

THE LEMON TREE

By

Gene Cartwright

THE LEMON TREE
"NEW BEGINNING"

OPENING

EXT. LEMON TREE SALON - MORNING

AUTO TRAFFIC ROLLS, AND HOT MUSIC BLENDS WITH TRAFFIC SOUNDS.
THE LEMON TREE SALON NAME APPEARS ON STORE AWNING.

TEASER

INT. LEMON TREE SALON - MORNING

AT STATIONS, JANET, 25 WITH CUSTOMER, IRENE. BEVERLY HAS
CUSTOMER, RENÉ. MARCIA, 28, SITS AT 3RD STATION, MELINA
UMBAWI, EVELYN, SYREETA ARE AT FRONT DOOR PEERING OUT.

A BOY, PATRICK, 8, PUTS CANDY IN CANISTER ON RECEPTION DESK,
PLACES INVOICE ON DESK, GOES TO JANET'S STATION.

PATRICK

I'm all done. I left the invoice on
the desk.

JANET

Thanks, Patrick. See ya in three
weeks. Don't be late for school.

THE TWO EXCHANGE WINKS, PATRICK TURNS, EXITS SALON.

JANET (CONT'D)

He is sooo cute. Wish he were about
twelve years older. We'd be about the
same age.

BEVERLY

Is that twelve dog years?

JANET

Entrepreneur, too. When he grows up --

BEVERLY

-- Ah, Janet, I knew you liked them young but this is ridiculous. Get some help, girl.

JANET

C'mon Beverly. It's obvious, you're just jealous.

BEVERLY

Me, jealous?

JANET

Yes.

BEVERLY

Of what?

JANET

Of the fact I have a way with men.

BEVERLY

Men? He's only eight. I've got underwear that old. Besides, who can resist a real woman?

(strikes sexy pose)

END TEASER

OPENING MONTAGE

EXT. THE LEMON TREE - MORNING

ALL SALON OPERATORS AND OWNER, KARYN SIMONE, LOCK ARMS AND WALK IN MATCHED STRIDES ACROSS INTERSECTION TO SALON.

OPERATORS ENTER, AS KARYN FACES CAMERA, STRIKES A POSE.

ACT ONEINT. THE LEMON TREE - MORNING

EVELYN, SYREETA, MELINA ALL STAND AT WINDOW, ANXIOUS AND STRAINING TO SEE PEDESTRIANS APPROACH. EVELYN WALKS AWAY.

EVELYN

Forget it. I don't think Karyn's coming. If she was she'd be here by now. Besides, I am not into this hide 'n seek stuff. It is juvenile.

SYREETA

Look, don't be such a poo-poo.

EVELYN

POO-POO? WHAT THE HELL IS A
POO-POO?

SYREETA (CONT'D)

She'll be here. Besides, it's her birthday and the shop's fifth anniversary. Be calm. Relax. We'd do the same for you, probably.

BEVERLY PLAYFULLY STRIKES SYREETA WITH ROLLED UP MAGAZINE.

SYREETA (CONT'D)

Look, I made it up for a moment. It seems to fit. Don't hit me.

EVELYN GLARES AT SYREETA WHO STEPS OUT OF SALON ENTRANCE, LOOKS DOWN SIDEWALK. EVELYN WALKS SLOWLY AWAY FROM DOOR.

MELINA WALKS TOWARD REAR OF SALON.

SYREETA DASHES BACK INSIDE, YELLS OUT.

SYREETA (CONT'D)

Karyn's coming. Evelyn, C'mon. How can you be so calm?

EVELYN STARES AT SYREETA, HANDS ON HIPS.

EVELYN

Excuse me, Syreeta. Do I look like a runner to you? I am packin' 36 double d's and I don't run for nobody - excuse me, anybody. Okay? Must be crazy.

JANET

That's your problem, girl. You need to run.

EVELYN

Funny. Listen to me, Miss Jane Fonda. I'll have you know running can kill you - give you cardiac arrest. I mean, I can't take a nice slow walk in the park without having to step over some dead jogger. No thank you.

JANET

Go on, tell the truth, girl. You won't run 'cause you don't want your thighs rubbing together.

(makes squeaky noises)

EVELYN GIVES JANET THE EVIL EYE, SWIPES AT HER WITH MAGAZINE.

EVELYN

Janet, how's your yeast infection? Or was it Herpes? See? Don't start with me. Now, you just take care of your customer.

BEVERLY SNICKERS. JANET'S SMILE VANISHES. EVELYN WALKS AWAY.
ON CUSTOMERS IRENE AND RENÉ.

IRENE

This is all so very interesting.
What's going on? Does she really have
... you know.

RENÉ

I'm really not qualified to say.
Anyway, that's just their way of
showing affection.

IRENE

Affection? Oh, I see.

EVELYN REACHES MARCIA, POUNDS MAGAZINE ON HER COUNTER, GRABS
HER WRIST TO WAKE HER, PULLS HER UP.

MARCIA

(groggy)

What are you doing? Stop.

EVELYN

C'mon, Get up. Next time, get some
sleep. Tell Romeo to take a cold
shower.

