

Fish

By
Antwone Fisher

Fox Division
10201 West Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90035

Double Pink Revision-11/24/2001
Double Blue Revision-11/18/2001
Salmon Revision-10/01/2001
Goldenrod Revision-09/28/2001
Yellow Revision-09/28/2001
Green Revision-09/25/2001
Pink Revision-09/24/2001
Blue Revision-09/23/2001
Shooting Draft-09/21/2001
08/17/2001

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. COPYRIGHT 2001 TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX
FILM CORPORATION. NO PORTION OF THIS SCRIPT MAY BE
PERFORMED, PUBLISHED, REPRODUCED, SOLD OR DISTRIBUTED BY ANY
MEANS, OR QUOTED OR PUBLISHED IN ANY MEDIUM, INCLUDING ANY
WEBSITE, WITHOUT THE PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT OF TWENTIETH
CENTURY FOX FILM CORPORATION. DISPOSAL OF THIS SCRIPT COPY
DOES NOT ALTER ANY OF THE RESTRICTIONS SET FORTH ABOVE.

1 EXT. FIELD OF KNEE-HIGH BLADES OF GRASS - NOON - A DREAM 1

Child ANTWONE QUENTON FISHER (FISH), dressed in a white cotton nightgown, is standing in this field. Only the sound of a gentle BREEZE is heard.

Child Antwone tilts his head back and takes a deep breath. He sees a rainbow lacing a sky of multi-shades of blue. He turns toward the sun and there stands a full-figured, middle-aged BLACK WOMAN with a wonderful smile.

She wears a white dress and a white, cotton apron. She also wears a white scarf tied on her head. The woman takes Antwone's hand and leads him to a large dilapidated barn. African drums and wondrous voices are HEARD from within.

2 EXT. BARN - DAY 2

SUDDENLY, the big doors swing open and a barefoot, muscular, black MAN steps into the doorway. He's dressed in pants, cut off, and a white sleeveless, cotton shirt.

Leaning backwards, with his fists on his waist, the man looks down, seeing little Antwone. Looking up, Antwone sees right into the wide nostrils of the glorious man.

MAN

It's you isn't it? Yes.
(extending his hand)
Welcome home, Antwone.

Antwone smiles and takes his hand. The woman smiles and the three enter the barn.

3 INT. BARN - DAY 3

Antwone sees two levels of rafters on each side of the barn. The PEOPLE gathered there are dressed as his escorts.

Musicians and dancers stop at Antwone's entrance. They study him with gentleness and acceptance, as the others empty the rafters onto the floor surrounding him.

THE PEOPLE

(whispers)

It's Antwone, Antwone's here.

In the middle of the dusty dirt floor sits an unusually long wooden table, adorned with a red-and-white checkered tablecloth. Containers of maple syrup, jugs, silverware, and candlelight shimmer across the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The muscular Man guides Antwone there and seats him at the head of the table. The Man and the Woman step aside and fold into the assemblage of people.

We move in on the back of Antwone's head as a pair of FEMALE HANDS reaches in and places a tall stack of steaming pancakes before him, the hush, the wonder.

Antwone finally reaches for the plate to pull it closer. SUDDENLY, a loud cowbell is HEARD.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

BANG! A gun shot. We SEE in graphic detail, the back of a black teenage boy's head explodes at impact.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - BERTHING - ANTWONE'S RACK - MORNING

In a sweat and jolted from the dream, twenty-four-year-old Antwone jumps from his middle rack onto the floor of this confining space.

INT. HEAD (SHOWER ROOM) - MORNING

The head is steamy and crowded with nude, young, virile sailors. There is a row of toilet stalls across from a row of four shower stalls, where a short line of sailors wait their turn to shower.

PORK CHOP, a chubby, black man, who speaks with a southern accent, is standing at the front of the line, speaking to the occupant of the first shower.

PORK CHOP
Berkley!

BERKLEY (O.S.)
What?!

PORK CHOP
You've been in there ten minutes, man!

BERKLEY (O.S.)
Shut up!

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

PORK CHOP

Okay. One day the Chief, or somebody's gonna come in here and catch you taking Hollywood showers. I should snitch on you.

Petty Officer BERKLEY, a white sailor, steps from the stall and takes his towel from a hook.

BERKLEY

(pushing)

Get out of my way.

PORK CHOP

(pushing back)

You move.

Pork Chop steps into the shower and closes the shower curtain. Berkley steps away from the shower area drying himself and popping other sailors with his towel. KANSAS CITY, a twenty-three-year-old man, is in a stall showering o.s.

PORK CHOP (O.S.)

Kansas City!

KANSAS CITY (O.S.)

What's up?

PORK CHOP (O.S.)

What do you call Berkley driving through a black neighborhood.

Berkley snaps to attention at their joke. Antwone enters holding a towel tightly around his waist. He walks over to a counter which houses sinks, with mirrors above them.

KANSAS CITY (O.S.)

(laughing)

A trembling fool!

BERKLEY

Say something else. I'll put both of you on report.

Berkley continues horse playing, harassing others. SLIM, a slender, nineteen-year-old white man, exits a shower, makes his way to a sink next to Antwone and begins shaving.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2)

SLIM

Hey, Fish.

ANTWONE

Hey.

Antwone is wiping his face with astringent on a cotton ball. Some of the fibers of the cotton ball get caught on his whiskers. Berkley walks over to Antwone.

BERKLEY

(mocking)

What's cracking, Fisher?

ANTWONE

Your head if you don't get away from me.

BERKLEY

Wait a minute. What's that on your face.

ANTWONE

(wipes his face)

Cotton.

BERKLEY

(with a big smile)

What is with you people and cotton?

Berkley cocks his head, begins to speak. But we'll never know what he was going to say because the instant his lips start moving, Antwone DECKS him with a wicked right, jumps on top of him and in a flash has him by the neck, choking him hard. Slim and others try to break the grip, but no way.

ANTWONE

What you say?! Answer me! You can't talk?! Could it be because I'm squeezing the life from your dumb ass!

SLIM

(pulling at Antwone's grip)

Damn, Fish! Why you gotta fight all the time! Let him go.

A team of sailors move in and break Antwone's grip as Berkley gasps for air. As Antwone calms down the sailors release him.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (3)

Berkley is being helped to his feet, still gasping for air. Upon seeing him up, Antwone lunges at Berkley again.

7 INT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - ANCHOR ROOM - CAPTAINS MAST - DAY 7
- ON A HATCH

As it opens revealing Antwone, a third class petty officer dressed in full dress blue uniform. He steps through, followed by the Chief Master at arms. A voice is heard over the 1 MC.

VOICE OVER THE 1 MC
Captains Mast... Captains Mast...All
Mast reports, witnesses and Division
Officers concerned assemble on the
Foc'sle at this time. Maintain silence
about the decks.

The CAPTAIN is standing behind a podium.

CHIEF MASTER AT ARMS
Ship's Serviceman Third Class Fisher.
Front and Center. Hand. Salute.

