

CHRISTIAN MORRIS

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL - CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

A large hospital conference hall is packed full of DOCTORS, NURSES, and other ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF. Their attention is held at the front of the room by a tall, distinguished-looking doctor, DOMINIC RHOADES (27), African American. Dominic addresses the room while gesturing toward a PROJECTOR SCREEN behind him.

DOMINIC

Here we have a prototype of the latest robotic surgeon. This device is state of the art, possessing a wide range of surgical skills and medical data.

DOCTOR #1 raises his hand.

DOCTOR #1

Is this device going to push us out of a job?

DOMINIC

(laughs)

Not necessarily, but having it around will keep you on your toes.

DOCTOR #2 chimes in.

DOCTOR #2

That doesn't sound very reliable to me, Doctor Rhoades.

DOMINIC

I assure you, it's as reliable as you or me.

The audience begins to MURMUR amongst themselves, interested.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Now, it's a little pricey, but it's worth every cent as a life-saving device. Plus, we include the full training package with every purchase.

He pauses and looks around the room.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, everything I've presented today is geared towards upgrading your hospitals and providing a higher quality of robotic surgical equipment to your patients. The cost of preventive medicine is increasing, so I urge each of you to go back to your Board of Directors and inform them about our equipment specs and let them decide.

Dominic's smartphone VIBRATES. He looks down at it and sees a flashing light revealing a message:

"Please call the office, very important"

He puts the phone back in its case.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Let's take a short break. I'll start our next device in five minutes.

The crowd stands up and walks toward the exits and into the hallway of the hospital. Dominic grabs his phone and walks over to an empty seat to return the call. He presses the phone to his ear and waits. Dominic's Receptionist, SUSAN WILLIAMSON (30), answers on the other end.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Hello Susan, I got your text. What's going on?

SUSAN (V.O.)

Doctor Rhoades, you received an urgent call from a Wendy Morris?

DOMINIC

Yes, Wendy Morris, I know her. Did she leave a message?

SUSAN (V.O.)

She did, but it's not good. She said Christian, her brother, is in hospice in Atlanta.

Dominic pauses as his demeanor changes. He closes his eyes.

DOMINIC

Hospice? What -- Did she say anything else?

SUSAN (V.O.)
No, sorry, but she did provide the
name and address of the facility.
And she said he asked for you.

DOMINIC
Please arrange a flight to Atlanta
and forward me the itinerary.
Thanks, Susan.

SUSAN (V.O.)
You're welcome, Doctor.

He hangs up.

EXT. NOVEL HOSPICE - ATLANTA - DAY

A taxi stops in front of the care facility. Dominic opens the door and exits, carrying two small bags. He makes his way toward Novel Hospital's main doors and enters.

INT. NOVEL HOSPICE - CONTINUOUS

Dominic walks up to the information desk, where a young RECEPTIONIST (27) sits.

DOMINIC
Hello, I'm here to see Christian
Morris?

The receptionist looks at the monitor screen.

RECEPTIONIST
Yes, sir, he's on the 10th floor in
room 1012. You can use the visitor
elevators down the hall to the
right.

DOMINIC
Thank you.

Dominic proceeds down the hall and to the elevators. He walks in and pushes the button to the 10th floor.

INT. 10TH FLOOR - HOSPICE FLOOR - DAY

The elevator doors open and Dominic walks out of the elevator and looks at the directional sign, directing him to the nurse's station. The sound of the heart monitors BEEP loudly in steady tones throughout the hallway.

NURSE WINTERS (50) is sitting behind the counter writing notes on a patient's chart when Dominic approaches.

DOMINIC

Good morning, Nurse--

Dominic looks at her name tag.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

--Winters, I'm looking for Christian Morris's room.

Nurse Winters looks on the whiteboard behind her.

NURSE WINTERS

Mr. Morris is in room 1012. It's down the hallway, last room on your right.

DOMINIC

Thanks. Uh, how's he doing?

NURSE WINTERS

You're in a hospice, sir, no one is doing well. He's doing better than most. We're making him as comfortable as possible.

DOMINIC

Down this way?

NURSE WINTERS

Yes, it's the last room on the right.

DOMINIC

Thanks.

Dominic walks down the long corridor, passing by several open rooms --

ROOM 1009 -- A FRAIL WOMAN has a feeding tube attached to her stomach. Members of her FAMILY are sitting by her bedside holding her hand.

ROOM 1010 -- An ELDERLY MAN sits on a chair with an I.V. is on a pole next to him, watching TV. An adult diaper is seen through his robe's opening.

ROOM 1011 -- A BALD WOMAN sits up in her bed, coughing violently as she chats with VISITORS. One of the female visitors is crying and holding her hand. Dominic reaches Room 1012. Taking a deep breath, he enters.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dominic stops in his tracks as he stares ahead at his ailing friend, CHRISTIAN MORRIS (27), light-skinned African American. He's covered in lesions and wearing a sweat-drenched gown with a breathing mask over his mouth. Even in this condition, though, his good looks are apparent.

There's an empty I.V bag in front of the bed. Dominic carefully tip-toes forward and sees Christian is sleeping soundly on his back. He looks to a bedside table and sees several small picture frames. He leans in to get a closer look and sees a picture of Christian and a woman in their FLIGHT ATTENDANT UNIFORM.

A picture of Dominic and his family together. A picture of his MOTHER SOPHIE (52) and his SISTER WENDY (30). Next to those is a photo of a healthy Christian with his beautiful wife, CHERYL MORRIS, (27), and their TWO CHILDREN. Dominic picks up and stares at another picture of him and Christian at the school dance, hugging and laughing --

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. STERLING HIGH SCHOOL - EVENING

SUPER: *10 Years Earlier*

Cars pull into the parking as the sun begins to set. Dressed-up high school SENIORS walk to the main door of the gymnasium, pumping out loud DANCE MUSIC.

INT. STERLING HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS

The lights are dim in the decorated gym, a school dance well underway. SCHOOL PRINCIPAL GARNER (45) Caucasian and heavysset, and some other FACULTY greet the arriving seniors as they enter the room. Standing near the refreshment table, watching his peers, is 17-year-old Dominic. RODNEY SHELBY (17) African American, medium height, walks up to Dominic and looks at his watch before turning to pour himself a drink.

RODNEY
Where's Christian?

DOMINIC
If I know Christian, he'll be--

Just then, a younger, healthier, incredibly handsome Christian (now 17) entered with a pretty young Cheryl Anderson (now 17, the woman from the photo) draped on his arm. Rodney nudges Dominic.

RODNEY

Dominic! Look! Christian's with Cheryl Anderson!

DOMINIC

The freakin' cheerleader?

Dominic turns around to see Christian and Cheryl shaking hands with Principal Garner.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Shit! That's Brady's girl! Is he fucking crazy!?

Several DANCING GIRLS notice Christian and start to whisper as they look at Cheryl and glance over to a group of FOOTBALL PLAYERS, who sit unaware at a table. Dominic looks over at the table, spotting BRADY LANE (17) African American, tall, muscular. Dominic watches him, checking to see if Brady has noticed Cheryl. Christian takes Cheryl through the crowd of dancing teens and they begin to dance. Dominic hurries over and taps Christian on the shoulder.

CHRISTIAN

Hey D, what's up?

DOMINIC

Come on, we need to talk.

Cheryl looks back at Christian.

CHRISTIAN

Right now, D? Can't you see I'm dancing!

DOMINIC

Yes, right now, Christian!

Christian whispers into Cheryl's ear then follows Dominic toward the hallway.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dominic and Christian enter the deserted hallway, still hearing the THUMPING MUSIC from the other room.

DOMINIC

Are you fucking crazy, or do you have a death wish?!

Christian smirks.

CHRISTIAN

Crazy? Why am I crazy, D!?

DOMINIC

For bringing Brady's girl to the dance -- Nah, shit, that's not crazy, it's suicide!

Christian looks through the double HALLWAY GYMNASIUM DOORS at Cheryl moving to the beat of the playing music.

CHRISTIAN

Just look at her, D!

DOMINIC

Christian, if Brady sees you with her, he's gonna break your neck--

CHRISTIAN

Why!? She asked me to the dance. What was I supposed to do, say no?

DOMINIC

Yes, dummy! Brady's an all-state middle linebacker! And you know he doesn't like you. Dammit, they've been together since the beginning of summer school!

CHRISTIAN

She said he had another girl, so she wanted the next best thing.

DOMINIC

Did she really say that? Well, you better hope she was right because here he comes.

Dominic looks through the door and sees Brady talking to Cheryl, who gestures toward Christian through the window. Brady clenches his fists and runs to the door, forcefully ripping them open, slamming the double doors with several football team players trailing him.

BRADY

What the fuck, Morris?! Why did you bring my girl to the dance?

CHRISTIAN

Because she asked me.

BRADY

She asked you!?

Brady turns and looks at his teammates.

CHRISTIAN

She said you broke up with her.

BRADY

We didn't break up, asshole; we're just on a little hiatus, if you know what I mean.

Brady and all of his teammates laugh.

DOMINIC

She's not with you anymore, Brady, so why don't you and your boys go back inside and enjoy the rest of the dance?

BRADY

And I thought all you wrestlers were stupid?

Brady laughs and turns to his boys, and they begin to laugh. Dominic is getting angry.

DOMINIC

I said, take your boys, go back inside and try to have fun with each other.

Christian laughs. Brady unclenches his fist.

CHRISTIAN

I'll make it easy for you: ask Cheryl who she wants to be with, and let's see what she says? Bet money she'll pick me.

BRADY

You're betting on yourself, pretty boy?

Brady slowly walks closer to Christian, and they stand face to face. Brady is angry.

BRADY (CONT'D)

I should knock your teeth out.

CHRISTIAN

Tell you what--

Christian pauses and reaches in his pocket and pulls out TWENTY-DOLLARS and hands it to Dominic.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I'll bet you she'll leave with me
after the dance and if I'm wrong,
you're twenty dollars richer,
whaddya say?

Brady glares over at his teammates to see if anyone is
laughing.

BRADY

You're a pretty motherfucker, but
I've got two years with her, and I
know her better than you, light
bright.

CHRISTIAN

Then prove it!

Brady nods his head.

BRADY

Ok, pretty boy, I'll take your bet,
but when you lose -- and you're
going to lose -- then I'm gonna
beat your ass.

CHRISTIAN

We'll see about that.

Brady looks over at Dominic, turns, and walks through the
doors with his teammates following. Dominic walks up to
Christian.

DOMINIC

He isn't playing, Christian! He's
going to beat your ass! You don't
have anything to prove, so please
stop this nonsense!

CHRISTIAN

No, D! I came here with her and I'm
leaving with her!

DOMINIC

All you're going to do, Christian
Morris, is get your ass kicked
tonight. Grow the fuck up, man!
You've been doing the same shit
since grade school!

Dominic points to the gym full of teenage girls.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Look out there, Christian -- you can have the pick of the litter, so why Cheryl Anderson?

CHRISTIAN

Because she's the finest girl in the school, that's why! And because I can't stand that asshole!

DOMINIC

Yeah, well, I'm getting tired of patching your ass up every time you do this. The last time it was Mr. Jenkins's wife and now Brady? I'm not going to be around to save your ass like before, Christian. After graduation, I'm leaving for Johns Hopkins.

Christian gets angry.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, sorry, congratulations, D. I was thinking about joining the military.

DOMINIC

The military? I thought you'd go into modeling? You told me some rich magazine lady liked your portfolio.

CHRISTIAN

If my portfolio you're referring to is my dick, then yes, she loved it!

Christian tries to wipe the grin off his face.

DOMINIC

You slept with her?

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, so what?

Dominic rolls his eyes, agitated.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

She told me to come back and see her once I graduate. I might take her up on it. I don't know, D.

DOMINIC

There's something seriously wrong with you, Christian! You know your looks won't last forever, you need to do something other than slinging your dick. Get a real job.

CHRISTIAN

I thought about that too. My guidance counselor said the airport is hiring. Maybe I can be a Stewardess.

DOMINIC

Flight attendant, not Stewardess, stupid.

CHRISTIAN

Whatever, I got the whole summer to think about my future.

DOMINIC

Not if you're dead, dumbass!

Christian looks at the reflection of his face in the door glass and smiles.