SYREETA

Get up.

MELINA

She'll be here any minute now.

SYREETA AND MELINA WALK TO REAR OF SALON.

MARCIA

Romeo? I'll have you know I was up
late watching Nightline.

EVELYN

Got a thing for Ted Koppel, huh?

GIVES MAGAZINE TO CUSTOMER, DIANE, ALREADY WITH MAGAZINE.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Here, Diane, I'll be right back.
(keeps walking)

DIANE

I hope so. I could have a hot date
with Kevin Costner tonight, you know.

EVERYONE LAUGHS IN RIDICULE.

DIANE (CONT'D)

It could happen.

EXT. MYRTLE AVE TRAFFIC - MORNING

INT. SALON - MORNING

AT ENTRANCE, A FROWNING KARYN ENTERS ,DOESN'T SEE NERDY MR.
BILL GILL 35, IN GLASSES, ENTER BEHIND HER.

JANET, BEVERLY SEE HIM, TRY TO SIGNAL HER.

KARYN TOSSES HER PURSE ASIDE, TAKES SEVERAL STEPS, STANDS
WITH HANDS ON HER HIPS.

BEVERLY AND JANET FREEZE, STARE AT HER.

BEVERLY STARTS TO SPEAK, BUT IS CUT OFF.

KARYN

Save it. Just save it. I don't wanna
hear a single word.

(MORE)

KARYN (CONT'D)

I don't wanna hear good morning, good luck or congratulations or nothing. Not only am I having a bad hair day-no pun intended, I am on the verge of committing a homicide. So, hold the happy talk. Thank you, very much.

BEVERLY

Excuse us. But why would we want to congratulate you or wish you luck? Am I missing something?

KARYN STARES. BEVERLY TURNS, ADDRESSES A FIDGETY MR. GILL.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

Hellooo.

BEVERLY WAVES AT HIM. KARYN TURNS TO FACE MR. GILL.

KARYN

Mr. Gill. You came by yesterday, and the day before that. What's the emergency now? Can't it wait. Please?

RENÉ TURNS TO IRENE TO INTERPRET.

RENÉ

(whispers)

The landlord has a woody for Karyn.

IRENE

A woody?

RENÉ

Yeah. The jacket's a coverup.

MR. GILL/KAREN

MR. GILL

Miss Simone, you look very nice, as usual. Ah, I have your new lease.

GETS COLD REACTION FROM KHAREN.

MR. GILL (CONT'D)

Why don't I come back? Yeah, I'll come back.

KARYN STARES. MR. GILL BACKS AWAY, STUMBLES TOWARD DOOR.

KARYN

Sorry, ladies. Forgive me.

MR. GILL RETURNS, INTERRUPTS HER.

MR. GILL

Ah, what time should I come back?

SILENCE. KARYN STARES. GILL LEAVES. KARYN TURNS BACK.

KARYN

So, let me get this straight. You two weren't about to wish me anything at all?

BEVERLY AND JANET EXCHANGE GLANCES, SHRUG SHOULDERS.

JANET

No. I wasn't. Were we supposed to?

KARYN LOOKS PAIR OVER WITH FEIGNED DISAPPOINTMENT.

KARYN

I guess not.

KARYN STARTS TO REAR, STOPS AT MARCIA'S, LOOKS AROUND.

KARYN (CONT'D)

Where are Cinderella and her step-sisters this morning?

STAFF EXCHANGE GLANCES, PUZZLED EXPRESSIONS. KARYN WAITS.

KARYN (CONT'D)

Well? You guys aren't talking, huh?

Listen, I'm trying to run a business here. I expect people to be on time.

Is that asking too much? How can I run a franchisable business here? How can we expand and develop new businesses if --

KARYN STOPS AS, MARCIA, SYREETA AND EVELYN, EMERGE FROM REAR WITH BIRTHDAY CAKE AND A BIG GOLDEN CANDLE IN ITS CENTER.

KARYN MOVES TO JOIN THEM.

INCLUDE CAKE

KARYN (CONT'D)

Oh, my god. I swear. You got me. You got me.

BEVERLY

Go on. What was that about step sisters?

KARYN CUPS HAND TO MOUTH. ALL, INCLUDING JANET AND BEVERLY WALK TOWARD THEM. ALL BEGIN BIRTHDAY SONG.

ON CUSTOMERS

IRENE

(dabs eyes)

This is so touching. I think I'm gonna
cry.

RENÉ

Oh, please.

RETURN TO KARYN AND CREW

ALL SING

/Happy Birthday to you - Happy
Birthday to you. Happy Birthday dear
Karyn, Happy Birthday to you./

KARYN IS SURPRISED, EMBARRASSED.

KARYN

Oh, my god. And look at this thing.
(points at giant candle)

EVERYONE

/How old are you? How/ --

KARYN

-- Okay, now. Don't start anything

EVELYN PLACES CAKE ON NEARBY TABLE.

KARYN (CONT'D)

I should've known. And you two
(to Beverly and Janet)
were looking at me like I was crazy or
something. You ding-dongs. And look at
this thing.
(points at cake)

JANET

Ding dongs? That's not nice, Karyn.
Maybe we oughta take back Marcia's
gourmet cake.