Antwone approaches the podium and stands at attention.
The Master At Arms stands back to one side.

CHIEF MASTER AT ARMS
(cont'd)

Uncover...

Antwone puts his hands on his dixie cup (hat).

CHIEF MASTER AT ARMS
(cont'd)

Two!

Antwone removes his dixie cup and brings it to his side.
Others in attendance are standing in the appropriate
areas.

CAPTAIN
Petty Officer Fisher, you have been
accused of violating article 128,
assault on a superior, non-
commissioned officer. How do you
plead?

ANTWONE
Guilty.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN

During your six years of service, I see you've managed to rise from Seaman Recruit to Petty Officer Second Class. Drop down to Petty Officer Third Class, then to Seaman, and back up to Third Class. Now, here you are again. In your statement, you say your attack on Petty Officer Berkley was provoked by a racial slur. Is that correct?

ANTWONE

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN

Petty Officer Berkley, did you make any racial remarks to Petty Officer Fisher?

BERKLEY

No, sir!

ANTWONE

So you're a coward...

CHIEF MASTER AT ARMS

Stand at attention!

CAPTAIN

Stand at attention!

Antwone comes to attention facing the Captain.

CAPTAIN

This is the United States Navy, son!
(a few moments)
I find you guilty. Do you have anything to say?

ANTWONE

No, sir.

CAPTAIN

There will be a forfeiture of two hundred dollars for two months, you'll be restricted to the boundaries of the ship for a period of forty-five days and you'll perform forty-five days of extra duty.

(beat)

I am reducing you from ship's Serviceman Petty Officer Third Class to ship's Serviceman Seaman.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAPTAIN (cont'd)

I'm recommending that you be evaluated at the psychiatric clinic before our next underway period.

(beat)

Cover. Two. Hand. Salute.

CHIEF MASTER AT ARMS

About.

Antwone's feet move into position.

CHIEF MASTER AT ARMS

(cont'd)

-- Face! Dismissed.

8 INT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD -- OUTER PASSAGEWAY -- DAY

Antwone is exiting the anchor room through a hatch; Slim, Pork Chop and Kansas City, whom are waiting, walk with him down a passageway.

ANTWONE

Same ole, same ole. Got busted, extra duty, but I gotta go to the psych clinic this time.

PORK CHOP

You gotta go to the nut house! Give it up to the shrink? Daaaaaam, you're crazy!

ANTWONE

Shut up Farmer!

9 INT. NAVAL PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC - DAY

The waiting room. Antwone, taut. The RECEPTIONIST smiles at him: Just another minute or two, OK? He doesn't smile back.

DAVENPORT (O.S.)

Seaman Fisher.

The door to the office opens. LT. COMMANDER JEROME DAVENPORT, 40, black, self-possessed, trim in freshly pressed khakis, looks at Antwone without expression. Nods for him to enter.

10 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - DAY

Davenport takes a seat behind his work-piled-high desk, while Antwone lingers by the door. Cautious, wary, suspicious.

(CONTINUED)

DAVENPORT

Have a seat.

(looking at a folder)

I see this is not the first time
you've been here. You've seen Lt.
Commander Williams...

Antwone, by some shelves where files are stored,
textbooks stacked. Where a framed PHOTO of an attractive,
thoughtful black woman (40) stands out.

ANTWONE

No, he saw me. That your wife?

Davenport looks at Antwone. There's no menace or
hostility in his expression. Just all business and
boundaries.

DAVENPORT

Yes. Have a seat.

Antwone pauses, then drops into a chair in front of the
desk.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

So, I understand you like to fight?

ANTWONE

Only way some people learn.

DAVENPORT

Yes, but you pay the price for
teaching them.

Antwone shrugs. Davenport leans back in his chair.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Tell me about it.

ANTWONE

About what?

DAVENPORT

About what's bothering you.

ANTWONE

Why somethin' gotta be bothering me.

(beat)

Because I jumped on a white boy
something must be wrong with me. "Send
him to a psychiatrist. Nigga tried to
kill his master, he must be crazy!"

(CONTINUED)

TO CONTINUED: (2)

Davenport stands, comes around his desk toward Antwone. Who stands and moves away from him, always keeping a few feet of distance between them.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Are you looking for a discharge?

ANTWONE

I ain't looking for nothing.

DAVENPORT

That's where you're headed.

ANTWONE

If I want out of the Navy, I'll just leave.

DAVENPORT

Unauthorized absence?

ANTWONE

Yeah, if that's what the Navy calls it.

DAVENPORT

Is running away how you handle your problems?

ANTWONE

I don't have any problems.

DAVENPORT

Where are you from Fisher?

Antwone doesn't answer. Davenport studies him.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Where'd you spend childhood?

ANTWONE

(reluctantly)
Cleveland.

DAVENPORT

Do your parents still live there?

ANTWONE

I don't have any parents.

DAVENPORT

Are they deceased?

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (3)

ANTWONE
I never had no parents.

DAVENPORT
Well that would make you a medical
miracle. Where'd you come from?

ANTWONE
From under a rock.

Forceful, jarring. Antwone immediately clams up, as if
angry at himself that he's revealed anything personal to
this man. Davenport studies him for a moment, then
returns to his desk.

DAVENPORT
Week from today.

Antwone says nothing, watches Davenport write in his
calendar.

ANTWONE
I ain't coming back.

DAVENPORT
Why not?

ANTWONE
Because there's nothing wrong with me.

DAVENPORT
I agree, see the Receptionist on the
way out.

Antwone turns and exits.

11 INT. WAITING AREA - DAY MOMENTS LATER

11

There are two more sailors in the waiting area. Antwone
receives an appointment card from the Receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST
Next Wednesday at 1400.

He walks away down the hall.

12 INT. JUST OUTSIDE THE CLINIC DOOR - DAY

12

Antwone balls up the appointment card and throws it in a
trash can as he passes it.

*

13 INT. NAVY EXCHANGE (NAVY DEPARTMENT STORE) - LATER THAT DAY 13

The Exchange is bustling with sailors and marines. Antwone is selecting writing materials and, at the same time, glancing at CHERYL.

Cheryl is pretty and good natured. She is assigned duty at the Exchange. She's wearing the Navy's dungaree uniform.

Cheryl notices Antwone.

CHERYL

Logan. Derek Logan. That was the name of the last guy who stalked me.

ANTWONE

Hey Cheryl.

CHERYL

Hey you. Where've you been?

As she approaches, Antwone backs away, always keeping a two-foot space between them.

ANTWONE

I'm on restriction.

CHERYL

Again? How'd you get off the ship?

ANTWONE

I had to go over to the psych clinic...

CHERYL

Why?

ANTWONE

There's this Commander.

(trying to impress)

I'm working on this important, high priority paper for this Commander, at the clinic.

CHERYL

Oh really? What kind of paper?

ANTWONE

I'm not at liberty to say much more than that right now.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

CHERYL

Oh. I was going to invite you to a party.

