extends his hand to make their introduction official.

DEWAYNE

I'm DeWayne.

JAVIER

Javier. People call me Javi. Hey look - if you're ever trying to get something, or you need to find something, anything, and you don't seem to have any luck - use this number. Just remember Javier.

Javier hands DeWayne a plain white business card with only a telephone number on it.

JAVIER

Welcome to Los Angeles homeboy.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD - NIGHT

West Hollywood. DeWayne is walking in the area of The House of Blues. Bunches of trendy people, dressed to impress, are out to enjoy the night. DeWayne is walking in the direction of The Standard. In front of The Standard, he notices a group of attractive women about to enter. He decides to go in and have a look around.

INT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - NIGHT

DeWayne locates a seat at the bar. As he approaches the bar top, DeWayne passes a group of three men standing in a circle, engaged in a discussion that is evidently exciting to them. As DeWayne passes by he notices one of the men using his index finger to stroke the groove of the man's back immediately to his left. DeWayne sees this but does not stare. He seizes the first available seat, just a few feet from the three guys. He signals for a bartender. The BARTENDER is a young lady, cordial and pleasant.

BARTENDER

What can I get for ya?

DEWAYNE

You wouldn't happen to know how to make a gangster of love, huh?

BARTENDER

(grinning)

Afraid not.

DEWAYNE

I knew you wouldn't. My mother and father came up with that drink. We used to drink them all the time at home. Call 'em gangsters for short.

BARTENDER

Well if you explain the ingredients to me I'll mix you one.

DEWAYNE

Okay. It's one part cognac and one part red wine. Do an ounce and a half each. Use Hennessy XO and a good merlot. My mother used to put it on ice and add a strawberry, but you don't have to do that.

BARTENDER

Sounds kind of harsh. How's it taste?

DEWAYNE

Like alcohol. But you might like it. The first sip may be kind of rough, but eventually you'll feel a nice, cool kind of drunkenness. Hence, a gangster of love.

BARTENDER

Well I'll have to try it someday. Let me go get that for ya.

As she turns to walk away, the bartender smiles at BRIAN, a popular local with whom she is familiar. Brian, a hip, gay Black man in his mid-twenties, is part of the three man group standing just feet away from DeWayne. By now Brian has stepped over to the bar, after having overheard DeWayne's unusual drink request. DeWayne glances to see who is at his side. Brian quickly initiates a conversation.

BRIAN

Say, what was the name of that
drink you ordered?

DeWayne has another more scrutinizing look at Brian. He heeds Brian's sharp, well-groomed appearance. He suspects Brian's homosexuality, and that it is the essence of Brian's interest towards him. But DeWayne selects to be decent and sociable.

DEWAYNE

It's a gangster.

BRIAN

(grinning)

A gangster?

DEWAYNE

My mother called it the gangster of
love. But to be simple - a
gangster.

BRIAN

Gangster of love - Sounds like it
might interest me.

DEWAYNE

Right.

BRIAN

And the way you ordered it, sounds
like it might be a little pricey
too.

DEWAYNE

Well you know, there are cheaper
ingredients. But I don't mind
paying the cost for what I want.

The bartender returns with DeWayne's drink. Brian turns to his friends to signal that he will be a moment. Then he turns to flirt with the bartender, jokingly, hoping to reveal his popularity to DeWayne. The bartender and Brian have a laugh. Then she leaves to service someone else. Brian returns his attention to DeWayne.

BRIAN

Yeah so, I'll have to try the
gangster someday. It must be good.

DEWAYNE

It is good. But it's not for the
wobbly.

BRIAN
What's that mean?

DEWAYNE
It's just a warning.

Brian appears to show some sort of appreciation for DeWayne, and gets even more relaxed at the bar.

BRIAN
By the way, forgive my manners. We didn't introduce. I'm Brian. Some of my friends call me Brothalicious.

DeWayne reveals one of his mean faces to Brian.

DEWAYNE
They call you what?

Brian shows amusement to DeWayne's reaction.

BRIAN
Oh never mind. And you are?

DEWAYNE
DeWayne, or Mr. Coltrane, depending on...

BRIAN
DeWayne Coltrane - sounds cool enough.

DEWAYNE
Or, since we're in Hollywood, people had a nickname for me and my father. John Wayne Coltrane. I could use that.

BRIAN
Definitely. So what do you do DeWayne?

DEWAYNE
What, for a living? I get money.

BRIAN
Yeah I suppose, but I mean...

DEWAYNE
Look, if there's an idea for getting some real money then I'm interested. If upon further detail

DEWAYNE
my interest doesn't continue then
I'm not interested. But getting
money is my interest.

BRIAN
Sounds like we share some of the
same interests, me and you. So
what, are you into financing?

DEWAYNE
That's possible. What I'm out here
for is to invest my money in this
Hollywood industry.

BRIAN
Oh, well you should probably meet
some of my friends. Seriously. I
know people of every sort in this
town. But if you're talking like, a
producer, I know some guys. They're
not the most noticed yet. But
they're moving. And plus, they've
already got money good enough to
get people's attention. I could
introduce you to some people.

DEWAYNE
Well what do they do?

BRIAN
They're producers. Independent
films, documentaries, stuff like
that so far. They do the business,
you know - financing and what not.
But my one guy, Absolon, he's the
one. He's so intense. You two have
that in common. You know what -
he's having a party next Friday
night. I could invite you.

DEWAYNE
What kind of party?

BRIAN
A party dude - drinks, drugs,
music, mingling, whatever. It's out
in Malibu. Can't get any better.

DEWAYNE
Sounds like it might be worth at
least meeting some people. But I'm
not making any promises.

BRIAN

Wayne Coltrane, you should come.
Listen - how about I give you my
number, and if you decide that
you're serious about knowing the
right people around town then just
let me know before Friday.

Brian provides DeWayne with his phone number, then returns to the company of his friends. DeWayne remains at the bar to finish his drink.

EXT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - NIGHT

Brian steps outside to have the valet bring his automobile to the front. He ensures that the valet will leave it at the front until he is ready. Brian returns inside, back to his friends.

INT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - NIGHT

Brian continues on in the spirit with his friends. He pays close attention to DeWayne at the bar so that when DeWayne decides to leave he can arrange an exit as well.

DeWayne prepares to leave. Brian excuses himself and makes for the front exit.

EXT. THE STANDARD HOTEL - NIGHT

Brian instructs the valet to pull up his car. DeWayne exits. He notices Brian. Brian turns to notice DeWayne.

BRIAN

Don't forget about the party Mr.
Wayne Coltrane.

DeWayne stares and nods. He notices a new model European luxury coupe pull alongside Brian. Brian looks at his vehicle, and then turns back to DeWayne.

DEWAYNE

That's a mean whip you got there.

Brian smirks, makes his way around to the driver's door, and tips the valet. He looks over at DeWayne.

BRIAN

This is bare necessity. Come to the
party and see the rest for
yourself.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MALIBU - NIGHT

DeWayne is driving on Pacific Coast Highway in the vicinity of Pepperdine University. The sky is unobstructed. The weather is calm. People are out in droves to take advantage of the pleasurable night. DeWayne follows directions given to him by Brian all the way to a very nice mansion. He calls Brian to alert him to his arrival. Brian informs DeWayne that he will be out to welcome him.

EXT. MALIBU MANSION - NIGHT

DeWayne observes the façade of the house, the landscaping, and such. He notices some very expensive, exotic cars parked. The front doors open. The FESTIVE SOUNDS OF POP MUSIC AND CHEERFUL PEOPLE are heard. Brian emerges. He motions DeWayne towards the entrance.

DEWAYNE

This is a bad ass place. Who lives here?

BRIAN

I don't think anybody actually stays here. I think they just use it for parties. People rent it out for whatever. This is, I believe, the third time I've been here for a party.

DEWAYNE

Lucky guy.

BRIAN

Yeah. Come on, I'll show you the place.

INT. MALIBU MANSION - NIGHT

Brian and DeWayne embark upon a tour of the house. The crowd is roughly 40 people. The majority are easily identifiable as men. There are two handfuls of women, and there are female impersonators numbering slightly less than the women. DeWayne shows dissatisfaction at the sight of the other guests. There is champagne present among each separate huddle of people. Different couples are noticed disappearing behind closed doors. Quite a few of the guests are obviously inebriated. DeWayne observes Brian closely and sees that he

is a favorite among everybody. Brian doesn't bother making any formal introductions. DeWayne notices several people exhibiting a hefty interest for him. As he and Brian pass through, some of the guests seek his attention directly by waving and winking. DeWayne's body language and facial expression present evidence of agitation. Brian turns to DeWayne to observe his reception of the gathering. He witnesses DeWayne's irritation.

BRIAN

Hey man, come on, let me give you some advice. Make a habit of enjoying yourself as much as possible - wherever you go.

DEWAYNE

Man I hope you didn't invite me to some gay orgy.

Brian chuckles and looks around, and signals for a server.

BRIAN

Look, relax. What, do you want your own personal bottle of champagne? There's coke. There's pills, cush. Let's just get nice, and meet you some new friends.

DeWayne's face changes immediately from bothered to angered. At this time, the server and half-a-dozen other guests have closed in to hear the conversation after picking up on the intense interaction between those two.

DEWAYNE

'Ey listen, I will slap the feeling out of your face. I mean, what did you expect, for me to come here and get wasted, for you to turn me out or something?

After that remark, SKYLER, an athletic and energetic California native, mid-twenties, of mixed Caucasian and Oriental heritages, intervenes. Skyler is another respected gay acquaintance of the party, who has had possibly too much drugs and alcohol.

SKYLER

The thought crossed my mind.

Everyone directs their attention to Skyler. DeWayne turns to face Skyler. An intense second of staring occurs between the two men. DeWayne approaches. Skyler assumes a relaxed, martial arts fighting position.

BRIAN
No, Skyler don't...

DeWayne remains calm. He continues toward Skyler with his arms at his sides. Once he is within an effective striking distance he suddenly throws a quick, sharp, stiff, three punch right-left-right combination to Skyler's facial area, that puts him down and leaves him conscious-but-stunned. The crowd GASPS and simultaneously backs several feet out of DeWayne's range. DeWayne stands over Skyler, gloating his handiwork.

ABSOLON (OS)
I sure hope this isn't how you
introduce yourself everywhere you
go, friend.

Everyone turns to face ABSOLON(25), White male, fit, sophisticated, dapper, the host of the party. Absolon and DeWayne begin a stare-off.

BRIAN
Uh, Absolon, meet John Wayne
Coltrane. I mentioned him to you
earlier, before.

ABSOLON
Yes I remember.

BRIAN
Uh, John - DeWayne Coltrane, this
is Absolon. He's the host of our
party.

DeWayne continues staring. He waits for Absolon to comment.

ABSOLON
Well this is usually a good way of
ending the party. But I don't
suppose we're ready to call it a
night.

Absolon gestures for some people to assist Skyler up from the floor. Then he walks over to DeWayne.

ABSOLON
Or maybe that's just a hell of a
way to get everyone's attention.

DEWAYNE
Maybe I'm just not in the right
place.

ABSOLON

Oh this is as good a place to be as any, depending on your reasons. Let's you and I step out onto the terrace and talk.

EXT. TERRACE - NIGHT

DeWayne leans against a stone railing, facing the inside of the house. Absolon stands facing the railing with the fingertips from both of his hands pressed against the top of the railing. He stares off into the night.

ABSOLON

So Brian tells me that you've come to Hollywood to invest.

DEWAYNE

Yeah, probably. But I actually came out here just for a new life. I don't really know what I'll do yet.

ABSOLON

So why the interest in the movie business?

DEWAYNE

Because, it seems like a good industry to be involved with.

ABSOLON

Yes. But you know, there are a lot of people wandering the crevices of this city with nothing more than a source of motivation similar to that. But money - people can hear the sound of money from all the way across the world.

DEWAYNE

Okay.

ABSOLON

So how much are you trying to make available, for starters?

DEWAYNE

What?

ABSOLON

If you decide that your serious about the film business?

DEWAYNE

Well I don't know. I've got about 1.5 million.

ABSOLON

Hmm. Well that's decent money. Trust me, no one's going to refuse it. But around this town that kind of money can disappear in the wink of an eye.

