

Brithop Television Series
Pilot: London Fog
By
Minka Wiltz

copyright 2006
WGA-E

Minka Wiltz
minkawiltz@gmail.com
404-668-8974

ÇLÇR ÉSÉVÉB BRIT HOP

An original TV serial concept by M. M. Wiltz of RedFro Productions

BRIT HOP SYNOPSIS

The story of

Carla Campbell- black American woman in early 30s. Grew up in the Atlanta HipHop scene of the '80s while living in the lower class area. Is now the senior editor at Britain's premiere Hip Hop magazine--BritHop. Is becoming more and more like Tiffany by the day.

Tiffany Boddelle--formerly owned Brithop. Early 40s but doesn't disclose her age. Doesn't care about the potential social impact of HipHop. Only interested in the business. The ultimate in snakery. She has just merged with one of the major global conglomerates like Clear Channel or Time Warner. This merger has demoted her to being a figurehead with the title of CEO. Tiffany is a woman who comes from money. Tiffany is striving to save face while her American subordinate--Carla--is constantly making fans of her superiors. Tiffany is not happy with Carla's presence or her popularity.

Ian Conelly- the Irish bred hip-hop aficionado who grew up hanging out with the Rastafarian and African communities in Dublin. He sounds like a Jamaican more than an Irish man and he is smitten with Carla but will prove to be her greatest rival.

Tyrone Williams- Carla's childhood friend who runs his own independent record label in New York. She calls him for advice and consolation when London gets to be too much. Tyrone's biggest secret will not only challenge his friendship with Carla but also shake her foundation.

Daddy Campbell-- Carla's hardworking and loving father who has provided for her all her life and been there though her mother couldn't because of her addiction which took her to the streets.

Mama Campbell-- Carla's deceased mother. Died young from cirrhosis of the liver. Comes to Carla in her dreams periodically; soon begins to appear to Carla when she is awake.

Michael Obike- Carla's very gay biracial assistant who loves all things hip-hop. He isn't out to anyone in the office but Carla. He is loyal and chatty. Carla isn't. Good friends with Soul.

Soul-- 18 year old impressionable British girl who has an enormous crush on Carla. Extremely funky. Carla sees her as a younger sister and Tiffany sees her as a pawn with which to get inside Carla's life and sabotage her career.

BritHop is a semi-surreal-comedic-dramatic series that follows Carla's rediscoveries of what she thought she knew about race and culture in the context of the world, life, and hip hop.

The opening credits roll as we see unruly children in an elementary school gymnasium. There are dozens of them.

CUT TO:

INT.SCHOOL GYMNASIUM--THE STAIRS OF THE STAGE -- MORNING

Patent leather kiddie shoes with bobbie socks begin to take the first step.

CUT TO:

INT. 9-YEAR OLD CARLA'S HOUSE-EARLIER THAT MORNING

We see Daddy Campbell-a robust black man- as he wrestles with Carla's hair. He stands back to admire his work with a fatherly smile.

DADDY CAMPBELL

OH! That's my little girl! You look just like a princess.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM--THE STAGE

The feet and legs of a pudgy 9 year old Carla walk onto the bare stage with only an American flag in the background. As her chubby face is revealed we see her father's handy work: two thick pigtails- one directly at 12 o'clock and the other directly at 3 o'clock with one white ribbon on the end of each. Her dress is a black velvet jumpsuit with white pearl buttons and a hem that stops short just above her chubby knees.

As Carla stands in the center of the stage, the sound of the children's laughter intensifies and a spit ball makes it's way for her lip. Just before it lands:

CARLA (V.O.)

It actually looks worse than it is. This was the assembly that my daddy still talks about with pride. I have won a Rhodes Scholarship, graduated as valedictorian from both high school and college, and now am the senior editor at Britain's premiere HipHop magazine and he *still* can't stop talking about *this* day. I guess it is pretty remarkable that he got my hair in those pigtails.

The spitball lands directly on Carla's lip. The sound of the children quickly subsides as Carla, without wiping the spitball off, begins to read from the piece of paper.

LITTLE CARLA

To the teachers of Erlem Elementary School we, the student body, would like to thank you for your tireless effort in guiding us. We are forever grateful for all your help and would like now to join in giving you this special teacher's day celebration. From us...

(motions to herself)

to you.

(motions to the teachers)

Thank you.

The auditorium is completely silent as Carla stands with the paper clinched in her hand as she tries to begin the applause. No one joins her with applause but, instead, the sound of thunderous laughter is heard and large wet balls begin coming at Carla who cowers helplessly on the floor of the stage.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM -- CONTINUOUS

We see that the children in the assembly are seated quietly while the teachers have taken the children's place in acting disrespectfully and pulling each other's hair, etc.