KARYN

Marcia made this? Oh, my God. Just
kidding. Look, I'm sure the cake is
great, but I wanna know where you guys
found that candle.

ALL POINT TO MARCIA.

MARCIA

What candle?
(yawns)

KARYN

What candle? For a minute I thought
there was a very unusual man in my
cake.

ALL LAUGH. KARYN BLOWS OUT CANDLE TO APPLAUSE/CHEERS.
CUSTOMERS JOIN IN. JANET GETS KNIFE, FORKS, PAPER PLATES.

ON RENÉ AND IRENE

RENÉ

Everybody's so friendly here. By the
way, I'm René.

IRENE

I'm Irene.

RENÉ

I've been coming here for about a year. How about you?

IRENE

Oh, this is my first visit. My husband's ex-sister-in-law's first cousin's best friend's wife, Sylvia told me about it.

RENÉ

(slack-jawed)

That's fascinating.

IRENE

She said she was so satisfied with the service. Said I should see for myself. So, I said sure, Sylvia.

RENÉ

I see.

JANET SLICES AND SERVES CAKE.

KARYN

Save that candle for me, alright?

BEVERLY

I'll split it with ya.

JANET HANDS EVELYN A PIECE OF CAKE. EVELYN STARES AT IT.

EVELYN

No, thanks. I really shouldn't. Chocolate gives me gas. Besides, that's gotta be at least three-hundred-fifty calories.

MARCIA

At least. I'd say about oh, six-hundred, easy.

EVELYN

Who asked you, Miss Jenny Craig?

KARYN

Listen, thanks ladies. We couldn't make this happen without each other. You know that.

MELINA

Yeah, we know. Thanks, anyway.

JANET STILL EXTENDS CAKE TO EVELYN.

JANET

I'm not gonna stand here all day. Just chase it with some Slim-fast or diet Pepsi like you always do. You'll be fine.

EVELYN

That is not funny at all.

JANET

Well, don't eat it.

(starts away)

EVELYN TAKES CAKE, JANET TAKES A PIECE, STARTS BACK TO HER STATION & DIANE, WHO SIGHS. EVELYN ALMOST DROPS HER CAKE.

KARYN STANDS NEAR MANICURE STATION. BEVERLY WALKS TO HER.

BEVERLY

Why you were so bitchy earlier,
besides the PMS, and I'm not trying to
be funny.

KARYN

Good because woman to woman, there is
nothing funny about PMS.

ALL-EYES ARE ON KAYRN AD BEVERLY.

KARYN (CONT'D)

Well, I may as well tell all of you,
so I can have some peace.

KARYN (CONT'D)

You guys are so nosey, I swear. Just
look at you. Anyway, it's Jack. Okay?

EVELYN

I knew it, I knew it. Girl, I am
convinced ex-husbands never die.

SYREETA

You're right. They just start looking
better and dating younger women. It's
true.

BEVERLY

Syreeta, girl, I'm not gonna say what
I'm thinking. I'm not.

MELINA

Say it girl. Say it!

BEVERLY

Syreeta, just what would you know about married men? I thought you were a virgin.

SYREETA

I am. But I don't have to think, act and dress like Mother Teresa. Anyway, I learn all I need to know from Oprah.
(sings)
/I'm every woman. I'm every woman/ I'm
--

INT. BEVERLY AND JANET'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

KARYN

I was stupid enough to let him come over last night. He called, sounded so serious. He said he had some very important business to discuss. I said okay.

BEVERLY

Uh huh. And?

KARYN

You won't believe this. I am so ... I mean, this man had the gall to tell me he plans to sue me for his so-called share of the equity in my business.

EVERYONE

He what?

KARYN

He says that during our marriage, he sacrificed to make the business grow and deserves to share in the success.

JANET

Does he?

KARYN

Hell no. I had to fight him every step of the way, to start this business. He wanted to open a sushi bar in Watts.

JANET

What did you say when he threatened to sue?

KARYN

Nothing.

EVERYONE

Nothing?

KARYN

Well, by the time I went to the bedroom and came back with my three-fifty-seven he was gone.

ALL APPLAUD. BEVERLY RETURNS TO STATION, KARYN FOLLOWS.

KARYN (CONT'D)

(to Beverly)

God, we were married three years...
been divorced for three.

(MORE)

KARYN (CONT'D)

Never thought I'd marry an older man, but he was so smart, so debonair, so cosmopolitan — a world traveler. I just fell in love with him.

BEVERLY

So, what happened.

KARYN

Well, we just discovered we were separated by more than years — going different places. We're both pretty strong-willed.

BEVERLY

Excuse me, but you sound like you still ... Never mind. You think it's money he wants?

KARYN

No way. He was broke when were divorced, but he now makes half a million dollars a year now, and he's not getting a dime from me. Makes me mad to think I used to wash his dirty drawers.

BEVERLY

(flailing)

Yeah! And I bet you probably cooked him dinner and served it piping hot every night.