ANTWONE

Me?

She moves closer.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

I'm on restriction. I...

She touches his arm. Overly nervous and shy, he accidentally drops his items. They both stoop to pick them up and Antwone begins fumbling around, collecting his articles.

CHERYL

Are you okay?

ANTWONE

I gotta get back to the ship, before they start looking for me.

Before Cheryl can respond, he stands and takes off jogging toward the cashier's counter.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

Damn!

CASHIER

Will this be all?

ANTWONE

Yeah.

He looks over and sees Cheryl standing in the same spot, holding what he left behind.

CHERYL

See you when you're off restriction.

ANTWONE

Alright.

A moment. Antwone watches her as she walks away.

DISSOLVE TO:

14 INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY
OMIT

14

15 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - DAY

15

Davenport on phone.

DAVENPORT
Send him in.

Antwone is hustled into office by SP's. Davenport looks up from his desk.

DAVENPORT
I thought you may have forgotten the way here, since you didn't make it last week, so I took the liberty of arranging an escort team for you.

ANTWONE
You may be able to make me come here, but you can't make me talk.

DAVENPORT
You're not going to talk to me?

ANTWONE
(to SP's)
What ya'll looking at?

DAVENPORT
Okay.

The SP's exit.

DAVENPORT
Let me lay this out for you, Son.

Davenport points to the mountain of files and work on his desk.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)
That's how many cases I've got...You understand me? I don't have time to waste.
(pause)
I have to make a recommendation based on three sessions with you. Your Captain wants to throw you out of the Navy. You know that?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

DAVENPORT (Cont'd)

You can come and sit here for an hour
and not talk if you want to. But our
sessions don't begin until you begin
talking.

ANTWONE

I've got nothing to say.

DAVENPORT

Then we'll sit until you do. We'll sit
here every week till the day I retire.
It doesn't matter to me. I got a lot
of work to catch up on.

ANTWONE

It don't matter to me either. What
about the brig? Send me to the brig.

DAVENPORT

(reading him)

No. You'll sit.

DISSOLVE TO:

Davenport hits the clock on his desk and the TICKING
begins. Davenport takes his seat behind the desk and
starts working.

TIME CUT TO:

16 DAVENPORT AND ANTWONE

16

The clock TICKS 3:00 PM.

DAVENPORT

What do you know, our time is up. See
you next week, 1400.

DISSOLVE TO:

17 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - DAY - FOLLOWING WEEK

17

In the dungaree uniform, Antwone is sitting across from
Davenport. Davenport, in tropical whites with shoulder
boards, is writing, catching up on his work. The CAMERA
moves in on the TICKING clock.

DISSOLVE TO:

18 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - DAY - FOLLOWING WEEK 18
The TICKING clock, just as Davenport's hand hits it.

DISSOLVE TO:

19 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - DAY - FOLLOWING WEEK 19
Davenport is working at his desk. Antwone is standing with his back against the door, scowling at Davenport. Davenport looks up and their eyes lock, staring. Davenport doesn't flinch; Antwone blinks and turns away. Davenport goes back to work.

DISSOLVE TO:

20 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - DAY - FOLLOWING WEEK 20
TICKING clock...the CAMERA pulls back and reveals Antwone in his tropical dress white uniform, sitting in front of his desk. Davenport is sitting behind the desk in his khaki uniform.

As Davenport does his paperwork, he HUMS softly as though he's enjoying himself. Antwone, however is looking increasingly fidgety and uncomfortable. Finally he CLEARS HIS THROAT. Davenport looks up at him expectantly.

DAVENPORT

What?

ANTWONE

I didn't say anything.

DAVENPORT

I thought you said something.

ANTWONE

No, I, I was just clearing my throat.

Davenport nods, returns to his paperwork. Antwone puts his fist to his mouth and COUGHS. Davenport looks up again.

DAVENPORT

Just coughing?

ANTWONE

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

DAVENPORT

Maybe you're coming down with something. Maybe you need some medicine.

ANTWONE

No, I'm alright. It's just ---

DAVENPORT

Its just what?

ANTWONE

It's just a waste of time sitting here week after week. I'm going crazy.

Davenport puts down his pen, leans back in his chair puts his hands behind his head, and looks at Antwone.

DAVENPORT

Well we don't want you going crazy.

It hangs there. Antwone, looking down, his mind whirring.

ANTWONE

...So what do you want me to say.

DAVENPORT

It's not what I want you to say. It's what you want to tell me.

Antwone considers. Looks away. There's silence. He looks back at Davenport. And---something releasing inside him--- he finally exhales.

ANTWONE

Maybe you could ask a question, I dunno, get things going...

DAVENPORT

I could do that.

(thinks a moment)

You said you came from under a rock. What did you mean by that?

ANTWONE

I don't know. It was the first thing to come to my mind. What do you think it means?

DAVENPORT

Being in the dark. Maybe you feel under pressure.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (2)

DAVENPORT (cont'd)
It could mean that you feel alone. You
said you had no parents.

ANTWONE
I had parents.

DAVENPORT
Okay...

Antwone is very quiet, very still, then ---

ANTWONE
They called my father Edward.

DAVENPORT
(taken off guard)
So you knew him?

ANTWONE
No. I don't even know his last name.

DAVENPORT
Do you know where he is?

ANTWONE
Yeah, I know where he is.

SMASH CUT TO:

21 EXT. APARTMENT - DAY - CLEVELAND 1976

21

A tall strongly-built BLACK MAN knocks on a door. Then
once more. Then raising his arm knocks again when ---
BLAAMM!! ---a shotgun blast blows him away. Almost
cutting him in two.

22 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - DAY

22

ANTWONE
He went to his ex-girlfriend's parents
house where she was living with their
two kids. They got into an argument
and she killed my father. She was
nineteen.
(pause)
He was twenty-three.

Davenport, professional, showing no emotion, waiting.
Antwone stares past him, says nothing.

DAVENPORT
Where was your mother when this
happened?

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

Behind bars. She was eighteen.

(beat)

I was born in prison. Two months after
my father was murdered.

DAVENPORT

Why was she confined?

ANTWONE

I don't know. All I know about her is
what I told you.

DAVENPORT

They gave you over to the state.

ANTWONE

Yep. The state placed me in an
orphanage. It was supposed to be until
my mother got out to claim me. She got
out.

(quietly)

But she never claimed me.

DAVENPORT

How long were you there?

ANTWONE

Two years.

DAVENPORT

How does all that make you feel?

ANTWONE

I don't know.

DAVENPORT

It must make you feel something.

ANTWONE

I feel like they were all cloudy
disappointing times for everybody.

(pause)

Just rainy days.

DAVENPORT

Rainy days?

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

ANTWONE

You know in Cleveland it rains. Not all the time, but to a kid who wants to go out and play, it seems like it rains everyday.

(pause)

Kids expect it to rain sometimes. But for one kid it just rained too much.

(pause)

You understand?