DEWAYNE

So what d'you do?

ABSOLON

I actually do produce projects. But I came out here with enough money to pay for things all by myself. I've been relatively successful-always made a profit, and good things are normally said about works that I've backed. But I haven't produced anything major like a blockbuster. Now I'm beginning to pool funds together with some of my other associates. And we plan on taking on bigger jobs. But here's what I like about you. You're definitely no wimp, and you're no coward. Those are two very respectable qualities in a man. The next very important quality that I would hope for is intelligence, preferably brilliance. But I can't say just yet that you possess such. You see, people worship money, but it doesn't qualify you for respect. What I envision is a network - respectable men, or persons, who are strong, and courageous, and brilliant, putting our minds together to present wonderful endeavors.

DEWAYNE

So what are you offering me a partnership of some sort?

ABSOLON

Not actually. Not yet. Here's what I suggest - get to know the town, meet people. Learn the business.

ABSOLON

Try and multiply your money some. If you're willing to invest in stock I could advise you on that. I grew up on Wall Street you know.

DEWAYNE

Maybe there's some kind of work that I could do for you, to get an inside look at things.

ABSOLON

I don't know. I've already got a personal assistant, and a driver. I manage to stay pretty busy throughout a day so, I don't mean any offense but, I couldn't just have you around all the time with no official purpose. You're more than welcome to hang out with us when you feel. You wouldn't get the full impact of our business sense from the parties and the clubs but...

DEWAYNE

How about a fitness trainer? I could get you to the point of being almost as fierce as me. We can discuss the business in the morning. I can eavesdrop on you and your friends at night, and in between I can figure out a way to work myself into the program.

ABSOLON

I had a personal trainer from the time I was 13 until I was about 22. I don't believe I need one any more. Besides, DeWayne is it? I'm quite capable of handling myself. I know you must think that you could beat 30 gays with your best hand strapped to your side. But that guy, Skyler, that you assaulted in there, he's actually a proficient martial artist. I suppose he's had too much intoxicants tonight. But in the right condition, I think he could make you sweat it out.

DEWAYNE

(chuckling)

Come on now. I'm not saying that homosexuals don't know how to defend themselves. But I'm not your average kid on the playground. Tell him whenever he's sober, whenever he's had enough time to train, we can do it in the ring or wherever.

ABSOLON

Well, I'm no fight promoter. But I do try to use the gym everyday. There's some equipment in my gym - boxing gloves, a punching bag. Maybe I'd like to get an idea of just how menacing you are.

DeWayne remains silent. His stare becomes inquisitive.

INT. ABSOLON'S PERSONAL GYM - DAY

Absolon is cooling down. He is taking a breather while observing DeWayne reveal an absolutely ferocious component of his character upon a heavy punching bag. Absolon's face reacts slightly to each hard THUD that comes in regular intervals as DeWayne's fists slam repeatedly against the bag. DeWayne finishes. He steadies the bag. He turns to Absolon.

ABSOLON

I get the impression that you might do quite some damage if there was a body at the other end of those punches.

DEWAYNE

I've had to demonstrate on a few people.

ABSOLON

Let me ask you, John Wayne Coltrane - what's the story behind your name?

DEWAYNE

My father was Jonathan DeWayne Coltrane. I'm DeWayne Johnathan Coltrane. Whenever he wasn't doing something that related to boxing, or catering to me or my mother, he was usually watching a John Wayne

DEWAYNE
film, or relaxing listening to jazz, like Coltrane, or both. His friends referred to him as John Wayne Coltrane, all the time. And since he trained me to be just like him since I was a kid, when I was about 10 people started calling me Little John Wayne Coltrane.

ABSOLON
So he was a professional boxer?

DEWAYNE
Yeah. Light Heavyweight. He was pretty good.

ABSOLON
Why didn't you do it professionally?

DEWAYNE
When I was 17 I got into some trouble. I beat a kid up at school, put him in the hospital for a little while. The judge said that because of my training I was an extra threat, so therefore I needed a harder lesson about self-control. So I did some time. I was considering pursuing a fighting career once I was free. But my father died before I got out. He died of brain complications stemming from a life and career of trauma. My mother always spoke against me being a fighter anyway. So I decided not to.

ABSOLON
Well, there's no doubt that you would've been a contender.

DEWAYNE
Yeah. So what about you and your father? What kind of man was he?

ABSOLON
My father's a great man. He's got quite the impressive resume. And you know what - in spite of all the things he's accomplished, I don't think he's been happier about

ABSOLON

anything in his life than the day I was born. He didn't expect my mother's pregnancy. But when he learned that I was a boy - that invigorated in him such a proud feeling. He taught me everything he knew - like your father. He provided a life for me, that was splendid. And I believe that if I would have just come out and told him that I was gay, that, he would have felt disappointment, but he would've figured out a way to accept it.

DEWAYNE

So he doesn't know?

ABSOLON

You know, my name, Absolon, means something to the effect of my father is peace. My mother recommended it to him. She told me that having a son made him so much more calm about everything in life. I can't remember him ever showing any signs of a bad temper or a violent streak. He was firm of course. He was aggressive and daring. But I didn't believe that he was capable of rage until the day he walked in on me lying naked with another man.

DEWAYNE

Oh.

ABSOLON

And that had a much more disastrous effect on our relationship.

DEWAYNE

Wow.

ABSOLON

Yes. Well, Mr. John Wayne Coltrane - I have a busy day ahead, so I'm going to get ready. I actually am enjoying your company, so, if you're not opposed - let's do something next weekend? I'll probably be partying. I won't take

ABSOLON
you to any homo clubs. I can
actually introduce you to some of
the most stunning women in town.

DEWAYNE
Hell, let's do it.

INT. SPLIT LEVEL LOFT - NIGHT

It's the weekend. Absolon is planning to show DeWayne a night on the town. They have arranged to meet at Absolon's loft in the Miracle Mile area. DeWayne is sitting. He stares at the GERMAN SHEPHERD GUARD DOG that is returning a blank stare. Absolon is preoccupied with text messaging on his mobile phone. The DOORBELL rings. The dog stands and faces the door. Absolon approaches the door, and opens it to present Brian. Brian enters carrying a brown paper grocery bag, folded to conceal its contents. Brian and DeWayne make eye contact. Brian grins slyly.

BRIAN
I'm glad to see that you two are
getting close to one another.

DeWayne reacts as if noticing a hint of insinuation in Brian's tone.

DEWAYNE
Man shut your ass up.

Brian continues grinning; he turns to Absolon and hands him the bag.

BRIAN
This is for the month.

ABSOLON
Sounds good. So, we going to see
you tonight?

BRIAN
I'll be out, mostly up and down
Santa Monica. What are you guys
gonna do?

ABSOLON
Oh we're going to do the whole
town, in style.

Absolon raises the bag as a gesture to Brian.

BRIAN

Sounds tasty. Perhaps I will join you gentlemen at some point in the night.

Brian turns to bid DeWayne farewell. Absolon sees Brian out the door. Absolon then heads upstairs to secure the contents of the brown paper bag. When he returns, DeWayne is observing the neighborhood through a large plate-glass window.

ABSOLON

Well, my driver's waiting outside, so, if we're ready...

DeWayne lowers his head.

DEWAYNE

Absolon what's going on?

ABSOLON

What's going on with what?

DEWAYNE

What are you trying to do? Why is Brian coming to you with a big secret brown paper grocery bag that you disappear into your bedroom with?

ABSOLON

What, do you think that we're trying to prey on you?

DEWAYNE

I'm not worried about you preying on me. Since when does the rabbit prey on the wolf?

ABSOLON

I see. In that case, what are you concerned about?

DEWAYNE

It just seems that all of a sudden I feel like I'm connected to some sort of secret between you and Brian.

ABSOLON

Well I give you my word that mine and Brian's matters do not involve you.

DEWAYNE

You know what - maybe, maybe this you and I hanging out together as buddies is the wrong idea. Maybe if we're going to associate with each other it should only pertain to business, so that we can maintain a clear understanding. Maybe tonight's not necessary.

DeWayne starts as if to make an exit.

ABSOLON

Wait, DeWayne. I've been thinking. You know, maybe you're right. Perhaps our personal social lives won't ever be compatible. Contrary to whatever you might think, that's not a problem for me. But I was considering your desire to work and be around people in the industry. And I got an idea.

DEWAYNE

And what might that be?

ABSOLON

I thought I might like to hire you as my own personal security.

DeWayne reacts as if this is funny.

DEWAYNE

Come on man. What d'you mean like a bodyguard? Why do you need security?

ABSOLON

Well I'm stinking rich, for one.
(indicating)

And I'm quite a risk taker. Who knows? I probably don't. But I'm guessing that if I'm seen all over town with the likes of you, then people that I might be doing business with would have immediate evidence that there's a seriousness about me that they'd be wise to respect. And other people that don't know me would just assume that I was of importance. There's a certain image that is created.

DEWAYNE

I don't know. It doesn't seem necessary.

ABSOLON

What does it matter if it's necessary? Are you going to turn down the opportunity to make money? I'll pay you a thousand dollars per night that you accompany me. You'll be at all the big gatherings with so many of the players in this town. You'll see how things are done.

DeWayne takes a moment to consider.

DEWAYNE

Make it twenty-five hundred a night.

ABSOLON

Give me a break! I'll pay you fifteen hundred per day, and I'll provide you with the wardrobe that you'll have to wear when you're on the job. I can't believe that you're even debating this offer.

DeWayne studies Absolon for a moment. Then his eyes wander off to do some more considering.

DEWAYNE

Absolon what was in the bag?

Absolon takes a moment to consider the magnitude of such a revelation.

ABSOLON

If I tell you do we have a deal?

DEWAYNE

We have a deal if you show me.

Absolon takes some more seconds to consider. Then he leads DeWayne up the stairs into the master bedroom. He instructs DeWayne to have a seat. Absolon enters the walk-in closet. He opens a safe and retrieves the brown paper bag. He exits the closet. He walks over to the bed and dumps the contents. There's \$100,000 cash.

ABSOLON

When I first arrived in Los Angeles I had some steam to let out still. My father was cutting all ties to me. I was bewildered. I planned on partying every night if I could, for at least the first few months. I met Brian within a week. You see the kind of guy he is. We were partying every night. I was getting stoned out of my mind. But I was making my way around town. I was meeting the people who I would eventually be making deals with.

Absolon stops to spread the money around the bed.

ABSOLON

I don't suppose Brian is foolish enough to boast about the types of things he does, or to disclose the exact nature of our relationship. All he is, is a hustler. He'll sell drugs. He'll run credit card scams. He'll prostitute himself. But he has such a talent for networking, and he's established a very valuable clientele.

DEWAYNE

And the nature of your relationship is?

ABSOLON

At first, I suspected that he might try to scheme me. But I'm no idiot. Then, one night when we're completely trashed, he divulges a business proposal to me. Now, I'm still in this rebellious state of mind that I brought with me from New York. I'm tempted to just go wild. Plus I was feeling rather good. I didn't bother to consider any consequences, or rationality. So to make it simple for you - I began funding Brian, eventually totaling to a million dollar investment. And now he's repaying his loans, with interest.

DEWAYNE

So I heard him tell you that this was for the month. How much is the monthly payment?

ABSOLON

A hundred grand.

DEWAYNE

(amazed)

And for how long?

ABSOLON

Until he completes our agreement.

DEWAYNE

I meant how long have you two had this arrangement?

ABSOLON

He's been bringing me \$100,000 a month for 16 months - well this makes 17. And now DeWayne, if you're satisfied, can we enjoy some of this night before it's over? My driver's waiting. I've invited some fun girls to join us tonight.

DEWAYNE

Yeah, look, I can meet women on my own. I don't think that I'm interested in any girls that you probably hired to spend the night with us.

ABSOLON

Oh my God! What is your problem? Are you sure you're not gay too? Look, things do not have to be this complicated. I throw a lot of great parties around town. You don't have to be gay to enjoy a good party. I meet bunches of superb women, a lot of which happen to be attracted to me. Unfortunately I don't have any interest for them. But that doesn't mean we don't get along just fine. So these women, who I'm guessing you've mistaken for prostitutes, are actually my friends.