KARYN

Actually, I fed him TV dinners –
gourmet, of course.

BEVERLY

And you stayed awake at night
listening to him snore, only he swore
he didn't snore.

KARYN

Now, I did do that.

BEVERLY

And you cleaned his ring around-the-
tub, like he was some three year old.

BEVERLY BECOMES MORE ANIMATED, SHE POUNDS RENÉ'S HEAD.

KARYN

I should have made him clean it.

BEVERLY

And just when you've got it all
together and he's out of your life...
This!

RENÉ IS POUNDED OUT OF HER CHAIR, MOVES OUT OF LINE OF FIRE,
LOOKS AT THE TWO, SHOWS STUNNED DISBELIEF.

RENÉ

Ladies, please.

KARYN

Right. You watch Oprah too, huh?

BEVERLY

Yeah. I've also been married twice.

MELINA

Karyn, you know you can count on us.
And you've got your sister Felicia to
commiserate with regarding the
vicissitudes of life.

JANET LOOKS AT MELINA WITH PUZZLED EXPRESSION.

JANET

What did she just say?

KARYN

You're right. Since Mom and Dad died,
we only have each other. But, right
now, enrolling at U.C.L.A. is all
that's on her mind and I want to keep
it that way. By the way, She's
stopping by later with her new
boyfriend.

MARCIA

Uh-oh. Poor guy's in trouble.

IRENE

(to René)

What does she mean by that?

RENÉ

Felicia's boyfriends have to pass
their test, bare their souls, run the
gauntlet.

IRENE

I see. Like Tailhook for women.

INT. AT WALL NEAR RECEPTION AREA

KARYN LIFTS A FRAMED CHECK FROM WALL NEAR RECEPTION DESK,
LOOKS AT IT. SYREETA STEPS CLOSER.

SYREETA

Why do you keep that ol' check on the
wall. It's worthless.

KARYN

It's from my very first customer at my
old shop - Mrs. Fannie Mae Foster. She
was seventy-five then ... probably
dead now. I remember she kept waiting
for me to open.

KARYN (CONT'D)

I only had three seats then, counting
the commode.

SYREETA

Karyn, you told us she stopped payment
the very next day. You never even got
paid.

KARYN

I know. I'm just sentimental. The
very next day, she got mad, claimed
whatever I did made her hair come out.
She never came back.

(returns check)

I think I'll go call my lawyer.

SYREETA

Wait a minute. You're kidding. After five years, you're gonna sue that old lady?

KARYN

Syreeta, you need a man, girl. Your hormones are all screwed up. I'm talking about this mess with Jack.

SYREETA

Oh. I knew that. I did.

INT. AT FRONT DESK

EVELYN GOSSIPS ON PHONE. AN ANGRY DIANE ENTERS FRAME.

DIANE

Evelyn. You think maybe sometime today?

EVELYN

I'm sorry, Diane. I'll be right there.

EVELYN GIVES HER ANOTHER MAGAZINE. DIANE FLASHES A "WTF" LOOK, EXITS FRAME IN A HUFF.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Girl, these women make me sick.

DIANE

I heard that.

EVELYN SMILES, SHEEPISHLY. DIANE STORMS AWAY. EVELYN HANGS UP, STICKS OUT HER TONGUE BEHIND DIANE'S BACK.

ON RENÉ AND IRENE

IRENE

Who's the lady at that last station?

RENÉ

Oh, that's Melina - Melina Umbawi. She has the toughest job of all.

IRENE

What do you mean?

RENÉ

She's a beauty consultant... does makeovers.

AT MELINA'S STATION WITH CUSTOMER, MIKIE.

MIKIE

Now, are you sure? Can you guarantee I'll be beautiful when you're done?

MELINA

Relative to what, how you looked when you came in this morning?

MIKIE, NODS YES.

MELINA (CONT'D)

Let me put it like this. I guarantee you you'll look better than you've ever looked in your life. Alright?

MIKIE

Okay. I wanna look just like Beverly Johnson.

MELINA

(cracks up)

I do makeovers not plastic surgery.

INT. IN KARYN'S OFFICE, SHE IS ON PHONE.

KARYN

Look, TYLER G. MOREHEAD the Third
 You're my lawyer and I need help, not
 excuses.

KARYN (CONT'D)

Don't give me that crap. Just do it! I
 want Jack gone. Period. And I don't
 care if it is unethical. You are a
 lawyer, aren't you?
 (slams down phone)

INT. ON SALON FRONT DOOR

J.C., BLACK, 30S, IN SOILED SUIT, TATTERED HAT, UNSHAVEN,
 GRUBBY, ENTERS CARRYING WALL STREET JOURNAL. CUSTOMERS STARE.

STAFF IGNORES HIM. HE HEADS STRAIGHT TO REAR, PAST MELINA AND
 MIKIE, TO RESTROOMS.

AT JANET'S AND BEVERLY'S STATIONS

IRENE AND RENÉ LOOK UP AT STAFF-PERSONS, AS IF EXPECTING THEM
 TO REACT. THEY DON'T.

