



Written and Directed by
Gary Hardwick

FADE IN:

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY.

A crowd, mostly African-American is jammed into the room. It is filled with flowers. SAD MUSIC plays. The mood is sad, somber, respectful.

RAY (v.o.)
You know when a funeral is really awful?...

Surrounded by LILIES is A BLOWN UP PHOTO of RAY ADAMS, late twenties, handsome African-American man.

RAY (v.o.)
...When it's yours. That's me, Ray Adams, young, gifted-- and dead.

AN URN sits below the picture.

RAY
Those are my remains. And these three mournful brothers...

MIKE CLARK, TIMOTHY WILLIAMS and DARRELL RYDER, all late twenties, black, sit together in a row.

RAY (v.o.)
...they're the men who killed me.

Mike is handsome and muscular, the leader and all-around asshole. Tim is a middle class doctor, easy-going, a follower and completely pussy-whipped. Darrell is cool, hip-hop style, closer to the 'hood than the others, but sadly, not too bright. They all look somber.

RAY (v.o.)
They look sad, don't they? But this is how they really feel.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - FANTASY

Tim, Mike and Darrell all dance to a RAP TUNE, surrounded by VIDEO WOMEN, happy as hell. They grab the urn and toss it around like a ball.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - REALITY

The service continues.

RAY (v.o.)
But they're not the real reason I'm dead. These are their women.

KAREENAH, BETHANY, and JACQUI, all African-American and fine.

RAY (v.o.)
Fine, ain't they? Some families are blessed with great genes, and the Dandridge sisters had it all.

Kareenah, Tim's wife, is the oldest. She is bold, strong and fiercely independent.

Bethany, Mike's girl, is a knockout, a spiritual, new agey woman who's into her self-made life.

Jacqui, Darrell's wife, is a brilliant and outgoing student and a real tomboy.

RAY (v.o.)
But they're not the reason I'm dead,
either. She is.

EVANGELINE DANDRIDGE, even in mourning, she's beautiful. Eva dabs tears as her sisters huddle around her, consoling. Eva is a strong, intelligent and terribly outspoken woman who loves her sisters and interferes in everything they do-- in other words, the sister-in-law from Hell.

RAY (v.o.)
How did this sweet-faced woman cause a
man to die? Well, it began six months
ago....

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAMS DEN - SIX MONTHS AGO - NIGHT

Tim, Darrell and Mike sit and watch A BIG-SCREEN TV. The room is filled with beer, food and testosterone. Darrel has a POSTAL INSIGNIA on his shirt.

SUPERIMPOSE: "SIX MONTHS AGO."

The fellas cheer and call out to the TV, having a good time. Suddenly, Kareenah comes in carrying a plate of food.

TIM
Kareenah, honey, that's great of you,
but we already have food.

KAREENAH
Tim, what are you doing in here?

TIM
Watching the game.

KAREENAH
But my book club meets here tonight.

TIM
Honey, I told you we were going to be here
last month. You said it was okay, remember?

KAREENAH
Oh, Eva changed all that. She was
supposed to tell you.

TIM
Well, she didn't.

Jacqui and Bethany enter carrying drinks and food. Jacqui wears a USC T-SHIRT.

JACQUI
Hey, it's the men. What are you fellas
doing in up here?

BETHANY
Are you joining our book club? It's
gonna be very enlightening.

TIM
(to Kareenah)
Listen, precious, can't your book club
have the meeting in the living room?
We're all settled in here.

KAREENAH
Well, I guess we could--

EVA (o.s.)
No, we can't.

From behind the sisters, like an evil apparition comes Eva.
She is dressed conservatively with her hair up, all goddamned
business. The men all burn with anger at the sight of her.

EVA (cont'd)
(flatly)
Michael, Timothy, Darrell.

The fellas mumble hellos to Eva. Eva notices the game on TV.
Her face turns even more sour.

EVA (cont'd)
Our book club is reading "Beloved"
today and we need the TV to watch the
movie when we're done.

KAREENAH
Oh, right. Baby, we need the room.

The other sisters go about taking over the room, leaving Eva
to battle the men. This is obviously the way it always goes.

TIM
You didn't tell me you needed the room,
in my house, Eva.

EVA
Well, I'm telling you now and this is
half my sister's house, too. Community
property. I want Kareenah to make a
good impression on the book club, don't
you?

TIM
No.
(off Kareenah's look)
Yes.

Tim backs off. Darrel steps to her.

DARRELL
Look, we was here first, Eva.

EVA

Yes, but certainly the temporal
proximity of our advents isn't
determinative, is it?

*
*
*

Darrell looks totally confused. He hasn't got s clue.

*

DARRELL

(angrily)
I'm gon' get back to you on that.

*
*

Mike steps up for his turn. He's cocky.

MIKE

You can't get to me with your fifty
dollar words, Eva. What would you say
if I demanded you leave this room?

*
*

EVA

I'd say that I find your particular
brand of crack very interesting.

*
*

Eva straightens her back. She circles the men like a
tigress.

EVA (cont'd)

You know, this isn't about a book
versus a football game. It's about men
versus women. Women who aspire to
culture and men who aspire to scratch
themselves, women who bear the burdens
of life and men who create those
burdens. Women who uplift humanity and
men who uplift the "Playboy Channel."
If society were left to the whims of
men, we'd still be living in caves,
carving pictures with our non-opposable
thumbs. We are not the brainless
silicone receptacles of your pitiful
fantasies. We are women of substance,
women of power, women who break the
rules like we might crack a walnut-- or
two. So, today is a day for civilized
behavior, today the women raise our
voices against tyranny, crudeness and
playoff games. And that's it
gentlemen, end of story, fat lady's
singing, out of the room!

*
*

Eva takes a step, then turns back to them.

EVA (cont'd)
By the way, if any of this is lost upon
you, then I've only proven my point
again. Excuse us.

Eva walks off. The men are speechless. Mike and Darrell
look at Tim, pleading with him to stand up to his wife.

TIM
Kareenah, I'm putting my foot down!

Tim puts his foot down hard and we:

CUT TO:

EXT. TAPPERS'S BAR - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

A local bar and restaurant in the city.

CUT TO:

INT. TAPPER'S BAR - NIGHT

The men stand at the back of a crowd watching a big screen
TV. There are so many people, that they can't see the
action. They move off.

DARRELL
God, I hate that woman!

TIM
Darrell, you need to calm your ass
down, man.

DARRELL
And you need to stand up to your wife,
Tim. It's like she took your balls and
turned them into earrings.

MIKE
This is what we get for being with
Eva's little sisters. They could never
stand up to us without Eva.

TIM
I thought I was getting one of the
fabulous Dandridge girls. I didn't
know the sister in law from hell came
with it.

DARRELL
But they were the finest girls in the
neighborhood. We used to say their
daddy's johnson should be bronzed.

MIKE
You notice how they all stick together
in an argument? One for all and all
for Eva.

TIM
Come on man, have some compassion.
Their parents died and left them alone
when they were kids. They had to be
united.

MIKE
I should have used the argument to get
on Eva about the Dandridge fund.

TIM
Let it go, man.

MIKE
(ignoring him)
Okay, the sisters have been taking
money and putting it in a bank account
since they were all in their teens,
right? They needed it then, but what
do they do with it now? Nothing. I
bet they don't even know how much is in
there now.

DARRELL
Forty-six grand. I keep tabs on it.

TIM
With that money, Kareenah could take a
trip to Japan like she's always talking
about.

MIKE
Bethany could expand her hair salon.

DARRELL
I could get me a new Escalade.
(off their looks)
I'm gon' let her ride in it.

Suddenly, there is a COMMOTION from across the room.

ANGLE ON: Ray Adams, the man we saw in the funeral picture.
Ray is standing between CYNDA and LORI, two attractive and
angry women.

CYNDA
I'm telling you to step off my man!

RAY
Ladies, there's no need for this.

LORI
If he's your man, what's he doing here
with me?

CYNDA
Charity work, heifer!

RAY
This is just a big misunderstand--

Cynda grabs at Lori. Ray keeps them apart.

ANGLE ON: Tim, Mike and Darrell.

DARRELL
Why do women embarrass themselves like that? I got ten on the tall sister.

TIM
You're on.

MIKE
Fellas, I know that brother.
(calling out)
Yo Ray!

Ray notices Mike. He waves. Ray calms the two women down.

MIKE (cont'd)
I didn't know he was back in town.
(thinks, remembers)
Fellas, that might be the man we need to rid us of Eva.

DARRELL
Right. His game is raggedy. Those two women are about to cuss him out and leave him high and dry.

RAY AND THE WOMEN:

Ray smiles at the ladies. He says something. They all talk. The ladies smile back. Suddenly, they grab their coats and all walk to the door, hugging Ray.

MIKE AND THE GUYS.

TIM
Well, I'll be....

DARRELL
Playa!

Mike runs over and says something to Ray. Mike goes back to Tim and Darrell.

MIKE
He said he'll meet us here day after tomorrow.

DARRELL
Okay, so he gets freaky, how does that help us with Eva?

MIKE
Eva just needs a man.

There is great disagreement to this notion.

TIM
We tried that. Remember our boy, Rashaun?

SWISH PAN:

EXT. STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK.

RASHAUN, a handsome black man stands mesmerized and terrified as Eva rants and people watch.

EVA

...There is nothing on this earth that will make me forgive what you said! Do you men think about the words you choose, or are they expelled by your head like some kind of brain-diarrhea?

RASHAUN

No... uh, see, all I said was, you're a little uptight. But I like that, so... it was like a compliment-- in reverse.

EVA

Reverse? I see. Did you know female spiders eat the male when she's done with him? They date, they laugh, then she turns his ass into a crab cake! Now, while the prospect of biting your head off makes me happy, I'm sure that ultimately, you are not a happy meal. So, I'm moving on to better cuisine. Goodbye, Rashaun.

Eva walks off, then.

RASHAUN

Wait, you're just gonna say goodbye?

EVA

Oh, it's not goodbye, it's hello-- in reverse.

SWISH PAN:

INT. TAPPERS'S BAR - REALITY.

The guys remember the incident with fear.

TIM
Eva put him in the mental ward.

MIKE
Don't exaggerate. It was a regular hospital wing-- with armed security.

DARRELL
Eva drove that brother insane! I saw him last week. Now he t-t-talks like th-th-this.

MIKE
It can work with Ray. This guy is a specialist, a master player.

TIM
He's that good, huh?

MIKE
You saw what he just did. Ray can get Eva to let go of her sisters. Once it's just us and them, we can get all of their love. So you two in or what?

Darrell and Tim ad-lib agreement to the evil plan.

DARRELL
We can get him to seduce her 'cause all Eva really needs is some you-know-what.

TIM
No, Eva needs a sensitive man to help her with her personality problem.

DARRELL
Eva needs a man who can hit that ass until she speaks in tongues.

Darrell pretends to speak in tongues and the fellas all laugh.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RYDER HOME - DAY - ESTABLISHING.

*

A nice home in a working class neighborhood.

CUT TO:

INT. JACQUI'S BEDROOM - DAY.

Jacqui and Darrel are in the bed. He is holding index cards for her while she works on two laptop computers at the same time.

DARRELL

Okay, later, after we're finished doin' it, we're gonna lie together, hold each other and talk for a while, right?

JACQUI

We can have sex, but I have to study tonight, honey, so I can't linger.

(brightly)

I'm doing a paper on a computer that thinks. It functions on a binary basis like a brain synapse, you know what I mean?

Darrell hasn't got a clue. Jacqui is obviously smarter.

DARRELL

Uh, yeah, baby, fo' sho' all that shit. But what about what I asked you? You know, most men don't even like to cuddle. I'm tired of wham, bam, thank you, Darrell.

JACQUI

You're the one who wanted to get married before I graduated.

DARRELL

But it ain't right for a woman-- a person, to just get theirs and move on. When you do it to me then just jump up and leave, it makes me feel bad. I mean, you taught me to cuddle and now I can't get none? What are you, a drug dealer?

JACQUI

But Eva says--

DARRELL

Don't say the "E" word.

Darrell jumps out of bed, upset.

JACQUI

--I have to stick to my study schedule. All of us agreed.

DARRELL

All of us. What is it with you Dandridge women?

JACQUI

I love my sisters.

(beat, then remembers)

And I love you too, just in a different way.

DARRELL

Okay then, I demand that you love me the way you love them.

JACQUI

Darrell, baby... You and them, it's like apples and oranges.

DARRELL

I'm your husband. I pledged my life to you, before God and bunch of ugly ass relatives I don't even like.

(more)

DARRELL (cont'd)
I gave up my wild ways, and I had a
helluva lot of 'em, baby! I had pros
in area codes. Therefore, I demand to
be an orange!

JACQUI
Darrell, don't be silly.
(then, seriously)
No.

DARRELL
Okay, if a brother can't be an orange,
I ain't doing it with you, woman. You
are cut off!

Jacqui starts to kiss on him, slowly, Darrell loses his
resolve.

DARRELL (cont'd)
Hell no... no... damn.

They fall into bed. Jacqui gets on top. They get into it.
Suddenly, Eva enters the room.

EVA
Jacqui, I have a dreadful problem, can
you help?....

The couple reacts with shock. Jacqui calms down.

EVA (cont'd)
Oh, you two are doing it. I'm sorry.

DARRELL
How did you get in here?!

EVA
Jacqui gave me a key-- for emergencies.

DARRELL
Well, don't mind us, we're just having
sex.

EVA
I'll come back in what, two minutes?

JACQUI
Is it important, Eva?

DARRELL
Get out!

JACQUI
Give us a minute, Eva.

EVA
A minute?
(laughs)
Okay.

Eva exits. Jacqui jumps off of Darrell.

DARRELL
Where are you going?

EVA
Eva needs me.

Jacqui fixes her clothes and exits.

DARRELL
We need you!

Darrell tries to go after her, but falls on the floor with a THUD.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILLIAMS HOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING.

A big Spanish-style house in the suburbs of L.A.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAMS KITCHEN - DAY.

Kareenah and Eva prepare a meal. Tim drinks a cocktail, relaxing and enjoying himself.

EVA
So, you two still talking about having a baby?

KAREENAH
Not so loud. If Tim even hears the word "baby," he'll jump on top of me. He stopped working on some kid's broken leg to nag me about it at work today.

EVA
It's the male biological clock.

KAREENAH
Biological cock?

EVA
Clock. It's when a man gets baby fever like a woman. I read about it in *Psychology Today*.

KAREENAH
Well, all I know is every time we argue about it, he ends up drinking.

EVA
The drinking isn't serious is it?

KAREENAH

No, but--

(whispers)

His father had a drinking problem, you know. What do you think I should do?

EVA

I don't like to get into people's married business. Nothing wrong with a man having an occasional drink... but a study showed that a drinking problem can be hereditary.

(more)

EVA (cont'd)

Don't want your baby coming out of the
womb going "Where da liquor at?!"

Kareenah considers this. She walks over and takes Tim's
drink away.

TIM

Hey, that's my drink.

KAREENAH

Honey, you shouldn't drink so much.
Eva and I were just talking and--

Tim gives Eva a nasty look. Eva smiles.

KAREENAH (cont'd)

This is not what you need. You want to
do some deep breathing exercises?

TIM

I don't want to breathe. I want that
drink!

KAREENAH

Baby, I don't like to bring up the
past, but you know the problem your
Daddy had.

TIM

(upset)
I am not my father.

KAREENAH

I know, sweetie. Please, for me, no
more drinking tonight.

Tim looks at his lovely wife. He can't resist her. He
throws up his hand. Kareenah walks off with the precious
drink. Tim turns and sees Eva happily chopping vegetables.
He looks at her with hatred in his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAMS KITCHEN - FANTASY - DAY.