DEWAYNE

Okay. I apologize. I just meant that I'm trying to find a woman that my mother would've approved. And I don't feel like I'll meet that woman in the circumstances of getting drunk, getting high, and being wild. I might. But I don't think that I would recognize her for those qualities, under those conditions.

ABSOLON

Makes sense. That sounds mighty decent of you. But nobody's looking to play matchmaker. We're all just planning on socializing, and having a blast.

DEWAYNE

You know what - I think I'm gonna pass tonight. Don't trip. I'm accepting your job offer. But I want to take some time and think some things through. I'll call you tomorrow, or before the weekend's over, to discuss when I'll start and whatever else. Didn't mean to waste your time. It's just - I need to be sure that I'm staying focused. You understand right?

ABSOLON

Sure. Of course. Nobody knows better what to do with your life than you do.

DeWayne excuses himself, to leave. Absolon begins to gather all the money back into the bag. There is the slight appearance of aggravation in his mannerisms.

INT. AUTOMOBILE - DAY

DeWayne's first day on the job. He is dressed according to the wardrobe that Absolon has insisted - black slacks, black jacket, dark gray silk t-shirt, black shoes. Absolon is dressed in his normal business-style/professional attire. Absolon and DeWayne are sitting side by side in the back of Absolon's expensive transportation, while the DRIVER, KENNETH, is en route to a meeting that Absolon has scheduled. Absolon is reviewing papers. DeWayne is sitting comfortably.

ABSOLON

So, listen - during this meeting you're just there to be noticed. You can sit, or you can stand if you choose. Just don't cause any interference. No disturbances, no distractions.

DEWAYNE

I got it. Just look serious.

ABSOLON

It's as simple as that. And when we're out in public, for a meeting or an appearance, or whatever - same thing, don't allow any interference. And if any danger, or a threat should ever occur - then just do what you do best. Other than that, this is a break for you to take advantage of. Listen. Learn. Whenever you have any ideas, you and I can discuss those. And when you feel like you're ready to get actively involved just say so.

DEWAYNE

I should thank you.

The car comes to a stop. Absolon starts to organize his papers. The driver exits and rounds the vehicle to open Absolon's door. DeWayne opens his own door and exits.

EXT. BURBANK OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Absolon exits the vehicle.

ABSOLON

Thank you Kenneth. I shouldn't be much more than an hour.

Kenneth acknowledges Absolon's comment and returns to the driver's seat. Absolon faces DeWayne.

ABSOLON

Don't mention any thanks. Just don't make me feel like I've made a mistake.

Absolon turns and approaches the building, stopping a few feet from the doors. He turns back around to DeWayne.

ABSOLON

And oh yeah, one other thing - the least you can do to actually earn your money everyday is open the doors for me.

DEWAYNE

So now I'm the help instead of your secret weapon?

ABSOLON

Secret wh-? Hey, are we being professional? Isn't that what you wanted? If you have a problem with holding the door open for the person who's paying you fifteen hundred dollars for doing not much more than that, then I'd imagine that things might not work out the way you plan them in life after all.

They stare at each other, intensely. And then DeWayne, showing slight attitude, goes to the entrance and opens a door to allow Absolon through.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A different day. Another night's work for DeWayne. He is dressed the same, in the wardrobe required for his job. Absolon is wearing different clothes, but dressed in the same business/professional style. The occasion is a business dinner/discussion. They are seated at a booth table. There are drinks and food already on the table. On one side sits Absolon, near the wall, and DeWayne at the outer edge. On the other side, a pair of BUSINESS COMPANIONS, A MAN AND WOMAN DIRECTING/PRODUCING TEAM to whom Absolon is campaigning on behalf of Simone, due to arrive soon from France.

ABSOLON

(infusing fun)

What other possible validation could you need besides the case that she's one of my dearest friends ever?

WOMAN/PRODUCER

Well obviously we can't wait to meet her. But what kind of experience does she have?

ABSOLON

Let's see, she's recognized all over France for her work on the stage, and throughout Europe. She's been in a few French films. She attended the International Theatre School Jacques Lecoq. And she studied at the Sarah Lawrence theatre program in Paris.

MAN/DIRECTOR

Those sure sound like qualifications.

At this instant a young DRUNK WHITE GUY stumbles near their table. He is an arrogant, privileged type. And he seems to recognize Absolon.

DRUNK GUY

Oh wait. Fella - we know each other right?

ABSOLON

I don't believe we do.

DRUNK GUY

Shit yeah. The Bel-Air Bay Club - there was some function happening. Some babe that I was going for introduced us. She told me that her friend tried to suck your cock for a movie role, but you're not into that kind of stuff.

Absolon's companions are shocked by the interruption. Absolon makes an effort to show indifference to the situation. DeWayne finds the senseless inebriate amusing, indicated by a grin.

DRUNK GUY

Listen guys, tonight we're celebrating our friend's birthday. So I think you guys should come over to the bar with us and participate in the festivities.

While the drunk guy is making his statement, Absolon clears his throat in order to get DeWayne's attention. When DeWayne looks, Absolon gestures for him to get rid of the nuisance.

ABSOLON

(to DeWayne)

Would you please.

DeWayne appears to be somewhat peeved. He doesn't deem the drunk guy to be a threat, or even a bother. But he stands up and escorts him away from the table. The three bodies remaining at the table watch DeWayne walk with the drunk guy to a certain distance. Then Absolon's companions return their attention to him.

MAN/DIRECTOR

Say, Absolon, what's with the hired muscle?

ABSOLON

Just for effects. Actually, I figured that if I was being so reckless to allow him close enough to me to possibly render me vulnerable, then, perhaps I should just hire him and eliminate any potential danger in the future - why, with all the crazy types I come into contact with routinely.

MAN/DIRECTOR

Hmm.

At this moment DeWayne returns. There is a moment of silence as he gets situated comfortably back into his seat. He and Absolon have a short, analytical look at one another. The companions notice this moment.

INT. SPLIT-LEVEL LOFT - DAY

Absolon is surfing the internet. The guard dog is gone, taken for a walk by KELLY, its hired caretaker/walker. DOORBELL RINGS. Absolon goes to allow DeWayne to enter. DeWayne is dressed according to his own liking. Absolon greets DeWayne and starts back for the computer. DeWayne follows behind Absolon, watching the back of his head as he listens to his words.

ABSOLON

Hey I only stopped here to get some info off the net. I'm not staying long. Besides, I thought you'd be using your day off to stay as far away from me as possible.

DEWAYNE

Huh. 'Ey, Absolon, is there any problem that you have with me?

Absolon stops to give DeWayne his full attention.

ABSOLON

A problem? Like what? You mean besides the fact that you're way too tense.

DEWAYNE

So what, I'm intense. How's that a problem?

ABSOLON

No, you're just plain tense. And I don't think it's me that has a problem. You're the one - you can't get over my personal lifestyle to realize that you've landed right where you were hoping to when you set your coordinates for Hollywood.

DEWAYNE

Man I don't care about you being gay. And if I'm too tense it's probably because both my parents died horrible, painful deaths, and while they were dying I couldn't do anything to help 'em. I never accomplished anything to honor them for everything they did for me. I failed them. And now I wanna do something about it, and I can't afford any mistakes.

ABSOLON

Can I offer you some advice, as a friend? My parents worshipped my existence. To this day, my mother adores me so much I don't think she's capable of disliking anything about me. And my father - I lived up to his high standards all my life. He was always proud of that. Now he scorns me, because he refuses to accept me as who I am. Nobody ever chooses to be born. He's responsible for my existence, so he's responsible to accept me as I come. And what I'm trying to say is this - if your parents went to their graves loving you and being as concerned for you as the day you were born, then you didn't disappoint them. So don't bother stressing yourself, when all they probably ever wanted was for you to

ABSOLON

be happy. Do you think that your father was ashamed of you when he died?

DEWAYNE

Ashamed? Definitely not. I'm sure he was mad at me, at least for a little while, before he died. But he couldn't be ashamed - I was so much like him, right down to the explosive temper. You know, my father never got wild on me or my mother - but a stranger, or any random person in public. I saw him put so many people down. I thought it was normal.

ABSOLON

Do you think your father ever killed a man?

DEWAYNE

Nope, I doubt it. He was always still in control. He didn't have to kill anybody. Sometimes all it took was a slap to send the right message.

ABSOLON

You know, there was a John Wayne film that I remember watching with my father. It was called The Quiet Man. Do you know it?

DeWayne shakes his head no.

ABSOLON

John Wayne was an American boxer. In the movie he's moved back to Ireland, where his family's from, and he's quit boxing because he killed a man in the ring. I don't remember it all but, basically, he's trying to have a life without fighting. But in the end, I guess, there has to be something worth fighting for.

At this time both men are distracted by the sound of someone entering the loft. It is Kelly. She and the dog come into sight of Absolon and DeWayne.

ABSOLON

Hi Kelly. Um, Kelly, this is DeWayne. DeWayne, this is Kelly, the dog's only friend.

DEWAYNE

Hey.

KELLY

Hello. Uh, I'm going to get this guy some fresh water, and then I'm going to go okay.

ABSOLON

Sure, see you tomorrow, or whenever.

Absolon is back at the computer. He returns his focus to DeWayne.

ABSOLON

So, was that all you stopped by for?

DEWAYNE

Yeah. I just wanted to be sure we weren't gonna have any collision down the line.

ABSOLON

Well, my appreciation for the concern. And while you're here - I probably won't need you until the end of the week, Thursday night, there's a fashion show and my presence is requested. But my dear friend Simone is arriving in LA, from France, that night too. So I haven't decided if I'll have you with me the whole time, or, if I'll send you to meet her at LAX. But in the meantime DeWayne, while you're off, do some reading. Exercise your brain. It'll help you to be more innovative about the things that bother you in life.

DEWAYNE

Okay. What is this, your feminine part expressing itself? You remind me of my mother now.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COLTRANE HOME - DAY

This is a flashback. A 19 YEAR OLD DEWAYNE has just recently returned home from prison. He and his MOTHER, a graceful and pleasant Black woman, are flipping through some family photo albums. DeWayne's mother stops at a picture of DeWayne and his father squaring-off in boxing gloves. Her eyes tear up. She looks up at DeWayne, smiling.

MOTHER

I told your father that he better not encourage you into a boxing career. He was difficult about that. He liked the idea of you continuing his legacy, maybe even being champion. Lord knows you've got that kind of spirit. But I told him it wasn't necessary. We didn't need but one knucklehead in our family. That's why I've always tried to inspire you with The Arts. That fire that you have burning inside you DeWayne, it can be translated so beautifully through art. You just have to choose, for yourself, how you want to present your expression.

19 year old DeWayne's eyes wander downward, away from his mother's gaze. Then he lowers his head, needing his full concentration while processing his mother's words.

INT. SAFEHOUSE LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

DeWayne is sitting in the recliner. His head is back. Beyond the top of DeWayne's head can be seen the glow from the television screen. The broadcast is heard clearly.

JOHN WALSH (OS)

... This guy is a real creep. For over two years he roamed up and down the west coast, victimizing young women in college communities. But the mystery of his identity has come to an end.

DeWayne's eyes open. He lifts his head to pay attention to the program some more. Within seconds he turns to the safehouse host. Safehouse host is nestled comfortably in his seat, seemingly dazed, completely focused on the television. DeWayne returns his attention to the screen. He begins to speak, loud enough to break his company's concentration.

DEWAYNE

You see. This is what I'm trying to say. Look at the type of people who they identify me with. Rapists and thugs with no life. I had a life. I'm not like these lames.

DeWayne looks back at the host, to verify whether or not he is listening. The host is sitting in the exact same relaxed manner, only now his eyes are on DeWayne. DeWayne looks straight ahead.

DEWAYNE

An international sensation fell in love with me.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FASHION SHOW - NIGHT

An upscale fashion show in progress. There are roughly 100 people present. Absolon, dressed in his normal business/power look is sitting front row, bordering the catwalk. DeWayne, dressed in his work attire, stands in the aisle, a few rows behind Absolon. DeWayne is enjoying the show, especially the strutting ladies. Absolon is distracted by someone who has come to tell him something. Absolon looks into the distance. He stands. The messenger leaves. Absolon turns to DeWayne and signals for him to follow. Near the front entrance, Simone stands awaiting Absolon. She is dressed in very comfortable clothes. Her appearance is indicative of the fact that she has just traveled across the sea, and been in the air for half-a-day. Simone notices Absolon approaching. They both begin to glow. She starts towards him.