JANET

(to Beverly)

I've never had it this bad before, I
 swear. I hear plain yogurt works
 wonders.

BEVERLY

I get it every now and then. Drives me
 nuts. I wonder if it's as bad as jock
 itch?

JANET

Gotta be worse. Otherwise, men would
get it.

IRENE

Who is this person?

JANET

That's J.C. His street name is Penny.

IRENE

You're joking.

JANET

I swear. Claims he's an ex-Wall Street
broker convicted of insider trading.
He wasn't as lucky as Boesky or
Milken. Judge took every thing he had,
including his dog and his Miles Davis
collection... Thinks he's a preacher.

ON REAR OF SALON

J.C. EXITS RESTROOM, GOES TO MARCIA'S STATION, BEGINS USING
CONDITIONER ON HAIR AND BODY, PUTS HIS HAT ON, MOVES TO
CENTER OF SALON, LOOKS UP, IN PRAYER MODE.

J.C.

Dear Lord, bless this establishment
and all who enter its doors ... except
for U.S. Attorneys, Federal Judges and
Rush Limbaugh. Amen.

J.C. TURNS TOWARD FRONT DOOR, STARTS TO LEAVE.

ON MARCIA

FROM REAR OF SALON, MARCIA YELLS OUT HIS NAME.

MARCIA

J.C.! May I see you for a moment
please?

J.C. WALKS BACK TO MARCIA'S STATION, ARRIVES, SITS IN CHAIR.

J.C.

How you doin', Miss Marcia? You want a
special prayer or a hot stock tip this
morning? I feel the power. So I'm
gonna hook you up. Now, you might
consider communication and
entertainment stocks, which are doing
quite well. Of course, a diversified
portfolio is always advisable. Tax
free municipals and even some --

MARCIA

-- J.C. I don't need investment
advice, today. I need a favor.
Alright?

J.C.

Lord willing.

MARCIA

Let's leave the Lord out of this one.
Now, we appreciate you blessing our
place of business and stopping by to
make sure we're okay and all --

J.C.

-- Yes ma'am. I'm just doing the Lord's work.

MARCIA

I'm sure. And I really don't mind too much, your grooming yourself at my station - always my station.

J.C.

Cleanliness is next to godliness.

MARCIA

(looks him up and down)

Uh huh. Even though you manage to get spray all over the mirror, the chair, the floor and everywhere else.

(voice rises)

ALL EYES ARE ON THE MARCIA-J.C. CONFRONTATION.

J.C.

Oh, I'm very sorry, Miss Marcia.

J.C. REMOVES A HANDKERCHIEF, BLOWS NOSE WITH A LOUD SNORT.

EVERYONE CRINGES, MAKE FACES AT DISGUSTING ACT.

MARCIA

(grimaces, steps back)

I can even handle that. But, next time, would you please lift the damn seat before you pee? I just sat on a wet toilet seat. That's the worst feeling in the world.

J.C.

Yes ma'am. I can imagine.

MARCIA

No. no. I don't think so.

J.C.

Yes ma'am. I'm truly sorry. I promise
you it won't happen again. And just
to make sure, next time I'll pee
sitting down, too.

MARCIA SHAKES HEAD, BEGINS CLEAN UP. J.C. LEAVES FOR EXIT.

AT RECEPTION AREA

EVELYN

Goodbye, J.C.

J.C. GRABS CANDY CANISTER, EVELYN GRABS BACK, SPILLS CANDY.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

J.C.!

J.C. LEAVES, HIS HEAD DOWN.

INT. KARYN'S OFFICE - LATER

KARYN

(firm)

Just do it, Tyler!

(then seductively)

You know how much I appreciate your
solving impossible problems for me.

(then firm again)

I'll be right over.

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. LEMON TREE SALON - MORNINGON SALON ENTRANCE

EVELYN SITS ON EDGE OF DESK. ENTERS MARY MURPHY, 60S, WEARING COLORFUL HIP-HOP SHORTS, BLACK BOOTS, HEAD COVERED WITH CAP. HOT TRACK BOOMS AS MARY DANCES, SNAPS HER FINGERS TO BEAT.

EVELYN

Mary? Mary Murphy, is that you?

SHOCKED, KARYN AND OTHERS, EXCEPT MARCIA APPROACH MARY.

MUSIC STOPS. MARY FREEZES.

KARYN

I don't believe this. Last time we saw you, you were an elegant, gray-haired grandmother with hemlines six inches below your knees. What happened? Are you on drugs?

MARY

I've changed, honey. I've got a new walk, a new talk, a new wardrobe, a new attitude, a new boyfriend and... well, I'm afraid a new hair-do.

MARY REMOVES CAP, REVEALS RAINBOW-COLORED HAIR STICKING IN EVERY DIRECTION. OOOHS AND AAHS ERUPT. KARYN'S EYES BUG OUT.

KARYN

What in the world is that on your head? What happened to you?

MARY

Okay, okay, I'll tell you. Just chill out. Hey, y'all like that? Chill out. That's my new talk.

JANET

I'll bet you it's got something to do with this new boyfriend.

MARY

And what's wrong with that? He thought I should let the real woman in me out. Even gave me a new name - Queen Leticia.