Davenport is taken aback by Antwone's analogy and sits quietly. Then the clock sounds, Antwone smiles and stands.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

You wanna see me next week?

DAVENPORT

Yeah. Yeah, next week.

Antwone pauses and begins to exit.

DAVENPORT

You ever think about finding her? Your mother?

ANTWONE

(raw, from the gut)

No!

DAVENPORT.

Okay. I'll see you next week.

Antwone pauses then exits.

23 INT. DAVENPORT'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

23

The dining room where BERTA DAVENPORT---even more lovely than the photograph suggested---passes a plate to Davenport. Smiles as she does. He smiles back, though his eyes do not meet hers.

BERTA

...Busy day?

DAVENPORT

(shrugging)

No more than usual.

Berta waits to see if he'll elaborate. When he doesn't, she begins to eat as well. A moment passes.

(CONTINUED)

23

CONTINUED:

BERTA

Tomatoes straight from our garden.

DAVENPORT

(nodding)

They're good.

BERTA

Much better than last year's.

(beat)

I'm no green thumb or anything, but
who knows, maybe I'm learning...

Davenport nods again but doesn't respond, focused
entirely on his food. Berta smiles awkwardly, picks up
her fork again.

DAVENPORT

(suddenly)

Yeah, they're very good.

Berta brightens, turns toward him. But there's no opening
here; the smile he gives is short and sweet before he
looks away once more. The silence returns, endures, until--

24

INT. REV. TATE'S STOREFRONT CHURCH (CLEVELAND 1984) - 24
PULPIT - DAY

The bald REVEREND is giving a heated, theatrical sermon.
He has a large, electric guitar strapped to his chest and
a microphone clipped to his lapel.

There is a glass pitcher of grape Kool-Aid on the tray
next to the podium with a glass half full.

Foster siblings DWIGHT (8), KEITH (10), Antwone (7) are
reluctantly clapping. MRS. TATE, COUSIN NADINE (25), is
beating a tambourine and a blind piano player plays the
piano.

Mrs. Tate, Antwone's foster mother, is hitting a big bass
drum that sits at the side of her seat.

Everyone participates in a way that heightens the drama
of the Reverend's sermonizing.

REV. TATE

(huffs and puffs)

I don't know psychology! I don't know
anthropology!

(claps his hands)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED).

24 CONTINUED:

REV. TATE (cont'd)

I don't know astrology!

(claps his hands after each
subject)

I don't know zoology!

(huffs and puffs)

But I khhnnnoooooowww this, Jeeesssus!,

Jeeesssus!, Jeeesssus!

Jeeeeeeeeeesus!

(claps his hands)

Is the almighty! Prince of peace! Lily
of the valley! The bright and morning
star! I heard they took him up on
Calvary...

ANTWONE (V.O.)

When I was two, I was placed in the
Tate foster home. Mr. Tate was a fire
breathing preacher. He had his own
storefront church.The Reverend SUDDENLY catches the Holy Ghost, jumping and
shouting and the HOLY GHOST MUSIC begins.

ANTWONE (V.O.) (cont'd)

There were only a few members: Mrs.
Tate, Cousin Nadine, a blind piano
player...

ON MRS. TATE

as she SUDDENLY catches the Holy Ghost jumping and
shouting.

WIDE ON THE CONGREGATION

ANTWONE (V.O.) (cont'd)

...me, my foster brothers, Dwight and
Keith. Keith was half white.

(pause)

It was church three times on Sunday,
Bible study on Tuesday, Y.P.W.W.
meetings on Thursday and choir
rehearsal on Friday.Then like wild fire, one by one, each member catches the
Holy Ghost, jumping and shouting just like the Reverend.

ANTWONE (V.O.) (cont'd)

We found out that if we caught the
Holy Ghost in front of Mrs. Tate she'd
give us vanilla wafers after church.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (2)

ANTWONE (cont'd)

(pause)

So we'd catch it every Sunday.

We SEE Antwone, Dwight, and Keith, jumping and shouting
up a storm.

END FLASHBACK

25 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - DAY - FOLLOWING WEEK

25

ANTWONE

Mr. Tate didn't like Dwight at all. He
said he had too much pride. So he
tried to beat it out of him. Sometimes
it seemed like...like he was trying to
beat him to death.

Davenport looks on as Antwone is quiet for a moment.

DAVENPORT

Did he beat you?

ANTWONE

No. I think he pitied me, and I liked
him for it. But I was ashamed of him.

DAVENPORT

Why?

ANTWONE

Maybe because he was so old. Maybe
because I knew he wasn't my real
father or maybe because he was
baldheaded. I don't know. I do know I
never wanted to be like him though. I
knew that.

A few moments pass.

DAVENPORT

Tell me about Mrs. Tate.

ANTWONE

(eyes jolt up at Davenport)

Huh?

MRS. TATE (V.O.)

I don't know which of you no good,
rotten, hard headed niggas...

FLASHBACK TO:

26 INT. TATE HOUSE - BASEMENT - DEEP SINK - DAY

26

The sound of water pouring from the faucet into the sink is HEARD as we SEE Mrs. Tate's hands soak and wring a hand towel.

MRS. TATE

...Put your dirty hands on my walls,
but I bet I'll get the right one!

She moves over to Antwone and Dwight who are tied to a stanchion with their hands behind their backs. They scream in pain as Mrs. Tate fusses, WHIPPING them with the wet towel.

MRS. TATE (cont'd)

I took you niggas in when your no
account mammies threw you away. Now
this is the thanks I get!

She continues whipping them.

ANTWONE (V.O.)

She beat us so often I learned how to
separate my mind from the physical
pain, so it wouldn't hurt so much.

Dwight SCREAMS as Antwone slumps over unconscious.

MRS. TATE (O.S.)

Now! I know I got the right one!

END FLASHBACK

27 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - DAY

27

Antwone is standing at the window, still maintaining a four foot distance between them.

ANTWONE

She would brag about beating me
unconscious and threaten to do it
again. But she never did.

DAVENPORT

Why do you think it never happened
again?

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE
I think it scared her...but she found
a new way to get me.

FLASHBACK TO:

28 INT. TATE HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

Child Antwone is tied with his hands behind his back to the furnace. Mrs. Tate is beating him with a flaming rolled newspaper. He's shrilling in terror.

MRS. TATE
So nigga, you like fire?!

ANTWONE
No Mu-Deah, no mu-deah! I don't like
no fire. No ma'am, I don't even like
it!

MRS. TATE
Stay away from things that don't
belong to you, you ungrateful nigga!

Mrs. Tate walks away LAUGHING, leaving Antwone on the floor screaming.

END FLASHBACK

29 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - DAY

Antwone is sitting; Davenport is standing.

ANTWONE
It didn't hurt, it just terrified me
really bad. I would scream until my
voice was gone. I tried everything I
could to get her to like me. But
nothing ever worked.

DAVENPORT
Were you the youngest of the foster
children?