CHRISTIAN

I'm not worried about that, D. She already showed me some of her nasty cheers. So, I'm not concerned about her picking Brady over me --

Dominic looks through the doors and clears his throat.

DOMINIC

Hey Romeo, Brady's leaving with Cheryl.

CHRISTIAN

Shit!

Dominic and Christian look through the door into the gymnasium and see Brady forcefully grabbing Cheryl's arm and dragging her out of the Gymnasium entrance. Cheryl rips her arm free and runs back into the gym and runs straight for Christian.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

See, I told you!

BACK TO:

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - RESUMING

Dominic snaps out of the memory. He places the photo back down on the table. Christian slowly opens his eyes.

DOMINIC

Christian, it's me, Dominic!

Christian smiles.

CHRISTIAN

You made it.

Christian is embarrassed. He tries to raise his weak hands to cover his face. Dominic takes Christian's hand and holds it tightly.

DOMINIC

I got Wendy's message. I was at a medical conference at Walter Reed. How are you feeling?

Dominic pauses and closes his eyes.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Sorry, that was a stupid question.

Christian coughs and struggles to take down the breathing mask from his face.

CHRISTIAN

It's alright, D, they're keeping me as comfortable as possible given my situation. Look at you, you've gained some weight since the last time I saw you.

DOMINIC

Yeah, eating hotel food and keeping myself busy lecturing since my divorce. Patricia is killing me with alimony and child support is no joke, but traveling keeps the checks coming in.

CHRISTIAN

How are the kids?

DOMINIC

They're both fine.

CHRISTIAN

Your Mom and Dad?

DOMINIC

Momma is doing well; she's getting older and has her ups and downs. Daddy died two years ago.

CHRISTIAN

Damn, D, I'm sorry to--

Christian starts coughing and immediately covers his mouth. Dominic hands him a tissue and he wipes his mouth, staining it with blood.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I have Pneumonia.

DOMINIC

Pneumonia? What are they giving you?

CHRISTIAN

Nothing, they're making me comfortable, that's all.

DOMINIC

We'll see about that!

CHRISTIAN

D, wait!

But Dominic is already on the move and down the hallway.

INT. NURSE'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Dominic approaches the nurse's station, where Nurse Winters is on the phone and filling out a shift report log.

DOMINIC

Excuse me!

Nurse Winters pauses talking and looks up at him.

NURSE WINTERS

I'll call you back later.
(hangs up)
Yes, sir?

DOMINIC

Why is the patient in Room 1012 not receiving anything for his cough? He's coughing up blood!

NURSE WINTERS

Sorry, he can't get--

Dominic walks closer to the counter and looks down at her.

DOMINIC

I'm sorry, Nurse, I didn't formally introduce myself to you earlier. I'm Doctor Dominic Rhoades from the New York University Medical Center. May I please speak with Mr. Morris's Doctor?

NURSE WINTERS

Unfortunately, Doctor Samuel will not be in until later this evening, but I assure you we are making Mr. Morris as comfortable as possible. As you're well aware, Doctor, AIDS attacks the lungs, the immune system... and Pneumonia is pretty much the final stage, especially in his weakened condition.

DOMINIC

AIDS?

NURSE WINTERS

I thought you knew?

DOMINIC

No, I didn't know. I knew he was dying, but I thought it was cancer or something other than this, but not AIDS.

NURSE WINTERS

I'll have Dr. Samuel contact you once she arrives. If you could please leave your number, I'll pass it along to her.

Dominic nods slowly, still taking in the information.

NURSE WINTERS (CONT'D)

I saw your bags. How long are you in Atlanta?

DOMINIC

I don't know. I guess until he...

NURSE WINTERS

I understand, Doctor.

Dominic pulls out a pen from his jacket and writes down his cell phone number on a piece of paper and hands it to Nurse Winters.

DOMINIC

Can you please contact Dr. Samuel to see if she can give something to ease his coughing for just a little while?

NURSE WINTERS

I'll see what I can do, but it is against the rules here. I don't mean to sound insensitive, but Mr. Morris is here for a reason, Doctor.

DOMINIC

I understand, but please see what you can do.

She looks at him as he turns away and walks down the hallway and back into Christian's room.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dominic returns with his head down, and his eyes fixed to the floor.

CHRISTIAN

I heard you from all the way down here.

DOMINIC

(looking up, sorrowful)
You've got AIDS?

CHRISTIAN

You knew all that sex was bound to catch up to me one day.

DOMINIC

Bound to catch up with you!? That's not fucking funny! I can't be... Oh my God, you have AIDS!

Christian nods and COUGHS, this time harder.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Fuck, Christian! What about Cheryl and the girls?

CHRISTIAN

Keshia is healthy, but Cheryl and Aleshia, our newborn, are both HIV positive.

DOMINIC

Fuck!

Dominic turns facing the window, sadness in his eyes.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, Cheryl's not allowing Keshia and Aleshia to see me anymore. I've been here for a few days and they haven't been by--

DOMINIC

Can you blame her Christian?

CHRISTIAN

(coughing)

No, I can't. But given my condition, I just thought she'd--

DOMINIC

What? Understand?

Christian says nothing. A heavy beat.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

How many others have you infected?

Christian tries to sit up but falls back on the bed.

CHRISTIAN

There were a few more, but--

DOMINIC

How many, Christian?

CHRISTIAN

Five or six that I can remember. Look, I searched, OK. But I couldn't locate any more women. But I did look, D.

DOMINIC

Dammit, Christian!

NURSE REED (40s) enters the room carrying several small I.V. bags. Dominic walks over to Christian and angrily whispers.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

You infected Cheryl, your newborn, and possibly many others, so don't sound so fucking smug!

Nurse Reed finishes and leaves the room.

CHRISTIAN

Dominic, do you think I would knowingly infect Cheryl, my kid, and those other women? How long have you known me? Huh, how long?

DOMINIC

Since middle school, but--

CHRISTIAN

But, my ass, D! Yes, I'm selfish, inconsiderate, shallow and vain, but I would never maliciously infect anyone with this fucking disease. Especially my family!

Nurse Reed enters again and injects something into Christian's I.V. line.

DOMINIC

Nurse, what's that?

NURSE REED

It's Dilaudid.

DOMINIC

Dilaudid, good. Thank you.

Nurse Reed looks down at Christian and notices his soiled gown.

NURSE REED

It should take effect in a few minutes.

CHRISTIAN

D, what is that medicine?

DOMINIC

Dilaudid is a drug similar to morphine. It will periodically stop your coughing.

CHRISTIAN

Whatever it was, I feel good.

In another room, a patient's monitor alarm loudly BEEPS.

NURSE REED

It will make you a little tired. I'll be back to change you in a minute. I have to see about that alarm.

She hustles out of the room. Christian turns to Dominic.

CHRISTIAN

How long will I stop coughing?

DOMINIC

Well, fluid is still building up in your lungs. Stopping your coughing is like putting a band-aid on a bullet wound. You have about an hour until you start coughing again.

CHRISTIAN

How long do I have left, I mean to live?

DOMINIC

Well, it's hard to say with the fluid building up in your lungs, your shortness of breath, and your weakened condition. I don't know, but I'll find out more once I speak with your Doctor.

Christian rubs his hand slowly across his face and touches the lesions around his head.

CHRISTIAN

Can I ask you a question, D?

DOMINIC

Sure.

CHRISTIAN

How do I look?

DOMINIC

(smirks)

Same old Christian Morris, still worrying about his precious looks.

He leans in closer to Christian.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Real talk, not too good. You've lost a considerable amount of weight and you have lesions on your chest, legs, and head. Of course, you don't look the same, then again, neither do I. Now, can I ask you a question?

CHRISTIAN

Sure.

DOMINIC

Did you inform any of the other women that you were infected?

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, I told them. Well, the ones I could remember and/or locate.

DOMINIC

Shit! So, how did they react to the news that they may have contracted HIV? I mean--

Christian's hand begins to shake as he takes a sip of water.

CHRISTIAN

What I learned over the past year is that all HIV cases don't turn into AIDS.

DOMINIC

True, but 40% of all HIV cases do. Yes, there are exceptions in most cases, but it mainly depends on the person's physical health and immune system. But all in all--

CHRISTIAN

All in all, my ass, D! I never had gay sex, shared a needle with a crack-head junkie, or any of that other shit, so stop with the Doctor bullshit, Dominic. I was stupid and had unprotected sex with an HIV positive woman. She was a heroin addict, she shared needles and infected me, and now other people are infected too.

Christian takes another sip of water.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

It wasn't easy telling any of them, especially Cheryl. Imagine what these women would say to their families, husbands, and boyfriends that they may be infected.

Christian coughs to clear his throat as he wipes blood into the tissue.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

It was shameful, embarrassing, and awful, but I had to do it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONCORDIA AIRPLANE CABIN - AFTERNOON

SUPER: Several Months Earlier

A very fit and strikingly handsome Christian is in his tailored flight attendant's uniform, looking at himself in the LAVATORY MIRROR.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

After high school, I tried to join the military, but I didn't get accepted. I worked for a year at a retail department store, then the Airlines started hiring again, and I interviewed for a position as a flight attendant. Concordia hired me, and I spent eight years with them. Thousands of women have come and gone off my flights, and they were everywhere!

His HAZEL EYES look back at him as he conceitedly winks at himself.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

I flew with my friend Stacey Collins. Stacey and I were two peas in a pod, we loved the attention, and we had our pick of the litter at 30,000 feet.

STACEY COLLINS (25) and Christian serve PASSENGERS coffee in First Class.

CHRISTIAN(V.O.)

I met countless attractive women while flying, and I screwed plenty of them.

He flirts with beautiful BUSINESSWOMEN.

CHRISTIAN

So, you like it "black"?

The businesswoman smirks and Christian walks away. Several other FEMALES look at Christian's BUTT as he passes.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Women would throw themselves at me
left and right! And they'd do
anything to spend time with me. It
was very addictive.

QUICK SERIES OF SHOTS --

--Christian has sex with WOMAN #1 in the airplane bathroom.

--Christian makes out with WOMAN #2 in the airplane bathroom,
then gently pushes her head down toward his crotch.

--Christian and TWO LADIES have sex in the cramped airplane
bathroom.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOME - DAY

Christian is in the bathroom looking at himself in the
mirror.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Cheryl and I got together right
after High School. A year later,
Keshia was born.

Cheryl helps KESHIA MORRIS (6) get dressed for school.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Cheryl and I had our ups and downs,
I wanted to leave her so many
times, but I couldn't. Instead, I
decided to be unfaithful.

Cheryl is washing behind Keshia's ears.

CHERYL

Christian, can you help me please?
I need to get dressed.

Christian opens the closet door and looks at a neatly lined
row of tailored flight attendant uniforms hanging side by
side.

CHRISTIAN

I can't right now, Cheryl. That
stupid alarm clock didn't go off,
and I overslept. I have an
International flight today.
Stacey's gonna kill me if she has
to prepare the cabin by herself.
Why didn't you get her clothes laid
out last night?

CHERYL

Christian! I need some help! I have a meeting to go to.

Cheryl looks down at Keshia.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Honey, go see your father so Mommy can get dressed.

Ignoring Cheryl, Christian is in the bathroom looking in the mirror. Keshia walks in and looks up at him.

KESHIA

Daddy, did you sing to me when I was a little girl? Mommy said you have a beautiful singing voice.

CHRISTIAN

(smiling)

Did she? Yes sweetie, I used to sing to you all the time. I sang one of your favorite songs.

KESHIA

What did you sing to me?

Christian drops to one knee and holds her hands and begins to sing.

CHRISTIAN

(singing)

Hush little baby, don't say a word,
Daddy's gonna buy you a
mockingbird. And if that
mockingbird don't sing, Daddy's
gonna buy you a diamond ring! And
if that diamond ring turns brass,
Daddy's gonna buy you a looking
glass. And if that looking glass
gets broke, Daddy's gonna buy you a
billy goat.

KESHIA

I remember that song.

CHRISTIAN

I used to sing that to you every
night before you went to bed.

Christian stands up.

KESHIA

Where are you flying to today,
Daddy?

CHRISTIAN

To Germany. Can you tell me the
capital of Germany?

KESHIA

The capital of Germany is Berlin.