BEVERLY

I don't care if your name is Queen Mary, you look a mess, honey. Did he do your hair?

MARY

No. I went to another salon, okay?

KARYN

You what?

MARY

Well, I knew you guys would talk me out of it sooo ... Listen, don't dis me, please? Just fix me up. I know y'all gon' talk about me like a dog, when I leave. But, hey.

KARYN

Wrong. We're gonna talk about you like a dog, while you're here. You know us.

AT MARCIA'S STATION

MARY HEADS TO MARCIA'S STATION. MARCIA STARES, FROWNING, ARMS FOLDED. MARY ARRIVES AT HER STATION.

MARCIA

No way. Don't come over here. Go tell whoever messed up your hair to fix it.

MARY

C'mon Marcia. Please, redo my 'do'.

MARCIA

To hell with you and your 'do'. Look at you. You look like an old Buckwheat in drag.

MARY

Okay, okay. I strayed, alright? But I'm back. Queen Leticia's in the house, babe.

MARCIA

The nut house. Honey, you need a barber.

MARY

No. I had a barber, once. He couldn't cut it. He had a hell of a razor strap, though.

KARYN ENTERS FRAME.

KARYN

C'mon, Marcia. Give her a break this time.

MARCIA SCOWLS, MARY SITS. MARCIA LOOKS AT HER WITH DISGUST.

MARCIA

This is pathetic. Why you let some ol' man talk you into this?

MARY

Old? Honey, he's twenty-five and a rapper, too.

OOHS AND AHHS SOUND, HEADS TURN.

MARCIA

Your boyfriend is twenty-five and a rapper?

MARY

What can I say? Honey, I catch what I fish for.

KARYN

(to Marcia)

I've gotta go over to Tyler's office.

I'll be back in a few minutes.

(to Mary)

What do you talk about with a twenty-five year old?

MARY

As little as possible, honey.

KARYN HEADS TO HER REAR OFFICE.

RENÉ AND IRENE REACH DRYERS.

IRENE

(to René)

You and I actually went to the same college. That's amazing. I feel like I've found a sister.

RENÉ

I know. Same here.

AT FRONT ENTRANCE

FELICIA, 19, ENTERS. SHE SMILES, NODS HELLO TO STAFF AND WAITING PATRONS, CONTINUES FORWARD.

JANET

Felicia. Hey, look at you girl.
Where's boyfriend?

FELICIA

He had something to do. You know.

EVELYN

Bull. You tipped him off. Don't lie?

FELICIA

Well, I just told him he'd probably get grilled like a hamburger. So, I guess he just --

EVELYN

-- What a wus. You tell him exactly what I said.

THEN, MARK BRINAC, 22, ENTERS. THE WOMEN'S JAWS DROP.

FELICIA

Why don't you tell him? Say hello to
Mark.

EVELYN

I'm gonna kill you.
(steps to Mark)

FELICIA LAUGHS, MAKES QUICK INTROS.

FELICIA

Let me introduce you guys. This is
Beverly, Evelyn, that's Syreeta,
Melina, and that's Marcia. I'm sorry.
And this is Janet.

JANET FEIGNS ANGER AT ALMOST BEING LEFT OUT OF INTROS.

JANET

I'm Janet.

MARK

Hi, Janet. You're as beautiful as I
heard.

JANET

Oh. Thanks. You don't look like a wus.

MARK KISSES JANET'S HAND. BEVERLY HOLDS OUT HERS, MARK GRASPS
IT, SHE PULLS HIM DOWN INTO HER SEAT.

MARK

This must be the hot seat I heard
about.

FELICIA REACHES KAYRN. THEY EMBRACE.

FELICIA

Hi, sis. Happy birthday and Happy 5th.

KARYN

Thanks. Listen, I've gotta run somewhere for a few minutes. You and Mark stay 'til I get back. I've got a little problem to take care of.

FELICIA

You mean, Jack?

KARYN

We'll talk when I get back.

KARYN HUGS MARK, LEAVES. MELINA AND SYREETA APPROACH FELICIA.

MELINA

Felicia, girl we're so proud. U.C.L.A. Right? Look. Take it from me. Get a degree, stay single, be independent and remember, abstinence is the safest sex.

FELICIA

Thanks, Melina. And Syreeta, how's night school? Environmental law, right?

SYREETA

Yeah. Going great 3.7 GPA, so far.

FELICIA

Fantastic. And I love the outfit. You've got to make me one too.

RETURN TO MARK IN CHAIR. EVELYN AND BEVERLY SURROUND HIM.

EVELYN

So Mark, do you believe in abstinence
before marriage?

MARK

I'm sorry. Say what?

BEVERLY

And what's your sign, positive or
negative?

FELICIA LAUGHS, COVERS HER FACE, SHAKES HER HEAD.

RENÉ AND IRENE SIT AT DRYERS. RENÉ LEANS OVER.

RENÉ

My man is just the most romantic guy
I've ever known. So gentle and caring,
and always up for me.
(winks)

IRENE

Wish my husband was like that.