A shrill scream arises from the assembly and

CUT TO:

A 30 year old Carla opens her eyes slowly to the sound of an answering machine beeping. Sleepy. Not disturbed.

CARLA (V.O.)

See. I told you it wasn't that bad. Granted I've been having that same dream for over a month and NO ONE can tell me what it means. Not even Tyrone.

The answering machine in the hallway is blinking 5 messages as Carla walks by on her way to the kitchen.

CARLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hey. I'm Carla. This is my place...my flat as they say over in this country. And I'm going to kill whoever is calling me at...

The phone rings again.

CARLA (CONT'D)

5 A M!

(hostile kindness
into the phone)

How may I help you at 5 in the morning?

TIFFANY (O.S.)

(too perky)

Hallo? Is that Carla? Tiffany here. Sorry to call you so early. I was just wondering if I could get the tiniest little peek at what you're expecting to present this morning.

CARLA

No.

TIFFANY (O.S.)

Sorry?

CARLA

I won't be in the office until 9 to present...

TIFFANY (O.S.)

Yes, well that's why I'm calling. Clever me. I was wanting to know if you could come in the tiniest bit early so we could firm it up. Say 8:30 or so?

CARLA

I see. As much as I'd love to "firm up" with you, Tiff. I won't be able to make it out of my doctor's appointment by then. So sorry. but if you would like to see an overview...

TIFFANY

(facade of nice fading)

I would really like to see the report in its entirety.

CARLA

Sorry, Tiffany. My bosses are the people coming to the presentation. You changed the guards; you sold the company. I'll see you at the office.

TIFFANY

(pinched)

I see. Well, I guess I will see you when you reach.

CARLA
 Sure thing.
 (mock friendliness)
 Ta.

Carla hangs up the phone and becomes her Southern American self.

CARLA (CONT'D)
 (to herself as she
 walks into the kitchen
 to prepare her coffee)
 "Firm up". Hmph. I got yo' "firm
 up".

CUT TO:

INT. - BRITHOP MAGAZINE-- LATER -- MORNING

Carla walks into her office with portfolio under her arm. Obviously tired and relieved. She is dressed in semi-casual but expensive attire. Her office is full of framed photos of herself standing with famous hiphop artists and tasteful artwork from around the world. She tosses her folder on the table and plops down in her chair. Her intercom buzzes.

CARLA
 Yes, Michael.

MICHAEL
 Just to let you know, you nailed
 that presentation. The company just
 got another investor.
 Congratulations.

CARLA
 Ta very much!

MICHAEL
*...and the dragon lady is breathing
 fire.*

CARLA
 Now, that IS a victory report!!
 Would you get me a real cup of coffee?

MICHAEL
 Tea?

CARLA
 (insistent, slightly
 bratty)
 COFFEE.

Carla hangs up the phone and turns her chair to the window overlooking the city when the intercom goes off again almost immediately.

CARLA (CONT'D)
Coffee, Michael.

MICHAEL
(whispering over
intercom)
Pick up your receiver.

CARLA
What?

MICHAEL
(screaming whisper)
PICK UP!

Carla picks up.

CARLA
What?

MICHAEL
There is a god out here to see you.

CARLA
Michael...?

MICHAEL
Ian Connelly. He says he's
early...but...

CARLA
Oh, roll your tongue up and send him
in.

Carla makes sure her shirt is tucked in and takes her seat
at her desk. There is a knock at the door.

Come in.

Ian is a tall and attractive redhead man with broad shoulders
and very fair skin. Not the Jamaican black man Carla was
expecting.

IAN
(mixture of
Jamaican/Irish accent)
Ms. Campbell?
(he walks to the desk
and extends his hand
which Carla takes a
second too long to
shake)
Ian Connelly. Thank you for seeing
me.

CARLA
(motions to the chair
for Ian to take a
seat)
Yes, Mr. Connelly, please have a
seat.

IAN
I didn't know if I was too early.

CARLA
No. Punctual. That's good.
(trying to recover
from her shock)
Did you bring a...a uh..um a resume?

IAN
(not understanding
the word immediately)
Resume...?

CARLA
Sorry. A C.V...

IAN
Right. Sorry.
(immediately hands it
to her)

Carla takes the resume and peruses it.

CARLA
Oh. You've done work for Vibe
magazine?