Cheryl watches from the bathroom doorway and walks into the
bathroom to give Keshia a big hug.

CHERYL

My baby is smart!

CHRISTIAN

She's smart and pretty. Cheryl,
have you seen the wings for my
jacket?

CHERYL

They're in the nightstand drawer on
the left-hand side.

He walks into the bedroom.

CHRISTIAN

I got 'em, thanks.

CHERYL

When are you coming back?

CHRISTIAN

Tomorrow evening, I have to be back
for my physical on Wednesday.

CHERYL

Are you OK?

CHRISTIAN

I think so. It's also time for my
yearly physical. I need to ask why
I've been tired all the time. Do
these pants look big on me? I've
lost a few pounds.

Christian puts on his flight attendant jacket and cap and
picks up his car keys.

CHERYL

You look OK to me, honey. Do you
want me to make you breakfast?

CHRISTIAN

Nah, I'll grab something at the airport. That's if I get through traffic this morning.

He picks up his overnight bag and looks down at Keshia.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Come give Daddy a kiss.

Keshia runs up and jumps into his arms.

KESHIA

Be safe, Daddy.

Christian puts down Keshia and walks over and kisses Cheryl.

CHERYL

See you tomorrow, honey. Have a safe flight. I love you.

Christian looks back at Cheryl and kisses her again.

CHRISTIAN

Love you too.

KESHIA

Daddy?

CHRISTIAN

Yes, baby?

KESHIA

Can you bring Mommy and me back something?

CHRISTIAN

How about some German chocolates?

KESHIA

Ok, Daddy!

Christian smiles.

EXT. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

The International Terminal is busy. Several large Jumbo Jets are taking off and landing. Christian walks off the airport shuttle and into the airport entrance doors.

INT. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Several FEMALE BYSTANDERS look at Christian as he walks into the terminal. After going through the security check-in, he takes off his sunglasses and approaches Terminal Gate 23. Several female passengers stare as he walks past the gate and down the long ramp to the Concordia Airplane.

INT. CONCORDIA AIRPLANE CABIN - LATER

Stacey reaches up into the overhead compartment putting away her carry on bag.

GATE ATTENDANT

We're preparing for boarding. Get ready to greet the passengers.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Stacy calls herself my work wife, but she's been in one failed relationship after another. She's been with actors, lawyers, you name it. If they made big money, Stacey's been with them. Stacey was a diva and she invested a lot in her looks. Our layover in Germany was fulfilling. I met this beautiful woman on the plane, her name was Natalie Rue. She was a model with Vogue.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Christian's hotel room door SLAMS open -- He pushes NATALIE RUE (22) up against the door. They kiss and fondle each other as they stumble over to the bed and fall into it.

NATALIE

Do you have protection?

CHRISTIAN

No -- you want me to stop?

NATALIE

No, just don't cum in me, OK?

Christian smiles and proceeds to undress. He turns her over and takes her from behind. Natalie's MOANS becomes louder and louder as her eyes begin to close, and she tightly grips the bedsheets.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Oh God! Oh Christian! Yesssss!

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The ALARM goes off and Christian turns it off. Natalie rolls over, still sound asleep. He walks into the bathroom, and the sound of URINE hits the TOILET bowl, followed by the water of the SHOWER. Natalie hears the shower and wakes up.

NATALIE
(yelling out)
Come back to bed, Christian. Let's do it again!

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)
Sorry, I can't. I have a flight and I can't be late.

NATALIE
How about a quickie then?

Christian pokes his head out of the bathroom door.

CHRISTIAN
I don't do quickies.

He disappears back into the bathroom and shuts the door. Natalie falls back in the bed, upset.

BACK TO:

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - PRESENT DAY

Dominic listens intently beside Christian, who wraps up his story.

CHRISTIAN
I didn't see Natalie anymore after that. We exchanged numbers and I tried to contact her after my results. Two months ago, I found out she died in a car accident.

DOMINIC
Wow, so the majority of these women were from your flights?

CHRISTIAN
Yeah, most of them. We would meet on the flights and have sex. Stacey and I called them stickers.

DOMINIC

Stickers?

CHRISTIAN

One-timers, the ones you didn't ask to see again unless they want to hook up. The ones that would leave your room when finished.

DOMINIC

So, when did it all stop?

CHRISTIAN

After I returned to the States, I wasn't feeling well. I was dehydrated and had gotten sick on my flight back, so I scheduled an appointment with my Doctor. Cheryl wasn't feeling well that morning either and that's when she surprised me --

CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOME - MORNING (PAST)

Cheryl comes running into the bedroom, yelling.

CHERYL

Christian, wake up! Wake up!

CHRISTIAN

What's the matter, what's wrong!?

CHERYL

Look at the stick! -- Look at the stick!

Cheryl gives Christian the home pregnancy test stick.

CHRISTIAN

What's this?

CHERYL

It's positive!

CHRISTIAN

Positive for what?

CHERYL

I'm pregnant, Christian!

CHRISTIAN

Pregnant!?

CHERYL

I told you a few days ago I wasn't feeling well. I knew something like this was going to happen, shit!

Christian tries to process the news.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

I don't need this right now. Keshia's almost eight, and I don't want to go through the same problems I went through when I carried her.

CHRISTIAN

Are you sure this is accurate? These cheap home tests aren't always reliable.

CHERYL

It's the same test I used with Keshia, Christian, it's right -- I'm pregnant. What are we gonna do?

CHRISTIAN

What do you mean, Cheryl? We're gonna have a baby.

CHERYL

I can't go through this again! Keshia was a miracle baby after those three miscarriages!

Christian holds Cheryl tightly in his arms. She begins to cry.

CHRISTIAN

It's gonna be Ok, we'll get through this together.

Keshia walks into the bedroom and looks up at them. Cheryl wipes the tears from her face.

KESHIA

Why are you crying, Mommy?

CHERYL

No reason, honey. I'm OK.

KESHIA

Daddy, why is Mommy crying?

CHRISTIAN
We're having a baby.

KESHIA
(excited)
Am I going to have a little sister
or brother?!

CHRISTIAN
We don't know sweetie, Mommy needs
to see the doctor first.

KESHIA
I hope you're having a baby, Mommy!
I want someone to play with me.

They both start to laugh.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)
That was the week before my
diagnosis.

BACK TO:

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - RESUMING (PRESENT)

Christian sits back in his bed, reflecting. Dominic is still
by his side.

DOMINIC
I'm sorry, Christian.

CHRISTIAN
(gathers himself)
Hey, I have no one to blame but
myself, right?

They share a solemn look.

DOMINIC
How did you receive the diagnosis?

CHRISTIAN
I went to see my Doctor, Dr.
Anderson. He'd been my Doctor since
I first started at Concordia. I
gave a urine sample and a lot of
blood. A couple of days later, I
got a voice message asking me to
come to his office.

INT. DR. ANDERSON'S OFFICE - DAY (PAST)

Christian walks into the office, passing by PEOPLE in the waiting area. He walks up to the receptionist, DONNA SIMMONS (20s).

CHRISTIAN

Good morning, I'm here to see Dr. Anderson.

DONNA

No need to sign in Mr. Morris --
Dr. Anderson is expecting you.
It'll just be a few minutes.

Donna looks over at Christian, and he looks back at her and smiles. He picks up a SPORTS MAGAZINE SWIMSUIT ISSUE and flips through it, stopping on a picture of Natalie Rue posing in a swimsuit kicking a beach ball. Christian smiles. The door opens and NURSE SCOTT (46) looks out into the waiting area.

NURSE SCOTT

Mr. Morris? Dr. Anderson, will see you now.

Christian walks through the door and proceeds straight into Dr. Anderson's office.

INT. DR. ANDERSON'S EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nurse Scott directs Christian toward the exam table.

NURSE SCOTT

Please take a seat, Mr. Morris. Dr. Anderson will see you shortly.

She turns to leave. As she closes the door, Nurse Scott slowly shakes her head in disappointment as Christian gets comfortable. A moment later, the door opens and DOCTOR ANDERSON (52) enters.

DOCTOR ANDERSON

Hello Christian, how are you feeling?

CHRISTIAN

I'm OK. I was just wondering why you called me down here?

DOCTOR ANDERSON

Christian, I wanted to go over your lab results. I'm afraid I have a bit of unpleasant news for you.

CHRISTIAN

I know I've been off that cholesterol medication for a while, but I've had a hectic flight schedule and I promise to take--

DOCTOR ANDERSON

(stops him)

Christian, it's not about your cholesterol.

Dr. Anderson opens up Christian's medical folder and looks at his lab results.

CHRISTIAN

Then what's going on?

DOCTOR ANDERSON

There's no other way to tell you this, but your test results show you've tested positive for HIV.

CHRISTIAN

(upset)

You must have the wrong chart; I don't have fuckin' AIDS. You're mistaken.

DOCTOR ANDERSON

It's no mistake, Christian-- and you don't have AIDS. You have HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Your immune system was compromised.

Christian sits back in the chair, surprised.

CHRISTIAN

Those test results are wrong! I'm not gay and I don't use drugs!

DOCTOR ANDERSON

Son-- you need to calm down and listen to me. You are feeling tired all the time because the virus is starting to attack your immune system. To be sure of the results, I've run the test several times.

(MORE)

DOCTOR ANDERSON (CONT'D)

There is no mistake ---, Christian, you need to stay focused and listen carefully to what I'm about to tell you.

Christian's hands are shaking and he begins to sob. Dr. Anderson leans forward.

DOCTOR ANDERSON (CONT'D)

It would be best if you told your partner or partners about your diagnosis. I mean everyone you've had intercourse with for the past year. They need to know about your HIV status and they need testing immediately.

CHRISTIAN

I can't tell anyone about this! I can't-- Cheryl, she's gonna--

DOCTOR ANDERSON

(forceful)

Listen to me, Christian-- I know this news is painful to hear, but you need to take full responsibility for this. You need to tell everyone you've had sex within the last 12 to 15 months no matter how difficult it is for you, do I make myself clear!?

CHRISTIAN

No! I, I can't tell--

Christian places his head in his hands.

DOCTOR ANDERSON

Yes, you will! You have to tell your partners about your status and allow them to get tested! As a physician, I'm obligated and must report this to the CDC.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - RESUMING (PRESENT)

Christian looks over at Dominic and lets out an angry exhale.

CHRISTIAN

I left his office in shock. I walked out to my car and sat there thinking of what I've done to Cheryl and all those women -- Wondering how the hell I was going to tell them.

DOMINIC

How long ago was that?

CHRISTIAN

A little over a year ago.

DOMINIC

How did you tell them?

CHRISTIAN

I tried to remember all the women I'd slept with during the past year and a half. Out of 50 plus women, I had the numbers for 6 of them.

DOMINIC

Six out of 50?

CHRISTIAN

Yeah. Two of them were Cheryl and Stacey. Another was Natalie Rue, of course, and the last three lived here in Atlanta. The rest I met while flying and didn't have any contact with them.

DOMINIC

So, that's it?

CHRISTIAN

There might be a few more, but I couldn't remember.

Dominic slowly shakes his head in disbelief and steps back towards the window.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I stayed in my room for hours thinking this through, and I finally got the courage to tell everyone.

DOMINIC

When did you break the news to Cheryl?

Christian doesn't respond. Instead, he looks up at the clock on the wall.

CHRISTIAN
 (through gasping breath)
 I've been talking for a while. Are you hungry?

DOMINIC
 Yeah, sorta. I didn't eat much on the flight here.

CHRISTIAN
 Why don't you go down to the cafeteria on the main floor and grab something to eat?

Dominic gets up from the chair and walks toward the door.

DOMINIC
 Hopefully, by the time I get back, your doctor will be here.

CHRISTIAN
 She usually gets here around six.

Dominic looks at his watch.

DOMINIC
 I'll be right back.

Dominic walks out of the room and down the hallway.

INT. NURSE'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Dominic crosses over to the Nurse's Station. Nurse Winters is talking on the phone again.

DOMINIC
 Nurse, I'm going downstairs to get something to eat. I'll be back.

NURSE WINTERS
 Yes, Doctor.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - EVENING

Dominic stands in line, looking at the food behind the glass. He points to something, and the SERVER puts some chicken and vegetables on his plate. He walks to the dessert line and spies one last BANANA PUDDING.