ABSOLON

(in French)

Ah! My favorite lady.

They draw close and hug.

SIMONE

Oh my God! Look at you! Absolon - the man. But I am angry. You look fantastic. But you have me brought here after I've been flying and sleeping on a plane all day.

ABSOLON

Oh nonsense. Let's not be foolish. You could've just rolled out of bed

ABSOLON
 in some guy's boxer shorts and
 t-shirt, and you'd still be more
 breathtaking than 9 out of 10 girls
 here.

DEWAYNE (OS)
 That seems about right.

Absolon and Simone shift their attention to DeWayne.

ABSOLON
 Oh, yes. Simone, this is DeWayne.
 He's my thug.

Absolon was attempting to joke. DeWayne doesn't appear exactly appreciative of the remark. Simone witnesses the contempt in DeWayne's eyes.

SIMONE
 (to Absolon)
 Oh, don't be a disgrace.

ABSOLON
 No, I'm only kidding. DeWayne's a
 commendable guy. Un homme de
 beaucoup de vigueur.

DEWAYNE
 What's that?

SIMONE
 He said that you are a man with a
 powerful soul. Don't worry, he's
 already told me everything that he
 knows about you, weeks ago. And, I
 am delighted to meet you DeWayne.

DEWAYNE
 Uh, so let's even the score? I
 don't know too much about you.

SIMONE
 Well, for starters, I don't wake up
 in just any guy's boxers and
 t-shirt.

ABSOLON
 Okay. Why don't you come along with
 me?

Absolon takes Simone's arm. She and DeWayne are unable to remove their eyes from one another for a brief moment before Absolon begins leading her away. DeWayne remains in place for a moment, with his grin as evidence of being pleased.

EXT. RANCHO LA BREA TARPITS - DAY

Afternoon. Warm. Sunny. Absolon is meeting with some directing/producing associates to discuss budget and logistics for a scene that they are planning to shoot at this location. DeWayne is accompanying Absolon, but he is not on the job. Absolon has invited DeWayne to join him in observing some casting auditions. This meeting was on the way. DeWayne stands in some shade while he waits. Absolon's discussion ends. He heads in DeWayne's direction.

ABSOLON

They want to shoot a sex scene here, at night. I don't see any reason we can't fake it besides them wanting to be showy.

DEWAYNE

Fake what, the sex?

ABSOLON

No this location. What d'you think that the actors and actresses are having actual intercourse in their love scenes?

DEWAYNE

Hey, who knows? From my observations it's too close to call.

They begin to walk off.

ABSOLON

Hmm, well, I haven't produced any porn.

DEWAYNE

Yeah, so - but since you brought up sex, I was meaning to ask you - have you ever been with women too? I was wondering exactly what kind of friends are you and Simone?

ABSOLON

Oh boy. Sex? Well first of all - mine and Simone's relationship is

ABSOLON
so dear that she's virtually as
precious as a baby sister to me.
But sex. Let me put it like this,
it took my first six months here in
LA, with Brian and crowd, to tame
that animal.

DeWayne looks at Absolon with an expression of uncloaked
disgust.

ABSOLON
But to answer your question, I've
never done more than kiss a woman.

DEWAYNE
Huh. So, did Simone say anything to
you about me the other night?

ABSOLON
Not much. Later on, after the show,
at my home, she did ask where you
had gone to. And she said something
about your eyes being able to speak
for your heart.

DEWAYNE
Are you serious?

ABSOLON
Yes. But look, DeWayne, you two
might actually become good friends
during her stay in the U.S., but
don't count on anything more
hopeful than that.

DEWAYNE
Why not? Is there something wrong
with it?

ABSOLON
Look, personally, I can't even
imagine the two of you sharing that
sort of interest in each other. No
offense, but I've always known
Simone to favor guys with my sort
of sophistication. She's never been
a sucker for the athlete, or, you
know. But the truth is, I wouldn't
be any better than my father, or
any different, if I was to
disapprove of you exploring your
feelings for one another. Besides,

ABSOLON
 she might be just the right person
 for the cause of refining you.

INT. CLUB/LOUNGE - NIGHT

An industry, unofficial movie premiere after party. 100+ people present, dressed in elegant and otherwise expensive designer clothing. Energetic and festive. Absolon is dressed in his typical power look, but with a hint of flare on this occasion. Simone is stunning in a tastefully styled dress. She is as graceful and as pleasant as ever. DeWayne is in his uniform. The three of them are huddled together discussing the film they have just viewed, this proceeding event in general, and casual topics. A COLLEAGUE of Absolon, late 30's, executive type, approaches.

DEWAYNE
 So Simone, how would you feel about
 doing a gangster pic?

SIMONE
 I would not be afraid. As long as
 my character had vitality.

ABSOLON
 What d'you think DeWayne, can we
 make Simone a star in the ghetto?

DEWAYNE
 How should I know?

Absolon and DeWayne have one of their routine, short, intense stare downs. Simone observes and grins about this macho aspect of their relationship. Absolon's colleague walks up.

COLLEAGUE
 Absolon, I just heard that you were
 here. Glad you could make it. What
 did you think? These guys deserve
 some flattery this time huh?

ABSOLON
 Well it was captivating enough to
 keep me awake, and in my seat for
 two hours. That's worthy of some
 credit.

COLLEAGUE
 And who do we have here? This isn't
 the wonder from France is she?

ABSOLON

Indeed. Allow me to introduce you to Simone Blanc. Simone, this is my good friend and business peer, Owen Cohen. You already know DeWayne.

COLLEAGUE

DeWayne, good to see you again. Simone, I was impressed with you five minutes into Absolon's boasting about his friend, this lovely, genuine representation of the soul of women. And now here you are. Forgive me for saying so, but, I hope you don't mind if I stare at you, in awe, from time to time.

SIMONE

Oh. Why, I should hope that I don't mind either.

COLLEAGUE

I've mentioned to Absolon a project that I hope you might consider. I believe our meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, to discuss it?

ABSOLON

Yes, Tuesday sounds correct.

SIMONE

That is wonderful.

COLLEAGUE

I'm sure you'll like it. Now if you two would excuse us for just a moment, Absolon, there's a matter I'd like to mention to you.

ABSOLON

Oh, Simone, you won't be bothered if I disappear for a minute, right?

SIMONE

No, go ahead. As long as you leave DeWayne here to protect me!

ABSOLON

(speculating)

Why, certainly.

Absolon and his colleague walk away. DeWayne and Simone turn to each other.

SIMONE

DeWayne, why is it that Absolon can upset you so easily?

DEWAYNE

He doesn't bother me. The thing is though, it seems like that's his intention. So I get moody because I wanna know why.

SIMONE

If Absolon did not approve of you, or did not respect you, he would not allow you to be around him. So, I know he likes you. Maybe he is having some sort of a contest with you.

DEWAYNE

Well as long as he's aware that I'm damn competitive.

SIMONE

Oh you don't know Absolon. That's probably what he likes about you. If you plan to be around him for some time you'll just need to get used to his arrogance and his taste of humor.

DEWAYNE

I think he's a fairly good dude. But I think we should change the subject too.

SIMONE

Okay. Your turn.

DEWAYNE

I found out something else about you.

SIMONE

I wonder what?

DEWAYNE

I think that you enjoyed staring into my eyes the night we met. Did you?

SIMONE

(blushing)

SIMONE

I do. When I look into your eyes I see the beautification of pain. And I adore it.

DEWAYNE

Whoa. I wasn't really prepared for an answer like that. But I think I need to say thank you. How do you say it in France?

SIMONE

In French, you say merci.

DEWAYNE

Mare-see?

SIMONE

That is good enough for now.

DEWAYNE

Well, mare-see, from deep inside my heart.

In a distant section of the room an ENTOURAGE, belonging to the SUPERSTAR GANGSTER RAPPER who played a starring role in the film, has gathered. A group of friends who are not associated with the entourage have also gathered in its vicinity. They are two YOUNG ADULT FEMALES, one Black and one Asian American, and one BLACK MALE, early twenties. They converse amongst themselves, happy, consuming alcohol. In the midst of their conversation, the young Black lady notices a member of the rapper's entourage, mean and thuggish looking, staring at her, eagerly. They trade glances several times. The MEAN ENTOURAGE MEMBER finally decides to approach. She looks once more and observes him advancing, unapprovingly.

YOUNG BLACK LADY

Oh no. I hope this guy isn't coming over here for me. Don't look at him though.

The mean entourage member walks up, staring directly at her. He pauses. Then, despite her attempt to ignore him, he proceeds and steps in between her two friends to face her. The young Black male turns to face and observe this intruder.

ENTOURAGE MEMBER

'Ey baby doll, can I pull you aside for a moment?

YOUNG BLACK MALE

Before you get your hopes up homey,
it's a thousand just for the head,
but for fifteen hundred you can do
whatever you want.

The entourage member and the young Black male exchange hard looks. Then the entourage member looks back at the Black female, stares at her up and down, then waves his hand to express disagreement. The entourage member looks back at the Black male.

ENTOURAGE MEMBER

Yeah right. I don't ever have to
pay for no broad fool.

The entourage member steps off angrily, stopping just several feet away. The tension settles quickly among the group of friends. And the two ladies turn to their male counterpart with amazement.

YOUNG BLACK LADY

Oh my God! Why would you say
something ridiculous like that?

YOUNG BLACK MALE

Because I knew he was a dud. You
know, for somebody to be that much
of a hater and just blatantly
resort to those desperate tactics -
niggas with money don't infringe
like that. So I knew if I hit his
soft spot he'd get away fast.

From where the entourage member is standing he is able to hear those last few remarks. He turns around to confront the Black male.

ENTOURAGE MEMBER

What you talkin' bout soft spot? If
I sock you in the face then what?

YOUNG ASIAN AMERICAN

Could you please just not bother
us?

The entourage member begins an outburst of shouts and threats. The group of friends' participation changes suddenly from attempts to diffuse the situation to returned hostility. A crowd gathers around the ruckus. Other members of the entourage come to the side of their peer. Then members of the security force arrive to intervene. The security personnel present a threatening attitude towards

the entourage members, and a physical altercation begins. For the most part the security, bigger, stronger, and trained at handling nuisances, is controlling the scuffle. From the area of the room where DeWayne and Simone are standing the brawl looks to consist of roughly a dozen men. In the middle of the mass of squabblers, the arms of two different men are raised in the air. At the end of one arm is a clenched pistol. The other arm is forcing that pistol to stay pointed at the ceiling. GUNSHOTS begin to sound. The brawl intensifies. The crowd panics and begins to move about, scattering for safety. Simone takes one step, intending on following the movement of the crowd. DeWayne grabs her hand and pulls her back. DeWayne lowers himself, and guides Simone, to the floor. DeWayne shields Simone from the direction which any harm would come. DeWayne looks back at Simone to identify how she has been affected by this disturbance. She appears worried. DeWayne smiles at her.

DEWAYNE

I've learned that, in situations like this, the only people that get shot are the ones who are being aimed at, or, the ones who get in the way of the bullets. Or, you might get hurt in the stampeding crowd. The best thing to do is just be calm, get out of the way of danger and stay out of the way. And relax until it's over.

DeWayne smiles again. Simone appears comforted. Simone clings on to DeWayne for safety. DeWayne notes the way that she holds on to him.

Minutes later. The majority of the crowd has relocated outside. The aftermath of the disturbance is taking place outdoors. DeWayne and Simone are composed. Absolon reappears.

ABSOLON

Oh my God! Can you believe all that?

DeWayne shrugs his shoulders.

ABSOLON

(to Simone)

Are you okay?

SIMONE

Yes, I am all right. That was scary.

ABSOLON

A shame.

(in French)

In America, people can get rich overnight. But they take their same poor ways with them wherever they go.

Absolon does a quick panoramic observation of the setting.

ABSOLON

Well I suggest we go somewhere more cordial.