IAN
Yes. I was a guest writer for a few
pieces. It was flattering to be
able to work with them. I think of
them as kind of the forerunners of
really telling people about the hiphop
movement.

CARLA
(surprised)

Movement?

IAN
I think hiphop is a movement. I mean
no one thought it would last this
long now there's an exhibition at
the Smithsonian.

CARLA
It's not everyday I hear...

IAN
a white boy who says "movement" when
referring to HipHop.

CARLA
(caught)
OH...No...No! I wouldn't.

IAN
It's okay. I won't tell anyone you
called me white.

CARLA
Mr. Connelly...

IAN
Ian...

CARLA
Ian. On the phone I thought you
were Jamaican. I didn't expect you
would be Irish.

IAN
Yes. I thought about that.

CARLA
It's your accent.

IAN
would you feel better if I sounded
Irish?

CARLA
We...

There's a knock on the door.

CARLA (CONT'D)
Yeah!

Micheael comes in with Carla's coffee. Mooning over Ian.
Stands with the coffee as an offering to him.

CARLA (CONT'D)
Thanks, Michael.

Michael finally comes back to earth and places the coffee on
Carla's desk.

IAN
(referring to Michael)

Is he Irish?

CARLA
No. He's gay.

IAN

(not really hearing)

I am more than qualified for the position but if you don't think it would "look" right for me to write for the magazine I understand.

Ian begins to gather his things to go.

CARLA

Wait. Wait. I'm sorry. All I meant was your accent surprised me. That's all. Do you think you could get some story ideas by tomorrow?

IAN

I have some right now. What time you want them?

CARLA

As soon as you get them in my email box.

IAN

Done.

Elated. Ian offers his hand in good faith to Carla and gets his things together and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT.-CARLA SITTING IN HER NEIGHBORHOOD BAR OVER A CUP OF COFFEE-LATER THAT DAY

She is on the phone with Tyrone who is in his recording studio in New York. This scene cuts back and forth between the two. The conversation between the two uses vernacular and dialect from their Southwest Atlanta days.

TYRONE

Girl, stop trippin'.

CARLA

I ain't lyin', T-. This man is Irish with a Jamaican accent. How could I make that up?

TYRONE

He know his stuff?

CARLA

More than me and you combined.

TYRONE

Watch yo self, now.

CARLA

I might have to make the boy break
me off a piece of verse.

TYRONE

You gon' make the boy rap in your
office?!

CARLA

Yeah.

TYRONE

I don't think that's fair.

CARLA

I got to test him somehow!!

TYRONE

Why not just read his work?

CARLA

Well...

TYRONE-

Listen, boo. I gotta go. I'll call
you later. Alright?

CARLA

But when you coming to visit?

TYRONE-

Soon. Peace.

CARLA

Peace.

CUT TO:

INT. CARLA'S FLAT- LATER THAT EVENING- MUSIC LIKE GNARLS
BARKLEY IS PLAYING

Carla is sitting at her computer working. Her cell phone
rings again. She picks it up to see the name on the caller
i.d. It's Tiffany. She puts it down without answering and
continues typing. Her cell phone rings. Annoyed she looks
at the i.d. it's an unidentified number. She lets it ring
into voice mail as she continues typing. Her curiosity gets
the best of her. She picks up the phone and a Jamaican accent
is on the other end. It's Ian.

IAN (O.S.)

Hello.

(MORE)

IAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

This is Ian Connelly, I came in to interview for the journalist position this afternoon. I was just checking in to see if you had a chance to look at some of the story ideas I sent to you. I'm hoping I got your e-mail address right. Um. Any way, it was nice to meet you. Really so grateful for being considered for the position. Look forward to hearing back from you soon. Cheers.

Carla clicks into her e-mail and begins reading the message Ian sent. He is good.

CUT TO:

INT. - BRITHOP MAGAZINE--NEXT DAY -- MORNING

We see Carla sitting across the desk from Ian. A print out of his e-mail of ideas is in front of her.

CARLA

Ian, the only problem I have is...

IAN

(interrupting her)

Whether or not the rest of the hiphop community cares about Dublin's scene.

CARLA

well...that's one thing...

IAN

(interrupting)

...And if BritHop has a place for the voice of an Irish man.

CARLA

(blindsided)

Well...I don't think...

IAN

(rises from his
chair;moved by his
own passion)

But isn't the whole point of hiphop supposed the be to challenge the structure?!

CARLA

(trying to regain
control)

YES! However...if you...

IAN

And the whole vibe of the music has
been taken and moved into another
direction.

CARLA

(firmly)

IAN!! Mr. Connelly...