He reaches out for the pudding, just as another HAND reaches for it too -- Dominic stops and turns to see the hand belongs to an attractive, classy female doctor, BLAINE SAMUEL (28). Blaine looks over at Dominic and they both laugh.

DOMINIC

I'm sorry, you can have it.

BLAINE

No, take it, it's yours.

Dominic places the banana pudding on his tray.

DOMINIC

Since it's the last one and we both like banana pudding, how about splitting it with me?

BLAINE

Split it? Oh no, I don't split my desserts with strangers. But thank you anyway--

DOMINIC

Hi, I'm Dominic Rhoades.

BLAINE

Hi, Dominic, my name is Blaine.

She looks at the banana pudding with vanilla wafers around the dish and looks over at him.

BLAINE (CONT'D)

Nah, go ahead, you keep it. I just came from my pilates class. I was craving something sweet, plus my shift starts in a few minutes.

They approach the register, and she feels around in her medical coat pocket.

DOMINIC

Is there a problem?

BLAINE

I must have left my credit card in my locker.

DOMINIC

It's OK, it's on me.

BLAINE

You don't have to do that. I can run and get it.

DOMINIC

You can pay me later, I'm visiting my brother on the 10th floor.

Blaine smiles.

BLAINE

That's funny, I work on the 10th floor.

DOMINIC

You do?

BLAINE

Yes, I'm treating several patients up there.

DOMINIC

By any chance is one of your patients Christian Morris?

BLAINE

He is one of mine, yes.

DOMINIC

So, you must be Dr. Samuel?

BLAINE

That's me! Why what did you hear?

Dominic laughs. The CASHIER acknowledges Dr. Samuel and rings up both meals. Dominic pays for them. They take a seat at an empty table. Blaine looks at her watch.

DOMINIC

Can I ask you a question, how long does Christian have?

BLAINE

I'm afraid he doesn't have long, the Pneumonia has gotten worse. So any day now, if not sooner. We've made him as comfortable as we could.

DOMINIC

I thought so. Thanks for ordering the Dilaudid. He was suffering.

BLAINE

So it was you who asked! Well, you're welcome, I'm not supposed to do that.

Blaine looks at Dominic and smiles.

BLAINE (CONT'D)

It's a shame he lost contact with his family. I guess he doesn't want them to see him like that.

DOMINIC

I'm just catching up with him now. This whole thing has been a mess for everyone.

BLAINE

So, you're the one he's been ranting about "Dominic this, Dominic that" --

DOMINIC

Really, what did he say?

BLAINE

He said you two were best friends and how you saved his life in High School, something about you beating up the entire football team?

Dominic laughs.

DOMINIC

It wasn't like that. Christian always had a knack for taking girls away from their boyfriends. He just chose the wrong girl once or twice, that's all.

BLAINE

He never mentioned a brother. His file only lists his Mother and Sister as his next of kin.

DOMINIC

Well, it all depends on who you ask. If you'd asked my father before he passed, he wouldn't agree with you.

BLAINE

What does that mean?

Dominic pauses, eyeing Blaine seriously.

DOMINIC

Because of the circumstances, I'll give it to you straight, Doctor.

(MORE)

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Christian and I are biological half-brothers. We have the same Father, but our mothers don't know anything about it.

BLAINE

Wow! So it's just you and Christian that know?

DOMINIC

He doesn't know either.

Blaine mouths the word "Wow".

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Sorry for dropping that on you like that. Well, I don't know whether or not I should tell Christian before he dies... I suppose it would be best if I didn't, given what he's been going through.

BLAINE

That's a powerful secret to hold, Dominic.

DOMINIC

Tell me about it.

BLAINE

How did you find out he was your half-brother?

DOMINIC

After Father died, I went through his safe deposit box and found several pictures of Christian, Sister Wendy and his Mother. Daddy was a salesman. He was on the road all the time. He told me he met my Mother not far from where we lived. They hooked up, she got pregnant and had me the same year Christian was born. A few years after I was born, he left Christian's Mother and moved right in with us until he died. Can you believe Christian and I lived just a few blocks from each other?

He shakes his head in disbelief.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

A few stinking blocks!

BLAINE

How could he abandon Christian and his family like that?

DOMINIC

I've been trying to figure that one out too. My Dad was a hothead. He went nuts when he couldn't get his way. So part of me thinks he knew damn well what he was doing. He left his family and just walked right down the Goddamn street.

BLAINE

You said your last name is Rhoades, why don't you and Christian have the same last name?

DOMINIC

I took my Dad's last name, which I found out later had been changed from 'Morris' to 'Rhoades' after he abandoned them.

BLAINE

(stunned)

All those years as your best friend and he never met your parents?

DOMINIC

Oh no, he met my mom many times, but not my Father. Dad always worked and was never home. When Dad came back, we had tons of fun, he even went to some of my wrestling matches, but he sat up in the bleachers. I never knew why until I found those pictures. He must have found out Christian and I were best friends and went to the same school.

Blaine takes a spoonful of Dominic's banana pudding.

BLAINE

Did you ever meet Christian's Mom?

DOMINIC

Many times. Did you know she was a runner-up in the Ms. New York pageant in the early '90s? Ms. Morris is a tall, gorgeous, and stunning white woman. Oh my God, Christian favors her a lot.

(MORE)

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

It was never a surprise why all those women were so attracted to him.

Blaine reaches out and touches Dominic's arm.

BLAINE

Dominic, I know we just met, but I can tell you love Christian very much.

DOMINIC

I do.

BLAINE

So pardon me for saying, but I think you should tell him the truth before he dies. He has to know. You can't let him die without knowing you're his biological half-brother!

Dominic looks at her.

DOMINIC

I don't want him spending his last minutes of life hating me for keeping this from him... Father passed away two years ago and I've still kept this from him! I don't know what to do.

BLAINE

Well, you better decide soon. I'm not sure he's going to make it till morning.

Blaine looks down at her watch again.

BLAINE (CONT'D)

Oh, I've got to run. Thanks again for paying. My shift ends at 6:00 am, maybe we can do breakfast?

DOMINIC

It all depends on Christian.

BLAINE

I understand. I'll see you upstairs.

Blaine walks toward the door. Dominic waves as she leaves the cafeteria.

INT. CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

An oxygen mask is on Christian. The oxygen is at maximum. The bed is automatically moving his emaciated frame from side to side. Dominic walks into the room and observes Blaine as she stands over Christian, listening to his heavy breathing.

Nurse Reed reaches above the bed on the wall, pulls out two rubber gloves, undresses Christian's sweat-drenched hospital gown, changes his soiled diaper, and places a stethoscope on his chest. Christian looks at Dominic, who watches as Blaine and Nurse Reed turn him.

CHRISTIAN

How was your food?

DOMINIC

It was Ok, I liked their banana pudding.

Dominic looks at Blaine.

CHRISTIAN

Dominic, that's Doctor Samuel, she's my doctor.

DOMINIC

Yes, we met downstairs.

CHRISTIAN

Did you tell Dr. Samuel you're a doctor, too?

BLAINE

(surprised)

No, he didn't mention that.

DOMINIC

Yes. I'm doing my residency at NYU and working part-time for a startup medical robotics company.

Blaine listens to Christian's breathing again.

BLAINE

Can you cough for me?

Christian lets out a big cough. Blood sprays on the inside of his breathing mask. Blaine uses some tissue to wipe off the blood and places it in the medical waste can as she looks over at Dominic and shakes her head.

BLAINE (CONT'D)
Your lungs are not getting any
better. Did the Dilaudid help?

CHRISTIAN
It helped a lot.

Blaine looks over at Dominic.

BLAINE
I'll see if I can get you a little
more Dilaudid for pain management,
but you need to be still and don't
get too worked up. I'll be back.

Christian starts coughing again as Blaine walks out of the
room. Christian tries to sit up but doesn't have enough
strength. Dominic helps him.

CHRISTIAN
Thanks.

Dominic nods and steps back as Christian gathers himself.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
Now that you've eaten, let me tell
you about Monica Williams.

INT. CONCORDIA AIRPLANE CABIN - AFTERNOON (PAST)

SUPER: *Eight Months Earlier*

A super-hot, confident woman, MONICA WILLIAMS (32) comes out
of the plane's lavatory. She walks by sleeping passengers and
goes back to her seat in First Class.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)
Monica is one of the women I
remembered. We met on a flight to
Las Vegas. She was an Atlanta
attorney with the law firm of
Williams & Walters.

Monica sees Christian and presses the flight attendant
button. She nudges her girlfriend, GAIL SUMMERS (30), sitting
next to her. Christian walks down the aisle and turns off the
page.

CHRISTIAN
Hello ladies, what can I get for
you?

MONICA

It all depends -- my friend and I were wondering, do you have any brothers? I said if not, then she's out of luck.

CHRISTIAN

No, I don't have any brothers.

Monica looks at Christian's name tag.

MONICA

Christian, what a beautiful name.

CHRISTIAN

Thanks, and you are?

MONICA

I'm Monica.

Monica looks him up and down.

MONICA (CONT'D)

You married?

CHRISTIAN

I am. What about you?

MONICA

Do I look like I need to be held down?

CHRISTIAN

I don't know, looks can be very deceiving.

MONICA

Christian, can you bring me and my friend a glass of wine?

CHRISTIAN

What kind of wine would you like?

MONICA

You tell me, Christian, what do you suggest?

CHRISTIAN

We have a European Chardonnay, a sweet Riesling from Germany, and our signature Red Wine from Italy.

MONICA

You have an accent, where are you from?

CHRISTIAN

I'm originally from New York but live in Atlanta now.

Christian looks over at another flashing call light. He looks down at Monica.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Call me when you're ready to order.

Monica pulls Christian towards her.

MONICA

Can I have anything?

Christian looks down at Monica and smiles.

CHRISTIAN

Hit the button when you've made up your mind.

Monica looks at Gail and smiles.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

It wasn't too hard getting Monica in bed --

INT. MONICA'S HOTEL ROOM (VEGAS) - LATE EVENING

A partially naked Christian is thrusting harder into Monica, she arches her back and grabs the sheets.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

She was everything I expected in the bedroom and more. I left her asleep and flew back to Atlanta the next day. We hooked up one last time, but I didn't see her again until nine months ago. Luckily, I got her number before I left.

INT. LAW OFFICES OF WHITE, WILLIAMS & WALTERS - AFTERNOON

Christian walks into the law offices of White, Williams & Walters. Receptionist, VERONICA RAWLS (24), looks up at Christian.

VERONICA
Hello sir, can I help you?

CHRISTIAN
I'm here to see Ms. Monica
Williams. Is she in today?

VERONICA
Ms. Williams is in a partners
meeting, but I expect her out soon.

CHRISTIAN
Thank you, I'll wait.

VERONICA
Can I ask what this is in reference
to?

CHRISTIAN
It's in reference to a health case
she may be taking.

VERONICA
She'll be right with you. Please
have a seat in the waiting area
over there. Please help yourself to
some refreshments.

CHRISTIAN
Thank you.

VERONICA
My pleasure.

She steady watches as he walks into the waiting area. Monica
appears from around the corner and peeps into the waiting
area.

MONICA
Hey handsome, how are you?

CHRISTIAN
Hi, you got a minute?

MONICA
I got five for you handsome, come
with me.

Christian stands up and follows her down the hallway and into
her office.

INT. MONICA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Monica closes her office door and grabs him by the shirt and throws him against the door and kisses him. She reaches down and loosens his belt. Christian pushes her hand away.

CHRISTIAN

No Monica! That's not why I came here-- we need to talk.

MONICA

Did you forget how this works?

Monica kisses his neck. Christian eases her away.

CHRISTIAN

Seriously, I need to talk to you--

MONICA

Talking is not one of your strong points, Christian.

Christian slowly eases past her. Monica hunches back against the wall upset.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Tell me, what could be this important for you to drive all the way down here and not want to fuck me?

Monica laughs.

CHRISTIAN

I think you should sit down.

Monica sits down at her desk.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

There's no easy way of saying this, I'm HIV positive.

Monica pauses and slowly sits back in her chair.

MONICA

You're what? Stop playing, Christian. You're playing, right!?

CHRISTIAN

I'm sorry, Monica. I just found out myself and I'm contacting everyone I've been with.