Tim stands in front of the counter, buck naked. His penis is
on the block. Eva raises the cleaver then brings it down
cutting it off as Tim screams.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAMS KITCHEN - REALITY - DAY.

Tim watches from the chair as Eva happily chops veggies.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT DAY.

Eva is sleeping. Her ALARM CLOCK GOES OFF. She turns it
off. She goes to her stereo and hits a button. "Ain't No
Stopping Sunshine" by Yoli pumps out.

Eva sings along as she starts to wake up. She sings tiredly at first, then gains strength as the power of the tune takes over.

CUT TO:

INT. KAREENAH'S BATHROOM - SAME TIME.

Kareenah sings to the same song, washing her face. Tim walks in groggy.

TIM
Please, not that song again.

KAREENAH
It's our theme, honey. Come on, sing
it with me!

Kareenah tries to get Tim to sing. He grumbles and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. BETHANY'S BATHROOM - SAME TIME.

Bethany sings the song with big ass rollers in her hair. She has aromatherapy candles lit on the sink.

CUT TO:

INT. JACQUI'S BATHROOM - SAME TIME.

Darrell is on the toilet. Jacqui comes in singing, using a hair brush as a mic.

DARRELL
Hey! I'm in here!

Jacqui pinches her nose. She gets some hair gel and sings her way out.

DARRELL (cont'd)
I hate that damned song.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS.

INT. EVA/RYDER/BETHANY WILLIAMS HOUSES - DAY

Each sister sings in front of her mirror, dressing.

EXT. EVA'S HOUSE - DAY

Eva walks out to her car and gets in.

INT. RYDER HOUSE - DAY

SPLIT SCREEN: Jacqui piling books in a backpack.

INT. WILLIAMS HOUSE - DAY

TRI-SCREEN: Kareenah putting on her lab coat.

EXT. BETHANY'S HAIR AND NAIL SALON - DAY

QUAD SCREEN: Bethany opening up her shop.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - ANOTHER DAY.

SLOW MOTION. The sisters all walk down the street looking sexy and beautiful. Behind them, the men lag, looking like losers.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. TAPPERS'S BAR - EVENING.

The fellas all talk. Ray enters and goes over to them.

MIKE

This is Dr. Tim Williams and Darrell
Ryder. This is Ray Adams.

They all ad-lib hellos. Tim and Darrell eye Ray like fresh
meat.

MIKE (cont'd)

So, I thought you moved to Florida.

RAY

I did. Worked at a car dealership. It
was cool, but that was a year ago. I
never keep a job for more than a year.

MIKE

That's how we met. Ray dropped out of
the police academy.

RAY

That was only two months. Just seemed
like a year. I'm working for Jomo's
Meats in L.A. now.

DARRELL

Why do you quit your job every year?

RAY

I have to service my many talents. I
was brought up an orphan. No mama, no
daddy, no ties. That's how I do it.

MIKE

Ray is quite the player, too.

TIM

So we saw last night.

RAY

You just gotta know how women think.
You get in her head, find out what
makes her tick, what comprises her,
then you just become what she wants.
It's very simple. My motto is, player
first, women second.

DARRELL

Well, I gotta know. How did you do it?

RAY

(laughs)
Well, it's kind of a trade secret....

PAN TO:

INT. TAPPERS'S BAR TABLE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Ray, Cynda and Lori talk by a table.

RAY

Ladies, please, you should be mad at
me, not each other.

(more)

RAY (cont'd)

I've been dating the both of you and true, we don't have a commitment, but I haven't been able to choose. So, it's a good thing this happened.

The women regard Ray who seems totally sincere.

RAY (cont'd)

No man could pick just one of you. Hell, you'd be better off with each other.

CYNDA

What is that supposed to mean, Ray? Are you making fun of me?

RAY

No, I'm sorry, forget I said that.

LORI

What, is she a....

CYNDA

Watch your mouth.

Lori gives Ray an upset look.

LORI

Ray, did you tell her what we talked about the other night?!

RAY

Absolutely not. That was a private, secret conversation.

CYNDA

What conversation?

Ray looks at Lori and makes a gesture that his lips are locked.

LORI

Nothing. I just said I was... curious, you know.

Lori regards Cynda. They smile at each other a little. Ray smiles like a prince.

RAY

You two send me some pictures, okay?

LORI

Oh no, I'm not doing this alone. You got to do it with me, Ray.

CYNDA

I don't think we have to twist his arm, honey. Ray, let's go.

Ray smiles at the ladies. They smile back.

PAN TO:

INT. TAPPERS'S BAR - EVENING

Ray smiles proudly at the fellas who applaud him.

DARRELL

Man, that's hot. You oughta be exempt
from taxes or something.

RAY

Just another day in Paradise. Nothing
my man Mike couldn't have done, right?

MIKE

No, no. I turned in my player card.
I'm engaged. A nice girl named
Bethany.

RAY
Congratulations, man.

DARRELL
She's fine, too, but not as fine as her
sister, Eva.

TIM
Yes, Eva is gorgeous. I wish I was
good enough for her.

DARRELL
I wish I was her garbage. Check it
out.

Darrell whips out a picture. Ray examines it.

RAY
Cute, but why is she scowling like
that?

DARRELL
That's a sexy smirk, my brother.

RASHAUN, the man who Eva terrorized ambles up to the bar.

RASHAUN
What's c-crackin', f-f-fellas?

He sees the picture of Eva and panics.

RASHAUN (cont'd)
B-b-bitch!

MIKE
Rashaun, go on, get out of here. Ya
stutterin' playa hater.

Mike pushes Rashaun away.

TIM
So, would you like to meet Eva?

RAY
She giving it up?

DARRELL
Are you kiddin'? She be looking up at
her feet every night.

RAY
Cool. Then there's just one thing.
What's wrong with her?

MIKE/TIM/DARRELL
Nothing.

RAY
So, three grown men come to a bar and
try to hook up a man for some perfectly
good woman? So what is it? She got
five kids and a violent, ex-con
boyfriend? Or is she one of them evil,
nasty sisters who beats a brother down
until he's dust?

DARRELL
It's the ex-con thing.

TIM
Shut up.

MIKE
Look Ray, I admit Eva is a piece of work. So, we'll make it worth your while to go out with her.

RAY
Whoa, hold up. You gonna pay me?

TIM
You worried that it makes you a gigolo?

RAY
No, I kinda like that aspect of it.
(thinks a beat)
I'm sorta in a financial bind. My landlord is selling my house. I need cash to buy it. I figure I can sell it in a year and make a little profit.

MIKE
Good. We can all gain on this deal.

TIM
We need you to take her out for a couple of months. And don't just distract her, you have to make her fall hard for you.

RAY
I can definitely do that. And I love a challenge, but really, she can't be all that bad, can she?

DARRELL
Eva's sisters gave her a cross with Jesus on it for her birthday. The next day, the Jesus was gone.

RAY
(laughs)
He's kiddin', right?

MIKE
No. And when you do it, you have to make her love you, then you tell her you're leaving town and get her to move away to another city with you.

TIM
Then you can dump her. It'll take her years to relocate back here.

Ray contemplates the indecent proposal a little more.

RAY
Sorry fellas, but this ain't my kinda thing, you know. I'm a lover, not a con man. Mike, let's hang out some time, okay?

Ray finishes his drink, then exits. Tim scowls at Darrell.

TIM
You just had to tell him about Jesus, didn't you?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BETHANY'S HAIR AND NAIL SALON - THE NEXT DAY.

A modest establishment on a business street in L.A.

CUT TO:

INT. BETHANY'S HAIR AND NAIL SALON - DAY

A busy hair and nail salon. Women wait for service, while others receive it. The place is LOUD AND ALIVE WITH FEMALE CHATTER.

Bethany is working on Eva's hair. ORMANDY, a sexy, brassy woman and Bethany's best worker does a woman's hair next to Eva. TELLY, a gay man also works on a woman. MARGARITTE, a nail technician works busily.

ORMANDY
I went out with that construction guy yesterday.

BETHANY
The cute one?

ORMANDY
Yes and you know we ended up in my bedroom--

TELLY
Did he have to take a number or was the line moving briskly?

Laughter from the woman.

EVA
Go on and tell it, Ormandy.

ORMANDY
Thank you, Eva. Well, I got R. Kelly on the box, so you know what time it is, right? Well, he drops his pants and whips it out all proud. And I say, "So, where's the rest of it?"

Telly and the women all laugh.

BETHANY
What did he say?

ORMANDY

He says "Look woman, I don't need this.
I ain't got to be here with you." And
I say, "Well, your dick certainly
hasn't made an appearance!"

They all laugh again.

ORMANDY (cont'd)

Now, the truth is, he was a nice size.
But he said my butt looked big, so I
put him in the psychological penalty
box.

More laughter. Margaritte walks by, smiling.

MARGARITTE

(heavy patois)
You gotta put a man in his place girl.
That's what my mama always said, you
know.

No one understands what she said.

BETHANY

Right, girl.
(off Ormandy's look)
I know but she can do some nails.

Mike enters in his policeman's uniform. The WOMEN ALL WHISTLE AND CAT CALL. A woman slaps him on his ass as he goes over and kisses Bethany.

MIKE

Hey, baby.
(cold)
Eva. Yo, Eva. I wanted to have a
little talk with you about the
Dandridge fund. *

EVA

Why? You're not in the family.

MIKE

But I'm almost in. So, why don't we
have a little meeting, and--

BETHANY

Mike, do you really want to get into an
argument with a woman in here? *

Mike checks the faces of the women. He's no fool. *

MIKE

No, no. To be continued, Eva. So, you
got that thing for me, baby?

Bethany hands Mike a paper bag. He drops it and out pops A HERBAL FIBER SUPPLEMENT. Eva picks it up and hands it to Mike.

EVA

Fiber, Michael? Are you okay?

BETHANY

He's a little irregular. I got him a
herbal supplement from my holistic
medicine shop.

MIKE

You don't have to announce it.

ORMANDY

Mike, I got something for that, baby.

TELLY

And if she can't fix you, I know I can.

The women laugh.

MIKE

You need to quit, Telly, 'cause I ain't even close to going your way.

TELLY

Really? Damn, let me call headquarters.

Telly whips out his cell phone.

TELLY (cont'd)

Yeah, it's me... take Mike off the list... no, leave Shaq and Kobe on there, a boy can dream.

More laughter at Mike's expense.

MIKE

I should know better than to come into this place, better known as "man hell."

EVA

This is a female sanctuary, Michael. Where women can express themselves free of societal-inspired male dominance.

ORMANDY

The way the whole world oughta be!

MIKE

Ormandy, maybe I should send a squad car over to your house and see what you got growing in your backyard.

ORMANDY

Did I say something? I know I need to shut my ass up.

MARGARITTE

Don't be afraid of him, girl. We can take him anytime we want to.

MIKE

I'll be checking green cards tomorrow.
(to Bethany)
See you later, baby.

Mike kisses Bethany and exits.

EVA

You know, if he needs that much fiber Bethany, he should get checked out.

ORMANDY

Yeah girl, nothing worse than a constipated man.

TELLY

I know that's right.

EVA

Beth, you need to start making him take care of himself if you're going to get married. Send him to a specialist. I know a good one.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY.

Mike is on the examination table on his side, looking terrified. The doctor SNAPS on a rubber glove and moves in.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUTHERN ACCENTS - KITCHEN - DAY

A CHEF rams his hand into the ass of a chicken, stuffing it.

NEW ANGLE: The sparkling clean kitchen of an upscale restaurant in Los Angeles. The manager, OSCAR, 45, white, is on pins and needles.

Ray enters pushing some boxes on a dolly. He wears a shirt that reads: "JOMO'S MEATS".

RAY

I got your order. Where do you want it?

"Deliver Us From Eva"

21A.

OSCAR
Freezer number one. And make sure you
stack them neatly.

Oscar signs an invoice. Ray wheels off the meat.

THE SENSIBLE SHOE of a woman on a mission. PAN UP to Eva in her business suit. She walks into the kitchen pass the FEARFUL FACES of the staff.

EVA

Hello. Where's Leonard?

OSCAR

He's sick. I'm Oscar, the assistant manager.

EVA

Okay Oscar, I'm Inspector Dandridge from the health department.

OSCAR

Yes, I've heard about you.

EVA

Good. Then you know the drill.

Ray is about to leave, when he sees Eva go to a table and open her briefcase. He recognizes her from the picture. Ray waits, watching the action.

INSIDE THE BRIEFCASE: Eva's tools. Thermometer, specimen jars, clean cloths and PH paper. She takes out a pair of rubber gloves and snaps them on.

EVA (cont'd)

Let's get clean.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUTHERN ACCENTS - KITCHEN - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS show Eva inspecting the kitchen: taking samples, testing the temperature of the water and the freezer. Oscar follows her with a fake smile plastered on his face.

GLIMPSES OF RAY watching her inconspicuously.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUTHERN ACCENTS - KITCHEN - DAY

Finally, Eva stops and makes notes on a clipboard.

EVA

It doesn't look good, Oscar. I've found contamination in red zones, your glass freezer door has a hairline break in it, and I found black pellets behind the food containers in the back.

OSCAR

That's probably just graphite from the new units we put in.

EVA

Hmm, rat droppings, graphite. Tomato, tomahto-- I think not. And your water's only a hundred and five degrees.

"Deliver Us From Eva"

22A.

OSCAR

But that's only five degrees off the
requirement! Can't you let that slide?

EVA

Let it slide? The requirement is one hundred ten because science tells us that at that temperature, all dangerous organisms will die. That means, in your water, some will live, and not just any germs, Oscar, the badass ones, the ones that can swim in hundred and five degree water and live to party on some child's french fries--

OSCAR

We don't serve fries.

EVA

Are you mocking me?

OSCAR

(scared)

No, ma'am.

EVA

Good, because I'm not done. This whole kitchen gets a level four sanitation or you get written up.

OSCAR

That means it's in the newspaper!

EVA

Thank goodness for you I've got a soft heart.

Eva starts to pack up to leave. Oscar has had it.

OSCAR

Heart? You don't have a heart! You've got a hole with an ice pump in it! I don't understand you. Why do you have to be so goddamned-- uncompromising?

Eva stops packing up and turns. The staff takes an unconscious step backwards, run out, etc.,.

EVA

It's called principle, Oscar. Maybe the world is in short supply, but I'm not. See, people pay their tax dollars for my principle, so they can go into a restaurant and not eat chicken fried rat, or bite into a bacon lettuce and ptomaine sandwich. If I slack up on you, then I have to cut everyone a break and pretty soon the almonds on your salad have legs. If that makes me uncompromising, then I wear it as a badge of honor, because I'm in good company: Martin Luther King was uncompromising, Nelson Mandela was uncompromising, and I'm sure your mother was uncompromising, although the evidence of that is not apparent today. So, maybe you should just think of me as your mom right now.

Eva whips out a citation.

EVA (cont'd)
Mama says clean it up! I'll be back in
forty-eight hours.

Eva walks out. Oscar fumes. Ray watches with concern, then
a smile spreads across his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY.

Ray talks to Mike beside Mike's police cruiser.

RAY
I'll do it. I'll go out with Eva.

MIKE
What made you change your mind?

RAY
I saw her at a restaurant. Brother, if
I can get to that woman, I'll go down
in the player hall of fame.

MIKE
Okay, what's your price?

RAY
I need five grand to get the house.

MIKE
Five thousand dollars?! I don't know,
man.

RAY
I've seen Eva in action. You're
getting off cheap.

Mike contemplates this, then:

MIKE
I'll run it by the other guys,

Ray and Mike slap five. Ray goes to his van and drives off.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVA'S LIVINGROOM - DAY.