Carla notices people passing by her office window who slow
down and look in at her. Michael peeks his head in.

MICHAEL

Knock, knock. Everything alright?

CARLA

We're good, Michael. Thanks.

Michael slowly steps out of the doorway and pulls it shut
with his eyes on Ian.

CARLA (CONT'D)

(still calming down)

I agree with you. Hiphop does have
a message. It's not what it was.
You're right. The message now is
money.

IAN

I ain't writing 'bout nothin' I don't
believe in, man.

CARLA

I'm not asking you to.

IAN

You tellin' me you 'bout money
(rising to go)
I don't think this is goin' to work.

CARLA

Wait!

IAN

I believe in Hiphop. The way it
was...

CARLA

So do I.

IAN

(stops)

You just said...

CARLA
(lowering her voice
and looking him square
in the eyes)
If you write a story that sells, you
can have any story you want. You
have to compromise to get where you
want to be.

IAN
Where I want to be is where I am
now.

CARLA
Where is that?

Ian is shamed with this last question.

CARLA (CONT'D)
Ian. First of all I'm senior editor.
I make decisions around here because
I know how things work. If I hire
you you're going to have to trust
me. I give you a story to cover; a
hot new artist...you probably won't
like...and if you write a good
article...

IAN
(understanding)
...I get to write about what I want.

CARLA
I'll still have to edit it.

Ian stands and considers the offer.

IAN
I get to choose whatever story I
want, yeah?

CARLA
Right...
(reconsidering)
Within reason.
(extends her hand)

Ian takes her hand. She gives him a sharp pull.

CARLA (CONT'D)
Free advice: Don't ever interrupt me
while I'm talking. Clear?

IAN
(sheepishly)
Clear.

Carla walks back around to her chair.

IAN (CONT'D)
so...what's my first assignment?

CUT TO:

INT. RAISE THE NOISE VIDEOSHOOT-NEXT DAY -- AFTERNOON

Ian walks around the set of a gangsta' collaboration between British and US rap artists. Scantly clad women walking around in high heels. Men of color with baggy jeans, heavy jewelry and 'do rags on their heads are getting manicures and pedicures while white men are talking on their cellphones and running the cameras. **ARTHUR GOLDSTIEN** walks up to Ian. Arthur is a white man from New York city; he represents Big Red who is a new gangsta' rap artist from Britain.

ARTHUR
Yo' man! What's up? You the reporter?

IAN
Right. I'm supposed to be interviewing Big Red.

ARTHUR
Where you from?

IAN
Dublin.

ARTHUR
I would'a thought you wuz a brother from Jamaica, man.

IAN
(not interested)
So is he here?

ARTHUR
Yeah, man. I'm his manager, Arthur.
C'mon.
(Arthur leads Ian to
a dressing room)

INT. DRESSING ROOMS -- CONTINUOUS

The two men approach a closed door and hear some rustling inside that sounds like a mixture of heavy breathing and groaning. Arthur knocks on the door. The noise behind the door becomes quiet. Belt buckles and zippers being done up. The door opens and a young woman comes out followed by a young man. They are both fixing their hair and clothes. Arthur looks at Ian and shrugs his shoulders. Arthur walks into the room and closes the door in the face of a surprised Ian who is forced to stand and wait. Arthur comes back out.

Pulls the door behind him for a brief and quiet conference with Ian.

ARTHUR
Ah-ihgt, man. He ready. Ah-ight?
Yo...
(referring to the two
people that left the
dressing room)
You didn't see that. Before.

IAN
What?

ARTHUR
I'm sayin', those people who came
out before...Big Red's...assistants.
You didn't see that... right?

IAN
Assistants?

ARTHUR
Right. Okay. You can go on in now,
man.
(Arthur walks away
quickly without
acknowledging Ian's
confusion)

CUT TO:

EXT. TUBE STATION-TWO DAYS LATER-MORNING

Carla is standing outside the tube station talking on her cell phone. It's cold and she's moving around very animated as she talks with her best friend and one time lover Tyrone.

CARLA
(a mixture of amusement
and disbelief)
GAY! This boy just outed Big Red.

TYRONE
(sitting at his
breakfast table at
home)
For real?

CARLA
We all know about it but we don't
know know about it. Right?

TYRONE
Right.

We see someone bring him another orange juice. We never see the face.

CARLA
Tyrone! Hello?

TYRONE
Yeah, I'm here.

CARLA
So what do you think I should do?

TYRONE
You didn't get this far not knowing what to do, Carla.

CARLA
Yeah, but...