Monica leans back on in her chair in disbelief. Tears roll down her face as she starts to cry.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Look, I don't know if you're positive or not, but you need to get tested.

MONICA

HIV positive, you've got to be shitting me? This can't be--

CHRISTIAN

Get tested first before you tell anyone. I'll give you the number to my doctor if you're worried about--

Monica sits in shock, crying and shaking her head, looking at a photo of her hugging KEVIN BUTLER (44).

MONICA

Why are you telling me this?

CHRISTIAN

I know what you're feeling right now. I've been irresponsible for so many years, and now I have a chance to do something right for a change.

Monica picks up the telephone and dials.

MONICA

Veronica, cancel all of my appointments today.

Monica hangs up the phone.

CHRISTIAN

Monica, are there any more men you need to tell?

Monica stands up and walks over to the large office window and opens the door to an outside patio. She stands in heavy thought, tuning out Christian, looking down at the cars and people on the street.

MONICA

I'm sorry, what did you say?

CHRISTIAN

I said, how many men have you slept with after me?

MONICA

No one! I only slept with Kevin.
He's my fiancé.

Monica bursts into tears again.

MONICA (CONT'D)

How am I going to explain this to
him?

CHRISTIAN

Nothing is confirmed, Monica, but
you have to get tested right away.

Monica wipes the tears away and looks over at Christian.

MONICA

I know this wasn't easy for you to
do, but please, just go.

She falls back into her chair and starts crying
uncontrollably. Christian walks out of the office, closing
the door behind him.

INT. LAW OFFICES OF WHITE, WILLIAMS & WALTERS - CONTINUOUS

Christian stands in front of Veronica's desk.

CHRISTIAN

Will you go in there and sit with
her?

VERONICA

Is she alright?

Christian shakes his head, then look back at Veronica and
walks out of the front door.

BACK TO:

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING (PRESENT)

Christian takes a sip of water and continues sharing his
story with Dominic.

CHRISTIAN

I later found out Monica wasn't
positive, but with all of the
stress and backlash from her firm's
other partners, they released her,
and she didn't get married.

(MORE)

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

The firm paid her heavily for her partnership release. The last I heard, she's practicing law here in Atlanta.

DOMINIC

She got lucky. Hopefully, the scare made her more cautious about sleeping around.

CHRISTIAN

I'm sure it did. Do you remember Cathy Bishop?

DOMINIC

Chubby Cathy Bishop from high school?

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, but she isn't chubby anymore! I ran into her at the airport last year. She was buying a magazine at the International Terminal Newsstand, and she gave me her number.

Christian coughs.

DOMINIC

Does she still wear those thick ass glasses? The cheerleaders, including Cheryl, used to pick on her all the time.

CHRISTIAN

(coughing)

Nah, she changed. She changed a whole lot.

DOMINIC

What do you mean?

CHRISTIAN

When I got back from a trip, I called, and we met for drinks--

DOMINIC

Why are you telling me all of this, Christian? Why are you confessing now?

CHRISTIAN

Remember our school dance? You told me there comes a time when a boy has to grow up and be a man. I've lived dirty all of my life, and I didn't care about anything. I especially didn't care about anyone who loved or cared about me. Shit, I have no family except for Momma and Wendy. Cheryl wants nothing to do with me.

DOMINIC

You are so numb to everyone's feelings, Christian. What happened to you? How did you get like this?

CHRISTIAN

I've always been numb, D! That's what being molested at 11 years old does. It makes you numb.

DOMINIC

Molested?

CHRISTIAN

Yeah. After Daddy left us, Momma's shift changed to nights, and Momma hired a sitter --

INT. CHRISTIAN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - NIGHT (PAST)

A pre-pubescent Christian stares up at his BABY-SITTER.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

She began rubbing me and made me touch her-- I was only 11, Dominic! I didn't know any better.

BACK TO:

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - RESUMING (PRESENT)

Dominic looks over at Christian, stunned. Christian becomes angry as he shakes off the traumatic memory.

CHRISTIAN

I didn't have a father like yours to keep me safe, Dominic. Momma was weak and she wouldn't have understood any of that shit!

(MORE)

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I know your father was always working, but I hated you for having someone I didn't have in my life. If I had a Father like yours, maybe I wouldn't have turned out this way.

Dominic interrupts Christian.

DOMINIC

So that explains your lack of respect for women, but you don't need a Father to make you a better man, Christian. You should have received professional help, someone that could have helped you cope with all your Daddy shit and help you deal with your molestation!

CHRISTIAN

(angry)

He shouldn't have left us that way. Why would he abandon us, abandon me, like that?

Dominic shakes his head.

DOMINIC

(angry)

Because he was an asshole, that's why.

A heavy beat. Then --

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

(changing subject)

So what about Cathy Bishop?

INT. BURGERS ARE US - EVENING (PAST)

Christian walks into BURGERS ARE US, near their old High School. CATHY BISHOP (25) is sitting in a small waiting area talking on the phone.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Cathy was much different than she was in High School. She had major issues too.

CATHY

I'll call you later, bye.

Cathy hangs up, stands and gives Christian a hug.

CATHY (CONT'D)

Wow, I started laughing when you told me to meet you here, I have so many great memories of this place.

CHRISTIAN

If you want to go somewhere else, Cathy, it's OK.

CATHY

Nah!

CHRISTIAN

That was a joke.

CATHY

Yes, Christian, that was a joke.

They sit down in an empty booth.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

We talked for hours, and after a few too many drinks, Cathy started to tell me about her problems growing up.

Cathy is now intoxicated.

CATHY

And my mom and Dad got divorced. So what about you, are you married?

CHRISTIAN

Yes.

CATHY

Anyone, I know?

CHRISTIAN

Maybe, she was Brady Lane's girlfriend. I don't know if you remember her.

CATHY

Is her name Cheryl? Head cheerleader, right?

CHRISTIAN

Yes, we hooked up after the dance and been together ever since. We own a daycare center, and we have a 6-year-old.

CATHY
Are you a father? Christian Morris
is a Father-- Wow!

Christian pulls out a picture and shows it to Cathy.

CHRISTIAN
Her name is Keshia.

CATHY
I always wondered what type of
woman could tie you down. I
remembered what they said about you
in school.

CHRISTIAN
What did they say?

CATHY
They said you were like an illegal
drug. Is that true?

Christian looks embarrassed.

CHRISTIAN
Well, it all depends on who you
ask.

They start to laugh.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
I can't believe how beautiful you
are.

CATHY
Really?

CHRISTIAN
I remember when you wore braces and
those thick ass glasses.

CATHY
Yeah, times have changed. I have
20/20 vision now, hell it cost
enough. I got picked on everyday
wearing those coke bottle glasses.
I told myself one day I was going
to shut those skinny ass
cheerleaders up. Now, look at me!

CHRISTIAN
We graduated years ago, you still
holding a grudge?

Cathy points her finger at Christian.

CATHY

(loud drunk talking)

Those stuck-up bitches don't have anything on me now! I've got hella Lipo and a full-body lift. I'm not that same fat bitch you remember in High School, Christian. I can't wait until I see their tight skin, flabby asses at the class reunion, I'll show them, but now I'm starting with you tonight.

CHRISTIAN

Starting with me, what are you talking about?

Cathy starts to slur her words and places Christian's hand on her breast.

CATHY

We're going back to my apartment, and you're gonna do to me what you did to those bitches in school. I've got ten years to make up for, so let's go!

CHRISTIAN

Seriously?

CATHY

I said let's go!

Cathy stands up and picks up her handbag. Christian calls for the SERVER.

CHRISTIAN

Check, please!

INT. CATHY BISHOP'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The door to Cathy's bedroom is open, and clothes scattered on the floor.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Cathy was very drunk. I know, I should have walked away, but I couldn't. She got what she asked for and I didn't have a problem giving it to her.

Christian and Cathy are making love. Cathy loudly shouts and moans. Finally, she rolls off of Christian and lays in his arms and falls asleep.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)
I left her sleeping.

Christian slowly slips out of bed.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)
I did hear from her again, but my flight schedule was too hectic, and we never got a chance to meet up.

INT. CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING (PRESENT)

Christian looks over at Dominic with a puzzling look on his face.

CHRISTIAN
Did you go to the class reunion?
Damn, I forgot all about it. I don't know if she went.

DOMINIC
No, I didn't go.

CHRISTIAN
I don't think she attended after she got her results.

DOMINIC
Oh no.

CHRISTIAN
I went to tell Cathy after my results came back. By that time, I'd lost a lot of weight, and I didn't look the same anymore.

INT. CATHY BISHOP'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON (PAST)

SUPER: *Six Months Earlier*

Christian knocks hard on Cathy's apartment door. Cathy opens the door with a large bath towel wrapped around her waist.

CATHY
Damn, don't break down my door, I was in the shower!

CHRISTIAN

I've been leaving you messages for the past two weeks, why haven't you called me back?

CATHY

Call you back for what, Christian? I got what I wanted the last time we were together!

CHRISTIAN

I needed to talk to you. I need to tell you something.

CATHY

(angry)

Tell me what? That you added another trophy to your mantle?

CHRISTIAN

Listen, Cathy, you started all of this, not me.

CATHY

Well, you didn't stop me, and you damn sure didn't push me off you, now did you?

Cathy opens the bath towel, exposing her naked body.

CATHY (CONT'D)

Is this what you came over here for, Christian?

CHRISTIAN

No Cathy, put your towel back on. That's not why I'm here. Please, we need to talk, and I need you to sit down and hear me out!

CATHY

Make it fast, Christian, I have a date tonight.

Cathy sits on the couch.

CHRISTIAN

I'm just going to come out and say it, I found out I'm HIV positive, and you need to get tested right away, and you need to inform everyone you've had sex with since we've been together.

Cathy's expression rapidly changes.

CATHY

(angry)

What the fuck are you talking about!? Are you telling me that you infected me with HIV?

CHRISTIAN

I don't know Cathy, but you have to get tested right away.

CATHY

(angry)

Christian! You were the only one I've been with in three years.

Cathy's eyes close.

CHRISTIAN

Cathy, did you hear what I just told you?

CATHY

Yes, yes I heard you.

Cathy places her hand over her eyes, bursts into tears, and stands up.

CATHY (CONT'D)

Christian fucking Morris. The son-of-a-bitch who never paid any attention to me in school. A fat ass girl with glasses and braces who got picked on, and when I finally fuck the first motherfucker in three years, you tell me that I may be HIV fuckin' positive!

Cathy turns to Christian.

CATHY (CONT'D)

(angry)

Get out! Get the fuck out of here before I kill you!

Christian stands up and tries to comfort Cathy, but she pushes him away.

CHRISTIAN

I know you're upset, Cathy, but I never meant to harm you or the others.

CATHY

(angry)

Wait! There are more women!? What the fuck? Do you go around sticking your dick in every wet hole you come in contact with!?

CHRISTIAN

No Cathy, it's not like that--

CATHY

Was I just another fucking hole to you? You careless motherfucker!

Cathy turns around and runs into the kitchen. Christian stands up and slowly eases toward the front door.

CHRISTIAN

Cathy, I'm leaving now, but you need to get tested.

Cathy runs back into the room, holding a butcher knife in her hand.

CATHY

You inconsiderate, fucking son-of-a-bitch! If I don't stop you, you'll do this again to someone else.

CHRISTIAN

I know you're upset Cathy, but--

CATHY

Upset?! You haven't seen upset!

Cathy throws the butcher knife, just missing Christian's head. The knife sticks in the door. Cathy runs back into the kitchen, and Christian runs out the front door. Cathy runs out of the kitchen and notices Christian has gone. She stops and drops to the floor and cries.

INT. CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Dominic's mouth is agape at the story.

CHRISTIAN

Cathy tested positive. I tried contacting her, but she wouldn't return my calls.

DOMINIC

Christian, I want to apologize for what I said earlier I thought you were a jerk, but I never knew you--

CHRISTIAN

What, had it in me to take responsibility for something?

DOMINIC

You're dying and you're telling me all of this.

CHRISTIAN

I couldn't be selfish anymore. I needed to make amends and finally take responsibility for all of this. I deserved this, but not them.