INT. WINE BAR - NIGHT

Absolon, DeWayne, and Simone have relocated to a quiet wine bar where Absolon is familiar. They are sitting at a corner table, Absolon and Simone are side by side, DeWayne sits across from them. There is one empty wine bottle on the table already, and two other bottles, one opened, one unopened. The mood is pleasant.

ABSOLON

So Simone, besides our meeting with Owen that you learned about earlier, I have two or three other projects that people have asked me to mention to you. So it seems you'll have enough options.

SIMONE

(giggling)

Now that is wonderful news. There is a reason to drink more wine.

ABSOLON

If ever a reason is needed.

Simone reaches for the open bottle.

SIMONE

DeWayne where is your glass? Come on?

DEWAYNE

Oh, I shouldn't drink while I'm working.

SIMONE

Who does Absolon need protecting from? That is ridiculous. I want

SIMONE
 you to celebrate with us. We need a
 glass for you.

Simone signals for an employee.

ABSOLON
 (to DeWayne)
 I suppose you can call it quits for
 the night, if you choose.

SIMONE
 What do you mean if he chooses? Of
 course he does. He's our friend,
 and you don't possibly require his
 services at this moment.

ABSOLON
 So shall we drink already, or is my
 lecturing not yet complete?

Simone grins at Absolon. DeWayne grins about Simone's
 exercise of influence over Absolon. Absolon looks at DeWayne
 and smirks, then grins as well. The server arrives to their
 table.

EXT. WINE BAR - NIGHT

Absolon and Simone exit the bar arm-in-arm. DeWayne follows
 behind. They wait for the driver to pull up.

ABSOLON
 DeWayne I won't need you to work
 tomorrow. So if you'd like, we can
 drop you off at home, or you can
 come back with us and get your car
 tonight.

SIMONE
 (to Absolon)
 Well I have no desire to sleep yet.
 So if you're going home only to go
 to bed then I invite DeWayne to
 come and finish talking with me.
 Would you like that DeWayne?

DEWAYNE
 I was going to go with you guys
 anyway, to get my ride. But yeah,
 I'll keep you company.

Simone reaches out and seizes DeWayne by his arm, and pulls him to her side so that they are standing arm-in-arm, just like Absolon on her other side. She is cheerful. Absolon and DeWayne glance at each other, inquisitively.

INT. ABSOLON'S HOME - NIGHT

Absolon, DeWayne, and Simone gather in the foyer.

ABSOLON

So, this is where I say good night.
Simone, you know where to find
everything. I trust you two will
behave as adults.

Simone smiles, and approaches Absolon to kiss him good night.

SIMONE

I'm going to get one last bottle of
wine.

Absolon looks over at DeWayne, inspectingly.

ABSOLON

Gees. Too bad somebody has to work
tomorrow. If you should stay the
entire night, Simone will help you
find somewhere comfortable to
sleep.

DEWAYNE

Thanks.

Absolon walks away. Simone turns to DeWayne.

SIMONE

Come, will you accompany me to the
wine cellar?

INT. LIVING AREA - NIGHT

DeWayne follows behind Simone into the living area. Simone carries a Cabernet Sauvignon and two glasses. They get comfortable.

SIMONE

I am going to put on a film.

Simone turns on the television and starts the movie A GOOD YEAR. DeWayne uncorks the bottle and pours the two glasses. Simone takes a seat beside DeWayne. They do a silent toast.

SIMONE

This film is adorable. I would love to do this kind of amusing, clever romance while I am in America.

DEWAYNE

Is this your favorite movie?

SIMONE

I do not have just one favorite. But this one is very good. If you do not like this picture then you are in error.

DEWAYNE

Well I'll just have to judge that for myself.

DISSOLVE TO:

DeWayne and Simone relaxed on the sofa. The wine is all gone. The film is nearing its end. Simone looks at DeWayne.

SIMONE

When was the last time that you kissed a woman?

DEWAYNE

I kissed my mother on the last day that I saw her alive.

Simone frowns. Then she looks back at the television. DeWayne watches her for a moment. Simone gestures toward the screen. DeWayne looks to see that she is indicating a kiss in the film by characters Max and Fannie at 1h 46m 20+s.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION

Max and Fannie kiss. Then Max tells Fannie, in French, "Forgive my lips, they find pleasure in the most unusual places."

BACK TO DEWAYNE AND SIMONE

DeWayne grins.

DEWAYNE

I have that same kind of problem.

SIMONE

What problem?

DEWAYNE

What he just said. How do you say
that in French?

SIMONE

Pardonne mes lèvres, ils trouvent
le plaisir dans la plupart des
lieux insolites.

DEWAYNE

I have that problem too.

Simone blushes. Her eyes wander, into DeWayne's eyes, at his lips, at his physique, etc. DeWayne watches her eyes. Simone stares back into DeWayne's face. She reaches out to place her hand on his cheek. She strokes his face. DeWayne lifts a hand to rub her arm. Then he pulls her nearer. They stare into each other's eyes. They kiss. While kissing, Simone climbs over onto DeWayne's lap. Still kissing, DeWayne rises to his feet, with Simone's legs wrapped around his waist. He lowers himself, with her, to the soft, carpeted floor. DeWayne breaks the kiss, looks at the expression in her eyes, and then rolls Simone onto her stomach. He begins to undo her dress. With Simone's back exposed, DeWayne leans in to kiss her earlobe. He kisses her neck. He kisses the top of her back. He stops.

DEWAYNE

Am I going too fast?

Simone turns her head sideways.

SIMONE

No.

DEWAYNE

Let me know, if I'm doing too much?

Simone closes her eyes and smiles.

SIMONE

I will.

DeWayne proceeds to kiss her back, continuously moving lower and lower. He reaches the bottom of her back. DeWayne scrunches Simone's dress around her waist. He removes her panties. He reaches around her hips and props up her butt. He presses his face into her private region in a fit of carnality.

INT. DOORWAY/HALLWAY - NIGHT

In darkness outside of the room, Absolon watches the experience as it unfolds. He goes away.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Late morning. DeWayne and Simone are lying together in bed, DeWayne on his back with Simone's head on his chest. The sun is bright and shining through the window. The light evokes DeWayne's consciousness. DeWayne glances downward and is pleased by the sight of Simone in the morning. His movements cause her to wake. She looks at DeWayne, then repositions herself on her back, at his side.

DEWAYNE

Wow.

SIMONE

What do you mean wow?

DEWAYNE

I mean, wow, I feel so good about myself right now.

SIMONE

Uh! Are you complimenting your own performance?

DEWAYNE

No, actually, I was complimenting you.

SIMONE

(blushing)

Moi? Why do I deserve such flattery?

DeWayne hesitates to answer, while staring into her eyes.

DEWAYNE

It's just been a long time since I've felt so calm.

DeWayne watches for her reaction.

DEWAYNE

How do you feel, about what we did?

SIMONE

I feel happy. I feel great, and, that's what I was hoping for you -

SIMONE
to feel great. So if you feel good
too, then I am happy.

DEWAYNE
So, you were just trying to do me,
like, a favor?

SIMONE
No. I wanted to be close to you. I
am attracted to you. What is your
excuse?

DEWAYNE
Oh, well I don't mean to cramp your
space or scare you off, but, I like
you.

SIMONE
Do you?

DEWAYNE
Yeah. I liked you from the first
time I saw you. At first I liked
you just because you were
beautiful. But after spending some
time with you, I like you even
more, because you're so different
from me. You don't remind me of
anything ugly in my past. I guess,
you give me an idea of how lovely
the future could be.

INT. L'OCCITANE - DAY

Absolon and Simone browse the boutique. Simone picks up some
hand cream.

SIMONE
I should get a gift for DeWayne.

Absolon glances at the product.

ABSOLON
(being sarcastic)
Oh right, for his sensitive hands.

SIMONE
You were never a mean guy. So why
do you resent DeWayne?

ABSOLON

I don't resent DeWayne. I think he's a fairly good guy. But see, what I do is fight fire with fire. His personality is hostile. So I use some hostility of my own to maintain a healthy balance between us. But I'm not the one that - it's the two of you that are a cause for concern.

SIMONE

(in French)

Why is that?

ABSOLON

Because, okay the two of you had sex, so what. After all, that is the nature of our species. And, I was counting on you two becoming friends. I won't tolerate the people around me harboring tensions with one another. But DeWayne, you know, he's been depressed and kind of lonely, I guess, for some time. So he just might be, understandably, at a point of disregard for rationality. And with you coming here to make your mark in Hollywood, everything is best for you if it is careful and strategic. We all like sex, especially good sex. But that's not any excuse to be weak.

SIMONE

I hope that I am not making a mistake by the way that I am understanding your comments. I believe that you are only trying to suggest caution. It would be terrible if there were some other meaning to your statement. But just so that you have a clear understanding of my feelings for DeWayne - it was not merely a sexual curiosity.

INT. DEWAYNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Simone sits alone on the couch studying a script. DeWayne walks through the front entrance, returning from a jog. They look at each other and grin.

SIMONE

Did you exhaust yourself?

DEWAYNE

Never. In fact, I have the complete opposite effect from running or working out. Afterwards, I feel energized and ready for the world.

SIMONE

Then good. You can help me practice for this rehearsal.

DEWAYNE

Oh no, I'm not any good at pretending.

SIMONE

It's not pretending. It's just reading. Here...

Simone walks over to DeWayne and places the script in his hand.

SIMONE

All you have to do is read the lines for Jacob. And when I say the lines for Lauren you just let me know if I'm far off, or if I'm saying the wrong lines.

DEWAYNE

But what if you mess up because of me?

SIMONE

Now that sounds silly. Why would I mess up because of you when you inspire me?

DeWayne blends a blush and a smirk.

DEWAYNE

Okay, since you put it like that. And, I admire your tactics by the way.

SIMONE

You are first.

DeWayne takes a look at the page. He proceeds to read his first line with no display of emotion.

DEWAYNE

Jacob says, " What are you going to do with yourself?"

Simone is humored by DeWayne's performance.

SIMONE

No, DeWayne. First of all, you don't have to say Jacob's name, just read his words. But you have to do it with some energy for me to react to.

DEWAYNE

I thought all you needed was for me to read.

SIMONE

Yes, but don't you believe in being energetic about whatever you do? Having energy is so attractive. It's impressive. It's an aphrodisiac.

DEWAYNE

I know all about energy. But see, I'm used to training for the purposes of competition. But here you go attempting to seduce me into being your sparring partner.

SIMONE

Seduce you? I thought this might be something you would enjoy. I thought that your mother encouraged an enthusiasm for drama within you.

DEWAYNE

She did. She and you have a similar passion for this field of art. But the drama I know is more physically aggressive and hostile.

SIMONE

So do you still want to help me?

DEWAYNE

Of course I'll help you. But my personality just isn't the type that I can make believe so easily, and enjoy it too.

SIMONE

Well just help me practice. Maybe it will help if I explain this scene to you. Then you will know what kind of feeling the situation is supposed to possess. Jacob is a guy who ran away from home when he was fifteen. He felt that if he stayed around his family for too much longer then they would ruin him. He didn't think that they were preparing him to grow up and be able to face society. So he decided that he would take his chances facing it at fifteen. In this story he's 22. And he's a budding minister. Lauren is his childhood friend. She was the only person who he maintained contact with after he left home. They are the same age. She's in her fourth year at college. But she has come to tell him that all of a sudden she has decided to quit school and go at the world alone in search of her truest desires, similar to what he did as a kid.

DEWAYNE

She sounds foolish.

SIMONE

Then talk to me like I'm foolish.

DeWayne does his trademark combination of blush and smirk.

SIMONE

But you know - I think that she sounds sort of like you.

DeWayne becomes energized.

DEWAYNE

There's a great difference between my situation and giving up school after four years of progress to search for something that you'd be

DEWAYNE
 more resourceful at finding from a
 college campus.

Simone is cheerful.

SIMONE
 Okay. Don't lose that energy! Now
 we'll just trade places. You read
 the lines with that same feeling,
 and I'll give you a show.

DeWayne is enthused.

DEWAYNE
 Okay. You asked for it. But - I
 like to fight.

They both smile big.

DEWAYNE
 What are you going to do with
 yourself?

SIMONE
 (with American accent)
 I think I want to follow the lead
 of the man - the only person who
 ever convinced me to adore him. I
 want to measure up to you, because,
 I want to be with you.