ANTWONE
No. My foster brother, Dwight, was the
youngest.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE (cont'd)

I was in the middle and Keith was the oldest. Mrs. Tate put us against each other so much, we started hating each other, but I think deep down inside we really hated ourselves.

(pause)

Because Keith was half white, my foster mother would compare him to me and Dwight. Like his hair was good, our hair was bad. She spoke as if Keith was better because his father was white.

(ashamed)

I wished I was Keith.

Davenport takes his seat.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

But not even Keith could escape being called a Nigga. She hardly used our names. She called us Nigga so often we could tell which one of us she was talking to by the tone she used when she said the word Nigga.

DAVENPORT

(a few moments)

Where are Dwight and Keith now?

ANTWONE

Dwight's in Lucasville State Penitentiary. I don't know what happened to Keith. I also had a foster brother David, when his mother took him back one of her men friends raped him.

DAVENPORT

Did what happened to David ever happen to you?

ANTWONE

Hell no!

Explosive, charged. Davenport nods, registering the ferocity of Antwone's reaction, decides not to press it.

DAVENPORT

Was your foster mother ever nice to you?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (2)

ANTWONE

Yeah, there were times, days, weeks even. Sometimes she'd take us to the park, an occasional drive to Lake Erie. Sometimes, she would even tell her friends we were good kids and how proud she was of us. 'Chummy Time'.

DAVENPORT

'Chummy Time'?

ANTWONE

Yeah. It got to where I could tell what kind of day it was going to be by the scent in the air when I awoke in the morning.

DAVENPORT

How could you do that?

ANTWONE

If I awoke and there was the smell of grits and eggs or the scent of water steaming off the pavement as she hosed down the driveway, I knew I had to look out all day. But if there was the smell of pancakes, I knew I was going to be okay.

DAVENPORT

Did she make pancakes very often?

ANTWONE

(emphatically)

No.

Antwone drifts to a place that only he knows. Davenport looks at the clock and it SOUNDS.

DAVENPORT

I can delay my next appointment if you want to talk some more.

ANTWONE

(stands and walks to the door)

No. I'm gone.

Antwone pauses, then turns to Davenport.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (3)

ANTWONE (cont'd)

Um, I'm still on restriction, but I was wondering if you could talk to the R.O. about letting me go to my Japanese language class.

DAVENPORT

You're studying Japanese?

ANTWONE

Yes, sir.

Davenport stands, smiles, and joins Antwone at the door.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

I'm being all I can be in the Navy!

DAVENPORT

I'll look into it.

ANTWONE

Yes, sir!

Davenport opens the door and walks Antwone into the lobby.

DISSOLVE TO:

30

INT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - BERTHING - NIGHT

30

The lights are out and a few sailors, including GRAYSON, twenty-one, are preparing for bed. Quiet talking is HEARD. We SEE Slim lying in his rack with his light on, reading a letter.

GRAYSON

Hey, Slim.

SLIM

What?

GRAYSON

You're going on leave next month?

SLIM

Yeah, I have to catch up on my stalking.

GRAYSON

When I get leave, I'll be like a vampire coming to town with his coffin. Just a place to lay down before I get down!

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

PORK CHOP
Shut up! People are trying to sleep.

SLIM
You shut your grouchy ass up!

GRAYSON
When are you going home Pork Chop?

PORK CHOP
When your momma quits tripping and
sends me my money.

Grayson swings his pillow at Pork Chop and they all
LAUGH, but Antwone, intent on his sketch, doesn't seem to
be aware of them. We SEE what he is drawing.

INSERT - A GRASSHOPPER ON A WEED

SLIM (O.S.)
What about you Fish? Fish? When are
you going home?
(fading)

The drawing is intensely detailed and has the hyper real
quality of a hallucination.

FLASHBACK TO:

31 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS (CLEVELAND 1986) - DAY

31

In sunny ninety degree weather, (Small) Antwone, JESSE,
and their overweight friend, KENNY, are capturing
grasshoppers in tall weeds that extend for miles along
the railroad tracks.

ANTWONE (V.O.)
Last night, I had a dream about Jesse.

DAVENPORT (V.O.)
Who is Jesse?

ANTWONE (V.O.)
He was my best friend. When I wasn't
at home, I was probably wherever Jesse
was for three reasons. One was because
being his friend, he wouldn't beat me
up. The other reasons were, so he
wouldn't beat me up...and I liked him
a whole lot.

Jesse screws the top onto his jar of grasshoppers.

(CONTINUED)

Antwone sees a lone grasshopper, he stoops and with one quick swipe he catches the insect, unscrews the top off the jar, and places the insect inside.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

Hey Jesse! Jesse!

Antwone runs over to Jesse who is vigorously shaking his jar of grasshoppers. We SEE Kenny in the short distance, standing on the railroad examining his jar of insects. Antwone reaches Jesse.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

Look. Look, I got five.

JESSE

I got five too.

ANTWONE

(looking through the jar)

Oooohhh.

The heads turn towards Kenny whose back is to them. They look at each other devilishly, then take the tops off their jars. Antwone pours his into Jesse's. Antwone drops his jar and runs into the weeds.

ANTWONE (V.O.) (cont'd)

We used to drive our fat friend,
Kenny, crazy. Kenny hung around me for
the same reasons I hung around Jesse.

The sound of Antwone running through the weeds is HEARD. He runs just beyond where Kenny is still examining his insects and emerges from the weeds.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

Ooooh, Ooooh, Kenny. Kenny let me see.

KENNY

Come look. Where's Jesse?

Antwone moves in closer while Jesse sneaks up behind Kenny, pulls his shirt collar back and empties the entire jar of grasshoppers down his back. Kenny begins hopping like a rabbit, pulling and tugging at his shirt, screaming. Antwone and Jesse LAUGH hysterically.

ANTWONE

Hey Kenny! What's wrong?

31 CONTINUED: (2)

Kenny takes off down the railroad tracks like a runaway freight train. Antwone cups his hands around his mouth and YELLS.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

Kenny! Don't forget to write!

Jesse and Antwone continue LAUGHING.

ANTWONE (V.O.)

Mrs. Tate hated Jesse. She hated seeing us together even more, but for years she couldn't keep us apart. I was so happy when she kicked me out.

FLASHBACK TO:

32 INT. TATE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - (CLEVELAND 1991) DAY 32

Young teenage Antwone is watching television. He wears a very neat Afro hair style. Mrs. Tate bursts into the room and just stands inside.

MRS. TATE

'Twony! That hoodlum nigga Jesse come by here looking for you! Said y'all was going to the picture show! That's the devil carrying on. And who told you, you could go to the show anyhow?! Where you get the money nigga?! Did you steal it?!

ANTWONE

I raked Mrs. Moore's and Mrs. Jones' lawns.

MRS. TATE

Well, you would've stole it. Give me that money. You don't know what to do with money no how. That's why I never let you have none.

ANTWONE

(angry)

Why you always got to make things difficult for me?

MRS. TATE

Difficult! Difficult, where you learning them fancy words like that at?!