Eva enters. The place is clean and of course very homey.
There are BOOKSHELVES everywhere filled with BOOKS. Also
pictures and statues of HORSES are everywhere.

On her walls, are PICTURES of her and her sisters at various
ages. A PAINTED PORTRAIT of all the sisters. She stops at a
picture of their PARENTS. She looks at it and smiles a
little. Eva walks through the living room into a bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM/WALK IN CLOSET - DAY.

She takes off her shoes and puts them in a box. There are PICTURES OF EACH PAIR OF SHOES taped to the outside of the box. She takes off her suit and puts it away on a rack filled with SIMILAR SUITS. In the back, there's A SEXY OUTFIT with the tag still on it. Eva examines, it then puts it back.

Eva takes down her hair. She catches sight of herself in a mirror. She's still good-looking, so why is she alone?

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S KITCHEN - DAY.

Eva enters, goes to the fridge, opens it. Inside, we see HOMEMADE FROZEN DINNERS LABELED WITH DAYS OF THE WEEK. Eva takes down "Wednesday" and pops it into the microwave.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S DININGROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Eva goes to the table and sits. She pours herself a glass of wine. There is a setting for one on the table. She sits and watches TV for a moment. We can see she is lonely and used to living alone.

Eva takes her phone. On the SPEED DIAL, we see the names of her sisters in spaces 1 thru 3. In space four is "911." Eva hits a button. The machine dials.

EVA

Hey, Kareenah, how are you?... Oh, no.
Let's get the other girls on a
conference call.

Eva clicks over and dials again, happy to be involved in her sisters' lives.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BETHANY'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT NIGHT.

Bethany's bedroom reflects the taste of her spirituality. Mike is dressed in his policeman's uniform. Mike is helping Bethany bead a necklace.

MIKE

We shouldn't let Eva stop us from
moving in together, Beth.

BETHANY

I don't sense we're spiritually in tune
with each other completely. And
besides
(pointedly)
we're not married.

She kisses him.

MIKE

I'm not gonna propose just to spend the
night with you.

BETHANY

Have I ever put any pressure on you
about that?

MIKE

No, baby of course not.

BETHANY

And Eva says cohabitation does not
increase the chances of a lasting
marriage.

MIKE

Please stop the "Evaisms?" That woman with her statistics and philosophy.

BETHANY

She's very intelligent. Don't hate on her for it.

MIKE

If she's so smart, then why doesn't she dissolve that fund and let you have your own lives with your own money?

BETHANY

You know what, baby? Let's meditate again.

Bethany grabs his hands and closes her eyes and hums.

MIKE

No, no meditation!

BETHANY

You need it. Stress is why your colon is all clogged up.

MIKE

Thanks to Eva's doctor, my colon is a freeway. Look, all I want is to go to bed with you and not have to get up in the middle of the night and leave like a criminal.

BETHANY

Why does a man buy the software when he can download for free?

MIKE

See, that's Eva talking, not you.

BETHANY

Actually, Jacqui said it, but it doesn't matter. It's the truth and you know it. You know Eva--

CUT TO:

INT. RYDER BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Jacqui argues with Darrell. He helps her clean her jewelry throughout.

JACQUI

--took charge of the family, after our parents died. She helped us through school, guided us through hardship. She gave up her dreams for us.

DARRELL

And now she wants to live your life for you. Come on baby, I got a nice, hot bath for two going. Let's play pick up the soap.

JACQUI

I'll arm wrestle you for it.

DARRELL

No. You cheat.

JACQUI

Baby, I know you need quality time, but
when I graduate, we'll have plenty of
that.

(more)

JACQUI (cont'd)
Besides, Eva says as long as I fulfill
my wifely duties two point five times a
week, you really can't complain.

DARRELL
Yeah? Hook me up with half of one
right now, then.

JACQUI
You know what I mean.

DARRELL
Eva needs to get her own damned life.
(mumbles)
Bitch.

JACQUI
Don't you call her that! She--

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAMS BEDROOM - SAME TIME.

Tim and Kareenah are into it big time. Tim give her a foot
massage.

KAREENAH
--is a good person. Her heart's in the
right place.

TIM
But if we want to have a baby, it's our
decision, not Eva's.

KAREENAH
All she said was most marriages fail
within the first five years. Fifty-two
percent. We've only been married for
three years. If we had a baby, and
something went wrong, there would be a
life in the balance of our failure.

TIM
Nothing is going to go wrong. Honey,
you know I've never gotten along with
my father....

KAREENAH
I know baby, but--

TIM
Well, I want to be a good daddy. All I
want is a baby, a little brown bundle
of love and life. And I want it
because I love you, is that so wrong?

Kareenah and Tim sit in silence for a moment. This is her
man. She knows he loves her, but:

KAREENAH
Fifty-two percent.

Tim reacts, frustrated.

KAREENAH (cont'd)

Eva helped put me through med school,
you know.

TIM

God, do I know that. You know, you're
not married to me.

(more)

"Deliver Us From Eva"

28.

TIM (cont'd)
You're married to Eva. I'm just-- a handyman with a penis.

KAREENAH
Please, like you ever fix anything around here.

Tim reacts, then storms out.

KAREENAH (cont'd)
What'd I say?
(realizes)
Damn, I'm sorry, baby!

He SLAMS the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BETHANY'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Mike pulls away from a woman we can't see. He's exhausted and satisfied.

MIKE
How was that, baby?

ANGLE ON the woman: It's Eva in bed with Mike. She's dressed in a suit and looks anything but satisfied.

EVA
Inadequate, as usual.

CUT TO:

INT. BETHANY'S BEDROOM - REALITY.

Mike wakes up from the nightmare with a yell in his throat. Next to him in bed, is Bethany.

MIKE
What?!--

BETHANY
You fell asleep, honey. It's late. You'd better get going. I have to be at my shop early.

MIKE
Come on, can't I stay tonight?

BETHANY
No downloading, remember?

Mike gathers up his clothes and walks out, muttering his hatred of Eva.

CUT TO:

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Ray is asleep. The PHONE RINGS. He answers it groggily.

RAY
Hello.

MIKE (o.s.)
Ray, it's Mike.

RAY
Mike... what time is it?

MIKE (o.s.)
Late. Look, we'll do it. Five grand
to date Eva and get her to leave town.

RAY
Okay, let's get together tomorrow.

MIKE (o.s.)
Thanks, man.

Ray hangs up the phone, then:

RAY
Damn, I'm a gigolo--
(smiles)
--with his own house!

Ray goes back to sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BETHANY'S SALON - NIGHT.

All the sisters are there, getting manicures or pedicures and eating food. Ormandy and Telly attend.

THOMAS, a water delivery man ad-libs a goodbye then exits.

ORMANDY
How come I can't get my feet done on
girl's night out?

BETHANY
Because it's only for the Dandridge
sisters. We've always done a regular
soul bonding. *

TELLY
And no one will touch your nasty feet.

They all laugh.

ORMANDY
What we need to do is spice up this
party with a little of my homegrown
smoke. *

EVA
Didn't I tell you marijuana damages the
receptors on your brain cells?

ORMANDY
And yet I'm still smart enough to fire
up a fat one. *

JACQUI
Oh, ladies, ladies, guess who I saw
yesterday? Lucius Johnson.

All the sisters react with surprise.

EVA
Are you sure? I thought he lived in
Detroit. Not that I care, you know.

BETHANY
Maybe he's in town to visit his mother.
She told me it was her birthday when
she came in last week.

ORMANDY
Luscious Lucius. I wouldn't mind
seeing him again.

TELLY
Me neither.

KAREENAH
Lucius was the most handsome, athletic
and intelligent boy in high school. I
wonder if he's married.

Kareenah notices Eva looking despondent.

KAREENAH (cont'd)
You okay, Eva?

EVA
Sure, why wouldn't I be?

JACQUI
Eva, are you still stuck on Lucius?

EVA
No. It was a long time ago. Ancient
history. We were kids.

BETHANY
It's okay, Eva. When you give a man
some of your energy, he always has it.

ORMANDY
Especially if he popped your cherry.

Ormandy makes a "popping" noise.

EVA
There was no popping of cherries.
Lucius was my first and I was his,
that's all.

TELLY
Eva, the best way to get over an old
man....

ORMANDY
Get under a new one.

EVA
I'm not thinking about Lucius.
Besides, this is girl's night.
(more)

"Deliver Us From Eva"

30A.

EVA (cont'd)

I'm sure a group of intelligent women
can talk about something besides men.

There's a beat of silence, then the women start laughing.

KAREENAH

Hey, Tim introduced me to a new doctor
in his department at the hospital. You
want to meet him, Eva?

EVA

Hmm, I need a date for the mayor's formal fund-raiser in two weeks. What are his vitals?

KAREENAH

Thirty-six, divorced, two kids. I heard he's in group therapy, but--

EVA

Pass.

BETHANY

Eva, just meet the man.

EVA

Divorced, therapy? Too much baggage.

ORMANDY

Shoot, messed up men are the best ones.

JACQUI

"Messed up man" is redundant.

EVA

Look, I'd like a man in my life, but I don't need to be set up. I prayed on this. God will take care of it.

TELLY

Oh please girl, God ain't shipping out men.

ORMANDY

Like hell he ain't. Eva, tell God a sister needs a tall, fine one, please.
(off Telly's look)
And not gay.

The women all laugh. Eva does too, but her smile quickly melts away as she contemplates her loneliness.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEALTH DEPARTMENT - ESTABLISHING - DAY.

A low rise building in the city.

CUT TO:

INT. HEALTH DEPARTMENT - THEO'S OFFICE - DAY.

Eva enters the office of her boss, THEO WILSON, 45, white. They ad-lib hellos.

THEO

I wanted to talk to you for a second, Eva.

EVA

What about, Theo?

THEO
I was offered a position as Deputy
Health Inspector in Chicago.

EVA
(expectant)
That's great, sir. So, who's gonna
take over for you here? Anyone I know?

THEO
I'm not taking the job. But I think
you should consider it.

EVA
Me, sir?

THEO
Yes, a representative from Chicago has
been here all week checking out my best
inspectors. He liked you.

Theo hits an intercom button on his phone.

THEO (cont'd)
Send in Mr. Tillman.

Oscar, the manager Eva terrorized comes in.

OSCAR
Hello, Eva.

EVA
Oh my-- so, you were checking me out
the other day?

OSCAR
Yes, and you passed with flying colors.
Chicago is a big city and we need our
inspectors to have your intensity.

EVA
Well, I'm at a loss for words.

THEO
And that doesn't happen often.

OSCAR
You don't have to say anything now. I
have a few more candidates in other
cities to look at. I'll let you know
what my decision is in a few weeks.
Meeting you was-- an experience.

Oscar shakes hands with Eva and leaves.

EVA
Wow, this is great. I wanted your job,
but this is even better!

THEO
This will be very exciting for you. A
better job, more money, in a new city.

EVA

Yes, my sisters will--

Eva thinks about leaving her sisters for the first time in her life.

THEO

What?

EVA

Nothing. I know they'll be happy for me. Thanks for recommending me, sir.

Eva shakes hands with Theo and walks out, contemplating leaving her sisters.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FAITH TABERNACLE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A medium sized church in the city.

CUT TO:

INT. FAITH TABERNACLE - DAY.

The pews are filled with well-heeled African Americans dressed to the nines. The CHOIR sings A ROUSING GOSPEL TUNE.

All the Dandridge sisters sing in the choir. Eva is the director and leads them in the song.

Mike, Tim and Darrell all stand together, watching.

TIM

I can't believe we're paying five grand to that man.

MIKE

Look at it as an investment. When Eva is gone, we'll all be happy and richer from the fund.

TIM

It was a good idea to have Eva meet Ray here in church. She'll like that.

DARRELL

I don't think we should be talking about this here. God might hear.

MIKE

God made Eva, so we're even.

TIM

When is Ray gonna get here? Church is almost over.

MIKE

This is the black church. It's never over.

MIKE'S WATCH: Shows it's 8:16 AM.

CROSS FADE TO:

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD - HOURS LATER.

A WALL CLOCK shows it's now 1:07 PM.

The congregation lines up to eat from a table filled with soul food. Mike, Tim, and Darrell sit at a table and eat with their better halves.

TIM
(sotto, to Mike)
Where is he?

MIKE
(sotto)
Don't worry.

Mike sees Ray come in and looks around the room. Mike gets up and runs over to him.

MIKE (cont'd)
What the heck kept you?

RAY
I'm not the church going type. You people get up early, man.

MIKE
Well, there she is. I'm going to get her. You go to our table over there. Introduce yourself.

ANGLE ON: Eva talks with REV. WASHINGTON, 50, her pastor.

REV. WASHINGTON
Nice job with the choir today, Eva. And I want to thank you for organizing our meals on wheels this month and reading to those sick kids last week.

EVA
Just trying to help, Reverend.

REV. WASHINGTON
You know, you seem to have a lot of time on your hands for such a young woman.

EVA
Always time for the Lord's work.

REV. WASHINGTON
You know, the Lord likes people to date, too.

EVA
(changing the subject)
Of course.

(more)

EVA (cont'd)

You know, Reverend your sermon today was great, although, you did miss a word of that verse from the book of Acts, but I think I was the only one who caught it, and you know, God of course. I have a few suggestions on how you can do better.

REV. WASHINGTON

Say what?-- my child.

Mike walks up.

MIKE

Eva, we're all waiting for you.

EVA

Can't you see I'm busy, Michael? I'm talking with the Reverend.

REV. WASHINGTON

No please, get back to your people. Please, go.

EVA

Actually Reverend, I need to ask your advice for a friend of mine who has a dilemma with a new job she's considering.

REV. WASHINGTON

I've got people here with much bigger problems, Eva, people who need their souls saved from eternal damnation and stuff like that.

EVA

But a soul lasts forever, this job may not. Please, I have to tell my friend what to do.

REV. WASHINGTON

Eva, tell your friend to follow her heart. Now, if you'll excuse me.

The reverend walks away. Eva contemplates the advice then walks off with Mike. Eva and Mike join the group which now includes Ray.

MIKE

Eva, this is Ray Adams. A friend of mine.

EVA

Hello, Raymond.

Ray and Eva shake hands. There is definitely an attraction. Ray reacts, "she's even prettier up close." Eva reacts, trying to hide her attraction.

RAY

It's Ray. No one calls me Raymond.

EVA

Well I do, Raymond.

The chill is felt by all. Ray starts laughing.

EVA (cont'd)

What's so funny?

RAY

You are. I like a woman who speaks her mind. My girlfriend is the same way.

The fellas react with shock. Eva's disappointed, too.

EVA

Well... good for her.

MIKE

(pointedly)

Ray, I didn't know you were seeing anybody.

RAY

Oh, yeah, six months now. Hey, I see a friend of mine over there. It was nice meeting all of you.

And just like that Ray is gone. The men all stew.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - LATER - DAY.

People are leaving. Eva and the group are all together. Mike spots Ray talking to a pretty young lady. He walks over to him and pulls him away.

MIKE

What the hell did you do in there? Why did you tell Eva you had a woman? We gave you half the money. If you're thinking about trying to screw us....

RAY

Calm down. A woman never wants a man who another woman doesn't already want. Now, the next time we meet, I'll make my move. I'm sure me and my girlfriend will be having trouble by then.

Mike thinks about this, then smiles.

MIKE

Damn, you're good. Look, Tim's having some people over for a barbecue next week. Come by.

RAY

I will. Just let the master handle his business. By the way, I'm gonna need expense money.

MIKE

Expenses? For what?

RAY

I need funding to take Eva on a date.

MIKE

What about the five grand?!

RAY

That's my fee. Fee. Expenses. See how the words are different? Three hundred should do it.

MIKE

Fine, fine, just get on it.