TYRONE
It could be good publicity.

CARLA
Or bad controversy.

TYRONE
Come on, girl. You know there's no such thing.

A hand comes and rests on Tyrone's shoulder. He lays his head on it affectionately as he speaks. The hand moves away. He's in love.

TYRONE (CONT'D)
Okay. Listen. You're the boss. Right?

CARLA
Yeah.

TYRONE
Then, put a spin on it. Make it sell the magazine. They love you over there don't they?

CARLA
I can't spin this one, Tye.

TYRONE
I've known you for 20 years. You can do anything you want. You just gotta want it.

CARLA
I ain't used to gay cats in this field.

Tyrone is silent.

CARLA (CONT'D)
(slightly romantic)
When you coming to save me?

TYRONE
No need for that. Just...do what you do.

CARLA
I miss you.

TYRONE
I miss you too. But I gotta go. We just waking up over here.

CARLA
Okay. Tye...?
(tentative)
What do you think about it? The gay thing.

TYRONE
(uncomfortable)
I don't think about that shit. You know me.

CARLA
(lightening up)
Yeah. Boy, you right about that. I know you better than anyone else. I want a date and time of your arrival next time I talk to you. 'Kay?

TYRONE
I'm working on it. Bye.

CARLA
Peace.

Carla hangs up the phone and goes into the tube station. Tyrone sits and looks lovingly into the distance. A beautiful man approaches him in a suit and tie. The man leans over, kisses him tenderly on the lips.

TYRONE
Don't be late for dinner.

The man leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. - BRITHOP MAGAZINE--NEXT DAY -- EVENING

Carla and Ian are having a standoff. She is standing at her window with her back to him.

He is sitting in the chair across from her desk.

IAN

You told me to interview him. That's what I did.

CARLA

I didn't tell you to kick him out of the closet.

IAN

I didn't.

Carla picks up the article from her desk and begins to read:

CARLA

"...From the moment I approached Big Red's dressing room door, I didn't know what to think of his reputation. After seeing his male and female playmates leaving his room, I knew the rumors didn't even start to tell the story..."

(stops reading)

What the hell was that?!

IAN

I wrote what happened. The boy is gay.

CARLA

We don't need to know that.

IAN

WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW!!!?

CARLA

We need to know about his work, his upcoming CD. Who he collaborates with. What his future plans are. The music. That's what this magazine is about. The music.

IAN

(under his breath)

Sounds more like the bullshit.

CARLA

What was that?

IAN

I don't think it's going to work out. I'm not going to be able to do this.

CARLA

Good luck.

Ian grabs his bag and goes. Carla buries her head in her hand and pulls out a joint from a cigarette box just when Michael knocks on the door.

CARLA (CONT'D)
(hiding her joint.
irritated)
Yes?

Michael peeks his head in.

MICHAEL
(referring to Ian)
What's up with that?

CARLA
It didn't work out.

Michael wants to know more but knows better than to ask. He waits.

CARLA (CONT'D)
(patience lost)
Anything else, Michael?

MICHAEL
(startled into
remembering)
Oh! I was meant to drop this off
with you from the dragon lady.
(he lays it on her
desk gingerly)

CARLA
What is it?

MICHAEL
I couldn't see through the envelope.
You need anything else?

CARLA
No. Thanks.

Michael walks out. Carla considers opening the envelope but decides to light up first. When she gets her first drag down she opens the envelope. Laughter. A shit storm is brewing. And she needs a drink.

CUT TO:

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD PUB -- LATER

Carla sits over a vodka tonic while she smokes her "cigarette". In the distance we see Tiffany at the bar. She's sloshed and notices Carla sitting alone. Tiffany approaches an unaware Carla.

TIFFANY
Do you mind...if I join you?

CARLA
(stunned and not
pleased)
Tiffany...

Without waiting for an answer, Tiffany sits down and begins to unload.

TIFFANY
I've always really liked this place.
It's got that quaint feeling of being
comfortable with the bottom feeders.

CARLA
What brings you to this side of town,
Tiffany? Hyde Park seems more like
your speed.

TIFFANY
Oh. I was waiting...

CARLA
Waiting for...?

TIFFANY
I was waiting for you, dear. I wanted
to see if I could have a personal
chat.

CARLA
Personal.

TIFFANY
When I dropped off that little
envelope with your personal poofter-
assistant I thought I could contain
my disappointment. My contempt. I
couldn't.
(immediately
sympathetic)
I have been good to you, haven't I
Carla?

CARLA
Excuse me...?