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

Fancy? That ain't no fancy...

MRS. TATE

Don't you sassy me!

Mrs. Tate removes her shoe, moves over to Antwone and begins beating him with it. He shrugs his shoulders, puts his arms over his head and face, then snatches the shoe.

ANTWONE

I'm not gonna let you beat me no more!

Stunned, she pauses a moment, then runs from the room. We stay on Antwone.

MRS. TATE (O.S.)

Lord Jesus! I want you out of my house! You think somebody's gonna take you in?! You retarded nigga, don't nobody want you! Your damn mammy didn't even want you!

FLASHBACK TO:

33 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - DAY - FOLLOWING WEEK

33

Davenport is seated, Antwone is at the window, gazing out.

DAVENPORT

You must have felt pretty good when you took the shoe from her?

ANTWONE

Yea...my first thought was to go up side her head with it...but I chilled.

DAVENPORT

Why did you chill?

ANTWONE

I don't know.

DAVENPORT

How did it make you feel to see her run from you?

ANTWONE

I felt like I won a prize. But in a way it scared me.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

DAVENPORT

Why?

ANTWONE

It was the first time I felt more powerful than her. It surprised me.

DAVENPORT

What happened to Jesse?

Antwone stares at him poker-faced for a moment. Then shrugs.

ANTWONE

No idea. Lost touch.

(beat)

You know how it is.

Davenport stands and walks to the bookshelf and selects "THE SLAVE COMMUNITY". Then walks over to Antwone.

DAVENPORT

It might be helpful to understand the mentality of people like the Tates. It's called "The Slave Community".

ANTWONE

What does that got to do with them beating my ass?

DAVENPORT

What you went through was in part because of the treatment slaves received from their masters, and then passed down to their own children, generation to generation.

ANTWONE

All that's just excuses! I was just a kid, why you takin' up for them?

DAVENPORT

I'm not saying that what they did was right. We all have choices. They made the wrong ones.

ANTWONE

Well...we can talk about it next time.

(CONTINUED)

DAVENPORT

This is it, Fisher. We won't be meeting after today.

Antwone freezes, stunned, stares at him.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Three sessions, remember? That's all I'm given to make my recommendation.

(extending his hand)

One which I can tell you I'll be making in your favor.

Antwone looks at the hand for a beat before shaking it.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

That is what you want, isn't it? To stay in the Navy.

ANTWONE

(barely audible)

...Yes.

DAVENPORT

OK then. Now you were sent to me because you have an anger problem. Well, you've had a lot to be angry about. But you got to channel it constructively. Hit the gym, pound the bag, work the weights. Don't let that anger defeat you---it can be your ally. Understand? Ummm?

Antwone, head down, expression averted nods imperceptibly.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

OK. Good luck. Stay out of trouble.

Davenport reaches for a file on his desk as Antwone starts to exit, then hesitates. Davenport notices, looks over at him.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Is there something else?

There's a beat. Then Antwone shakes his head and is gone.

34 EXT. FRONT OF THE PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC - DAY - A MINUTE LATER 34

There are a few sailors walking along the sidewalk. Then Cheryl walks into view.

Suddenly Antwone bursts through the door aggravated and walks down the walkway to the sidewalk toward Cheryl. She gets sight of him and smiles as he approaches.

CHERYL
Antwone! How are you doing?

ANTWONE
(short)
I'm cool.

CHERYL
You don't seem cool. What's wrong?

ANTWONE
Nothing.

CHERYL
(looking at the clinic then Antwone)
What are you doing in there? Still working on that paper?

ANTWONE
No. I finished. I just took a short cut through there.

CHERYL
Where you going?
ANTWONE
Sorry, Cheryl, I gotta go.

CHERYL
You gotta go?

ANTWONE
(backing away)
Yeah, I'm sorry.

Antwone swallows hard turns and walks away, then takes off running. Cheryl looks on concerned.

35 EXT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - FLIGHT DECK - DAY 35

Antwone, Grayson, Pork Chop and Slim are walking.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

GRAYSON

I want to know how all three of you
wound up on restriction at the same
time?

SLIM

Rolling dice with your momma!

Everyone LAUGHS except Antwone and Grayson.

GRAYSON

Why y'all always talking about
somebody's momma?

PORK CHOP

We ain't talking about somebody's
momma. We talkin' about your momma!

GRAYSON

Hey Fish! Fish! I bet you won't be
fightin' no more honkies on this boat.

PORK CHOP

This ain't no boat, this a ship!

GRAYSON

Duuu, dis' a ship, you country ass
negro, who let you in the Navy?

PORK CHOP

Your sister let me in. Again and
again.

GRAYSON

You backwoods country stick fishin'
bumpkin'. No one would ever guess this
corn fed, corn huskin' pork rib tip
eatin' dixie land whistlin' negro, was
as much of a world traveler as he is.

Antwone glances at Grayson.

GRAYSON (cont'd)

Hey! Hey! Look-uh Fish! Everytime I
see this brother today, he readin'
that book. Fish! What's that book you
readin'?

Antwone looks at Grayson.

GRAYSON (cont'd)

Let me see the cover.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED (2)

Antwone shows the cover.

GRAYSON (cont'd)
The slave community? What you readin'
that shit for?

ANTWONE
Because I want to.

GRAYSON
This ain't no slave ship! And deez'
ain't no slavery dayz!

Everyone LAUGHS except Antwone.

ANTWONE
I can't tell. You buck dancin' Uncle
Tom. Yuh' part time brother! You
always talkin' shit. What I do don't
have nuthin' to do with you, so why
you in my business? One day you try to
hang wit' the brothers, the next day
ya' grinnin' up in white folks face,
shufflin' and carryin' on. Dickhead.

SLIM
Come on y'all. Chill out!

Pork Chop and Slim stand between Antwone and Grayson and
pull them apart.

ANTWONE
(pushing past them)
Get off me! Forget all you punks!

36 INT. PSYCHIATRIC WAITING AREA - A LITTLE LATER - DAY 36

The receptionist is seated at her desk. There are a few
SAILORS and MARINES seated in the seats provided.

Davenport's office door opens and SAILOR #1 steps out
followed by Davenport. Davenport approaches the
receptionist.

DAVENPORT
Who's next?

The receptionist looks at Davenport as if there's
trouble, then Davenport's eyes follows hers as she looks
to Antwone who is seated in the waiting area. Sailor #1
walks by Antwone.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

(to Sailor #1)

On your way to the gym to hit the
punchin' bag huh, Man? That's what the
good doctor's prescribin' ain't it?

(pause)

That's right, get your healin' on.

(turning to Davenport)

Like that shit got some healin' power!

(turning back to Sailor #1)

Don't forget to wrap them hands,
Sailor!

ON DAVENPORT AND THE RECEPTIONIST

The receptionist moves to dial. Davenport shakes his head
"no".

BACK ON ANTWONE

Sailor #1 moves to the exit as a CROWD gathers. Antwone
picks another SAILOR seated, waiting to see Davenport.