RENÉ

Anyway, he's divorced. Says his ex-
wife was a real shrew, let herself go,
never wore make-up or anything, and
hated sex.

IRENE

Wish I didn't love him, jerk. Can't do
with him, can't do without him.

A WOMAN'S SCREAM PIERCES SALON. BEVERLY CLUTCHES HER CHEST.

HEADS TURN. MARK REGISTERS SHOCK.

INT. AT SALON ENTRANCE

REBECCA SANCHEZ ENTERS, DRESSED IN HEELS, A PROVOCATIVE DRESS, WEARING CLOWN FACE.

EVELYN

You poor thing. What's the story this time?

REBECCA

Please, don't condescend. You all know I view condescension as a form of ridicule and rejection and I can't take anymore rejection for today. Okay? And, please forgive the screaming. It's a part of my self-styled inhibition therapy. I was venting.

JANET

(to Mark)

She's an actress. Every time she has a casting call that flops, we get the fall-out.

(to Rebecca)

Rebecca, say hello to Mark, Felicia's boyfriend. Okay?

REBECCA WALKS OVER.

REBECCA

Hi. I would come by today, huh? I look a mess. I feel completely put upon.

(MORE)

REBECCA (CONT'D)

I swear, I'm not going to another casting call. I'm joining a notary. I mean, a nunnery.

AT MELINA'S STATION

MIKIE

(to Melina)

Who's that with the Bozo look?

REBECCA OVERHEARS AND REACTS.

RETURN TO FRONT OF SALON

REBECCA

Oh. I forgot to take it off. Wait.
That's not true. I mean it's true but I think there must be some reason I forgot — something buried in my subconscious that craves attention.
Some --

MELINA

-- Rebecca. Rebecca! Get a grip.

REBECCA

Okay, okay. So, I went to read for this young attorney role. I'm there five seconds and I'm asked to play a prostitute, of course.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Okay, like I'm Hispanic so automatically I should play a prostitute. No, I don't think so.

EVELYN

A prostitute? In clown face?

REBECCA

Yes. That's because the character is a well-known news anchor, slash call-girl, who doesn't want her johns to recognize her from the six-o'clock news.

BEVERLY

So, why didn't you get the part? Couldn't you play a call-girl? Julia Roberts did it and the next thing you know, she landed Lyle Lovett.

REBECCA

Look, I can play anything. It's just that I refused to do a nude scene. I have principles.

MARCIA

Yeah. And an eviction notice.

MARK

You still could've done the part. They could've used a body double. Right?

REBECCA

In the film, yeah. But, he wanted me to do the scene in his hotel room ... with him.

MARCIA

Fool, you went to a casting call in
some guy's hotel room?

REBECCA

He kept the door open.

BEVERLY GOES TO REBECCA, PUTS AN ARM AROUND HER SHOULDER.

BEVERLY

(whispers)

Listen. You did the right thing,
getting the hell out of that place.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

Ah, you don't happen to have the name
of that hotel and the guy's room
number, do you?

CO-WORKERS RECOIL, OVERHEARING BEVERLY.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

I just want to report him, okay?

EXT. MULTI-STORY OFFICE BLDG. - LATER (AFTERNOON)

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

INSERT SIGN ON DOOR: TYLER G. MOOREHEAD, ATTORNEY AT LAW

KARYN EXITS ELEVATOR, APPROACHES A CLOSED OFFICE DOOR, KNOCKS
FIRMLY. THERE'S NO ANSWER. SHE KNOCKS AGAIN, HARDER.

KARYN

Tyler, I know you're in there.

(waits)

Tyler, open up.

(MORE)

KARYN (CONT'D)

I know you're in there. You've got
your shoes off. I can smell your feet.

SILENCE. FINALLY, DOOR CRACKS. A FOLDER IS SHOVED THROUGH IT
IN SHAKY HAND OF ATTORNEY, TYLER MOOREHEAD.

TYLER (V.O.)

(lisp, stutter)

Now, Miss Simone, please just take a
quick look and hand that right back.
Please?

KARYN

Can't I make copies? I want copies.

TYLER (O.C.)

Oh, no. Definite, definitely not. I
shouldn't be showing you this, anyway.
I have to get that back over to my
brother's CPA office before he misses
it.

KARYN'S FACE BRIGHTENS AS SHE EXAMINES THE FILE.

TYLER (O.C.) (CONT'D)

I sure hope you don't ask me to
violate my canon of ethics again.

KARYN

Yeah, right. This is just what I was
hoping for. If you had your shoes on,
I'd come in and kiss you.

KARYN SLIPS FOLDER BACK INTO TYLER'S HAND.

TYLER (O.C.)

Okay. Just a second.

KARYN

Sorry.

TYLER (O.C.)

I'm putting them on, now.

KARYN

Gotta go. I'm in a hurry.

TYLER (O.C.)

Ah, Miss Karyn, I was ... I was wondering if maybe, this being your birthday and all, you'd have dinner at Denny's with me tonight. My treat?

KARYN

No thanks, Tyler. Save all that money. Buy yourself a personality. And some odor eaters.