Suddenly, a loud, steady TONE of the heart monitor coming from across the room, followed by the sounds of shoes SCUFFING down the hall and running into the room next door. Christian looks over at Dominic.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Mrs. Williams just died.

DOMINIC

Were you two close?

CHRISTIAN

She used to come to my room and spend time talking to me. We talked about God and what she believed was waiting for me when I take my last breath. I was scared when I got here, but after talking with her, she gave me the strength to fight this as long as I could. She told me to keep reaching out to Cheryl to ask her to bring the girls to see me, but Cheryl never returned my calls.

DOMINIC

Can you blame her?

CHRISTIAN

No I can't, I gave them a deadly disease.

DOMINIC

You're not an evil man. What happened to Cheryl and the others was your fault, but thank God for the viral medication Cheryl's been taking. I know none of this has been easy for any of you, but--

Christian coughs.

CHRISTIAN

I'm not Magic Johnson; I couldn't afford the Abacavir, Emtricitabine, Tenofovir, Lamivudine, Zidovudine, or the rest of those medications needed on a flight attendant's salary. After I left the airline, I had to give up my portion of the medicine to save Cheryl and Aleshia. That's why my symptoms escalated.

DOMINIC

Why did you leave?

CHRISTIAN

Because I got too sick to work, I kept calling in sick and missing flights. After I lost weight and the lesions began to show, I knew it was just a matter of time before someone found out, but I had to tell Stacey.

Christian coughs.

DOMINIC

Oh my God, not Stacey--

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING (PAST)

Christian, dressed in his uniform, stands beside his rolling bag. He has a lesion on his face. Stacey, also in uniform, leaves her room with her rolling suitcase and is just about to close her door.

CHRISTIAN

I didn't want to tell you until we finished our flight, but I should have told you as soon as I knew.

STACEY

Knew what?

CHRISTIAN

Can we go to your room for some
privacy?

Stacey is half angry, half joking.

STACEY

(angry)

Damn it, Christian, you better not
be proposing. I'll kill you.

CHRISTIAN

No jokes. You might want to sit
down for this.

Stacey looks stunned for a beat, then retreats into her room.

STACEY

OK. Sure.

They walk inside with their rolling bags, leaving the door
open behind them. Christian sits on one of the beds, facing
the other bed, and motions for Stacey to sit opposite him so
they can face each other. Cautiously, Stacey sits. Christian
stares at her for a beat.

The MUFFLED conversation is heard, followed by Stacey's
shearing SCREAM.

STACEY (CONT'D)

No...! No! This can't be happening
to me!

CHRISTIAN

Stacey, I'm so sorry!

INT. CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Christian is saddened by the memory.

CHRISTIAN

Stacey took another flight back,
and I had to smile for the
passengers back to Atlanta, knowing
that I just fucked my best friend
again. My greed for sex destroyed
her!

Christian coughs.

DOMINIC

Dammit, Christian! She chose to
sleep with you too.

(MORE)

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Why are you having a pity party now? Don't you know that things happen for a reason? Don't you know that things never go the way you want them to go, even when bad things happen?

Christian starts crying.

CHRISTIAN

I'm scared, D, I don't want to die! I don't want to spend my last hours remembering the man I used to be. Cheryl, my babies, Stacey, and the rest of those women: I never cared about them, I never cared about anyone and I damn sure never said I'm sorry to anyone before I got sick. Jesus, I don't want to die, I don't want to die--

Christian coughs and gasps for air, then slowly closes his eyes and drifts asleep. Dominic quietly walks toward the door and down the hallway.

INT. NURSE'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Dominic approaches the Nurse's Station, where Dr. Samuel and Nurse Winters are talking.

BLAINE

(to Dominic)

Is he sleeping?

DOMINIC

He's trying, but he's having a hard time breathing. I'm going downstairs, can I bring you anything?

BLAINE

No, but thanks.

DOMINIC

What about you, Nurse Winters?

Nurse Winters picks up another chart.

NURSE WINTERS

No, thank you.

DOMINIC

I'll be right back.

Dominic walks down the hallway to the elevators and pushes the button, and the elevator doors open.

INT. MAIN FLOOR LOBBY - NIGHT

The bell RINGS, and the elevator doors open on the main lobby. Dominic walks off the elevator and outside to the street.

EXT. HOSPITAL OUTSIDE SMOKING AREA - CONTINUOUS

The loud NOISES of cars and other street sounds fill the night. Dominic takes out a small cigar case and looks into the window of the hospital lobby. He sees Cheryl, Keshia, and baby, ALESHIA, walking out of the Hospital Chapel. Dominic waves to get Cheryl's attention.

DOMINIC
Cheryl, over here!

Cheryl looks over and sees Dominic waving and walks over to him. Cheryl is very slim. Keshia is pushing Aleshia in a stroller.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
How are you doing, Cheryl?

CHERYL
Hi Dominic, I'm doing the best that I can, given the circumstances. So you've heard about Christian?

DOMINIC
Yeah, but I didn't know he was this bad.

CHERYL
How is he?

DOMINIC
Not well, he doesn't have long.

Dominic looks down at Keshia.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
Hello sweetheart, do you remember me? Look at you! You've gotten so big since I last saw you.

KESHIA
You're my Uncle Dominic!

DOMINIC

I sure am. And who is this pretty little thing?

KESHIA

This is Aleshia, she's one year old.

Dominic looks into the stroller. Aleshia looks up from the stroller and smiles as she bites on plastic rubber keys.

DOMINIC

There's still time for you and the girls to see him.

CHERYL

We've been here several times, and each time I turn around and go home. I still can't forgive him for what he's done to us-- for infecting all those other women.

DOMINIC

Nothing is going to change that, Cheryl. I've listened to Christian get a lot off his chest in the few hours I've been here. Things that he's been keeping to himself for a very long time. It's like he's in his own private confessional. He wants forgiveness from everyone, especially you.

Cheryl is angry and grabs Dominic's jacket sleeve tightly.

CHERYL

(angry)

Don't you understand, I can't forgive him! I can never forgive him. I don't understand, I've been a good woman to him. I've washed his clothes, cooked his food, and did everything right. I didn't deserve this! Look at me, Dominic! Look at what he did to us!

Cheryl begins to cry. Dominic pulls Cheryl closer and rubs her back.

DOMINIC

It's OK, Cheryl, I understand your anger and frustration. Christian was being Christian.

(MORE)

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

He's a man with some serious issues, and I'm so sorry you and the girls have to suffer for his indiscretions, but deep down inside, he's holding on just long enough to see you and the girls. He's been telling me how he told these women about his status, but he hasn't told me about you yet.

CHERYL

Yeah, he told me all right. How could I ever forget that day? I was at home getting ready for work, just like any other day --

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOME - MORNING (PAST)

Christian is in a daze lying on the chaise lounge chair in his bedroom. He stands up and pulls down the strings on the blinds. Sunshine enters the bedroom. Cheryl is getting dressed for work and sees Christian looking out of the window.

CHERYL

What time did you come to bed last night?

CHRISTIAN

About 3 am, I didn't get much sleep, though. I have a lot on my mind.

CHERYL

I need to get out of here, honey. I left some breakfast on the stove for you.

CHRISTIAN

Cheryl, there's something I need to tell you. I've been trying to gather the words. I--

CHERYL

I don't have time now, Christian: the city is sending over an inspector to inspect the daycare; then I have to get ready for a parent's meeting this afternoon; and, I need to write to the city about that broken street light. Can this wait until later?

Christian sits and takes Cheryl's hand.

CHRISTIAN
No, it can't wait.

CHERYL
Hey, I forgot to tell you, I have my first prenatal appointment on Friday, you want to go with me?

Christian guides Cheryl to sit down.

CHRISTIAN
I guess you're probably wondering what's wrong with me?

CHERYL
Yeah, but I told myself you'd talk to me when you're ready. You don't look so well, are you Ok?

CHRISTIAN
I've been stalling, trying to find the right words, but I--

CHERYL
Are you leaving me? I mean--

CHRISTIAN
No, no, Cheryl, don't be silly, but I need you to listen and hear me out, ok?

CHERYL
Ok, so what's the matter?

CHRISTIAN
I saw Doctor Anderson for my yearly physical and--

CHERYL
What is it, do you need to have surgery?

CHRISTIAN
No, Cheryl, my blood work came back, and I'm HIV positive.

CHERYL
HIV positive!? That isn't funny, Christian -- Stop playing!

CHRISTIAN
I'm not playing. I'm HIV positive.

CHERYL

Are you telling me that you have AIDS?

CHRISTIAN

Jesus, no, honey, but I need to get you tested immediately.

CHERYL

Oh my God! What about Keshia and the baby? Christian, are you gay?

CHRISTIAN

No, Cheryl, I'm not gay! I've been--

Christian takes a long pause.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I've been cheating on you with a lot of women.

Cheryl starts to cry uncontrollably.

CHERYL

(angry)

You what!? You motherfucking selfish ass piece of shit! How could you do this to our girls and me!?

CHRISTIAN

I know you're upset Cheryl and I just want to say I'm--

CHERYL

(angry and confused)

Upset!? You don't know anything Christian!

CHRISTIAN

I know I fucked up Cheryl, and I know I haven't been faithful to you, but I never knew this would happen! I never meant to bring this home to you. I was having fun and look at what I've done! Please forgive me. I love you! Please forgive me, oh Jesus, please forgive me for what I've done!

Christian holds her around the waist.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

But you must get tested to make sure you and the baby are ok, Dr. Anderson says that there is a chance--

Cheryl pushes Christian away and walks toward the bedroom door and then runs back to Christian and grabs him by the collar.

CHERYL

(angry)

How many women, Christian!? How many women have you fucked!? How many others have you infected, you bastard!?

CHRISTIAN

I don't know; I can only remember a few of them. Five that I know, but there were many more.

Cheryl SLAPS Christian and starts beating on his chest. She grabs his arm and pulls the middle of his shirt.

CHERYL

(angry)

Five out of what, one hundred, two hundred!? How many women, Christian!?

CHRISTIAN

Does it matter, Cheryl? None of that matters now! I'm sorry!

CHERYL

You're damn right you're sorry you bastard, you worthless bastard! Get the fuck out of here! Get your shit and get out of here or God help me I'm gonna, I'm gonna--

Cheryl collapses to the floor on her side in the fetal position. Christian tries to revive her.

CHRISTIAN

Cheryl, Cheryl!

EXT. HOSPITAL OUTSIDE SMOKING AREA - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Keshia is standing next to Cheryl, tugging at her coat.

KESHIA

Mommy, Mommy, can I have some ice cream, the machine is over there?

Cheryl reaches into her coat pocket and gives some change to Keshia.

CHERYL

Here honey, do you need help?

KESHIA

No Mommy.

Keshia walks over to the ice cream machine, puts in the coins, and presses the button. An ICE CREAM BAR falls to the bottom of the vending machine.

DOMINIC

She has his eyes.

Cheryl wipes her face.

CHERYL

Yes, and she's too smart for her age.

DOMINIC

Does she know about all of this, about Christian dying?

CHERYL

She knows he's sick, and she's been trying to piece it all together, but--

DOMINIC

She needs to understand that her father, I mean, that her parents are sick.

Dominic looks at Cheryl's hands and face. Several small lesions are forming.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Have you been taking your viral medications?

CHERYL

I was, but I don't have any more. Once the rumors started and the parents found out about my HIV status, I had to close the daycare center.

(MORE)

CHERYL (CONT'D)

The medication became too expensive, especially when you can't afford insurance for three.

DOMINIC

So, when did you last take any?

CHERYL

Three, maybe four weeks ago, I don't remember--

DOMINIC

Four weeks ago!? Cheryl, didn't your doctor tell you that if you stop taking the viral medications, there's a strong chance the disease will escalate? You and Aleshia need to get monthly checkups or your immune systems could become worse, especially at your age.

CHERYL

Are you saying we could have AIDS now?

DOMINIC

I'm not saying that, but I've seen these symptoms before, and you don't look too good. I know you're still upset with Christian, but he's dying up there, and the girls need to say goodbye to their father. Please don't take that away from them or him.

Dominic looks down at Keshia. She is sharing her ice cream with Aleshia. He places his hand on Keshia's head.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Take care of your Mommy and little Sister, ok?

CHERYL

You ready to go, honey?