TIFFANY
I gave you a job when no one wanted
to believe an American like you could
do business in London...the greatest
bastion of civilization since the
Roman Empire.

CARLA
 (warning and contempt)
 Tiffany...

TIFFANY
 And I put you to work. Granted, you worked your way up diligently. Your people are known for that, aren't they? You work the streets and make it a sort of business. Right?

CARLA
 I think you should walk away before you say something you don't mean.

TIFFANY
 I mean it. You were angling the entire time. You were planning on taking my place from the moment I dusted you off from the gutter.

CARLA
 What-?!

TIFFANY
 I'm still your boss. Your job is to make me money, not to take my job. And if you think that little notice from the board means that you're going to be in charge.
 (mock black american street dialect)
 You better watch your back, shortie. I'm tougher than you think.

CARLA
 (amused in spite of herself. She calmly finishes her drink and pays)
 You've been drinking. We'll talk about this in the meeting tomorrow.

Carla leaves Tiffany alone.

CUT TO:

INT. - BRITHOP MAGAZINE-- NEXT DAY-- MORNING

Carla sits at a conference table with two white men who act as though they are a two headed monster. Tiffany is obviously not recovered from her night.

SUIT 1
 We want you both to know that we value your contributions to the
 (MORE)

SUIT 1 (CONT'D)
 magazine. Now that things are taking
 a turn for the better, we think some
 changes are in order.

SUIT 2
 (in agreement)
 Changes. Right.

TIFFANY
 You made that clear in your letter.

SUIT 2
 Then you understand that we need to
 make Brithop look more like our target
 audience.

TIFFANY
 I understand that the mission of
 this magazine has been overlooked.

SUIT 2
 Precisely!

SUIT 1
 Which is why Ms. Campbell is to be
 Brithop's new CEO.
 (Tiffany is stricken.
 Carla is trying to
 hide her elation.)
 Congratulations Ms. Campbell.

TIFFANY
 I don't believe this.

SUIT 1
 Ms. Bodelle...Tiffany. You knew
 this was an option we could exercise
 upon the merger. You have done a
 fine job with building this magazine,
 but it's time for fresh blood.

SUIT 2
 You'll not be made redundant.

SUIT 1
 Oh No!

SUIT 2
 Every good CEO needs a president to
 support her.

TIFFANY
 When I began BritHop I had the vision
 of a place where all races of people
 would be able to enjoy the music
 (MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

that gave a voice to young people who otherwise wouldn't be heard at all. While I have no doubt that Carla understands the *origins* of HipHop more than I might, I think it would be more effective to know that this genre is accessible to all young people. Not just nonwhites...quite frankly. Giving my presence a very poignant meaning...

SUIT 2

We agree with you, Tiffany but, if we may also speak frankly, we consider Ms. Campbell...

CARLA

(congenially
ininterrupting)

Please

(referring to herself)

Carla.

SUIT 2

(acknowledging her)

We consider Carla to be better suited for the position because of her...

(trying to find the
tactful way to put
it)

SUIT 1

For her ability to relate to the current generation. Let's face it. She has been the senior editor who is responsible for placing BritHop readers in the know before most mainstream publications could get a scent of the stories we had.

SUIT 2

Right. You do want to keep BritHop on top of the heap don't you? With hundreds of competitors popping up everyday, we need to maintain an ever sharper edge.

SUIT 1

Let's keep BritHop on top.

The suits look at each other and are impressed with their slogan.

SUITS IN UNISON

Let's keep BritHop on top!!!!

SUIT 2

Brilliant.

The two men remember the two ladies and return their attention to them. Carla looks over at Tiffany and remembers their last interaction.

CARLA

Will I be able to bring my assistant
with me?

Tiffany storms out of the room without another word. As she tears a path down the hall Soul-- an 18 year old butch-punky-looking black woman--is walking off the elevator. The two collide. Tiffany gives her a stare that could melt steel and continues walking. Soul looks around the office trying to find a friendly face. She is wearing a backpack and baggy clothes. She looks down the hall as Carla is walking out with the suits and shaking their hands. She's stunned. Never in her life has she seen someone so beautiful. Just as she is about to fantasize about meeting Carla, Michael calls from the distance.

MICHAEL

SOUL!!!!!! What up, girl!!?
(he runs up and they
embrace. Long time
friends)
You're early. Great!

SOUL

I wasn't sure where I was going.
You know how I am about
directions...so. First day and all.

Carla approaches them both. Soul almost faints. She's more beautiful up close.

MICHAEL

Hey, Carla. This is Soul. She's
going to be filling in for me during
my holiday.