Mike walks off. Ray looks over at Eva. She notices Ray who smiles at her and waves goodbye. Eva just stares at him and nods, stone faced. Ray walks off. After he does, Eva turns and looks back after him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BETHANY'S SALON - DAY

The sisters are there for their weekly session. Ormandy is missing in action.

KAREENAH

Mike's friend Ray was fine, Eva.

EVA
He has a girlfriend.

JACQUI
That's right. Leave him alone.

EVA
It's always like that. The good
prospects are taken.

TELLY
Or gay-- thank God.

Ormandy walks in waiving away smoke.

ORMANDY

Sorry, I needed a relaxation break.
What man are we talking about?

EVA

Ray Adams.
(pointedly)
Who has a girlfriend.

BETHANY

But he didn't bring her to church.
There's obviously been a severe
spiritual separation.

TELLY

Yeah, like he's gonna dump her ass.

ORMANDY

You should always take an opportunity
like this to swoop on a man, Eva. When
Mr. Mason left his wife last year, I
jumped right on it.

JACQUI

Ormandy, Mr. Mason is seventy.

ORMANDY

Single is single right, Telly?

TELLY

No. Sprinkle the wrinkles somewhere
else.

*
*

ORMANDY

You're crazy. An old man is the
perfect man. You give him Viagra so he
can take care of bid'ness, then before
he can get on your nerves, he dies and
leaves you his cash. Shoot, it's like
having a dick with the lotto number on
it.

*

Ormandy holds her hand up for a play. Telly won't give it to
her.

TELLY

Uh uh, that's nasty.

JACQUI

Eva ain't no home-wrecker. Forget
about him, big sister. You can do
better.

KAREENAH

Jacqui, you are always blocking on Eva.

JACQUI

I do not!

BETHANY

Yes, you do. You're spoiled. You like
having Eva all to yourself.

JACQUI
That's ridiculous. Ain't it, Eva?

Eva fixes Jacqui's hair setting for her, like a doting mother.

EVA
Of course it is, honey.

KAREENAH
You're a big ass baby, Jacqui.

BETHANY
The queen of big ass babies.

JACQUI
Why do you two always gang up on me?

KAREENAH
Because you're an evil, twisted little heifer. *

BETHANY
Ta-wisted.

EVA
Ladies, is this how we behave?

KAREENAH
(ignoring Eva)
Been like that since we were kids. You cut off my baby doll's head when I was ten.

JACQUI
You broke my boo boo kitty, so the bitch had to die!

Jacqui argues with Bethany and Kareenah. Eva looks at her sisters arguing and realizes that this is as good a time as any to say:

EVA
(loudly)
I might be moving to Chicago.

The sisters all stop arguing, shocked.

KAREENAH
What? What did you say?

EVA
I might be getting a better job and moving away-- to Chicago.

JACQUI
Illinois Chicago? You're joking, right?

EVA
No. My boss told me the other day. It's Deputy Health Inspector of Chicago. A great opportunity.
(more)

EVA (cont'd)

I've been looking for a way to tell you, so there it is.

The sisters take a moment to digest this information. They are stunned but know that Eva has her own life to live.

BETHANY

Eva, that's great for you.

KAREENAH

Yes, it is.

ORMANDY

Chicago. Ouu, they got some fine brothers up there.

Now Telly slaps five with her.

JACQUI

You're just going to pick up and go, just like that?

Eva regards her, knowing that this sister needs her more than the others.

EVA

Well, I have to get the job first. I'll know in a few weeks.

JACQUI

I'm sorry. First you get the job, then you run off like a thief in the night.

KAREENAH

Don't attack Eva.

BETHANY

Can't you be happy for her for two seconds?

They all argue again.

EVA

Okay, please, stop it. Look, if you don't want me to go, Jacqui, I won't.

JACQUI

It's not my decision.

EVA

It is if you're going to hate me for it. I won't go if it means losing your friendship, any of you.

KAREENAH

Jacqui doesn't mean it.
(pointedly)
Do you?

Jacqui looks at her sisters' faces and realizes that this is a decision that must be unanimous or it will cause trouble between them all.

JACQUI

I want you to be happy, Eva. If going makes you happy, then I'm happy.

"Deliver Us From Eva"

39A.

The sisters all hug, happy for Eva. Ormandy and Telly hug.

ORMANDY
(mocking)
I love you, sister.

TELLY
No, I love you, sister.

ORMANDY
We all so pretty, and perfect and shit.

Bethany takes a curling iron and singes Ormandy on her ass.
Ormandy jumps.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WILLIAMS BACKYARD - DAY.

All of the couples are there and a few more, including Ormandy.

Eva looks at everyone together and realizes that she is a big, fifth wheel. She's a little sad at this, but covers it up like always. She walks over to Tim and Kareenah at the barbecue pit.

EVA
Be sure to cook that meat thoroughly.
I'd hate to tell you the kind of things
that live in raw meat.

TIM
Please, don't.

There's a YELL from across the yard. Darrell is choking on something.

EVA
I see Darrell found my spicy baked
beans. Separates the men from the
boys.

Darrell grabs a bottle of soda.

EVA (cont'd)
See now, the carbonation will only make
it worse.

Darrell drinks the soda, gags and spits.

EVA (cont'd)
(calls out)
Give him some bread.

Jacqui gives Darrell some bread. He sighs in relief.

KAREENAH
What did you put in that stuff?

EVA
Special recipe. Only for a real man.
Try some, Tim.

TIM
No thanks.

KAREENAH
Hey, I didn't know Mike's friend was coming.

Eva turns and sees Ray talking with Mike by the door.

TIM
Kareenah, take over. I'm gonna go and say hello.

Tim walks off.

KAREENAH
He's really fine, Eva.

EVA
I'm not impressed by that-- much.

KAREENAH
Give him a chance. You've got to bend a little, girl. *

EVA
Are you saying I'm not accessible? *

KAREENAH
Yes, that's what I'm saying, Eva. *
You're too good a person to be alone. *
I'm your sister, I love you, and I'm *
asking you to bend. *

EVA
Okay, but it's the fine men who leave you alone with unpaid bills and a hair weave you don't want. *

Mike and Ray walk over to Eva and Kareenah.

MIKE
I hope you don't mind. I invited Ray.

KAREENAH
No, he's most welcome. *

RAY
Hello again, Eva.

EVA
Hi, Raymond.

MIKE
I gotta tell Darrell something. I'll be right back.

Mike walks off. Kareenah gets the hint.

KAREENAH

Oh, these ribs look ready.

Kareenah turns to cook, leaving Ray and Eva alone for the first time.

EVA

So, what is it you do for a living, Raymond?

RAY

I deliver meat-- for Jomo's.

EVA

Meat delivery. Interesting.

RAY

Jomo's deals in only premium meats for a high end clientele. What about you?

EVA

I'm a health inspector.

RAY

That sounds interesting, too.

An awkward moment as Eva assesses him.

EVA

Why don't we get a plate?

They move to the food table as all of the men and the sisters try not to watch, but they can't help themselves. Ray and Eva get plates of food.

THE WOMEN-- and Telly: They are excited.

KAREENAH

Two minutes and she hasn't insulted him! This could be something.

BETHANY

They feel good together to me.

ORMANDY

Lord help me that is a good-looking man. I can't keep my legs together.

TELLY

The sun comes up and you can't keep your legs together.

*
*

JACQUI

He's got sneaky eyes.

KAREENAH

Jacqui, don't you start.

JACQUI

Look, I didn't make the man's eyes, all beady and shifty and what not.

THE MEN. They are even more excited.

TIM
It's going to work. I can feel it.

MIKE
Damn, this is gonna be like the clash
of the Titans!

DARRELL
(still choking a little)
I'm gonna kill Eva for poisoning me
with them beans. I know when I go to
the bathroom, it's gonna hurt again.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILLIAMS BACKYARD - BUFFET TABLE - DAY.

RAY AND EVA. They have plates of food and talk under the
shade of a tree.

RAY
So, would you like to go out sometime?

EVA
And is your girlfriend coming, too?

RAY
Well, no. She... it's not working out.
Actually, it's over between us.

EVA
So, one car breaks down and you just
get into another one?

Ray heaps on a big serving of Eva's beans. Eva smiles.

RAY
I'd like to think of going out with you
as getting into a limo.

Ray laughs. He's about to bite into the beans, when he sees
that Eva isn't laughing. He stops.

RAY (cont'd)
I'm sorry. Did I insult you?

EVA
No, it was funny. I just don't laugh a
lot.

Ray is about to take a big bite of the spicy beans, then:

RAY
So, you never answered my question.

EVA
Which question?

RAY
Will you go out with me?

"Deliver Us From Eva"

43A.

EVA

Okay Raymond, I know we just met and you seem like a nice guy, so you should know something about me.

(more)

EVA (cont'd)

I know the one thing that scares men to death: I know the truth about them, and the truth is most men don't really know what they want. And I've been through all the basic types, the "playas" who think a woman is a disposable toy, the confused men who haven't decided if they want you or your brother, and the lazy men who live at home with mama and want you to pick up the check. So, if you really want to go out with me, realize that it means being a gentleman, it means respect for my mind, body, and spirit. If that frightens you, or makes me seem less attractive, then pretty much you've answered your own question.

Ray is a little shocked at this up close taste of Eva. But he recovers like a pro.

RAY

I'm not afraid of you, Eva. And I wanna go on record as saying that I respect your mind and your spirit.

EVA

What about my body?

RAY

It's beautiful.

EVA

But will you respect it?

RAY

I'll do anything to it you want me to.

A beat, then despite herself Eva smiles.

EVA

A smartass. I like that.

RAY

Well, look at that. The corners of your mouth actually turn up. So, when can we get together?

Ray downs a big spoonful of the beans. His face contorts, his eyes bulge. He swallows hard as the fire hits his gut.

RAY (cont'd)

Whoa! Oh man-- that's good! That Kareenah can really cook, huh?

Eva is shocked. Ray's a real man to her now.

EVA

Actually, I made those beans.

RAY

Really? Well, you put your foot in these, girl. Damn, I love spicy food.

Ray takes another mouthful. Eva watches with admiration.

EVA

How about we go out this weekend?

Ray nods and keeps eating. He gives Mike and the guys a thumbs up.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EVA'S HOUSE - DAY.

Ray knocks on the door. He carries flowers which he hides behind his back. Eva comes to the door, opening it a crack with the chain on. She's pissed.

EVA

You're late.

RAY

I know. I left early, but there was this terrible accident on the street.

EVA

Really? You know, when a man is late, he might as well be saying that you're not worth anything to him.

Ray pulls out the flowers. Lilies. Eva reacts, softening.

EVA (cont'd)

So, who told you I liked lilies?

RAY

Sometimes a man gets lucky.

Eva considers the man, the flowers and the gesture.

EVA

Come on in. I'll be just a second.

Eva undoes the chain on the door and Ray goes in.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS.

Ray comes into the living room of the impeccably clean house. Eva is already gone.

EVA (o.s.)

Make yourself at home.

He looks around and sees pictures and statues of horses. On a table, there's A PICTURE OF A TEN YEAR OLD EVA next to a white pony.

RAY

Looks like somebody likes--

Eva walks in looking radiant. Her hair is down and she's in a luscious looking dress. Ray is knocked off his feet.

RAY (cont'd)

I was just noticing all the pictures of horses-- you look good.

EVA

I love horses and thank you, Raymond.
Here, give me those flowers.

Eva takes the flowers and puts them in a vase.

EVA (cont'd)

Shall we?

RAY

Hell yeah.

They leave. Ray rushes to get the door for her. After they leave, Kareenah, Jacqui and Bethany come out of another room and rush to the window, watching and jockeying for position.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eva smiles as Ray walks up to A RED THUNDERBIRD.

EVA

You ever seen the accident rates on
these things? Very dangerous.

RAY

I know. That's why I drive this.

Eva grimaces as Ray walks up to JOMO'S MEAT VAN.

EVA

You're kidding me, right?

RAY

Nope.

He opens the door for her. She gets in. They pull off.

PAN UP the block. We see Mike, Tim and Darrell watching in a car. They all look pleased. Mike and Darrell high five.

CUT TO:

INT. RAY'S VAN - LATER

Ray drives. Eva looks at the delivery van with disdain.

EVA

This is what you drive when you take
out a woman?

RAY

Yeah, it's clean and it's free, you
know. I'm saving to buy a house.

EVA

Oh, well, I can understand that. Home
ownership is very important. Wait,
does your mama live with you?

RAY

No.

EVA

Even better.

They ride for a moment.

RAY

So, my boss has been hinting that he wants to slow down and let someone take over the day to day for him. I think he wants me to do it.

EVA

Great, when do you start?

RAY

I'm thinking about it. I've job hopped quite a bit the last few years. I think I might wanna settle down, but I'm not the suit and tie type.

EVA

There's nothing wrong with a little ambition, Raymond. I was a secretary in my department, now I'm the lead inspector. I gave myself five years to get there. I did it in four.

They pass AN ACCIDENT on the street still being cleaned up.

RAY

See, I told you it was bad.

Eva sees that Ray was not lying. She feels bad.

EVA

I guess you were telling the truth.

RAY

Sure, what did you think?

Silence a beat.

RAY (cont'd)

The words you're looking for are: "I'm sorry, Raymond."

EVA

I don't see a reason to apologize. I'm a woman and we certainly have reason to be suspicious of the motivations of men. My reaction may have been hasty, but it was warranted under the circumstances. I mean, we just met, how was I to know--

RAY

Did I mention that you look beautiful?

EVA

Yes.

RAY

Well, that's better than an apology, and I can see it all night.

Eva can't help but to be effected by this line. She smiles.

RAY (cont'd)
There it is again! That funny thing
you do with your face.

EVA
(still smiling)
Just drive your meat wagon, man.

He does a beat, then:

RAY
Hey, did you hear about the black cave
man they found? They knew he was black
by the curve of his jaw, the length of
this spine and the Cadillac he was
buried in.

Ray laughs. Eva does not.

RAY (cont'd)
Okay, you tell me a joke now.

EVA
Sorry, I'm not a jokey joke type
person.

RAY
Okay, how about some music, then?

Ray hits the CD player and out comes "CLASSIC SOUL TUNE."
Eva smiles again pleased with his musical selection. She
moves a little to the beat.

Ray starts to sing. It's pretty bad. He sings to Eva. She
shakes her head and tries not to smile.

CUT TO:

INT. LE QUARTIER - LATER.

Eva and Ray eat in a swanky Creole restaurant in the city.
Eva and Ray sit at a nice table. They have salads.

RAY
So, this must be a very good
restaurant, you being a health
inspector and all.

EVA
Yes. Most places I can't go to.
They'd try to poison me. But this
place is different. The owner has OCD,
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. He
cleans all day long. You could eat off
the floors.

RAY
Oh, I'm real hungry now.

Ray raises his fork, then:

EVA
You think it's funny? If food isn't prepared right, you'll be in the bathroom the next day crapping out a rainbow of colors.

RAY
Sorry, but I don't scare easily.

Ray eats some of the salad.

RAY (cont'd)
Hmm, just like mama used to make--

Suddenly, Ray stops talking, he coughs then gags, choking. He drops his fork as he chokes.

EVA
Oh, very funny, Raymond. I know when a person is really choking.

Ray continues to choke, starting to slump in his chair.

EVA (cont'd)
You can stop now--

Ray starts to become flushed. Eva jumps into action.

EVA (cont'd)
Oh, my God! Call 911!

Eva runs to Ray and grabs him from behind, as she does, Ray starts to smile.

RAY
Not the kind of hug I was hoping for, but it'll do for now.

EVA
You little--

Eva pumps his chest giving him the Heimlich anyway.