ANTWONE

What you here for, Man? Come on now,
speak the hell up and make it snappy!
'Cause, you only got three visits
comin'!

Antwone picks a SAILOR from the crowd.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

What you lookin' at?! You need a
healin' too?!

(to everyone in the room)

They ain't got time for all of our
crazy asses! Some of y'all come back
after workin' hours...

Imitating Mr. Tate with his arms outstretched.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

...when the Commander will be laying
on of hands.

(gradually moving over to
Davenport)

But hold on, wait a minute, they just
might have a book in there, that has
the answers to all your questions, all
your problems!

(standing in front of
Davenport)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

ANTWONE (cont'd)
Ain't that right Commander, that's
right, ain't it? *

DAVENPORT
You finished?

ANTWONE
Thought I was just gettin' started.

DAVENPORT
Would you like to step into my office.
Davenport closes the door. They stand face to face.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)
Must have slipped your mind. You're in
the United States Navy, you're
addressing a superior officer.

ANTWONE
I messed up, didn't I.

DAVENPORT
You better believe you did---

ANTWONE
(breaking in)
No. I mean I messed up big when I
talked to you.

Which throws Davenport back. Antwone, the rage expended,
now hushed in tone, almost haunted. The shift is
wrenching.

ANTWONE (cont'd)
Three sessions, yeah. I know. Can't be
flouting regulations. Not a man like
you. Run em in, run em out.

DAVENPORT
That's not the way it is.

ANTWONE
No? No?

He stands there, staring Davenport down, giving him a
chance to explain how it is. Waiting. But Davenport just
swallows.

Antwone moves closer, looks directly into Davenport's
eyes.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (3)

36

ANTWONE (cont'd)
 (intense, sotto voce)
 Well what do I do now, Commander? Can
 you tell me? Can you? Because-I-don't-
 know-what-to-do.

Davenport, unmoving, unable to take his eyes from
 Antwone.

ANTWONE (cont'd)
 (eyes welling up)
 I don't know what to do.

An excruciating beat, unbroken till the same two SP's rap
 hard on the door. In a moment Davenport goes to open it.

SP #1
 (while eyeing Antwone)
 Everything in order, sir?

DAVENPORT
 Yes, thank you, no problem at all,
 just---

ANTWONE
 (eyes cast down)
 I got to go.

Antwone presses by the SP's and Davenport, who watches
 him till he's gone from view. Who now turns back to the
 cops, working hard to show no impact.

DAVENPORT
 Everything's fine.

37 INT. DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

37

At his desk, deep in thought. Distracted only when he
 hears Berta walking past his slightly open door. He
 pushes it open further, sees her stop on the stairs and
 look back at him.

DAVENPORT
 Tired?
 (Berta nods)
 Long day, hunh?

BERTA
 Not complaining.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

Davenport nods; he knows. A beat as Berta seems to wait to see if he'll say more. When he doesn't, she begins again to climb the stairs.

DAVENPORT

Don't bother waiting up, probably be here for awhile. You know, work stuff...

BERTA

(nodding again)

I know.

She disappears. Davenport replaces the door as it was. Returns to his thoughts.

38 EXT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

38

OMIT

A39 INT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - BERTHING - DAY

A39

Antwone, Slim and Pork Chop are changing into civilian clothes.

SLIM

Man, it feels good to be off restriction for a change.

PORK CHOP

Oh, I'm going to be squared away from now on.

ANTWONE

You guys need anything from the Exchange?

SLIM

What's up with you and the Exchange? You spend more time there than you do on restriction!

PORK CHOP

Yeah. What are you? Some kind of shop-a-holic?!

ANTWONE

I asked you guys because I'm trying to be a good shipmate. Later.

SLIM

We're just kidding!

(CONTINUED)

A39 CONTINUED:

PORK CHOP

Yeah, bring me back, uh, some
Skittles!

ANTWONE

(all in fun)

No, ~~forget~~ it. I'm not bringing you
nothing!

39 INT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD -BERTHING - LATER - DAY

39

Davenport walks up, with a book in hand.

ANTWONE

What are you doing here?

VOICE OVER THE 1 MC
Liberty call, liberty call.
Liberty call commences for
duty sections one,
two, four, and five to
expire on Board at 0730.
(pause)
Now liberty call!

DAVENPORT

I was in the area. When I noticed your
ship.

ANTWONE

You just noticed this big ol' ship
moored alongside the pier, huh?

DAVENPORT

That's right. Let's see you back in my
office on Wednesday. After knockoff.
That stays between you and me, okay?
That is, if you want to continue.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE
Well, I have to check my calendar.

DAVENPORT
(softly)
You let me know OK?

Antwone watches as Davenport turns and exits the
berthing.

DISSOLVE TO:

40 EXT. NAVAL STATION - PIER - DAY
OMIT

40

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

41 EXT. NAVY EXCHANGE - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

41

The front entrance is busy with sailors, marines, and Navy dependants exiting the Exchange. Antwone is hanging around in front. Then he sees Cheryl exiting and takes off toward her.

ANTWONE
(as if merely bumping into
her)
Cheryl!

CHERYL
Where are you going?

ANTWONE
I have to pick something up.

CHERYL
The Exchange is closed.

ANTWONE
Oh it is?

CHERYL
Yeah.
(looking him up and down)
You finally off restriction?

ANTWONE
Yeah finally.

CHERYL
So that means we can hang out?

ANTWONE
Uh...yeah.

CHERYL
How about right now? I'm off.

(CONTINUED)

ANTWONE

(trapped)

Uhhhh, I can't just go right now I,
um, promised somebody I'd meet them,
like in a --- few minutes.

CHERYL

What's her name?

ANTWONE

No, its nothing like that.

CHERYL

What about tomorrow?

ANTWONE

How about the day after tomorrow?
Wednesday, after knockoff. That would
probably be better for me.

CHERYL

Okay. I'll meet you in the lobby of
the female barracks; around eighteen
hundred.

Antwone stands speechless, stunned.

CHERYL

Are you alright?

ANTWONE

Yeah...day after tomorrow. Eighteen
hundred.

CHERYL

(with a sweet smile)

That's a date.

ANTWONE

Okay.

Antwone turns and casually jogs away, then takes off
running.

DISSOLVE TO:

42 INT. DAVENPORT'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER

42

ANTWONE

Before we start...can I ask you a
question?

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

DAVENPORT

Of course.

ANTWONE

(forcing it out)

Is it possible for someone's who's had problems their whole life...to not stay like that. To not be that way forever.

(directly to him)

Do you think that's possible?

DAVENPORT

...Yes. I do. Absolutely.

Antwone studies Davenport's expression for any signs of doubt. Then, finding none, he relaxes. Not completely, but some.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Why do you ask?

ANTWONE

No reason.

Davenport waits, holding his fire, intuiting an imminent break in Antwone's reserve. In a moment it comes.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

...Just if, you know, one day you kinda meet somebody, I mean you got no shot if you're...you know...you follow me.