CARLA

Soul? That's some name. Your parents
give it to you?

SOUL

No. But they're tired of arguing.

CARLA

Funny. Well, I gotta get going so
you two have a good time. Oh,
Michael, thank you so much for that
envelope last night.

MICHAEL
That's my job.

CARLA
When you get back your stuff is going
to be gone.

MICHAEL
(alarmed)
What?

CARLA
The envelope you gave me was a
promotion to CEO. I'm moving to the
top floor and you're coming with me.

Michael and Carla scream and jump up and down. Soul is happy
to be a part of the celebration but doesn't know what the
party is about.

CARLA (CONT'D)
So have a good holiday. And be ready
to work when you get back.

Carla floats away and Soul watches. Michael notices.

MICHAEL
She's out of your league, mate.
Let's go.

The two friends move off into the direction of Michael's
desk.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN ATLANTA STREET--LATE EVENING

Mama Campbell is standing in the middle of the sidewalk next
to the Georgia Terrace Hotel. She is holding her hand out
to passers by when Carla walks up to her and puts a platinum
American Express card in her hand.

MAMA CAMPBELL
(obviously high)
Hey. Thank you ma'am. Thank you.
God bless you.

Carla pulls up a wheel barrow of money bags and places them
in front of her mother who immediately recognizes her.

MAMA CAMPBELL (CONT'D)
Oh! Hey, baby. How you? I been
wondering about you. Wonderin' how
you been doin'.

CARLA
Hey mama.

MAMA CAMPBELL
 (continuously stuffing
 her clothes full of
 the money)
 How you been?

CARLA
 I been good. I been doin' real good
 at school and I even got a promotion.

MAMA CAMPBELL
 (slightly interested
 in the discrepancy)
 You get promoted at school?

CARLA
 (happy that her mother
 was listening)
 Yeah, mama. I still get promoted.

Suddenly, Mama Campbell stops stuffing her clothes with money and becomes completely sober. There is a quick glimpse of her as a street woman and then she begins to uncover a business suit. She transforms herself right before Carla who is overjoyed to see her mother clean and respectable looking.

MAMA CAMPBELL
 (typical compassionate
 mother. Her speech
 pattern changes to
 that of an articulate
 college professor or
 business woman)
 I just couldn't stay with it long
 enough, baby. I just couldn't stay
 with you long enough.

CARLA
 But you're here now.

MAMA CAMPBELL
 But not for long. Gotta get my fix.
 (begins to laugh
 uncontrollably and
 goes back to stuffing
 her clothes with
 money)

There is the sound of a fire engine passing.

CUT TO:

Carla wakes up in her flat to the sound of a fire engine outside. The clock says 6 a.m. She rolls out of bed and starts her day. The phone rings.

CARLA

Hello.

DADDY CAMPBELL

Hey, baby. I just woke up thinking
about you. How you doing?

CARLA

I'm alright.

DADDY CAMPBELL

What's wrong?

CARLA

Nothing. You must have been thinking
about me because I got promoted
yesterday. I'm going to be able to
buy you a nice house this year some
time.

DADDY CAMPBELL

(not interested in
the news)

That's real good news, but what's
wrong, baby?

CARLA

I've been having dreams again.

DADDY CAMPBELL

(extremely
compassionate)

About your hair?

CARLA

No, daddy. Not about my hair.

DADDY CAMPBELL

(sadly defensive and
apologetic)

I learned how to braid from the next
door neighbor.

CARLA

I know you did.

DADDY CAMPBELL

(outright defensive)

I practiced!

CARLA

My hair was fine, daddy. And, you
know, the other kids stopped making
fun of me after a while.

DADDY CAMPBELL
(calms down)
Then what is it?

CARLA
I been dreaming about mama.

DADDY CAMPBELL
(somber)
Oh.

CARLA
In the dream she's on Peachtree
Street.

DADDY CAMPBELL
Which one?

CARLA
Between the Fox and the Georgia
Terrace. And she's homeless. She
looks horrible, daddy. She's got
these awful shoes on that are worn
through the soles and she smelled
bad. All I wanted to do was crawl
up in her lap, but...you know...she
was standing up.

DADDY CAMPBELL
Right.

CARLA
Then it all changed. She called me
"baby". She said she thought about
me.
(hesitant to ask)
Did she ever ask about me, daddy.

DADDY CAMPBELL
Boogie bear...?

CARLA
Did she?

DADDY CAMPBELL
(reluctantly)
She was sick. She loved you as best
she could. She couldn't see nothing
but her addiction.