A CROUTON pops out of Ray's mouth and lands in A MAN'S SOUP on a neighboring table. A man unknowingly eats it.

Eva laughs and goes back to her seat as COLETTE, the manager comes over to their table.

COLETTE
Is everything all right?

EVA

My friend here was just joking-- Hey, what are you doing here?

COLETTE

Well, well, Inspector Dandridge.

EVA

You manage the Red Leaf restaurant across town.

COLETTE

Not after your last inspection. I was fired for a broken light bulb in a freezer, remember?

EVA

No, no, no. I don't want you. I want the man with OCD!

COLETTE

Sorry, but he's gone. How's that salad working? We use the special house dressing just for you. Creamy, isn't it?

Eva looks down in horror at her food.

EVA

Oh no, I will not eat here. Let's go.

RAY

I'm sure it's okay.

EVA

Did you hear me? I will not eat here!

RAY

Okay, okay.

Ray gets up. Eva marches out.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT.

Bethany and Mike walk down the street.

MIKE

So, what are we gonna see tonight? I vote for Jet Li.

BETHANY

Violent movies are damaging to inner peace. How about this Julia Roberts one?

MIKE

I'll see Julia when she learns to stop grinnin' and kick a little ass.

BETHANY

Eva says the Julia Roberts movie is good.

MIKE

Eva's out with her man having fun right now. How about you having a little fun with yours?

BETHANY

Okay, okay, Jet Li it is.

They walk on. Mike pumps his fist.

CUT TO:

INT. RYDER BEDROOM -SAME TIME - NIGHT

Darrell comes in and is surprised to find Jacqui getting ready for bed.

DARRELL

I thought you'd be studying late.

JACQUI

Oh, I finished early. Usually, Eva and I would chat online tonight, but she's out with Ray.

Darrell embraces her.

DARRELL

How about you and me do some of that chattin'?

JACQUI

How about we don't?

She kisses Darrell. They tumble into bed.

DARRELL (o.s.)

I'm feeling like an orange, baby!

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAMS LIVINGROOM - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Kareenah sits with ANITA on the sofa. Tim stands with EARL, a man about Tim's age. Anita holds A NEWBORN BABY GIRL. They are all enthralled by the baby. Tim watches Kareenah with glee.

KAREENAH

Awww, what's her name?

ANITA

Kaci. She's five months old.

KAREENAH

She's adorable.

TIM

Why don't you hold her, honey?

Kareenah takes the baby, Tim smiles as he sees the intended look on Kareenah's face.

CUT TO:

INT. RAY'S VAN - NIGHT - NIGHT

Ray drives. Eva stews.

RAY
Don't be mad at me. I wanted to stay.

EVA
And have her put things in my food?

RAY
I just think you may have overreacted.
I mean, you're a civil servant, not the
FBI.

EVA
Well, excuse the hell out of me. How
about you tell me about the demanding
world of meat delivery. So, do you
basically pick it up and give it to a
guy named Bob, or is there math
involved?

RAY
No need to get nasty.

EVA
Oh, there is definitely a need to get
nasty. My job is serious. It's not
some kinda hobby. Well, guess what
"Meat Boy?" I'm sure my job pays more
than yours does, so in my eyes, the
eyes of society, and the IRS, that
makes me bigger and better than you.
Think about that the next time you're
out doing the complex work of toting
around a pig's ass.

Ray can't respond. He's blown it.

BLAM! A blow out. The van comes to a stop. Ray looks at
Eva.

EVA (cont'd)
Don't look at me. I'm just the woman.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER - NIGHT

Ray changes the tire as Eva fumes.

EVA
I should have known any friend of
Mike's was a loser.

RAY
Excuse me, but I am not a loser.

EVA
(to herself)
What was I thinking?
(more)

EVA (cont'd)

I should know not to take on a man that needs so much work.

RAY

Work?! Hey, I don't need work....

EVA

(still to herself)

Relax, Eva. It's just one night. Tomorrow, he'll be gone with all the other guys who think NASDAQ is a rapper and Malcolm X is a pain reliever.

Ray finishes. Before they can get back in, A ROBBER runs up wielding a pistol.

ROBBER

You know what time it is! Give it up!

Eva and Ray look at the robber and know it's the end of a perfect date. Eva hands over her purse as she glares at Ray.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT.

A police officer finishes a report, then walks off. Eva starts to walk away from Ray.

RAY

Wait, where are you going?

EVA

I've been insulted, inconvenienced, and robbed at gun point. I'm going home.

RAY

Come on, you can't just leave.

EVA

When the back of my head disappears, you'll know you were wrong.

RAY

Eva, don't be like that. We can start our date over. Please, let's start over.

EVA

There are about four billion women in the world, Raymond. When you take out the married ones, the lesbians, and the ones with taste, that still leaves a lot for you to choose from. Think of that number --then subtract one.

Eva walks off into the night.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAMS DEN - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Kareenah and the others fawn over the baby. The PHONE RINGS. Kareenah grabs it.

SPLIT SCREEN: Kareenah and Eva.

EVA
Kareenah, it's Eva. I need to talk.

KAREENAH
Something wrong? How was the date?

EVA
The date is what's wrong.

KAREENAH
Oh no. Hold on. Let's get everybody.

Kareenah walks out, stunning Tim and his guests.

TIM
Honey, where are you going?

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

Bethany and Mike walk along. Beth's cell phone rings. She answers it.

TRI SCREEN: Eva, Kareenah, and Bethany.

BETHANY
Hello?

EVA
It's Eva--

KAREENAH
And Kareenah. We got an emergency.

EVA
The date was a disaster.

BETHANY
Fill me in. Don't leave out anything.

Bethany walks away from Mike.

MIKE
Beth, what's up?

CUT TO:

INT. RYDER BEDROOM - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Darrell and Jacqui are lying together peacefully. Darrell is in heaven. The PHONE RINGS.

DARRELL
Don't you dare answer that.

JACQUI
Not a chance.

The machine picks up.

EVA (v.o.)
Jacqui, it's Eva.

KAREENAH (v.o.)
And Kareenah.

BETHANY (v.o.)
And Bethany. Code seven, girl.

Jacqui pulls away from Darrell.

DARRELL
No!...

Darrell tries to grab her and falls out of the bed again.
Jacqui grabs the phone.

QUAD SCREEN: Eva, Kareenah, Bethany and Jacqui.

JACQUI
What's up?

KAREENAH
The date went bad.

JACQUI
I knew it! The sneaky eyes never lie.

EVA
Wait 'til you hear what happened....

Eva begins to talk as the sisters get into it.

CUT TO:

INT. TAPPER'S BAR - THE NEXT DAY.

CLOSE ON MIKE.

MIKE
What the hell went wrong?!

NEW ANGLE: All of the men are at the bar. Ray is on the spot with the fellas.

TIM
Kareenah was falling in love with
having a baby.

DARRELL
My wife and I were cuddl-- I was
hittin' I and didn't finish.

MIKE
They had a four way phone conference
about your date, all night. I thought
you were the master player.

RAY
I can't get to her. Most women have a
few barriers up around their hearts.
Eva's got an electrified fence with
rabid pit bulls. And that mouth! My
ears are still bleeding.

"Deliver Us From Eva"

55A.

MIKE

Well, we gotta do something about this.
We can't have Eva messing up the plan.

(more)

MIKE (cont'd)

I got to see an action movie last night. I will not live without Jet Li!

TIM

You have to find a way to get her back on your good side.

DARRELL

He's gotta have sex with her.

RAY

Look, I'd love to get another shot at her. I mean, my pride was hurt, but I'm sure it's out of the question.

MIKE

What, you don't like women?

RAY

Hey, watch yourself now--

TIM

You have to sleep with her.

RAY

I don't think that's the answer.

DARRELL

Aw shit man, he don't like women.

RAY

(yelling)
I do like women!

Everyone in the bar looks at the guys.

RAY (cont'd)

Look fellas, I'm sorry, but there's no way she's gonna go out with me again. I'll give you your money back.

MIKE

Damned right you will.

Ray walks out of the bar. The fellas mumble curses. A BIG BARTENDER comes over to them.

BIG BARTENDER

Yo, no offense to you people, but the gay bar is across town. It's always happy hour over there.

The bartender goes back to work.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - TWO DAYS LATER.

Eva is on another tear. The manager fear-stricken.

EVA
...Martin Luther King was
uncompromising, Nelson Mandela was
uncompromising....

Eva looks across the room and sees Ray making a delivery.
Ray sees her. Their eyes meet. Ray senses there is
something about her, something more than his pride.

EVA (cont'd)
...and so am I. Here's your citation.

She hands the manager the citation and tries to exit quickly.
Ray cuts her off.

EVA (cont'd)
I'm working, Raymond.

RAY
So am I, and you know what? You were
right. There's no math involved.

Eva is not amused.

RAY (cont'd)
Look, I know you're upset with me. But
I want to go out with you again.

EVA
And why is that?

RAY
Because you're pretty.

EVA
That's the shallowest thing I've ever
heard.

RAY
Well, I didn't get to know much about
you, so basically I'm working on beauty
here.

EVA
I am more than what's on the outside,
more than what appeals to some man...
and thank you for the compliment.

RAY
Come on, I feel like I owe you. We'll
do anything you want to do.

EVA
(thinks)
Anything?

CUT TO:

EXT. RIDGEWAY EQUESTRIAN CENTER - DAY.

The rolling hills of an elegant equestrian center outside of
Los Angeles. We see two people riding horses.

NEW ANGLE: Eva rides like the wind on ROMEO, a white stallion. She's in heaven.

ANOTHER ANGLE: Ray rides by on a horse holding on for dear life.

RAY
Aaaaahhhh!!!!

CUT TO:

EXT. EQUESTRIAN CENTER - LATER - DAY

Eva walks along with Romeo. Ray walks with her and his own horse. He's dirty, sore and walking funny.

RAY
My ass feels like it got caught in a blender.

EVA
You did good. You only fell four times.

They walk along for a beat. Eva smiles. She's in heaven. Ray takes notice.

EVA (cont'd)
I have a confession to make. I used you.

RAY
I normally like being used by a woman, but I'm not seeing it here.

EVA
I can't afford to come here all the time. I come once a month after I save my pennies. When you offered to go out again, I didn't want to go, but I thought it would be a good way to--

Eva stops, feeling guilty.

EVA (cont'd)
I guess that makes me a bad person.

RAY
No. I just wanted to make up for the other night.

They walk along a little longer. Eva regards him, feeling his sincerity.

EVA
Did you know that I wanted to be a horse trainer when I was little?

RAY
No, but I could have guessed. What happened?

EVA

I had to take care of my sisters, and a beginning horse trainer doesn't make the big bucks. I took a job with the city, and another job as a waitress. Steady paychecks.

RAY

So, why didn't you come back to it later, after you sisters were okay?

Eva looks at Ray, but she's not ready to open up to him.

EVA

You know what? Why don't we do something you like now?

RAY

Anything?

EVA

(cautiously)
Yes.

CUT TO:

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

A BEAUTIFUL POOL TABLE. Eva and Ray are shooting a game. The pool table is the only thing in the room.

EVA

I have to say. This is exactly how I thought you'd live.

RAY

What, you got something against pool?

Ray sinks a ball.

EVA

No, but a sofa wouldn't kill you, would it?

Ray misses a shot.

RAY

Your turn.

EVA

So, how does a meat delivery man afford a nice place like this?

Ray looks guilty. Eva shoots but only nicks the ball.

EVA (cont'd)

Oops.

Ray takes his turn.

RAY

He struggles and makes due. Hey, did I tell you my boss and I are going to the mayor's mansion to show him cuts for a private dinner he's having.

EVA

You're doing a meat show for the mayor?

RAY

Meat presentation. There's a subtle difference of humiliation.

They share a laugh.

RAY (cont'd)

So, you never did answer my question. Why didn't you go back to horse training after your sisters got on their feet?

*

EVA

I don't want to talk about it.

RAY

Hard to get to know someone when they won't talk to you.

EVA

Raymond, we're having such a good time.
Please can we drop it?

Ray thinks, a beat. If she won't open up to him, then:

RAY

I was an orphan just like you and your
sisters, did you know that? My mother
gave me up after I was born. I don't
think she was sure who my father was.

(beat)

Okay, now, why don't you tell me--

EVA

So that explains why the idea of
staying in one place scares you so
much.

RAY

Scared? I said I have many talents and
I like to travel. I didn't say I was--

EVA

I read about this. When a child is
abandoned, he becomes afraid that his
life will fall apart on him again. You
shouldn't feel bad about it. It's
natural.

Ray is silenced by this. In his heart, he knows it's true.

RAY

Okay, Eva, I won't feel bad. So what
about you, then?

Eva takes a deep breath. She knows she's opening up to him
and is a little nervous about it.

EVA

Our parents died in a car accident when
I was eighteen. Insurance paid for the
house and we started a joint bank
account we called the Dandridge fund.
Well, after they were grown, I just-- I
was settled into a life, you know and I
didn't want go back and chase dreams of
being a horse trainer.

Ray looks at Eva now understanding why she is the way she is.

RAY

I guess if it doesn't kill you, it only makes you stronger, huh?

EVA

You know, I think what people mean by that is you deal with the pain by building a bridge over it with the things life hasn't taken from you.

RAY

So, if it doesn't kill you, it makes you build a bridge?

EVA

Hey, I like that. I'm gonna use that.

RAY

You should be proud of yourself.

EVA

I'm proud of my sisters. Kareenah's a doctor. Bethany has her own business. And Jacqui, she's the smartest of us all. She's going to be a millionaire one day.

RAY

And what do you have, Eva? I'm sure all of that devotion cost you.

Eva considers this question. It's a big one.

EVA

There was a man. Lucius Johnson. Our local Mr. Everything. We were just kids, but it was serious, you know. We were going to get married. But he made me choose between him and my sisters. When I didn't choose him, he dumped me.

RAY

Why didn't you choose him?

Eva briefly contemplates this hurtful question.

EVA

My sisters needed me more than he did. And what I needed didn't matter.

(beat)

So what about you, Raymond? What has the tragedy in your life given you?

Ray looks at her moved by her insight and compassion.
DOORBELL. Ray opens the door, revealing Mike.

MIKE

Just cough up the damned money, so I
can get going!

Mike looks across the room and sees Eva.

CUT TO:

INT. BETHANY'S SALON - SAME TIME - NIGHT.

The sisters all sit, waiting.

JACQUI

Eva never misses our night. Something
must have happened.

BETHANY

Maybe she had an accident.

ORMANDY

Eva would call from the ambulance.

The women all agree with this.

BETHANY

We need to call the police. I'll get
Mike to handle it.

Kareenah looks guilty, then:

KAREENAH

Eva's with Ray.

Bethany and Jacqui express surprise and shock.

JACQUI

But she hates him. We all agreed.

BETHANY

How do you know?

KAREENAH

She called me from her cell and said
they were going to ride horses. I
guess it went well.

TELLY

Horses? Three words: e-ro-tic.

ORMANDY

Horses make me all tingly.
(to Telly)
Shut up.

KAREENAH

If Eva went out with Ray again after
what happened, then there must be
something about him.

BETHANY

Eva never gives men second chances--
sometimes they don't get the first one.

The sisters contemplate this, then:

JACQUI
Oh, my God. Eva has a man.

CUT TO:

INT. RAY'S LIVINGROOM - SAME TIME.

Mike looks at Ray, then smiles.

MIKE
I didn't mean to interrupt.

EVA
You never do.

RAY
(covering)
So, Mike I'll pay you on that bet
later.

MIKE
Right, right.

EVA
Gambling is a bad habit, Raymond.

RAY
He's a lucky pool player.

MIKE
I'll let you two get back to your date.

EVA
It's not a date. Just a visit.