KESHIA

Yes, Mommy.

Cheryl wipes the tears from her eyes. Keshia waves goodbye to Dominic, and they leave. Dominic takes out a cigar and lights it.

INT. CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Several nurses and Blaine stand around Christian's bed. A full bottle of brownish bile is at the bottom side of the bed. Dominic enters the room and sees Christian is wincing in pain.

DOMINIC

What's going on?

BLAINE

We're draining some fluid from his lungs.

DOMINIC

Does he have to be awake? Why don't you put him under for the procedure?

BLAINE

If I sedate him in this condition, there's a strong chance he won't wake up.

Dominic looks at Christian.

DOMINIC

How are you holding up?

Christian coughs.

CHRISTIAN

Like a champ.

NURSE WINTERS

We're almost through Mr. Morris, just a little more fluid to go.

Blaine looks over at Nurse Winters.

BLAINE

The more fluid we drain, the more fluid he makes. It's like putting a band-aid on a gunshot wound.

DOMINIC

I know. Make him comfortable and I'll keep an eye on him.

Blaine looks down at Christian's urine bag. The urine is dark brown.

BLAINE

Whatever you two have to say to each other, you need to say it soon. Christian's kidneys are failing.

Dominic turns looking at Christian.

DOMINIC

How ya doing, buddy?

CHRISTIAN

My side hurts, but I can breathe better.

DOMINIC

I spoke with Dr. Samuel concerning--

CHRISTIAN

What, concerning my kidney's shutting down?

DOMINIC

So you know?

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, I know. So, did you see Cheryl and the girls downstairs?

DOMINIC

What, how did you know about that?

CHRISTIAN

They come here every other day and sit in the chapel, but never come up. Plus one of the nurses told me they saw them downstairs.

DOMINIC

Really?

CHRISTIAN

She told me she wasn't looking good. Is that true?

Dominic looks down.

DOMINIC

I didn't see them.

CHRISTIAN

Do you know how I know you're lying, Dominic?

DOMINIC

How?

CHRISTIAN

Your lips move.

Christian tries to laugh but coughs instead.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

You've never been a good liar, D.

DOMINIC

I guess lying never got me
anywhere.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, remember when you lied to
that teacher and got suspended?

DOMINIC

Yeah, my Dad found out and beat the
shit out of me.

CHRISTIAN

Hey, I'm sorry to hear about his
passing, D.

DOMINIC

Yeah. It's been two years now, but
it still feels like yesterday.

CHRISTIAN

You're lucky, at least your Dad
didn't pack up and abandon you. You
had someone there to teach you
about life and all that shit.

DOMINIC

You don't need a Dad to do that.
You have to understand Christian,
that it wasn't your fault. He left
because that's what cowards do.

Dominic takes a deep breath.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Christian, there's something you
need to know.

Christian interrupts.

CHRISTIAN

Wait, I need to finish telling you
about Stacey--

INT. STACEY COLLINS HOME - BATHROOM - MORNING (PAST)

Stacey is in the bathroom crying, smoking a cigarette and holding a handgun. She stares down at her positive test results and takes a long drag of her cigarette as tears hit the letter. She points the gun at her right temple and steps out of frame.

A LOUD GUNSHOT is heard, followed by a loud THUMP as her body hits the floor.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - RESUMING (PRESENT)

Christian looks over at Dominic wiping his tears.

DOMINIC

Oh, God... That poor woman.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah. Stacey just wasn't strong enough to live with her guilt, but Charlotte Stewart was.

INT. CONCORDIA AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY (PAST)

The low ROAR of jet engines surrounds the cabin. CHARLOTTE STEWART (40) staggers out of the lavatory carrying small a black bag. She sits back in her seat and nods off. She is sitting with two children, TREAT (15) and JAMIE (12). Jamie wakes Charlotte.

JAMIE

Momma, can I have a chocolate milk?

CHARLOTTE

Yes you can, darling.

Charlotte reaches up and pushes the call attendant button. Christian walks over and turns off the call button.

CHRISTIAN

Hi, can I help you?

A groggy Charlotte wakes up, slowly scratches her arms, and looks up at Christian.

CHARLOTTE

Oh my God, look at you, your eyes are amazingly beautiful. Oh yes, can I have a diet coke and chocolate milk, please?

CHRISTIAN

Thank you. Nice accent, where are you from?

CHARLOTTE

I'm from Sweden.

CHRISTIAN

Really, so what brings you to Atlanta?

CHARLOTTE

We moved to Atlanta after the Army transferred my Husband.

CHRISTIAN

Your Husband's a fortunate man.

CHARLOTTE

He's just a man, but lucky is what he is. What's your name?

CHRISTIAN

Christian, and you are?

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte, nice to meet you.

Christian looks across the aisle.

CHRISTIAN

Are these your children?

Charlotte scratches her arm again and starts to smile, looking over at her children.

CHARLOTTE

Yes, these two baddies are mine. That's Treat over there, he's the oldest and this one next to me is Jamie, she's my baby girl. I have two others at home.

CHRISTIAN

They're beautiful like their Mother. Excuse me, I'll be right back.

Christian walks into the first-class food galley. Stacey is fixing a cocktail. He pours a diet coke and then pours chocolate milk into a glass.

STACEY

Damn Christian, did she paint on that dress? Jesus, look at her breasts!

CHRISTIAN

She's Swedish.

Christian walks back to a snoring Charlotte carrying two drinks. He wakes her and hands her the drinks.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Can I get you anything else?

CHARLOTTE

Well, that all depends on what you mean.

Christian looks over at the children who are busy listening to music and watching an in-flight movie.

CHRISTIAN

So, you mentioned a husband?

CHARLOTTE

We left him in Germany; he's headed to Afghanistan tomorrow for another tour.

CHRISTIAN

Wow, so what do you do?

CHARLOTTE

I'm an interior designer, I remodel and decorate homes. I have a small office in my house.

CHRISTIAN

I'm looking at remodeling my closet.

CHARLOTTE

Is it a his-and-hers closet, or a his-and-his?

CHRISTIAN

(laughing)

No, no it's a his-and-her closet.

CHARLOTTE

You never know with all this gay marriage stuff going on.

(MORE)

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Maybe you can come to my office,
and I'll give you a quote. I'm sure
we can work something out.

CHRISTIAN

Do you have a rough idea how much
is it going to cost me?

CHARLOTTE

Who said anything about money? Give
me your number? I'll call you and
set something up. I promise you'll
like what you see.

Christian writes his number on a Concordia Airlines napkin
and hands it to Charlotte.

CHRISTIAN

Here you go, when do you want to
get started?

CHARLOTTE

What about tomorrow? If you're
free, I'll call you after lunch,
ok?

CHRISTIAN

I don't fly again until next
Saturday, tomorrow's good.

Christian turns to assist another passenger. Charlotte leans
to the side of her seat and watches Christian walk down the
aisle and into the food galley.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

Charlotte called me the next day.
It was the appointment that changed
everything.

EXT. CHARLOTTE STEWART'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Christian parks his car along the side of the long driveway
to the house. He walks to the door and rings the doorbell.
Charlotte opens the door wearing a robe with long sleeves.
Christian walks in.

INT. CHARLOTTE STEWART'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christian makes his way through the house behind Charlotte.

CHRISTIAN

You have a beautiful home.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks, it was built in the early '70s, and it's the prettiest house on the block. Can I get you anything?

CHRISTIAN

Maybe.

Charlotte smiles and they walk into the living room.

CHARLOTTE

I didn't think you'd show up.

CHRISTIAN

Why?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. You looked so damn innocent when I saw you. Do you know you look like one of those underwear models for what's his name? Do you do this a lot?

CHRISTIAN

What, show up at a stranger's house? Sometimes, it all depends on how I feel. Are your kids home?

CHARLOTTE

No silly, they're in school. They get out at 4:00, so we need to hurry. Did you bring any condoms?

CHRISTIAN

I didn't bring any.

CHARLOTTE

Why not? You didn't expect to fuck me without one, did you?

Charlotte laughs.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I'm fucking with you, I have plenty of them. Come with me.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)

We went straight into the living room and sat on the couch. Charlotte didn't waste any time. She pulled off her robe.

(MORE)

CHRISTIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
As I looked at her, I couldn't
believe she had four children. Not
a stretch mark anywhere.

Christian starts to undress as Charlotte looks at him, taking
off his shirt quickly.

CHARLOTTE
Slow down, take your time. I want
to see everything.

CHRISTIAN
OK.

Christian slowly unbuckles his belt.

CHARLOTTE
(in a soft voice)
Slower.

Christian slowly takes off his pants. Charlotte takes off her
panties. She stands next to him naked. From a rearview, he
pulls down his boxers, and she looks down at him.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Oh my, you're huge.

Charlotte positions him on the couch and reaches over and
pulls out a condom from a small music box on the table and
hands Christian the condom.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Now put it on.

She straddles Christian and begins to ride him up and down
slowly. She goes from slow to fast. Her eyes close.

CHRISTIAN
Oh shit, stop, I think the condom
broke!

Charlotte keeps moving faster and faster.

CHARLOTTE
Oh, my God! I can't stop, I can't
stop, I'm, I'm--

Charlotte arches her back and flings forward as she lets out
a loud yell. She continues to pump up and down on him as she
climaxes. Christian tries to hold back but can't. Charlotte
falls back on Christian, jumps up and staggers into the
kitchen and comes back with a hot towel.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
That was just the appetizer.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)
The woman was like a machine, and I
loved every minute of it.

DOMINIC (V.O.)
So, when did you tell her about
your HIV status?

EXT. CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - DAY - WEEKS LATER (PAST)

Christian's car turns the corner and pulls up in the driveway
of Charlotte's house.

CHRISTIAN (V.O.)
I saw a for-sale sign outside her
house when I drove up.

A realtor, REBA BLAKE (35), stands outside of the front door
with her back turned. Christian walks up the walkway and
yells.

CHRISTIAN
Charlotte?

Reba turns around.

REBA
Hi, no I'm Reba. Are you here for
the open house?

CHRISTIAN
Open house? No. I was looking for
Charlotte Stewart, the woman who
lives here.

Reba looks somewhat surprised.

REBA
Nope, she's doesn't live here
anymore. What a shame...

CHRISTIAN
A shame?

REBA
Are you from around here?

CHRISTIAN
No, no I'm not.

REBA

Well, Mrs. Stewart took ill some time ago. I heard she had AIDS. She fooled everyone who knew she used heroin.

Christian looks surprised.

CHRISTIAN

She did heroin?

REBA

Yeah, her husband had to come back from Afghanistan to put the house on the market. He moved her and kids to Arizona, said something about seeing a specialist. I didn't know they had a specialist for that, especially in Arizona. I heard the husband was sick too.

Christian turns around and walks away, angrily toward his car.

CHRISTIAN

(sotto)

Fuck... I can't believe this!

Reba yells at Christian as he gets into his car --

REBA

Are you sure you're not interested in seeing the house? I can give it to you for \$20,000 off the listing price.

Christian looks back at Reba.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, right.

He starts to laugh and then cry, wiping the tears off his face as he gets in the driver's seat.

INT. CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL ROOM - RESUMING (PRESENT)

Christian's heart monitor BEEPS faster.

CHRISTIAN

Charlotte just died a couple of months ago, and I'm dying now because the condom broke. Ain't that a bitch, D?

He gasps and struggles for air.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Look at me, Dominic, look at me!
I'm 105 pounds, and I look like a
fuckin monster, all because that
condom broke! I, I don't feel so
good--

Christian gasps for air and passes out.

DOMINIC

Christian!

Dominic runs into the hallway and yells.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Dr. Samuel! Nurse Winters!

They run down the hallway and into Christian's room. Blaine looks down at Christian with a grim, knowing look.

BLAINE

It's his lungs. There's nothing
else we can do.

Nurse Winters shakes her head.

BLAINE (CONT'D)

He's here to die, Dominic, and
they're not going to approve any
more treatments.

DOMINIC

Then get me Cheryl's and his
Mother's number!

BLAINE

I can't give you that personal
information without approval.

DOMINIC

Please, Blaine! We don't have time
for this, they need to be here.

Blaine looks over at Nurse Winters and nods.

BLAINE

They need to hurry here, he doesn't
have long.