Simone's delivery is so captivating to DeWayne that he has forgotten about the page, and he stares at her in awe and appreciation.

EXT. RODEO DRIVE - DAY

Absolon and DeWayne are walking down the street, towards Wilshire. Absolon is on the phone. DeWayne follows. Absolon ends his phone call. DeWayne steps up alongside Absolon.

DEWAYNE
 Hey, Absolon, I think that I've
 thought of a way for me to get
 involved with the business, for
 starters at least.

ABSOLON
 What's that?

DEWAYNE

I want to be involved with Simone's career.

Absolon appears perplexed.

ABSOLON

What do you mean, involved how?

DEWAYNE

I'm not sure yet. The other night she asked me to help with her lines, and she just made a believer of me. The way she transformed instantly into that character, with the feeling and passion. She convinced me that we were actually having that conversation.

ABSOLON

So you're impressed with her abilities as an actress. But, what services can you offer to her career?

DEWAYNE

I haven't decided on anything yet. I was thinking maybe I could contribute financially, but it doesn't seem like she needs that kind of help. I'd like to conceive a role for her to play, and develop a story that we could mastermind for her to star in.

ABSOLON

I don't see why not. Get working on that. Come up with a few ideas for us to talk about.

DEWAYNE

Sure.

Absolon and DeWayne face straight ahead. They walk a few more paces. Absolon looks to DeWayne.

ABSOLON

So, you and Simone are spending more time together than I ever anticipated.

DEWAYNE

Oh yeah?

ABSOLON

How do you feel when you're with her?

DEWAYNE

I feel at ease.

ABSOLON

You're not getting serious are you?

DEWAYNE

I'm always serious. You know that about me.

ABSOLON

You know what I mean. Are you falling in love with her?

DEWAYNE

I don't know. But what if I was?

ABSOLON

I'm just curious, that's all.

Absolon hesitates a moment.

ABSOLON

But you know DeWayne, I'll be blunt with you. My concern for Simone and all of her affairs is high. Now, I don't have any personal problem with you. But I don't want to put up with any drama if a relationship between the two of you should fail.

DEWAYNE

Well with all due respect, we're responsible for whatever happens between us. Don't worry, we're adults too.

ABSOLON

Of course you are. I only mention these matters because I know Simone. She's not the type of girl to have sex just for the sake of pleasure. Her feelings are growing deep for you. I just wanted to make sure that you understand that.

INT. DEWAYNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

DeWayne and Simone are nestled on his living room sofa. They are watching t.v. Simone appears intrigued by the program. DeWayne appears to be lost in thought. Simone turns to investigate why he is being so quiet.

SIMONE

What's wrong? Are you dreaming?

DeWayne's concentration is broken. He stares into Simone's eyes for a moment.

DEWAYNE

No, I was just thinking. I was wondering about you and Absolon.

SIMONE

What about us?

DEWAYNE

I was trying to figure out how well you know each other?

SIMONE

Why?

DEWAYNE

Because, you two are close like brother and sister, but you grew up across the ocean from each other. How did that happen?

SIMONE

Absolon and I have known each other since we were kids. He would come out to France every summer since he was a young boy, to be with his mother. She would bring him to visit family in Nice, where I'm from. So we became friends as kids, and every year for a few weeks, or a month, or two, we would spend time together playing and developing our bond.

DEWAYNE

Yeah, but you guys are like best friends.

SIMONE

So?

DEWAYNE

So, it seems like there would have to be something more than just the little time that you spent together every year for you to be so close.

SIMONE

We understand one another. We accept each other with no qualms.

DEWAYNE

What d'you mean qualms?

SIMONE

I matured a little faster than Absolon, at least sexually, or hormonally. At fifteen I was curious about sex. And I had a great crush on Absolon. So I kissed him one day. After our kiss, he gave me some strange look. I was too naïve to understand what it meant. But, I told him that I wanted him to make love to me. Well, he became uncomfortable, and even hostile. And he left. The next day he came to see me so that he could apologize, and, he revealed his secret. I am the first person who Absolon ever told he was gay. He said he didn't even know for sure himself until we kissed.

DEWAYNE

That didn't, like, hurt your feelings at all?

SIMONE

Well, he told me that he liked me - that he thought of me as his best friend in the world by then, so he - I understood instantly. But I was silly. It didn't matter to me. I said that I still wanted to make love with him.

DEWAYNE

But you two didn't?

SIMONE

No, we didn't. But I said that I would never fall in love again or be intimate with any man before him.

DEWAYNE

What! So I came along and broke the spell then?

SIMONE

Not quite. That promise didn't survive more than two years. But, after two or three jerk boyfriends, Absolon was still my favorite guy on the planet.

DEWAYNE

And now there's me.

SIMONE

And now there is you.

EXT. AGENCY OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

DeWayne exits the office building and stands to the side, holding the door for Absolon to exit. Absolon emerges. He appears furious. He is holding his mobile phone to his ear.

ABSOLON

Look Flora, I apologize for my tone, but, just cancel and erase any future appointments that I might have scheduled with Mr. Lewis! And if he or anyone from his office should call regarding meeting or speaking with me, you find out what their interests are and tell them to wait for me to respond. Thank you.

Absolon ends the call. He pauses to take a breath. DeWayne is grinning.

DEWAYNE

You let him get under your skin this time. Why didn't you give me the cue? I could've stepped in and applied the appropriate pressure.

Absolon looks at DeWayne and grimaces.

ABSOLON

You'd be smart not to aggravate me at this moment.

DEWAYNE

Ah, come on Absolute! I'm just trying to cheer you up.

ABSOLON

(seething)

Hey, I don't pay you to cheer me up! In fact, I don't pay you to speak at all!

DEWAYNE

I know the job that you expect me to do. But, regardless of your money, I won't ever be silenced - by any man.

ABSOLON

Perhaps you never learned about the appropriate times to open your mouth, and to keep it shut!

DEWAYNE

Like I said, ...

ABSOLON

Or perhaps your tongue is only useful for sticking it in women's crevices.

DEWAYNE

What!

Absolon's driver pulls up.

ABSOLON

You know what? I think I'll be able to manage without you for the rest of the day. Why don't you go home.

Absolon begins to enter the vehicle. DeWayne now appears equally upset.

DEWAYNE

We'll finish this discussion later on, Absolon.

Absolon closes his door. The car pulls off.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Simone is sitting on a blanket, two dozen yards from the water, staring out across the sea. DeWayne approaches her from behind. He stops alongside her.

SIMONE

Oh there you are.

DEWAYNE

Yeah, I thought this was you, sitting over here looking like the moonlight.

They both grin about that comment.

DEWAYNE

But what are you doing out here though?

SIMONE

Relaxing. Thinking. Wondering if this is what heaven is like.

DEWAYNE

You mean without the alcoholics and the young riff-raff?

SIMONE

Yes, of course - maybe. Why don't you sit down.

DeWayne sits beside her and has a gander at the ocean.

DEWAYNE

This is pretty calm though. In the city it's like constant clashes. It's impossible to not punch somebody in the head sooner or later. At least, for me it is.

Simone watches DeWayne. She grabs his hand and scoots over to sit between his legs. DeWayne picks up the blanket and spreads it out over their feet and legs. Simone secures both of DeWayne's hands and places them on her abdomen. She holds his hands firmly against her stomach. They stare off into space.

SIMONE

Just imagine that you had stayed back in your city, and we had never met? Do you think, whatever you would be doing back home, that your

SIMONE
 life is more or less satisfying
 without me?

DEWAYNE
 Oh, if I was still in Detroit? I
 know for certain that regardless of
 if I'm with or without you my life
 would be more hectic, and most
 likely more disappointing than
 being here. But, being here with
 you - I'd like to thank God.

Simone squeezes DeWayne's hands tighter against her stomach.

DEWAYNE
 But I should ask you something,
 before it bothers me.

SIMONE
 What is it?

DEWAYNE
 When you and Absolon talk about me,
 how do you refer to me? Do you tell
 him the things that should be
 personal between me and you?

SIMONE
 I talk with Absolon about
 everything, you know that. But,
 anything that I feel like you say
 only because you're speaking to me,
 then, no, I always keep that to
 myself. Why?

DEWAYNE
 Ah, he said something to me
 earlier. He was upset about
 something. I made a comment. He
 lashed out at me. We had some
 words. And then we parted ways. But
 he really pissed me off today.

SIMONE
 Oh you and Absolon are like
 ridiculous boys.

DEWAYNE
 He won't be satisfied until I bash
 him. And then he'll say he was
 right about me all along.

SIMONE

You know what is the problem with men? They cannot be convinced that they are powerful without destroying a fellow man.

DEWAYNE

I'm easily convinced that I would destroy Absolon.

SIMONE

Don't talk like that. Please, do not say things like that?

DEWAYNE

I didn't mean...

SIMONE

DeWayne - I have an idea to propose to you.

DEWAYNE

What's up?

SIMONE

You know that eventually I will return to France to live?

DEWAYNE

Yeah, I think about that.

SIMONE

I want to know if you would ever consider coming with me?

DEWAYNE

I - I never thought of that.

SIMONE

I hope that you would consider it.

DEWAYNE

Of course I'll consider it. But, I mean, that's a major alteration. I can't answer that so quickly.

Simone leans her head back against DeWayne, and stares back out at the sea.

DEWAYNE

What about you? Would you stay here with me?

SIMONE

Yes, I would. The transition might be even more difficult for me, possibly, being that I already have a career and a lifestyle established in Paris. But I will, if that's what we decide.

DEWAYNE

That's how you feel? And you're sure about that already?

SIMONE

There are no selfish reasons behind me asking you this. I'm thinking of us, but, I am thinking a lot about you. I feel that since you left home to leave your troubles behind, and in essence you're beginning a new life, what reasons do you have not to? Do you think that it would make your parents proud for you to let go of all your worries and simply enjoy life? I do.

DEWAYNE

Yeah, I believe they would be happy with that.

SIMONE

Then, if you are happy when you're with me, I want you to think about going to France, because I think that you will be happy there.

DeWayne's hands are still on Simone's stomach. Her hands are on top of his. He grabs hold of her hands and wraps his arms around her waist.

DEWAYNE

I think I would too.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

At the Grove. Sitting at a table outside of a restaurant, Absolon and Simone snack on appetizers while awaiting the time to relocate to Pacific theatres for an advanced screening of a film to which Absolon is associated. Their waitress walks near.

ABSOLON

Miss, excuse me, could I get another Adios please, and a - what do you want to drink?

SIMONE

Oh no, this glass of wine is all I'm having.

ABSOLON

(to waitress)

Then, just an AMF, thank you.

(to Simone)

It's not so exemplary to go soft while still so very young. I pray that it isn't your lover who's influencing this less spirited form of you.

SIMONE

Hush! What about you? Are you drinking so much because you are excited, or are you nervous about tonight?

ABSOLON

Nervous for what? Economically, a Big Screen release means I'm at least stepping in the right direction. And as far as excitement is concerned, there's no replacing that sensation of gathering in an auditorium with bunches of strange people to witness an event, hopefully a worthwhile one, and absorbing the impact of all that combined energy being summoned in response to the portrayal of people's imaginations, hopefully strong imagination that can tell a good story. So yeah, I anticipate the day when the films that I sponsor are shown in theatres around the world to provide people with that experience. But I'm not nervous at all. I do pretty good business nonetheless.

SIMONE

Well I am excited for you. I think the audience tonight is going to love this picture. And in six months or so you'll be attending the premiere.

ABSOLON

So why don't you drink with me then, to - a lack of discipline to wait for the good times ahead.

SIMONE

No, I can't. I don't want to. I don't feel like drinking right now.

ABSOLON

That's ridiculous. Are you feeling sick?

SIMONE

No, that's not it. Say, speaking of ridiculous - have you been getting along with DeWayne over the past few weeks?

ABSOLON

Sure! There's no problem between DeWayne and me. I mean if I have to be assertive I do, but he's a grown man, he can handle it.

SIMONE

I want the two of you to be good friends. I asked him to come to France with me when I return.

ABSOLON

Why'd you do that? What's he going to do over there?

SIMONE

We're going to be together.

ABSOLON

(teasing)

How about that! The magic of love.