Mike leaves. We hear him WHOOP faintly on the other side of
the door.

EVA (cont'd)
Mike and his buddies are not fooling
me, you know.

Ray is shocked for a moment. He resigns himself to being
busted.

RAY
I didn't think so.

EVA
They set us up, you and me. They want
us to date, so I'll be out of their
hair. You may not believe this, but
they don't like me very much.

RAY
I didn't get that. So, do you mind
being set up with me?

*

Eva considers a moment, making him wait, then:

"Deliver Us From Eva"

64.

EVA

Show me how hit the ball straight.

She smiles at Ray. Ray goes to her and instructs.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS.

MID TEMPO R&B.

EXT. RIDGEWAY EQUESTRIAN CENTER - DAY

Eva and Ray ride horses. Ray hangs on for dear life again.

INT. WILLIAMS HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - DAY

Kareenah and Tim laugh and read a book entitled: "So you Want to Have A Baby!"

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Eva and Ray play a game of one on one. Ray tries to dribble by Eva. She jumps on his back.

INT. BETHANY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike wakes up in Bethany's bed. It's 1 AM. He kisses her then wraps his arms around her, content.

INT. LE QUARTIER - DAY

Eva writes up a terrified Colette in her restaurant. Eva smiles then hands her an "A" designation. She smiles. Colette is in shock.

INT. RYDER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darrell and Jacqui lie in bed. She reads a book to him.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eva and Ray walk down the street. Ray sees Cynda and Lori the two women from the bar. They hug each other like lovers. Ray quickly pushes Eva into a doorway.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Mike pays a guilty looking Ray the rest of his money. Mike's cruiser and the Jomo's van are in the b.g.

EXT. RAY'S HOUSE - DAY

Ray shakes hands with a man who takes a "For Sale" sign off his lawn and hands it to him.

EXT. PARK - SUNRISE

Eva and Ray watch a sunrise together. The rays spill over the horizon. They turn to each other. Eva is falling for him, He feels the same, only it's tinged with guilt, but Ray can forget that for this moment. They kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. HEALTH DEPARTMENT - BULLPEN - DAY.

Eva bounds into work full of energy and life. She goes to her office area to find Theo, her boss, and Oscar waiting. Seeing Oscar, Eva knows what's coming.

"Deliver Us From Eva"

65A.

EVA
Good morning, guys.

OSCAR
Eva, Chi-town is calling you.

THEO
Congratulations, Eva.

They all shake hands with her.

EVA
I don't know what to say. Can I have
some time to think about it?

THEO
Sure, but why? It's a great
opportunity.

EVA
I know, but... my life has changed
since all this happened.

OSCAR
I know how relocation can be. Take
some time.

Oscar hands Eva a letter. He and Theo exit. Eva looks at
the letter with dread. It's the end of her and Ray.

CUT TO:

INT. TAPPERS'S BAR - NIGHT.

Ray and the fellas all huddle at the bar with drinks.

MIKE
You're the man, Ray. I haven't even
seen Eva this week.

TIM
Kareenah and I are talking about having
a kid, my blood pressure is down, and I
think I'm growing another penis.

DARRELL
Eva's cool because Ray got her in bed,
right, playa?

RAY
No. We're just hanging out.

MIKE
Okay, now you have to tell her that
you're moving to another state, so
she'll get out of our lives for good.

DARRELL
Yeah, tell her you're going to some
place like Delaware. Can't nobody even
find that shit on a map.

RAY
Do you have to be so gleeful about it?

Mike senses a crack in Ray's resolve.

MIKE

Ray, you got to be tough, stay strong for all of us. Men who get away with shit are the backbone of this country.

TIM

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of getting away with shit!

RAY

Did you know Eva does charity work, teaches bible study and loves animals? She rides this horse named Romeo and he talks to her like he understands.

MIKE

We didn't say she was a bad person. We said she was an irritating person.

DARRELL

And that horse is probably retarded.

RAY

I'm just saying--

MIKE

Saying what, Ray? We had a deal, Ray. Remember your motto, player first, women second? So, are you the man or what?

Ray considers his choice. He's not strong enough to resist.

RAY

You know I'm the man.

The men all drink on that.

CUT TO:

INT. BETHANY'S SALON - SAME TIME.

Eva takes a big chunk of brownie. They are all high as hell, giggling throughout.

KAREENAH

Ormandy, these are the best brownies ever, girl.

ORMANDY

Well, you know a sister has a special recipe.

To Telly, Ormandy makes a "joint smoking" gesture. They laugh. The brownies are laced.

EVA

This job couldn't have come at a worse time. Ray and I are doing so well. I'm real sad about it.
(giggles)

BETHANY
That's so sweet, Eva.
(to Kareenah)
Don't hog the damn brownie, girl.

Kareenah passes the brownie to her.

JACQUI
I say don't go. Ray could be the one.
Dang, the more brownies I eat, the more
I wanna eat!

KAREENAH
Jacqui has a point.

BETHANY
About Ray or the brownies?

KAREENAH
Shit, I don't know, girl. I'm just
talkin'.

EVA
It's just like life to send this job
and Ray at the same time. It's so sad.

TELLY
Jesus, just stay with him. You
breeders make everything so
complicated.

ORMANDY
So Eva, you and Ray bonin' yet or what?

EVA
No, but all that lip licking he does is
driving me crazy.

They all laugh at this.

KAREENAH
I know! I bet he's goooood.

Eva takes another piece of brownie.

EVA
I'm sure Raymond is proficient. But
that's not the best thing about a man,
is it ladies?

ORMANDY
Yes, it is. A man is all about girth
and worth.

BETHANY
Come on, Ormandy, I know that's not all
you care about.

TELLY
Yes, it is. She's a new-age goldigger.

ORMANDY
Shut up, you little rump ranger.

JACQUI

I say it's devotion. Darrell is my man
all the way.

KAREENAH

Yes, like Eva says, adoration is a
man's best quality.

EVA

Absolutely. More brownies!

BETHANY

I say the best thing a man has is his
spirit. A good spirit will bring you
everything you desire.

ORMANDY

I guess we know Mike ain't packin'.

KAREENAH

Okay Eva, how does Ray stack up?

EVA

I told you. We haven't gone there yet.

JACQUI

Then give us a prediction.

BETHANY

Yes, doesn't he inspire you somehow?

EVA

Well, he's funny and charming and he's
so much better than he thinks and
sometimes, I have this dream where he
pushes me on the hood of a car and
licks me like a snow cone on a hot day.
(covers her mouth)
God, did I say that?

ORMANDY

Yes, and I'd like details.

They all chant "details". Eva grabs the brownie pan. She
sniffs, high as hell.

EVA

Oh God, these brownies have
(whispers)
weed in them.

KAREENAH

I knew that an hour ago.

JACQUI

Me too.

EVA

Ormandy! Did you lace these?

ORMANDY

Maybe a little.

BETHANY
Ormandy!-- you my girl.

They slap five. Kareenah and Bethany take another brownie and eat.

EVA
Ladies, this is wrong. We have to eat all the evidence, right now!

They devour the brownies, laughing like hell.

KAREENAH
Eva, tell them about the singing.

EVA
Oh, yeah. Ray sang to me on our first date. It was so cute.

JACQUI
What song did he sing?

EVA
"Sweet Thing."

Everyone reacts to this, then they all start to sing the song.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BALLROOM - THE NEXT NIGHT.

A fancy party with a black tie crowd. A BAND plays on a stage in a corner.

Eva and people from her department sit at a table. Eva looks bored and lonely.

THEO
Eva, you flying solo tonight?

EVA
Yes. Ray, my boyfriend, had some kind of inventory tonight.

THEO
So, you given any thought to the offer?

EVA
Still thinking about it, sir.

THEO
Don't let me rush you Eva, but we do have a small window here.

EVA
I'll keep that in mind, sir.

Eva gets up and goes over to the bar. She gets to the bar, and stands next to a black couple. Eva's old flame, LUCIUS JOHNSON, tall, black and handsome, recognizes her.

LUCIUS
Eva? Eva Dandridge?

EVA

Lucius?

They hug. Eva is not glad to see her old lover looking so good and her looking so alone.

LUCIUS

I thought that was you. How are you?

EVA

I'm fine, Lucius. It's nice to see you again.

LUCIUS

Hey, I want you to meet my wife.
Renee?

RENEE, Lucius's shapely and beautiful wife turns around.

LUCIUS (cont'd)

Baby, this is Eva, the one I told you
about.

RENEE

Oh, the love of his life. I've heard
so much about you. I hate you.
(phony laugh)

Eva wants to leave, but she's caught. Running away will only
make them think she's not doing well. Lucius is the only man
Eva can't pummel into dust.

LUCIUS

Yeah, Eva and I were engaged right
after high school, but it didn't work
out.

EVA

You dumped me, Lucius.

LUCIUS

Right. You had to work for your baby
sisters or something, right?

RENEE

Eva, you broke Lucius's heart. Thank
God you did though, or I would never
have gotten him.

Renee and Lucius kiss, then Renee whips out some pictures
like a pistol.

RENEE (cont'd)

These are our kids.

EVA

They're very cute.

LUCIUS

I'm a mayoral assistant. They hired me
right out of General Motors.

RENEE

At a very generous salary.

LUCIUS

So Eva, what is it that you do?

EVA

I'm a health inspector.

LUCIUS

Great. So, you go and look at dirty
kitchens, grease traps stuff like that?

RENEE

Sounds fascinating, girl.

EVA
It pays the bills--

LUCIUS
So, where's your date?

Eva is beat down by the life and man she could have had.
She's about to answer, when?

RAY (o.s.)
He's running late.

They all turn to see Ray looking like a million in a tux.
He's holding a corsage made of lilies.

RAY (cont'd)
Sorry baby, but I had that thing.
Here.

Ray puts the corsage on Eva who looks at him like he's
Superman.

RAY (cont'd)
(to Lucius)
Hi, Ray Adams.

LUCIUS
I'm Lucius Johnson and this is my wife,
Renee.

RAY
Lucius? I've heard so much about you.

RENEE
(not meaning it)
If it came from Eva, I'm sure it's
good.

LUCIUS
So, how long have you two been
together?

RAY
Not long. I was in Africa on business,
you know the city is trading with the
brothers over there. Anyway, I came
all the way back to escort Eva.

LUCIUS
(suspicious)
I didn't know Los Angeles was a trading
partner in Africa.

RAY
Well, it's only on the highest levels
of the city government.

LUCIUS
Really? Well, let's hear all about
this so-called trade program.

EVA
Ray, you don't have to--

RAY
Mr. Mayor!

THE MAYOR OF LOS ANGELES walks up surrounded by an entourage, guards and photographers. He shakes hands then embraces with Ray. Photographers snap pictures. Eva is stunned.

MAYOR
Ray, how's my main man?

RAY
Good sir. This my date, Eva.

MAYOR
So, this is Eva. Ray, you didn't do her justice.

EVA
Thank you, sir.

The mayor kisses Eva's hand. They all pose for a photos.

RAY
Oh, this is Lumpy and Resus.

LUCIUS
Lucius and Renee.

MAYOR
(doesn't care)
Hey.

LUCIUS
(fawning)
I'm one of your new assistants, sir. I don't actually work with you, I'm hoping--

MAYOR
Ray, you bring this beautiful young lady up to the house sometime.

RAY
Will do, sir.

The mayor walks away. A NEW SONG starts to play.

LUCIUS
Ray, I'm really sorry about--

RAY
You can have a raincheck on kissing my ass, Leo. I have to dance with the prettiest girl here.

LUCIUS
Right, right. It was nice seeing you again, Eva.

EVA
Uh huh.

Ray and Eva go to the dance floor. Lucius looks after Eva.

RENEE
Stop staring at her or I'll slap the taste outta your mouth.

ANGLE ON: Ray and Eva dancing.

RAY
Was that okay?

EVA
The question is how did you do it?

RAY
Well, first I got off early from work.
And I saw you from across the room
looking like you wanted to die.

EVA
And the mayor?

RAY
I did a helluva meat presentation for
him, remember? He's a nice guy. I
only had to beg him once.

They dance a while, then:

EVA
You look good in that tux.

RAY
Thanks and your hair is looking fine.

EVA
Bethany did it.

RAY
Really? I'm gonna have to go by her
shop sometime.

EVA
No! Promise me you'll never go in
there.

RAY
Okay, okay.

EVA
You're a really good dancer.

RAY
Body movement is my specialty.

Ray dips her elegantly. People nearby react approvingly.

EVA
Smooth. Did you know dipping was once
banned in some communities because it
was considered a form of foreplay?

RAY
No, I didn't know that.

Eva suddenly dips Ray.

EVA
You learn something everyday, huh?

RAY
So, how long do you want to stay here?

EVA
After seeing Lucius grovel, not long.

RAY
What do you want to do?

EVA
I don't know, something fun.

CUT TO:

INT. RAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Ray and Eva are on his NEW SOFA all over each other, pulling at each other's clothes. The pool table is in a corner.

EVA
Nice sofa....

RAY
I bought it just for you....

Ray unzips Eva's dress, when he's overcome by guilt. He pushes her back.

RAY (cont'd)
Eva... don't take off your clothes.

EVA
You wanna do it with them on? I'm into that.

RAY
I can't do this.

Eva's hand is in his lap.

EVA
I'm feeling some doubt in your pants, my brother.

She kisses him again. He takes her hands.

RAY
Listen, I need to tell you something.

EVA
Yes?

He looks into her eyes and as much as he likes her, he can't do it.

RAY
I don't want to move too fast.

EVA
Fast? But the average couple has sex on the third date and we've been dating way longer than that.

RAY
I just know you've been through a lot of stuff with men. I don't want to mess this up. I want it to be perfect. I just think we should wait a while.

EVA
I have to respect that, don't I?

RAY
Yeah, I guess you do.

EVA
(thinks, then:)
I have to go.

Eva fixes her clothes and jumps up.

RAY
Please, don't be mad at me.

EVA

I'm not. It's just I've never met a man who cared so much about my feelings, and that's making me want you even more. So, if I don't leave right now, I'm gonna start saying all kinds of hot, freaky stuff to seduce you.

RAY

How freaky? I mean, go, go. I'll call you tomorrow.

Eva hustles out of the door, but not before placing a big kiss on Ray. Ray looks at the door and starts to open it, and call her back, then he thinks better of it.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER.

Eva enters the house looking upset. No sooner than she gets in, is there a KNOCK on the door. Eva opens it, revealing Ray who's followed her.

They kiss and fall to the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM ROOM - NIGHT.

EVA'S IMPECCABLY MADE BED. PAN TO Eva and Ray naked, sated, and under sheets on the floor. Ray is happy, but guilty as hell.

EVA

Did I hurt you?

RAY

Yes, but I liked it. Next time, maybe we'll actually make it to the bed.

EVA

Ray, I want to say... some of the things I said to you... I'm sorry about how I acted.

RAY

That was a beautiful apology, but the best part was when you called me Ray.

EVA

No need to be formal after what we just did.

RAY

If you really want to make it up to me, tell me a joke.

EVA

I told you I'm not a good joke teller.

RAY

That's why it's so special.

EVA
Okay, this man is at the zoo, and he
sees this gorilla...
(laughs)
...and so the gorilla says: "Yo
brother, can I borrow a dollar?...
(laughs hysterically, while
talking, then:)
...and the gorilla says "that's why I
don't wear any pants!"

Eva cracks up.

EVA (cont'd)
You get it?

Ray is confused, but he's never seen her so happy.

RAY
That's the best joke I've ever heard.
(beat)
Mind if I ask you a question?

EVA
I'm not minding much tonight, honey.

RAY
Why not dissolve your Dandridge fund?
Let your sisters have that money?