Blaine walks over to Christian. Dominic leaves the room and rushes down to the Nurse's Station.

INT. NURSE'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Nurse Winters hands Dominic the phone numbers, and he picks up the phone.

DOMINIC

Hello, Ms. Morris? It's Dominic Rhoades, I'm sorry to contact you so early, but--

(pause)

Yes, ma'am, I'm the same one that went to school with him.

(pause)

It's about Christian. It's time. Please get down here right away.

(pause)

Don't cry, Ms. Morris, hurry!

Dominic hangs up and dials Cheryl's number. The phone rings.

CHERYL (V.O.)

Hello?

DOMINIC

This is Dominic, it's time.

CHERYL (V.O.)

Oh my God, is he--

DOMINIC

It's just a matter of time, if you love him then please--

Suddenly, a steady dial tone. Dominic hangs up and walks sadly down the hall toward Blaine, who is standing outside Christian's room.

BLAINE

Did you get anyone?

DOMINIC

I called his Mother and Cheryl.

BLAINE

I doubt Cheryl will come.

DOMINIC

Yeah, who knows.

BLAINE

I made him comfortable. All we can do now is wait.

DOMINIC
Is he conscious?

BLAINE
Last I checked he was still out.

Dominic nods and walks into the room.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christian's breathing is congested, and his heart monitor is BEEPING in a slow, loud, steady tone. Dominic puts on rubber gloves and wipes Christian's face with a wet towel. Christian opens his eyes.

CHRISTIAN
That feels good.

DOMINIC
Hey buddy.

CHRISTIAN
I feel weird, my body is numb all over. Can I have some water?

DOMINIC
No, but have some ice.

CHRISTIAN
I'm so cold, D.

DOMINIC
You have a very high fever.

Dominic places an ice cube in Christian's mouth.

CHRISTIAN
I feel so weak.

DOMINIC
There's something I need to tell you, Christian. Something that I should have told you a long time ago.

Christian looks up at Dominic. His breathing is weak as he fights for air.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
I wanted you to know that you are my brother and I love you.

Keshia peeps around the corner and looks into the room.

KESHIA
Daddy, is that you?

Christian's face lights up with enjoyment as he looks over and sees Keshia looking into the room. Keshia looks at him and backs away, frightfully into the hallway.

CHRISTIAN
Keshia, don't be afraid. It's me,
Daddy.

Keshia comes back into the room.

KESHIA
What happened to you Daddy, why are
you in bed?

Cheryl walks in pushing Aleshia in the stroller.

CHRISTIAN
Cheryl!?

Christian's heart monitor BEEPS faster.

CHERYL
Hello, Christian.

Christian desperately tries to sit up.

DOMINIC
No Christian, you need to save your
strength. Lay down.

CHRISTIAN
I've been praying to God every day
to see you and the girls one last
time and--

Christian looks upwards. His eyes roll back in his head.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)
(faintly whispers)
God is good. He's really good!

CHERYL
I wasn't going to come, but--

Christian looks in the stroller at Aleshia sleeping.

CHRISTIAN
Look at my baby girl; she's
beautiful. Cheryl, please come
closer.

CHERYL

I--

Cheryl looks over at Dominic and he nods his head yes. Cheryl walks closer to the edge of the bed and sits down in a CHAIR next to Christian.

CHRISTIAN

Look at you; you're so beautiful.
You still look like the girl I took
to the dance.

CHERYL

I do?

Cheryl looks at Christian's face.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Is that how I'm going to look soon?

CHRISTIAN

No, no, not as long as you keep
taking your meds. Do you have
enough medication?

Cheryl looks over as Dominic nods his head yes.

CHERYL

Yes, I have enough medication. I
made an appointment for Aleshia and
me to see the doctor next week.

Christian swallows hard.

CHRISTIAN

You have to keep taking your
medication. You must keep yourself
healthy for the girls, ok?

Christian's eyes roll back in his head.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Cheryl?

CHERYL

Yes, Christian?

Christian starts to cry.

CHRISTIAN

I'm sorry, I know my words can't
erase the hatred you feel for me.
(MORE)

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I let you and the girls down, and I destroyed many other people because of my carelessness. Please forgive me, Cheryl, please don't let me die hating me. Please forgive me.

Tears run down Cheryl's face and Keshia starts to cry too.

KESHIA

Don't cry, Mommy.

Christian starts breathing heavy, trying to gasp for more air.

CHRISTIAN

Keshia--

Keshia steps back behind Cheryl.

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

Don't be scared, honey, come here.

CHERYL

Go ahead, honey, it's OK.

Keshia walks over to Christian. With all of his strength left, he reaches out and touches Keshia with his index finger.

CHRISTIAN

(slowly talking)

I know you're scared baby girl, I'm scared too. I want you to know that Daddy loves you, your Sister and your Mommy very much.

KESHIA

Don't die, Daddy, please come home.

Tears roll down Christian's face. Cheryl starts to cry out.

CHERYL

I forgive you, Christian.

Christian reaches out and pats Cheryl's hand and looks over at Keshia.

CHRISTIAN

(singing slowly)

Hush little baby, don't say a word,
Daddy's gonna buy you a Mock-ing-
bird and if that--

Christian gasps for air again and lets out a deep breath. A loud, steady TONE on Christian's heart monitor fills the room.

KESHIA
Daddy, Daddy, wake up!

Keshia grabs and shakes Christian's hand.

KESHIA (CONT'D)
Daddy, wake up! Please don't leave me, Daddy!

Dominic picks up Keshia and hugs her. Cheryl wipes her eyes. Just then, SOPHIE (53) and WENDY MORRIS (25) rushes into the room. They stop short, realizing they're too late.

SOPHIE
No... No!

Sophie drops to the floor, crying. Wendy cries and comforts her Mother. Blaine walks over and turns off the heartbeat monitor. Dominic holds Keshia tight as they depart the room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH - A WEEK LATER - DAY

The choir ends their song. Fans are waving as many families, and friends of Christian take their seats as PASTOR MARTIN RAWLS (50) takes the stage resting behind the pulpit.

PASTOR RAWLS
Christian Morris was small in stature but large in personality. He and I had many discussions once he received his diagnosis about what awaited him on the other side. He promised to come back and tell me. I begged him not to.

The audience laughs quietly.

PASTOR RAWLS (CONT'D)
On his death bed days before he died, he had but one request of me. He asked that I get Dominic up here to speak. Brother Dominic, please come up.

Dominic looks around nervously, rising to his feet. He glances over at Cheryl and Keisha, adjusts his suit jacket and straightens his watch as he makes his way to the pulpit.

The pastor pats him on the back as they pass each other by. Dominic stands silently, looking into the crowd, searching for his words.

DOMINIC

Good Afternoon, I wasn't prepared to speak today. As usual, leave it to Christian to put me on the spot.

Dominic clears his throat and begins to weep, struggling to compose himself and exhales.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

As some of you know, you can always be yourself around him, and he had no problem being himself around you, especially the ladies.

The audience laughs. Dominic wipes his eyes.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

He was just that type of guy. He made you feel as though it was ok just to be you. Our friendship goes way back. I've seen Christian's transition through many stages in life, and ultimately, I watched him unto his death, but deep-down, he was a good-hearted, kind, and loving father.

(clears his throat)

He loved people too, many people.

(looks over at Cheryl)

I'm going to be completely honest with you. Christian Morris was selfish, conceded, egotistical, and a habitual womanizer who hurt many people in life to include infecting his family with HIV.

Dominic goes silent, swallows, and begins again.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Even as he knew the end was nearing, he confided in me for once in his life to be the hero I knew he could be. He knew he'd made mistakes. He knew he hurt a lot of people, but he, I mean Christian Morris was my real-life biological brother.

Sophie and Wendy look up at Dominic, not knowing where his story is going but listens. Blaine nods her head.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Christian and I met in Middle School. He lived just three blocks from my house, and we've been best friends ever since. My Father David Wayne Rhoades died two years ago. As I was looking in his safe deposit box, I found pictures of Christian. His mother, Sophie, and Sister Wendy. I couldn't believe it.

The audience reacts, and Sophie stands.

SOPHIE

(angry)

That's a damn lie!

Wendy angrily looks at Dominic and gently motions to Sophie to sit down.

DOMINIC

I'm not here to embarrass you, Ms. Morris. I'm here to say my peace. You see, my Dad changed his last name from Charles David Morris to David Wayne Rhoades after he abandoned Christian's family, set up a new family, and moved just three blocks away. The day before Christian died, I went to the hospital to tell him about this, and I just couldn't. Looking at his fatherless face many years ago when I told him how I had such a great time with my Dad growing up not knowing that the man who raised me was the bastard who left his family like they were nothing.

The audience reacts with surprise.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

(angry)

The same Father who told me he loved me night after night but never shared that with Christian, his firstborn son. I never put the puzzle together until I saw the photos. I finally knew why Christian hated his Father so much and how this betrayal made him who he was. I couldn't put him through that.

(MORE)

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

I couldn't see the disappointment in his frail, dying eyes again. I'm a coward, yes, but I'm also a Brother who loved him. I'm so sorry for upsetting you, Ms. Morris, and you too, Wendy. I couldn't see the disappointment in his frail dying eyes again. I'm a coward yes, but I'm also a Brother who loved him.

Dominic looks over at Blaine and smiles.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Someone very close to me once said that it's not healthy, holding in pain. It will eat away at you like cancer. Thank you all for coming. We love you Christian.

The pastor nods to the organist to begin playing. Dominic walks off the podium, nods to Wendy. He takes Blaine's hand and weeps.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WALTON MIDDLE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

SUPER: *Six Months Later*

Keshia is standing in the hallway, rehearsing her award speech. A healthy-looking Cheryl comes out of the auditorium and sees Keshia talking to herself.

CHERYL

You almost ready, honey? You've been practicing your speech for over a week now.

KESHIA

Yes, Mommy.

CHERYL

Ok, they're ready. Don't be afraid and remember to speak clearly. I'll be on the other side of the curtain if you need me.

KESHIA

Ok, Mommy.

Cheryl fixes Keshia's dress and kisses her on the cheek. They walk into the auditorium.

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The full auditorium has PARENTS, TEACHERS, and middle school STUDENTS seated in rows, facing out at an empty stage. Sophia and Wendy are amongst them. Dominic and Blaine enter, dressed up and holding hands.

DOMINIC
(whispering to Blaine)
We made it!

They scurry quickly to their seats, just in time to see PRINCIPLE SCOTT (45) walking onto the stage and tap the microphone.

PRINCIPLE SCOTT
Ladies and gentlemen, can I have your attention? Up next is Keshia Morris. Keshia is this year's Newton Award Winner for outstanding student of the year and the recipient of the Bailey Bank and Trust young humanitarian of the year award. Please give a big round of applause for Keshia Morris.

Keshia walks down the aisle and up the stairs to the front of the auditorium stage. The auditorium's APPLAUSE is echoing as everyone in attendance stands up. Their applause eventually settles, and everyone sits down. Keshia stands in front of the microphone.

KESHIA
I want to thank everyone at Walton Middle School and Bailey Bank and Trust for these beautiful awards. I got involved in AIDS awareness because my Mommy and Sister are HIV positive and because my Daddy died a few months ago from it.

Keshia smiles at Cheryl.

KESHIA (CONT'D)
I didn't understand the disease at first, but now I do. My Mommy is still taking care of my little sister and me, and she has to take her medication every day, but there are still so many people out there who cannot afford the medication. That's why I decided to help those who can't afford it.
(MORE)

KESHIA (CONT'D)

I want to thank my entire school
for helping raise \$40,000 for AIDS
medication. I want to thank my
Uncle Dominic for helping me start
the Christian Morris Foundation,
and I want to tell my Mommy--

Keshia pauses and cries.

KESHIA (CONT'D)

I want to tell my Mommy that I love
her more than anything, and I want
her to live a long time, so she can
see us grow up.

Keshia looks upward.

KESHIA (CONT'D)

And I want to tell my Dad that I
love him very, very much. Thank
you.

The audience stands and uproariously APPLAUDS. Sophie and
Wendy wipe their tears and stand, joining in.

Dominic and Blaine clap proudly before turning to each other
and share a kiss. Cheryl walks up to Keshia, drops to one
knee, and hugs her.

FADE OUT.