Carla sits looking out her window.

DADDY CAMPBELL (CONT'D)
Carla?

CARLA

Yeah. I'm here. I was just wondering.

DADDY CAMPBELL

Wondering?

CARLA

Wondering why she wants to talk to me now.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGAZINE STAND--NEXT MORNING

Carla is at the magazine stand perusing the magazines for her favorite fashion magazine. Her eyes are drawn to a picture of Big Red--the artist Ian outed for BritHop--on the cover of Rolling Stone. The headline is "The Big Red Nobody Knows" by Ian Donnelly. She scoops up a copy and rushes back to her office.

CUT TO:

INT. - BRITHOP MAGAZINE-- LATER

Carla is reading the article she wouldn't let Ian run in BritHop when her phone rings.

CARLA

Hello. Carla Campbell here. Yes.
I'm reading it right now. No. No.
I didn't know anything about this.
Yeah, it was a bad move. Who? What?
No? How can this be good? Really?
Oh. Well. I'm sure it's just a
phase. Gay Lesbian Bisexual
Advocates? Elated. No. Right.
I'm right on it.

There's a knock at the door. Michael pops his head in the door.

MICHAEL

(overjoyed, carrying
a copy of the magazine)
Did you read?
(noticing she is
holding a copy of
the magazine)
Ah. Guess you already picked up a
copy. Scandalous, right?

Carla looks miserable.

CARLA

Did you know about this?

MICHAEL

Well, yeah. People been seeing him
in the clubs everywhere. Sweet guy
really. A bit lonely, I think.
Didn't that sweet-meat Ian interview
him?

CARLA

(defensively)
Stop rubbing it in!

MICHAEL

(not sure what he
said wrong)
Sorry. Listen, I'm on my way home.
Soul is here to take over. Anything
you need me to do in particular?

Carla shakes her head without speaking.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Right. Well. I'll see you all in
two weeks. Carla? You alright?

CARLA

(snapping out of it)
Yeah. Michael. Thanks. Yeah. Have
a good lunch.

Michael takes that as a goodbye and leaves. The phone rings.

CARLA (CONT'D)

Hello.

TIFFANY

(on the other end)
You do realize your little Irishman
has sunk us.

CARLA

Good morning, Tiffany.
(Carla puts her on
speaker phone)

TIFFANY (O.S.)

And there is no way out of this.

CARLA

How are you?

TIFFANY (O.S.)

Do you hear me? Do you know what
this means?

CARLA

If you're referring to the article,
it just means that more gay folks
will buy hiphop.

TIFFANY (O.S.)

Oh, that simple, yes?

CARLA

Maybe.

TIFFANY

"Maybe" doesn't sell magazines.

CARLA

Tiffany, that's all that sells
magazines--speculation. I've got
another call.

Carla hangs up the phone and finishes the article. The
intercom goes off. Soul's voice is on the other end.

SOLE

Hello, Ms. Campbell. Yes, mum, Mr.
Donelly is here to see you.

CARLA

Call me "Carla". And send him in
with a bulletproof vest.

Ian walks in.

IAN

Hello. I see you got the magazine.
I was wondering if you would read
it.

CARLA

(composed)

So this is the rag that hired you?

IAN

The only other magazine to rival
BritHop.

CARLA

They cover all things pop.

IAN

They cover all things music.

CARLA

The Rolling Stone. Yeah, if you're
into a purely white perspective on
music.

Ian takes no offense at this remark and Carla shows no regret for such a snide comment.

IAN

I just wanted to come by and thank you for not hiring me.

CARLA

Oh. In the mood to gloat?

IAN

Somewhat.

CARLA

Alright. Is that it?

IAN

No. I want you to have dinner with me.

CARLA

(indignant)

You came here to ask me on a date?

IAN

Yes. So if you're ready to go now, we can get a great seat at this kebab place I know.

CARLA

What makes you think I'm interested in sharing a meal with you?

Carla stands looking at this man in disbelief. Just as she is about to say "no" she looks over his shoulder out her office window. Mama Campbell is standing at the window with a calm smile on her face, nodding.

IAN

I'm just saying if you're hungry...

Carla moves to the window without saying a word. She walks out of her office and looks into the face of Mama Campbell--the deceased mother.

MAMA CAMPBELL

He's nice. You should hold on to the nice ones as long as you can.

Carla stares at her mother. Ian walks up behind her.

IAN

Carla?

Startled, Carla turns around to him and back to where her mother was standing. She is gone.

IAN (CONT'D)

Okay?

END OF ACT ?????