Eva thinks a moment, the truth about this rises in her.

EVA
I guess I don't want to let go of them.
That fund was our lifeblood, our bond.
If I let it go, then I let them go and
I can't see me doing that, you know.

RAY
I can't blame you for that.

Another moment as Eva calms down.

EVA
I've been thinking about what you told
me about your parents. My folks died
but I had my sisters to live for. I
think you could get over your fear of
building a life, if you had someone to
help you do it.

RAY
I see. You want to be my bridge?

EVA
I don't want to get married or anything
but I'm a very good friend, Ray.

Ray's heart has been laid bare by Eva's need and sincerity.

RAY
You give me your body and then offer
your friendship?

EVA
My priorities are straight. I'm
offering the best of me right now.

Ray is feeling even more guilty than ever now because of this
gesture.

RAY
Eva... I'm not the person you think I
am. I know women always think their
man is the one that's different. But
none of us are different. I'm just
like any other man, maybe not as good
as most. So think about what you're
saying, think about what it would take
to build a bridge with me.

Eva understands that she is taking a big chance on Ray.

EVA
I can handle it, Ray. As long as you
keep giving me what I need.

She hits him playfully.

RAY
Is that all you want?

EVA
Well, you know, I need all that other
stuff, too.

Ray thinks about her sincere words. She's right. He embraces
her not knowing how he's going to ever live with himself.

RAY
How can I turn down a deal like that?

They kiss and go under the sheets again.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BETHANY'S SALON - THE NEXT DAY

The place is full as usual. Eva enters strutting, wearing
the HOT OUTFIT we saw earlier.

EVA
Wha'saaaup!

The women are all shocked. Eva goes around the room.

EVA (cont'd)
Hey, girl... nice shoes. Jimmy Choo?
Ormandy looking good, baby... Telly
give me some, man....

Eva sits in a chair and crosses her legs, bouncing one. The
women check out her strut, her glow, her attitude.

JACQUI
Eva, what's gotten into you?

"Deliver Us From Eva"

78A.

Not what. TELLY Who.

KAREENAH

And what are you wearing?

ORMANDY

If you got some more of them brownies,
you got to share them, girl.

BETHANY

Eva, you're glowing. What did you do?

The whole shop stops and looks at Eva. Eva smiles, happy at her power over them.

EVA

Shit, I ain't discussin' my bid'ness
today.

The shop reacts in shock and laughter.

KAREENAH

Oh my God, she said "shit!"

JACQUI

And "bid'ness."

MARGARITTE

The girl done lost her natural mind.

EVA

Stop trippin'. I'm just in a good
mood. It's a beautiful day, I'm here
with all my girls. Ain't no thang.
Dang, it's hot up in here. Can a
sister get some water, a fan, an
iceberg, or somethin'?

JACQUI

Eva, you're scaring me.

TELLY

Come on Eva, did you do it with Ray, or
not?

EVA

Well....

All the women lean in to hear.

EVA (cont'd)

...he did show up at the mayor's fund-
raiser. Just when I was trapped by
Lucius Johnson and his wife.

KAREENAH

Oh my God, Lucius. What did you do?

EVA

Nothing. Ray did it. He put Lucius in
his place.

ORMANDY

Excuse me, but is there bonin', salad
tossing or something in this story?

BETHANY

Shut up.

EVA

After Ray rescued me, we danced, slow and nice. We went back to my place and had a nice, respectful, evening-- then we burned a hole in the floor!

The women all whoop, slap five and the like. The sisters are shocked, but happy.

KAREENAH

I'm so happy for you, Eva.

The sisters all hug Eva. She appreciates this more than anything.

ORMANDY

Shoot, if having sex is that big a deal, y'all should throw me a damned parade.

Eva continues to fill them in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RYDER DININGROOM - A WEEK LATER.

Darrell comes in dressed in just a robe holding a sandwich. Jacqui is working. He starts to kiss her.

JACQUI

Honey, I'm working.

DARRELL

Yeah, I wanna see if I can have sex with you and eat at the same time.

He keeps kissing. She pushes him away.

JACQUI

Darrell, no.

DARRELL

Come on, baby. Let's have some freaky sex, then we can watch a movie together.

He goes back to it. She pushes him off.

JACQUI

Eva told me that Ray drives this old van from his job to save money.

DARRELL

So what?

JACQUI

So, since we started all this cuddling and talking all hours of the day, I've fallen behind on my study schedule. I don't sacrifice like Ray.

(more)

JACQUI (cont'd)

I let my guard down. I need to get back to being driven about school.

DARRELL

Look, Ray and Eva ain't you and me. They ain't married. They don't even have sex.

JACQUI

Yes, they do.

DARRELL

He hit that?

JACQUI

Yes, and from what I hear, you could take a lesson from him in that department.

DARRELL

What the fu--? So what did he do? He got tricks and shit?

Jacqui kisses him and goes back to work. Darrell looks at her and knows he's back in hell.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLIAMS BEDROOM - LATER.

Kareenah enters. She finds the lights dimmed.

THE BATHROOM DOOR opens. We see the DARK SILHOUETTE of A MAN. It's Tim, dressed in a robe.

TIM

It's baby time!

He goes to her, hugging. Kareenah doesn't respond.

KAREENAH

Oh, about that, honey. We need to talk.

TIM

No talking. You don't have a baby talking. I know you're ready.

Tim pulls out a little chart and hands it to her.

KAREENAH

You're keeping an ovulation schedule on me? That's low.

TIM

Come on, baby. Let's play doctor.

KAREENAH

I've been thinking about Ray and Eva. They have this wonderful new relationship. It reminded me of my promise to myself. I had a plan and I let go of it.

TIM

But I-- I-- I threw all my condoms out.

"Deliver Us From Eva"

81A.

KAREENAH

I'll get you some more. They have them
on sale at Target.

TIM
But I'm ready. I'm so fertile, I could
look at an egg and hatch it.

*
*

KAREENAH
Tim, this isn't like buying a coat.
You can't take the baby back if you
don't want it. It's a lifetime
commitment. We should wait a little
while longer.

TIM
And who said that Eva or Ray?

KAREENAH
I don't remember.
(noticing)
Why is my potpourri all over the bed?

CUT TO:

INT. BETHANY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Mike and Bethany argue.

MIKE
I don't wanna leave!

BETHANY
I let you spend a few nights here and
now you've got your stuff all over my
place. It's like we live together.

MIKE
What's wrong with that?

BETHANY
You know what's wrong with it.

MIKE
Bethany, I thought we were all over
that.

BETHANY
Ray and Eva have a good relationship
and they don't co-habitate.

Mike realizes what she said.

MIKE
Oh no, you did not just say "Ray and
Eva" to me.

BETHANY
They each have their own place. They
have respect for each other.

MIKE
Ray doesn't care about Eva. I paid--
close attention to him. He don't like
her.

BETHANY

I guess that's why Ray calls her everyday, that's why they have lunch three times a week, and that's why Eva's thinking about passing on a new job to stay here.

MIKE

What job?

BETHANY

Eva was offered a job in Chicago, but she's going to say no because she found Ray.

Mike contemplates this information.

MIKE

Ain't this about a--

BETHANY

But I do have good news. We're dissolving the Dandridge fund.

MIKE

Oh really? Great.

BETHANY

Eva's gonna keep it all.

MIKE

What?!

BETHANY

She has a new life, a new man. She's going to need that money.

Mike stews, realizing that his plan has backfired on him. Bethany grabs a box filled with Mike's things.

BETHANY (cont'd)

Baby, here's all your stuff. You can let yourself out, okay?

Bethany kisses him on the forehead and walks out.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

EXT. WILLIAMS BACKYARD - DAY.

Ray in swimming trunks and the sisters are all in bathing suits sitting together. Ray regales them with a story. The sisters all laugh hysterically.

NEW ANGLE: The fellas all watch with growing contempt.

CUT TO:

"Deliver Us From Eva"

83A.

EXT. STREET - DAY.

Ray, Eva and the sisters all walk together. Mike, Tim, and Darrell walk behind them, brooding.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY.

Eva directs the choir. They are jamming. PAN the sisters to find Ray has joined the choir.

ANGLE ON: Mike and Tim. They are upset. Darrell is into the song until Mike elbows him.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER - A FEW NIGHTS LATER

Ray and Eva sit at the edge of a pier. Eva is happy. Ray is still feeling guilty. Ray looks at her and knows that he's fallen hard for her. He's bursting to confess.

EVA
Something wrong?

RAY
I took your advice and convinced my boss to let me run his company. He said I could start next week.

EVA
You did! Congratulations!

Eva hugs him, but Ray is still upset.

EVA (cont'd)
This is good, right?

RAY
Yes, but... you made me realize that I can't run away from myself. It's like someone gave me a pair of glasses that filtered out all the foolishness and stupidity in my life. And what have I given you for that gift, Eva? Nothing.

EVA
You taught me to trust again, Ray. I don't call that nothing. And this moment has helped me make a decision of my own.

RAY
What?

EVA
If you're gonna be here, then this is where I want to be.

Ray looks at her knowing that if he confesses, he'll blow the whole thing. He decides to kiss her instead.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RAY'S HOUSE - LATER.

Ray sits on his sofa the other fellas stand around him. He's under A LIGHT like an interrogation. There's A GARMENT BAG on the pool table.

MIKE

You crossed the line with Eva, didn't
you?

RAY

No.

DARRELL

Don't lie. You line-crossing
sonofabitch!

RAY

All I did was what you paid me for.

TIM
But now that Eva has a relationship,
our women are even worse. Everything
you do comes back on us.

DARRELL
And Eva's keeping all the money.

RAY
That's not my fault.

MIKE
Like hell. Something's wrong with you.
You seem too happy with Eva.

TIM
And you haven't asked for any expenses
lately.

DARRELL
You pay for the woman, you must like
the woman.

RAY
That's ridiculous. I'm a player, I'm
on the job.

MIKE
What's in the garment bag?

RAY
Nothing... a suit. I got a promotion
at work.

TIM
Promotion? That's Eva all the way.

RAY
No, that's me.

Mike comes over carrying a box of Tupperware.

MIKE
And what the hell is this?
Tupperware?! That's Eva's middle name.

RAY
I just needed to organize a few things.

DARRELL
Organization is Eva's second middle
name.

MIKE
Look, Eva has a job offer in Chicago.
If you dump her, she won't have any
reason to stay here.

Ray now knows what Eva meant the other night.

RAY
She's staying because of me?

DARRELL
She's only doing it because you boned
her. Yeah, we know all about it.

TIM
That's like stealing from your job.
You embezzled the booty.

MIKE
Look, just call her tomorrow and tell
her it's over.

Ray sees how serious they all are about this. He thinks
about it for just a second, then:

RAY
No.

TIM
Did he say no?

MIKE
No, he said "Okay fellas, we had a deal
and I have a new house, so I'll do it."

RAY
No, I said, no.

Ray stands up.

DARRELL

You're supposed to be a master player. Players don't feel. That's like a pimp with a health plan.

MIKE

We paid you and now you have to do this.

TIM

Ray, if you don't dump Eva, I may never have a son. You're killing my sperm.

Darrell goes over to a boom box. He notices something and hits a button. "Ain't No Stopping Sunshine" pumps out. The fellas recoil in horror.

DARRELL

Damn. They made you an orange!

RAY

Okay, fine! I do like her. I'm sorry, but Eva is special. I had to open up my heart to get to her and when I did, she got to me first.

The fellas are shocked, then:

DARRELL

Man... Eva must have some good stuff.

MIKE

We want our money back.

RAY

I want you to take it back. It'll just take me some time to raise it, you know.

TIM

We'll tell Eva what you did. We'll tell her you was a hired johnson.

RAY

You don't have to tell her. I'll do it myself. I'm tired of deceiving her. I was willing to go through my whole life with all this broken stuff inside me. Eva showed me how foolish that is. I'm not ever giving up that feeling. Each one of you fell for a Dandridge woman. You know what I'm feeling. I think... I might love her.

The other men react to this with more shock.

MIKE

Love? Love is an excuse, an alibi, a justification for sex, but it ain't something that stops a man from keeping his promise.

DARRELL

I don't know man, I love Jacqui and sometimes....

MIKE
Shut up! I'm making a point!

DARRELL
Yo, don't be talkin' to me like that.

Mike and Darrell face off. Tim gets between them.

TIM
Fellas, fellas, remember who we hate.
The sperm killer

They all look at Ray with anger.

RAY
I'm sorry fellas. I'm going to talk to
Eva tonight. The least I can do is
tell her in person what I did.

MIKE
(still looking at Ray)
Come on. Let's go.

They all head for the door. Darrel stops and turns.

DARRELL
So, was she really good? I bet she got
methods, huh?--

Tim pulls Darrell out of the door.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. MIKE'S POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT.

Mike, Tim and Darrell sit outside of Ray's house. They are
all frantic and upset.

MIKE
I can't believe him!

TIM
We're all going back into Eva hell.

DARRELL
You mean, Eva and Ray hell.

MIKE
When he tells Eva, we'll be in deep
shit. Beth will never marry me.

TIM
Is that all? My wife's a doctor.
She'll take sell kidneys on the black
market.

DARRELL
We should just kill Ray. That would
solve all of our problems.

Tim and Darrell laugh bitterly. Mike does not. He thinks
about it.

MIKE

Yeah... He doesn't have any relatives,
so there won't be a lot of loose ends.
He dies and Eva will leave town.

Tim and Darrell look concerned.

TIM

Mike, it's okay to joke about it, but
we can't kill a man because of Eva.

MIKE

I got a plan, but we don't have time.
Ray's gonna come out of that house in a
few seconds. If he gets to Eva, we're
all dead. So, grab your *cajones*,
fellas. It's time to be real men.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. RAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Ray come out of the house and goes to the van. He's grabbed by Mike, Darrell and Tim. He's forced into the back of the van.

POV inside of van. Ray is forced in and the door slams shut taking the screen

TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF BETHANY'S SALON - DAY.

Telly is on his cell phone. He seems different now, manly.

TELLY
(manly voice)
Is Linda there?... hey baby, I'll pick you up over on Fairfax... I'm at work... No, you know you can't come by... I'm pretending to be gay because in L.A. a straight hairdresser is an unemployed hairdresser... I'll do it until I get my own place... Okay, love you too.

Telly hangs up as Bethany comes out.

BETHANY
Telly, get in here, boy. We got customers.

TELLY
(back to being gay)
Just checking on my honey, you know how they are.

They go back inside.

CUT TO:

INT. BETHANY'S SALON - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The place is full as usual. All of the Dandridge sisters are there. Bethany fills out an order form for Thomas the water delivery man.

BETHANY
Thanks, Thomas.

THOMAS
No problem. Now, I'd better get out of here with all you women so y'all can get back to doggin' us brothers.

The women react, upset to this.

BETHANY
Excuse us?

THOMAS
I'm sorry, but y'all females be trippin'. You drive men away, then you bitch and moan about not having one. It's silly.

Ormandy steps from behind a chair. All the women react. "Uh oh," "Look out," and the like. Someone LOCKS THE DOOR.

ORMANDY
You know why I complain, Thomas?
'Cause...
(loudly)
I need a real man!

The women react, urging Ormandy on. She walks around the room.

Ormandy bows and the women all clap. Thomas waves them off and exits as Mike, Darrell and Tim come in and the women all whoop and cat call at them.

*

JACQUI

Fresh meat!

The women all laugh. The guys are stoned faced.

EVA

Leave them alone, ladies.

BETHANY

Men are people, too, kinda.

ORMANDY

They can stay, if they show us a little skin!

KAREENAH

Forget that. I want the Full Monty.

The women all laugh and whoop again. Bethany notices the guys' grim look.

BETHANY

Mike, is something wrong?