SIMONE

I do love him Absolon. And there is something else. I should have told you before. We are going to have a child.

ABSOLON

Wh-! Oh my God! Is that what the two of you are planning?

SIMONE

No, he doesn't know that I am pregnant already.

ABSOLON

Are you kidding? You're pregnant? How long? Why didn't you tell me? Why haven't you told DeWayne?

SIMONE

I'm not sure. I was not certain how he would be affected. I didn't want it to be bad news.

ABSOLON

If he thinks of it as bad news then that's what you need to know. You need to know the truth about what you two are doing with each other.

SIMONE

I know how he feels about me. But it's not that simple. Now, I'm waiting for his decision before I tell him.

ABSOLON

No. Why? You have to tell him sooner. That needs to be a weighty factor in his process of consideration. What if he gets intimidated about transitioning to a whole new life, in Europe, and says no for that reason. You can't lob something like that at him like a tool of persuasion. You should tell him beforehand. You should tell him tonight, after the show.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

DeWayne is sitting at the bar, slightly intoxicated, with a drink in his hand. He appears to be thinking heavily. A WOMAN BARTENDER approaches.

BARTENDER #2

So what is it that has you sitting here all bottled up?

DEWAYNE

I'm just having a drink to my mother and father. Tonight's the anniversary of my father's death.

BARTENDER #2

Oh. I'm so sorry to hear that. Is your mother dead as well?

DEWAYNE

She's not dead. They're not dead. They've just gone on.

BARTENDER #2

I see. Well God bless you and them. How are you taking it?

DEWAYNE

I'm good. I'm getting better and better. As a matter of fact, I'll be moving to Europe soon. I'll be living out the rest of my life in Paris, or somewhere in France - just getting better and better.

BARTENDER #2

Well congratulations. That sounds awesome. Tell you what - I'll make you a complimentary drink to celebrate to you getting better. Give me one moment.

The bartender goes off. DeWayne finishes the drink in his hand. He has a look around. He was already aware that he was in an establishment frequented by gays and lesbians, but for the first time he notices some of the gays ogling him. He displays dislike. The bartender returns.

BARTENDER #2

Here you go. This is to getting better, and to good memories of your parents.

DEWAYNE

Thanks so much.

DeWayne consumes the drink in one take. He looks eye to eye with the bartender.

DEWAYNE

You know what - when you start getting drinks for free, that probably means it's a good time to stop. I'm gonna take off before I have too many. But thanks for your conversation, and the honorary drink.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

DeWayne exits the bar and stops. His car is parked in front of the bar, but he walks off. DeWayne strolls Santa Monica Blvd., letting his mind work. DeWayne comes within the proximity of Brian, but does not notice him. Brian is standing, with another man, at the corner of a building ahead of DeWayne. Brian notices DeWayne.

BRIAN

Well look who it is. Don't you know better than to be hanging around in this part of town?

DeWayne looks at Brian with a blank stare.

BRIAN

You have no idea how glad I am to see you right now Mr. Coltrane. Could you spare me just one minute of your time? I have a favor to ask of you.

DeWayne doesn't appear thrilled, but accepts Brian's request. Brian returns to his male friend. DeWayne walks over to Brian's car and peers around. He can't help but look at Brian and his companion, once or twice. He sees them standing face to face, interacting flirtatiously. He becomes uncomfortable. DeWayne decides to walk off. Brian happens to witness DeWayne starting to leave.

BRIAN

Okay, DeWayne! Okay I'm ready.
 (to companion)
 I'll call you in a little while.
 (to DeWayne)
 I'd really appreciate if you would do me a favor.

DEWAYNE

Well what is it then? I wasn't about to stand here and watch you rub noses with another man.

BRIAN

I've got to go meet a guy in Little Armenia. I just want you to take the ride with me, that's all.

DEWAYNE

Man please. Take a ride with you? For what? You don't need me to ride anywhere with you.

BRIAN

Come on DeWayne. No funny business, I just want you to take this one ride with me. For me?

DEWAYNE

Hell no.

BRIAN

All right, look. I'm going to pick up \$10,000 on this deal. If you come with me I'll pay you 500 bucks - for fifteen minutes of your time.

DEWAYNE

You know what? What the hell. One time before I go. And make it a thousand dollars.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Inside Brian's car, he and DeWayne buckle up, and they head east on Santa Monica. Brian meddles with the radio. DeWayne tries to get comfortable.

BRIAN

So what did you mean before you leave? You going somewhere?

DEWAYNE

Yeah, in a matter of time I'll be outta here.

BRIAN

Things didn't work out to well with you and Absolon?

DEWAYNE

Nah, Absolon's my dude. I suspect we'll be doing some type of business for a long time. I'm just relocating. And you know what - if I never have to look at your feminine ass caressing another man's face I would be so grateful.

BRIAN

Aw, gimme a break. You should appreciate knowing me. I introduced you to your business partner, and subsequently helped you fall in love, or so I hear.

DEWAYNE

How about you keep that subject away from your mouth.

BRIAN

Gees. Anyways, thanks for coming. I'm going to meet these Armenian gangbangers. The guy I deal with is cool, but his buddies are real assholes. They always give me shit. I think with you there, they'll find a way to settle down.

DEWAYNE

Yeah, well, let's do it quick.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Brian and DeWayne pull into large parking lot and drive towards a corner where two cars are parked. They stop. They gaze upon FOUR YOUNG ADULT ARMENIANS, 20-23 years old.

BRIAN

Come on and walk over with me?

DeWayne groans, but opens his door and exits the car. As they approach, Brian makes eye contact with his business associate, who is welcoming. The other three Armenians stare at Brian and DeWayne with serious mugs. DeWayne scans the group for signs of intimidation.

ARMENIAN FRIEND

Brian, how're you feeling tonight?

BRIAN

Hey man, I'm pretty good. I want you to meet my good friend, Wayne Coltrane.

DeWayne and the friendly Armenian greet.

BRIAN

DeWayne just give me one moment to step over here with him and we'll be done.

DeWayne doesn't respond. Brian and his associate walk back over to Brian's car. DeWayne turns to face the remaining three strangers. They are all highly intoxicated. The mood is hostile.

ARMENIAN THUG #1
W'sup homey!

DEWAYNE
W'sup with you?

ARMENIAN THUG #1
You're a tough ass one of those,
huh?

DEWAYNE
A one of what?

ARMENIAN THUG #1
Ah never mind, don't pay me any
attention.

Armenian thug #1 turns to his comrades to speak under his breath. The three of them CHUCKLE. DeWayne gets aggravated.

DEWAYNE
Why don't you tell me the joke too?

ARMENIAN THUG #1
The joke is you should stay in
boys' town, you monster fag.

DeWayne reflexively steps off in the thug's direction. Armenian thug #1 steps toward DeWayne. Once close enough, DeWayne punches the guy and puts him on the ground. The other two thugs rush in. DeWayne hits the first guy to get close enough to him with two blows and influences him to back away. DeWayne sees the next guy approaching from the side and turns in time to counter-attack by punching him square in the middle of his face. The force of that punch pushes that third Armenian into the car behind him. He bounces off of the car, back at DeWayne, and DeWayne punches him with a left, turning the thug sideways and sending him back against the vehicle in one motion. DeWayne instinctively pursues him this time, and before the thug can stand up straight DeWayne punches the side of his face, smashing his head into the car door window, shattering the glass. By this time Brian and his associate make it back over there, panting from having darted to the mayhem after noticing what was happening.

BRIAN
(panicking)
DeWayne, what the hell!

Brian grabs DeWayne and pulls him away, off to his car. The Armenians gather themselves. The third thug is unconscious and bleeding badly. They pick him up and lay him across a back seat. From inside his car, Brian witnesses this, and pulls off.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Brian is still panicking. He drives fast. DeWayne is still angry.

BRIAN

What the hell happened back there?
What did you do to those guys?

DEWAYNE

Just take me back to my ride.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. - NIGHT

Ten minutes later. Brian and DeWayne are back where they first saw each other tonight. They are on the sidewalk, leaning against Brian's car. Brian is nervously puffing a cigarette. DeWayne is thinking. Brian's phone rings. He looks. It's the Armenians. DeWayne gestures for him to answer it. Brian answers with the speakerphone.

BRIAN

Yes.

ARMENIAN FRIEND

Brian! You tell your friend,
whoever that was you were with,
that he's going to die! He killed
my cousin. So we're going to kill
him. And we're going to kill you
too!

Brian hangs up.

BRIAN

Those guys aren't playing. DeWayne
they will kill us.

DEWAYNE

Listen, Brian, go home! Stay off
the streets tonight. Just be safe,
and I'll tell you what to do later.
I gotta go. But listen - don't say
anything about this to anybody.
Keep your mouth shut about all of
this!

INT. ABSOLON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's the still of the night. Absolon is asleep in his bed. The PHONE RINGS. Absolon comes to. He reaches for his phone, and notices that it is DeWayne calling. He wards off the sleep and answers.

ABSOLON

(into phone)

Hey.

(pause)

Yeah, hey DeWayne, where've you been? Simone and I were trying to reach you earlier tonight.

(pause)

What? Wait a minute. Right now? For what?

(pause)

Well, what's going on? Where are you at right now?

(pause)

Why are you...?

(pause)

Okay. All right. I'll be there. I'm on my way.

EXT. ABSOLON'S LOFT - NIGHT

DeWayne is sitting in his car waiting for Absolon. He is beginning to look worried. Absolon pulls up and parks in front of his loft. DeWayne exits his vehicle and approaches Absolon. Absolon stares inquiringly.

ABSOLON

What's going on DeWayne?

DEWAYNE

Have you spoke to Brian?

ABSOLON

Brian? No. Why should I have spoken to Brian?

DEWAYNE

No, look, something bad happened tonight.

ABSOLON

Something bad like what? Come on, let's go inside.

INT. ABSOLON'S LOFT - NIGHT

The guard dog comes immediately to inspect. As soon as they are both through the front entrance and it is shut, DeWayne opens with the story.

DEWAYNE

Absolon - I might've killed somebody tonight.

ABSOLON

What! What do you mean you killed somebody? What are you talking about?

DEWAYNE

Earlier tonight, I was out having a few drinks, and I ran into Brian. He asks me to do a favor and take a ride with him. We go to meet some Armenians, and, while he's talking with one of 'em, the other three get disrespectful with me and we start fighting.

Absolon rolls his eyes with discontent.

DEWAYNE

We fight until Brian and the other guy come to break it up. Then we leave. A little while later the guys call Brian, threatening my life.

ABSOLON

Damn it, DeWayne, what's so hard for you about being a bigger man?

DEWAYNE

What do you mean? It was 3 against 1.

ABSOLON

I mean - that fighting, and punching your way through every misunderstanding that you have is prehistoric. Before humans created language as a means of communicating and expressing themselves, effectively, beating their point into one another was the only option they had. Today, it's an outdated practice. And

ABSOLON
 furthermore - you act like an
 animal, you get treated like an
 animal.

DEWAYNE
 What should I have done then?

ABSOLON
 I don't know, DeWayne, I wasn't
 there. But I'm sure there was a far
 better solution than killing a guy.

DEWAYNE
 I didn't... I don't know what to do
 Absolon.

Absolon pauses to try and calm down.

ABSOLON
 You know, this is exactly the sort
 of thing that I feared about you
 and Simone.

DEWAYNE
 I would've never done anything to
 Simone.

ABSOLON
 Yeah, well, this is going to affect
 her life too. This is going to
 affect her a whole lot. Aw, man I
 should've known better.

DEWAYNE
 (shouting)
 You should've known what better?

The guard dog gets up BARKING, sensing DeWayne's anger at
 Absolon. Absolon commands him to silence.

DEWAYNE
 You know what Absolon...