TYLER (O.C.)

Ooh. What a shot. You sure know how to circumcise a guy.

KARYN HEADS TO ELEVATOR. TYLER CLOSES DOOR.

INT. LEMON TREE SALON - AFTERNOON

A SMILING KARYN ENTERS, COMES TO SUDDEN STOP. HER SMILE FADES. SHE CONTINUES.

SYREETA, BEVERLY, JANET AND EVELYN ARE IN A CIRCLE AROUND JACK AT JANET'S STATION CHAIR. MELINA, MARCIA, FELICIA & MARK LOOK ON. KARYN MOVES CLOSER. THEY STEP BACK TO REVEAL JACK.

MARCIA

He's all yours, what's left of him.

A FRAZZLED JACK, IN SUIT, TIE IS DISHEVELED, HIS JACKET RIPPED. JACK SEES KARYN, STRUGGLES TO HIS FEET.

JACK

What kinda people you got working here? They're savages. A man's not safe in here.

KARYN

What are you doing here, Jack?

JACK

Look, I feel really bad about ... the way I've approached this whole thing. Why don't we grab some lunch and talk. Alright?

KARYN

We've got nothing more to talk about.

JACK

(looks at Felicia)

C'mon. I just thought maybe we could work out a little out-of-court thing for all our sakes. Just trying to be fair. Felicia knows I'm right.

FELICIA TURNS, WALKS AWAY TOWARD REAR OF SALON.

KARYN

You didn't believe that would work, did you?

JACK

Karyn, just talk to me. Maybe I can be persuaded to drop the whole thing, maybe even invest a little money.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

You've got big dreams. Dreams cost money.

KARYN STEPS AWAY. JACK FOLLOWS. KARYN TURNS BACK TO HIM.

KARYN

You have exactly ten seconds to leave and never bother me again. Goodbye.

JACK

You sound real tough, Karyn. You don't have that three-fifty-seven on you now. Do you?

KARYN

No. I have something better.

JACK

Like what?

KARYN

Like the phone number to the I.R.S.

JACK'S MOUTH FALLS OPEN.

KARYN (CONT'D)

I'm sure they'd like to know all about six years of fraudulent tax returns, and that you're still not declaring hundreds of thousands of dollars. So, I don't want to hear it. Ten, nine, eight --

JACK

Wait. How did you... C'mon Karyn.

KARYN

Seven, six, five, four --

JACK

-- C'mon! Okay. Hey, If you wanna snitch to the IRS, go ahead. They can't touch me. And I don't need your money. I've got everything I need ... almost.

KARYN

So do I. Three, two ...

MELINA PLACES A PORTABLE PHONE IN KARYN'S HAND.

JACK

Remember babe, for three years, your signatures were on those tax returns too.

JACK LEAVES. APPLAUSE AND LAUGHTER ERUPT.

AT MARCIA'S STATION MARCIA TURNS TO MARY.

MARCIA

That's the best I can do, your majesty. This is the Ike Turner special.

MARY STANDS, STARES AT MIRROR MARCIA, LEAVES IN A HUFF.

AT DRYERS

IRENE AND RENÉ SIT WITH DRYERS UP AND OFF. A BEAMING RENÉ SHOWS IRENE A PHOTO OF HER BOYFRIEND. IRENE'S EYES BUG OUT.

SHE GRABS PHOTO, GASPS FOR AIR.

IRENE

(teary)

Oh, my god. Oh, my god. Your boyfriend
... is my husband. That's my husband!

RENÉ SHAKES HER HEAD DISPLAYING DISBELIEF.

RENÉ

Unh-huh, No-no-no.

BEGIN CREDITS

AT MELINA'S STATION, MOMENTS LATER.

MELINA COMPLETES MIKIE'S MAKEOVER. SHE HANDS HER MIRROR.

MELINA

Well, what do you think?

MIKIE

I think everyone's insane. You guys
licensed to operate an asylum?

MELINA

I know, but I meant your new look.

MIKIE

Fantastic. But I think I'll still come
back tomorrow. This is the best show
in town.

AT RECEPTION AREA, AS MARY LEAVES, MRS. FANNY FOSTER, 80,
WEARING FANNY PACK AND REEBOKS ENTERS, CHECK IN HAND. SHE'S
ACCOMPANIED BY AN ELDERLY FRIEND, LILLIE.

A STUNNED KARYN APPROACHES MRS. FOSTER.

KARYN

My God. Miss Fannie Foster. You were
my very first customer. You're still
alive.

MRS. FOSTER

You bet I am. Here. I been owing you
this for five years. I even added the
interest. Happy anniversary.

KARYN

Oh, that's so sweet.

MRS. FOSTER

I brought a friend with me. Come on
in Lillie.

LILLIE APPROACHES KARYN AND MRS. FOSTER.

MR. GILL APPEARS BEHIND THEM. KARYN GLARES AT HIM. HE LEAVES.

THE REUNION OF MRS. FOSTER AND KARYN CONTINUES.

OTHER STAFF GATHER AROUND.

END OF ACT TWO

COMPLETE CREDITS

FADE TO BLACK.