MIKE
We have some bad news.

TIM
It's about Ray.

EVA
My Ray? Is he all right?

Eva jumps up. Her sisters huddle around her.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETHANY'S SALON - SAME.

Through the window we see Mike talking to Eva. He gives her the bad news. We see the shocked reactions of the women and Eva, teeters then faints into her sisters' arms.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FUNERAL HOME MEMORIAL ROOM - DAY.

The BLOWN UP PHOTO of Ray.

NEW ANGLE on Eva and her sisters huddled together, crying.

RAY (v.o.)
Some story, huh? Well, it's not quite complete....

CUT TO:

EXT. ISOLATED WAREHOUSE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

An isolated warehouse on the outskirts of L.A.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - THREE HOURS AGO.

Ray is tethered to a wall by a harness that wrapped around his waist and secured with a padlock. Food and water is on the floor. There are two BUCKETS with "1" and "2" on them. Mike and Darrell look at him, smiling. Tim is concerned.

SUPERIMPOSE: THREE HOURS AGO.

MIKE
We got three hours before the funeral, fellas. Is all the food and water okay?

Darrell stands by a table filled with provisions.

TIM
Check. Where did you find this place, Darrell?

DARRELL
It used to be a postal storage warehouse. We don't use it anymore.

MIKE

You got everything you need, even two
bathrooms.

(pointing to buckets)
Number one and number two.

(more)

MIKE (cont'd)
You'll be a little gamy in a few days,
but you'll be alive.

RAY
This won't work.

DARRELL
Oh, yes it will. You died in a car
accident according to this police
report.

Mike shows the report.

MIKE
Eva needed to know your body was
immediately cremated.

RAY
What about my family? Did you figure
that out smart guys?

MIKE
You have no relatives and not many
friends, thanks to your job hopping.

DARRELL
Eva took that job after she heard you
was dead. After she leaves town, we'll
let you go.

RAY
It's not fair for you to make her leave
under a lie.

DARRELL
And it wasn't fair for you to screw us
on the deal!

TIM
Fellas, maybe we should think about
this.

MIKE
It's our word against his. And by the
time he tells Eva the truth, she'll be
long gone. And we can say we didn't
know anything about this sick joke he
played on her.
(to Ray)
What the hell is wrong with you falling
in love with Eva?

DARRELL
I still say she's got some good stuff.

Mike and Darrell walk off. Tim lingers looking at Ray and
knowing that what they're doing is wrong, then he leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. FUNERAL HOME MEMORIAL ROOM - DAY.

The services continue as Reverend Washington finishes up.

REV. WASHINGTON
...and now we'd like to invite
Evangeline Dandridge up to say a few
words about the deceased.

Eva gathers her resolve and walks up to the podium. We see the room is filled with Eva's coworkers, the beauty shop women, and all the other players we've met.

ANGLE ON: Mike, Tim and Darrell.

TIM
I thought you said this would be a
simple funeral. Who are all these
people?

MIKE
Eva invited all her friends from work.

DARRELL
It's packed up in here.

MIKE
Just hang loose and it'll be okay.

ANGLE ON: Eva at the podium.

EVA
I want to thank everyone for coming.
Ray and I didn't know each other for
very long, but in that short time, we
became very close...

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - SAME TIME.

Ray struggles with the handcuffs and chains. He notices A THIN PIECE OF SCRAP METAL on a table just out of reach. He goes to the food and looks for a way to reach the knife.

INTERCUT THE FUNERAL HOME AND THE CABIN.

EVA
...I don't think anyone is prepared to
lose someone close to them...

Ray takes the plastic holder from a six pack of soda and stretches it as far as he can. He tries to use it to reach the metal, but he can't. He eyes A BAG OF BREADSTICKS.

EVA (cont'd)
...when a person enters your life, you
don't realize how much that changes you
until they're gone...

Ray has now tied the soda can plastic around two breadsticks which are held together by peanut butter. The first attempt fails and he has to use another breadstick.

The second try fails too. Ray loses his grip and the soda can plastic falls out of his reach.

Ray curses and slams a fist into his legs. He looks at his pants and smiles.

EVA (cont'd)
...I spent a lot of my life caring
about everything but my own
happiness....

Ray is now stripped below the waist. He's tossing his pants on the knife, pulling it back. He gets the knife and starts to pick the lock.

CUT TO:

INT. FUNERAL HOME MEMORIAL ROOM - SAME.

EVA
...If I learned anything from Ray it
was to be happy first, then do
everything else. I've invited Valerie
from my church choir to sing a song.

Tim and Darrell react. They obviously didn't know this. Mike calms them down.

VALERIE, a black woman goes on stage and sings a wailing, sad song.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FUNERAL HOME MEMORIAL ROOM - LATER.

The service is finally breaking up. A minister carries out Ray's ashes. Eva cries and falls as her sisters hold her up.

A SCREAM! All heads turn to see Ray walking into the room. People scatter, jaws open. The minister drops Ray's ashes. THE URN BREAKS, revealing SAND.

ORMANDY
Lord, have mercy!

Mike, Tim and Darrell see their plan gone to hell. Ray walks past them to Eva.

RAY
Eva, it's me. I'm not dead. The whole
thing is a lie.

Eva is tentative at first, then she throws her arms around him, kissing.

EVA
Thank God! We thought-- What
happened?

RAY
I want to explain that. Eva... I...
Mike, Darrell and Tim faked my death so
that you would leave town.

MIKE

That's a lie! He did this because he wanted to dump you and he didn't have the balls to do it face to face.

EVA

Ray, is that true?

Ray is about to answer, when:

TIM

No, it's not.

DARRELL

Shut up, man.

TIM

I'm tired of all this. Eva, we did take Ray and lied about him being dead.

Jacqui, and Bethany and Kareenah all berate their men as the crowd watches.

ANGLE ON: Ormandy and Telly watching rapt with attention.

TELLY

This is the best funeral I've ever been to.

ORMANDY

You got that right.

Ormandy passes Telly a stick of chewing gum.

RAY

It's not their fault.

EVA

Like hell it isn't. All of you have only begun to suffer my rage.

RAY

Eva, you don't understand. It's because of me. I... I only went out with you because they paid me to.

Shock from the crowd. Eva is hurt by this.

RAY (cont'd)

I was supposed to make you like me, then trick you into moving away.

More shock and gasps.

RAY (cont'd)
But I didn't know you then. I didn't realize how wonderful you are, how much you'd change me, make me want to change. None of us gets to choose when we meet the person we were meant to be with. Our time didn't come at the best moment, but it came Eva, and we'd be foolish to pass it by. Now, I know I was wrong, but we can get over this. What we have is bigger than all the mistakes I've made. I just know it.

Eva considers this. She knows in her heart that he's right. She looks around the room and sees the faces of all the people she knows including LUCIUS AND RENEE, who try to hide their laughter at her situation. Eva turns to Ray.

EVA
How much did they pay you?

RAY
Eva, that doesn't make a--

EVA
How much!

RAY
Five thousand dollars.

The crowd reacts to this information.

RAY (cont'd)
I'm giving them the money back Eva, because it's not--

Eva rears back and lands a punch on Ray that sends him flying on his ass. Eva stands over him, hurt, angry and humiliated. She's breathing hard, full of emotion. Ray can see that he's destroyed her trust.

EVA
You are everything I thought you were.

Eva walks out. Her sisters follow. Mike, Tim and Darrel all go after their women, leaving Ray alone. Ray gets up, rubbing his jaw. He is at the bottom of his life, feeling lower than low. Ormandy walks up to him.

ORMANDY
So, I guess you single now, huh?

R&B TUNE.

CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY.

Ray is waiting for Eva outside her building. She walks past him without speaking. He follows her inside. A beat, then Ray is escorted out by A BIG SECURITY GUARD.

INT. BETHANY'S SALON - DAY.

Mike goes to Bethany's salon. Bethany won't talk to him. The women throw things at him until he's forced to leave.

INT. RYDER HOUSE - DAY.

Jacqui is in her room on the computer. Darrell tries to come in, and she shuts the door in his face.

INT. WILLIAMS KITCHEN - DAY.

Tim pleads with Kareenah who walks away from him. He grabs her by the shoulders and she pours a carton of milk on his head and walks away.

INT. L.A. HEALTH DEPARTMENT - DAY.

Eva is at an office party. A banner reads "GOODBYE EVA - HAVE FUN IN CHICAGO." Eva cuts a cake and everyone applauds.

Eva notices something out of a window. It's Ray on a scaffold with A WINDOW WASHER. Ray holds up a sign that reads "FORGIVE ME." Eva smiles as she walks over to the window. When she gets there she pulls the blinds closed on Ray, shutting him out. We hear a YELL, THEN A CRASH.

CUT TO:

EXT. L.A. HEALTH DEPARTMENT - LATER

Eva walks out, carrying a cart filled with presents. Ray intercepts her.

EVA
Police!

RAY
Eva, please just me have a minute.

EVA
Robbery, murder, indecent exposure!

RAY
One minute, sixty seconds.

Eva considers, then:

EVA
Okay. One minute, Raymond.

RAY
Raymond? How did I get all the way back to Raymond? I know you're mad, but--

Eva looks at her watch.

RAY (cont'd)
Right. First, I don't want you to stop being mad. I think anger is healthy in a situation like this. I'm upset too, but at myself you know.

(more)

RAY (cont'd)

I think we need to remember what we're losing here....

EVA

Tick, tick, tick....

RAY

I know you still have feelings for me. I have them for you, too. Life is hard, Eva and we've both passed up a lot of good things in life. But we're too wise for that now. I'm never going to find another woman like you.

(beat)

I love you.

Eva considers this, he's right on all counts, but:

EVA

You know what I learned about love? Love isn't a virus that infects you. Love is a choice, Raymond. We choose to be in love and we choose what love makes us do. You and I both made the choice to feel this way, only you did it under false pretenses. I earned your choice. You stole mine. I was ready to change my whole life for you, and the only thing you were ready do to was let me. So are you sure? Are you sure you love me, or are you just upset that I found out what you were and made a different choice?

Ray is speechless. Eva wants him to prove her wrong, but Ray knows his gesture is inadequate.

EVA (cont'd)

That's what I thought. If you'll excuse me. I have travel plans.

Eva walks off, leaving Ray behind her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WILLIAMS DEN - A WEEK LATER.

Mike, Tim and Darrell sit feeling like the losers they are. Suddenly, Eva enters.

EVA

Hey, fellas.

TIM

You don't have to rub it in, Eva. We've been trying to apologize to your sisters for weeks now. They hate us.

DARRELL

Yeah, you got what you wanted. We're all miserable.

EVA

What makes you think I ever wanted that?

MIKE

I don't know, maybe it was the way you meddled in our lives and turned it into a living hell.

EVA

I know I can be too intense sometimes. I guess what you did showed me that.

MIKE

What we did was stupid and it cost all of us.

EVA

My sisters love you. I was just a distraction-- and a pain in the ass. I apologize for that. You know, I've never told you guys how I really feel about you. All of you are good men. You have big hearts and you love and protect my sisters with your kindness and strength. You adore them. So, I know I'm leaving them in good hands. We dissolved the Dandridge fund and split it up yesterday. I'm letting it go and my sisters with it.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

Eva waves out the door and her sisters all come in. Their men all wait a beat, not knowing if they are still mad. Darrell goes over first. They kiss. Tim goes over and kisses Kareenah. Mike walks over and gets down on one knee.

*
*

MIKE

I want to do this right now before I lose my nerve.

He pulls out AN ENGAGEMENT RING and puts it on Bethany.

MIKE (cont'd)

Will you?

BETHANY

(overwhelmed)

Yes.

Mike and Bethany hug and kiss.

Eva drifts off as the couples reunite.

KAREENAH

Let's go out to dinner. Eva?--

They turn to find Eva has gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHICAGO HEALTH DEPARTMENT - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The stately building housing Eva's new job.

SUPERIMPOSE: CHICAGO - A MONTH LATER.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S NEW OFFICE - DAY

A big executive office. Eva inspects a row of recruits. Oscar watches. But she is not the Eva of old, her manner bespeaks a woman more laid back and in step with life.

EVA

...Your training is over and you are ready for field work. You are the captains of cleanliness. Without you, people will lose faith in the dining experience and send us back to the days of bag lunches. Now go out there and don't take dirt for an answer.

The troops laugh and file out. Eva stops JOYCE an uptight looking white girl who is what Eva used to be.

EVA (cont'd)

Joyce, got a minute?

JOYCE

Yes, ma'am.

EVA

I've been watching you the past two weeks. I like you, but take it from me, you need to loosen up a little.

JOYCE

Loosen up, ma'am?

CUT TO:

INT. CHICAGO HEALTH DEPARTMENT BULLPEN - DAY

It's a bullpen in Eva's office. Joyce walks out with her hair down, glasses off and her dress hiked up. Eva smiles.

OSCAR

You're doing fine, Eva. Want to go to lunch?

EVA

Sure, I have an expense account now. Let's do it.

They laugh and exit.

CUT TO:

INT. CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LOBBY - DAY

Eva and Oscar come down to find a commotion brewing.

PUSH INTO Eva's stunned face as she sees the commotion across the lobby.

"Deliver Us From Eva"

99A.

Holy mother--^{EVA}

ANGLE ON: Ray riding Romeo, Eva's horse. Eva watches and can't help but be moved. He's come for her like a bold knight on a steed out of a dream.

SECURITY OFFICER

Sir, you can't be in here on a horse!

RAY

I know. Ain't it cool?

(notices Eva)

Hey, Eva!

Romeo sees Eva and he raises up on two legs. For a second, Ray looks handsome, stunning, courageous, then he falls off, hitting the ground hard.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eva nuzzles Romeo while Ray holds an ice pack to his head. A crowd of people have assembled, watching.

RAY

I quit my job, sold my house and bought him.

EVA

Well, you shouldn't have. I can't be bought.

RAY

I got him a home in a stable outside of town. He's paid up for a year.

EVA

Are you listening to me?

RAY

Yes, and now you listen to me. You said love is a choice, well, I made mine. I love you and I'm not leaving. I'm gonna be here at your job every day. I'm gonna send you gifts, and say I'm sorry until you understand that I will not live without you-- or until you call the cops on me, but even that won't stop me.

Eva looks at him knowing that he's not kidding. She wants to go back to him, but:

EVA

How can I ever trust you?

RAY

You can't, but how is that different from any other man? We're all untrustworthy. I just know it now. The way I see it, that puts me ahead of the game.

WOMAN IN CROWD

He makes a good point.

The crowd quiets her. Eva can't argue with Ray's logic.

EVA
Well, let's let Romeo decide.
(to Romeo)
Romeo, do you think I should trust him?
What do you say, boy?

Romeo nuzzles Eva affectionately.

TWO MOUNTED POLICEMEN come by on horses.

MOUNTED COP
Excuse me, ma'am. This your animal?

Eva looks at Ray knowing that she has to give it another try.
Ray waits. THE CROWD waits, too.

EVA
Yes officer, it's my horse.

Eva and Ray kiss. The crowd applauds politely.

MOUNTED COP
You'll have to take him off the street.

RAY
His trailer is down the block, officer.

Eva mounts Romeo and helps Ray up behind her.

ANGLE ON: woman and man in the crowd. *

WOMAN IN CROWD *
Would you buy a horse for me? *

The man just laughs at her. *

Eva and Ray pull Romeo out into the street with the two cops.

RAY *
There's only one thing that could make
this perfect.

EVA
Okay.
(giggles)
This guy walks into a bar with a dog on
his head....
(laughs over talking)

Eva keeps telling the joke badly as we PAN UP and AWAY as Eva
and Ray ride off between the two mounted policemen.

THE END

FADE OUT.