DeWayne walks forward, towards Absolon to finish his
 statement eye to eye with him. At the same time, Absolon is
 shifting his focus from the dog back to DeWayne and is
 caught off guard and startled by DeWayne approaching him
 with the appearance of animosity still in his eye. Absolon
 perceives a threat and strikes DeWayne. DeWayne strikes back
 reflexively. Absolon goes down, stunned. The guard dog is
 back on its feet, barking and growling. Then it takes off at
 DeWayne. It leaps at DeWayne. DeWayne punches it out of the

air. The dog leaps at DeWayne again, and he punches it down once more. The dog lunges at DeWayne once more, and DeWayne is able to grab a hold of it, but they both go down to the floor where DeWayne wrestles the canine, punching and strangling it to death. Absolon regains his motor senses, and sees DeWayne overpowering the dog's final struggles. Infuriated, he goes over to DeWayne, catches him off guard, and strikes him again. DeWayne, consumed by rage, turns to attack Absolon. Absolon tries to back away. DeWayne grabs him and pummels him to the floor. Once Absolon begins to go limp, DeWayne pauses. While pinning Absolon to the ground, DeWayne appears to stop and think. DeWayne slaps Absolon to keep him conscious and alert.

DEWAYNE

Whose fault is this Absolon?

Absolon doesn't speak. He just pants, in pain. Absolon starts to look unresponsive. DeWayne slaps him. Absolon finally tries to resist some more. DeWayne punches and chokes him some more, then lets up. Absolon gasps. The two of them stare at each other a moment.

ABSOLON

(paining)

Please?

DeWayne's eyes close. And after a brief moment, he shakes his head in disbelief, opens his eyes, and stands up.

DEWAYNE

Come on, I'm gonna need you to give me that money from your safe. Let's go open that safe.

DeWayne grabs Absolon at the collar and drags him off.

INT. BEDROOM CLOSET - NIGHT

Absolon lays flat across the closet floor. DeWayne sits in front of the open safe, transferring the money to a trash bag. Once he's got it all, he looks over at Absolon. Then he drops his head. Absolon just stares at him.

DEWAYNE

I can't believe this is happening. You know what I was gonn' say? I was going to tell you thanks for everything, and that I'll handle that other problem on my own. And that I was going to France with Simone. Now look at me, I'm sitting here robbing you.

ABSOLON
(straining)
DeWayne, let me try to help you?

The expression on DeWayne's face instantly changes back to pure contempt.

DEWAYNE
Let you help me. I came here to ask for your help. And you didn't care about me. You don't want to help me. You want to insult me. How're you going to help me now?

ABSOLON
I've been trying to help you. I've been helping you since the day we met. You're the one who messes things up. You're the one who did this.

DeWayne drops his head again. He takes a moment. Then he stares at the ceiling while addressing Absolon.

DEWAYNE
I'm sorry Absolon. This is not what I wanted at all. I don't know what else to do.

DeWayne stands up and turns to face Absolon. He approaches. Absolon notices by the look in DeWayne's eyes that he means him harm. He attempts to muster up strength for a defense. DeWayne drops to his knees, straddling Absolon, and punches him in the face repeatedly, until Absolon stops fighting. Then he proceeds to choke Absolon to death.

INT. SAFEHOUSE LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

The AMW broadcast is nearing its end. DeWayne is standing, at a large mirror mounted on a wall in the living room, leaning forward with one hand on the wall and his head lowered.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION

John Walsh is recapping the show.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

A local rest stop for cab drivers. The cashier is surfing tv channels. He stops at America's Most Wanted.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION

JOHN WALSH

(into screen)

In Los Angeles, DeWayne Johnathan Coltrane is wanted for murder. Authorities say he killed one man by punching his head through a car window. Coltrane is also wanted for questioning as the prime suspect in the murder of Absolon Adler Andrews, the son of a prominent Wall Street banker/lawyer, himself a rising Hollywood producer. Coltrane is believed to also have killed Absolon's guard dog that night as well.

CUT TO:

The taxi driver who drove DeWayne to/from the airport is sitting alone at a small table, drinking coffee and reading a magazine. His attention is diverted to the broadcast.

BACK TO SCREEN

JOHN WALSH

If you've seen DeWayne Johnathan Coltrane call us at 1 800 Crime TV.

BACK TO TAXI DRIVER

His whole face expands when he recognizes the picture of DeWayne on the screen. He gets on his feet.

TAXI DRIVER

That man was in my cab tonight.

He looks around for people's responses. The cashier and few other customers are indifferent. He sits back down to think.

INT. SAFEHOUSE LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

DeWayne is standing at the wall with the large mounted mirror. He is watching the television as the closing credits roll for AMW. The safehouse host sits up, on a couch located between the two recliners, and turns to observe DeWayne. Then he resumes facing the television.

SAFEHOUSE HOST

All you gotta do now is make it out the country. And then laugh about it.

The host turns to observe DeWayne's reaction to these comments. DeWayne doesn't react. He is lost in thought. The host gets up and exits the room. DeWayne becomes conscious of the host leaving the room. He glances at a clock on the wall. He walks over to the couch and takes a seat, with his head lowered, and his torso leaned forward, hovering over the floor. His expression is gloomy.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CARWASH - DAY

In East Los Angeles. DeWayne is sitting with Javier. Under the guise of the normal activity on a busy day at a carwash, they speak.

DEWAYNE

I need to disappear. I need to disappear, all the way, like, right at this moment.

JAVIER

Yeah I know what you mean. I can help you with that.

Javier pauses to watch the life-in-motion at the carwash.

JAVIER

Bet you didn't expect nothing like this when you went looking for those rich people in Hollywood?

DeWayne shakes his head in disbelief. DeWayne's phone RINGS. It's Simone. DeWayne looks at Javier, with despair all over his face. Javier stands and walks away. DeWayne answers. Simone is CRYING. She sounds distressed, and devastated.

DEWAYNE

(faking)
Simone what's wrong?

SIMONE

Absolon is dead. Someone murdered him.

DEWAYNE

What? What are you talking about?
How?

SIMONE

I don't know. His caretaker for his
dog found the dog and him dead
inside his loft today.

DEWAYNE

You can't be serious. I don't
believe it. What the! What did the
police say?

SIMONE

I don't know. I haven't spoke with
the police. DeWayne, how could this
happen?

DEWAYNE

This is crazy. I can't believe it.
Did he seem like he had any
problems when you seen him
yesterday?

SIMONE

No. Everything was fine, for him.
Where are you? I want you here with
me.

DEWAYNE

All right. I'll call you as soon as
I get in the area.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Simone is on a park bench, looking distressed with dark
sunglasses to hide her teary eyes. DeWayne approaches her.
When he gets near, and she notices him, Simone stands and
runs to him. She hugs him and holds him tightly and dearly.
They hold each other for a moment. As they head for the park
bench, this conversation begins:

SIMONE

Why did you want to meet here?

DEWAYNE

I just thought you needed to be
breathing fresh air at a time like
this.

A silent moment.

DEWAYNE

Simone I have to tell you something. I didn't think you knew, but, Absolon was involved with some shady people. You know that guy Brian. Well he was mixed up with some bad guys on the streets, and, Absolon and him were doing drug deals together.

SIMONE

No, don't say that. Why would you say that?

DEWAYNE

It's true. And I'm only telling you because maybe his death has something to do with that.

SIMONE

But why? You have to tell the police.

DEWAYNE

No. I can't. We shouldn't tarnish Absolon's image with that sort of information. And plus - I have to be honest with you. Last night I fought with three of the guys, and I might've killed one of them.

SIMONE

What are you saying?

DEWAYNE

I don't know if it had anything to do with Absolon. I don't think it does. But, I think I may have accidentally killed one of them in the fight.

Simone tries to speak, but starts to show signs of a breakdown. DeWayne pulls her close to him, and holds her head against his chest, with his other arm wrapped around her.

DEWAYNE

I wish I would've been able to tell you before now, but, I decided that I would go to France with you.

Simone looks into his eyes.

SIMONE

But how? What's going to happen now?

DEWAYNE

Don't even worry about it. Let me do that. I know all of this is unbearable, but, you just stay focused on what you came here to do. When your work is done, then we'll leave.

Simone looks away for a second, then looks back into DeWayne's eyes.

SIMONE

I should tell you something also.

DEWAYNE

What?

Simone pauses, takes some time to consider, but does not find the strength.

SIMONE

I'll wait until we're in France.

INT. SAFEHOUSE LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

With sorrow displayed all over his face, DeWayne is pacing back and forth. He looks over at the clock. The time is nearly one hour since he last looked. He heads for the staircase leading upstairs.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the bedroom where he has been staying, in the dark, DeWayne sits in a chair placed at a window, staring out into space, thinking heavily. He closes his eyes tightly, and breathes deeply. When he opens his eyes, he reaches for the phone.

EXT. LAX ARRIVALS - NIGHT

Simone exits the terminal. She is met by FLORA, Absolon's personal assistant.

SIMONE

Hi, Flora.

FLORA
Welcome back. How was your trip?

SIMONE
I enjoyed it.

They walk up to Absolon's luxury sedan, where his driver awaits them to open the doors.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Inside the moving Sedan there is an extended silence. Then Flora looks over at Simone.

FLORA
The detectives came with more news about Absolon's death.

SIMONE
What did they say?

FLORA
They said they need to find DeWayne. They said they only want to ask him questions. But they told me that he's their most likely suspect.

SIMONE
DeWayne would never do something like that to Absolon. He would've never hurt Absolon.

FLORA
Do you know where DeWayne is Simone?

Simone just stares.

FLORA
Do you know about DeWayne's past? That he's been to prison - for assault and battery, and for robbery?

SIMONE
Not for robbery.

FLORA
Yes. The police showed me these things.

SIMONE
He couldn't do it.

Simone goes numb. The silence returns. Simone's phone RINGS. It is DeWayne. Simone looks at Flora. Flora knows. Simone answers.

SIMONE
(faintly)
Hello.

DEWAYNE
(sorrowing)
Hey. Was your flight okay?

SIMONE
(numbing)
Ye...

There is a moment of silence between them.

DEWAYNE
Do you know how much I love you?
(silence)
You are the best thing in the world
to me.
(silence)
I have to tell you the truth, but,
I can't say it to you now.

Simone loses control.

SIMONE
No, DeWayne, what is it? You tell
me now, whatever you have to say!
What happened, DeWayne? What
happened?

DEWAYNE
I promise I'll tell you when we are
in France.

SIMONE
What did you do to Absolon?

DEWAYNE
I, I, I didn't mean for anything to
happen.

SIMONE
(crying)
No, why did you do that? How could
you do that?

DEWAYNE

It was - a mistake. Please forgive me? Please! I lost control.

SIMONE

What is wrong with you?

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

After that last comment by Simone, DeWayne sits upright in his chair, and glances out the window to notice law enforcement agents swarming the street. DeWayne stands and walks over to the nightstand beside the bed, where there is a large high-caliber handgun stowed. He seizes it. He sits down at the foot of the bed. He SIGHS heavily. In a calmer tone of voice, he continues to address Simone.

DEWAYNE

I care so much for you Simone. I'm not sure if you even understand the wonders you did for my life. I hope that someday you'll be able to forgive me. And I hope that no matter what you'll always love me, or something about me.

DeWayne's eyes begin to water. Simone senses something strange, that his mood has changed.

DEWAYNE

I would never be able to express how much I regret the mistake I made. But the thing that hurts the most right now is knowing what I'm going to be missing. I wish there was another way to do this. To make things right.

At this moment, law enforcement begins to demand entry, SHOUTING and BANGING the door. DeWayne pauses to listen.

Over the phone, Simone hears the FRENZY in the background.

SIMONE

DeWayne, what is happening over there?

DeWayne doesn't answer.

SIMONE

DeWayne I do. I will always love you. I don't want you to make any more mistakes.

DEWAYNE

I've always lost the people,
whoever meant the most to me in
this world, whenever I've gone to
jail. It's a curse, and I won't let
it happen again. I won't do that to
you.

SIMONE

No. Please. Nothing is going to
happen to me, love. There's not
only me.

DeWayne interrupts. He hears the SOUNDS of law enforcement storming the house. He leans forward on the bed. With his head dropped, he places the opening of the pistol's barrel against the center of his forehead, and positions his index finger on the trigger. The tears begin to fall from his eyes.

DEWAYNE

I apologize. I ruined everything. I
hope for all the best for you. You
were the greatest love of my life.

At that moment, the police BANG on the bedroom door.

SIMONE

(screaming)

No! I am preg...

BOOM! The gunshot is heard over the phone.

Simone breaks down crying.

The Task Force bursts through the door.

DeWayne lays lifeless on the bedroom floor.