DAVENPORT

I follow you. Who is she?

Antwone, careful to cover any and all tracks. While Davenport labors to smother the spread of a knowing smile.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

...So who is she?

ANTWONE

(busted)

Oh, man....

DAVENPORT

What's her name?

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (2)

ANTWONE

She works at the Exchange. There's something about her.

DAVENPORT

Have you spoken to her yet?

ANTWONE

Barely. I get all tied up the moment she comes close to me.

DAVENPORT

Everyone's awkward at first.

ANTWONE

Not like this. Not like I am.

DAVENPORT

Believe me. Everybody.

ANTWONE

Even you?

Davenport cocks an eye at how fast Antwone's dealt this.

DAVENPORT

Everybody! So...

ANTWONE

So we're hooking up tonight.

DAVENPORT

Good!

ANTWONE

We were supposed to go out a couple of days ago but I wanted to take my time so I could clear my head, so I can think things through...

(a beat, then the quiet confession)

So I could talk to you first.

Davenport, surprised at the impact these few words have upon him, yet---ever the professional---retaining a poker face as Antwone finally sits down across from him. Eager, intent.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

So what should I do?

(CONTINUED)

DAVENPORT
About what?

ANTWONE
About Cheryl!

Davenport smiles to himself, rubs his jaw thoughtfully.

DAVENPORT
Well, we could role play.

ANTWONE
What?

DAVENPORT
Sometimes it helps. To take away
anxiety about a future meeting. To
show there's nothing to worry about.

ANTWONE
(beyond skeptical)
Role play...?

DAVENPORT
Yes. You play yourself, I'll take
Cheryl. Ready? You start.

A classic expression on Antwone's face. One part
interest, one part fear, ten parts you-have-got-to-be-
kidding-me.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)
(reading him)
All right then. I'll go first.
(claps his hand: I am now
Cheryl)
So...how you doing?

ANTWONE
(finally)
...OK.

Davenport, waiting for more. Not receiving it. He presses
on.

DAVENPORT
Uh, so, uh, where should we go?

ANTWONE
(resisting still)
...I dunno.

DAVENPORT
I'm kinda hungry. You?

ANTWONE
(grudging)
...I could eat.

Davenport, knowing he's running into a wall, but refusing to let Antwone derail him, refusing to let go of his role. A spirited, humorous contest of wills now.

DAVENPORT
Quite a conversationalist, aren't you.

ANTWONE
- That's what people say.

DAVENPORT
A regular chatterbox.

ANTWONE
You just got me all tongue-tied.

DAVENPORT
Come on.

ANTWONE
I just don't believe it.

DAVENPORT
What.

ANTWONE
(bursting)
That they ever let you into med school! Owwww!

DAVENPORT
Okay, you got me.

ANTWONE
(still rollicking)
Sorry, I'm sorry...but that bad boy was sitting right there in front of me.

DAVENPORT
Just couldn't help yourself.

42 CONTINUED: (5)

ANTWONE
(settling down now)
No disrespect, but that is some
raggedy game you selling there.

DAVENPORT
(all innocence)
You think so?

ANTWONE
Yeah! It's not even close to the way
it would be with me and her.

DAVENPORT
So you wouldn't just sit there and
grunt, like you just did with me.

ANTWONE
Hell no! I'd be lively, I'd be
charmin', I'd be cool.

DAVENPORT
You're sure.

ANTWONE
Yes I'm sure!

DAVENPORT
Sounds like you're ready to go.

ANTWONE
No thanks to you. What.
(Davenport is silent)
What?

Davenport snaps to, looks back at Antwone. Masterful
here.

DAVENPORT
Nothing. Just have a good time
tonight. Just in case you have any
questions, I mean any questions at
all, get to a phone and call me. No
matter what time it is.

ANTWONE
It ain't that serious.

DAVENPORT
You never know. Sometimes things can
escalate.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (6)

ANTWONE
Escalate into what?

DAVENPORT
Well my wife and I escalated into
marriage.

ANTWONE
(taken aback)
Really?

DAVENPORT
(with a grin)
Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

43 EXT. SEASIDE - DUSK

CHERYL
It's all gone crazy, hunh. "Two
coffees? That'll be sixty one dollars,
please"...Of course what do we care,
with all the cash we're making. That's
why I joined: see the world, build a
fortune. I don't know what to do with
all the money I got...

They share a gentle laugh. Cheryl sips her drink, eyes
him, her expression now deepening.

CHERYL (cont'd)
So tell me, why did you enlist, I mean
for real.

Antwone looks at her, looks down, smiles, shrugs. Ducks
it.

ANTWONE
How about you?

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

CHERYL

Never any doubt with me. My father's a Navy man, Vietnam vet, his boys gonna grow up, join and serve just like he did...only one little problem. He didn't have any boys.

ANTWONE

So you...

CHERYL

(nodding)

So I.

They lock eyes, another soft laugh.

CHERYL (cont'd)

It's worth it, you know? Even if I hated the Navy, which I don't.

(thoughtfully)

It's worth it just to see his eyes, the way they shine when he sees me in that uniform.

ANTWONE

...So you're close, you and him.

CHERYL

Yeah. We're close. I can't wait until Thanksgiving. It'll be nice to get home.

It hangs there for a moment...

CHERYL (cont'd)

You going to go home and see your family too?

ANTWONE

(lying)

Yeah.

A beat as Cheryl looks at him, as Antwone tries not to writhe in the silence he has left there. Then she smiles.

CHERYL

You know I'm sorta hungry.

ANTWONE

I could eat.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (2)

CHERYL

What?

ANTWONE

Nothing, let's roll.

Then Antwone stiffens as it hits him: An almost word-for-word replication of his role-play session.

44

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

location - # of extras?

44

Inexpensive, bolsterous. A booth. The comfort level growing:

ANTWONE

Some days it's an effort just to tie your shoes...but others? I mean like I could bust, you know? Like I'll never have the time for all the things I want to do.

CHERYL

Tell me.

ANTWONE

Paint. Write. Teach. Speak every language in the world.

CHERYL

My mother was my teacher.

ANTWONE

Yeah? I get so filled up sometimes, all these dreams knocking up against each other, going "me, me, me" all pressing on my head at once.

Antwone stops, smiles at her. You know what I'm saying? She nods, smiles back at him. Yes I do. A moment, then:

CHERYL

It's funny. I mean it's nice.
(he doesn't follow)
What happens when you smile.
(she gazes up at him)

ANTWONE

What's wrong with my grill?

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

CHERYL

One side curls up higher than the other. Did you know that?

Antwone shrugs, smiles again in spite of himself. Giving her fresh evidence to examine.

CHERYL (cont'd)

There it is. Oh, don't hide it.

Antwone takes away the hand he playfully covered his mouth with. She nods. Her eyes. He wonders at the way they seem to sear right into him. Through him. Suddenly a powerful moment.

CHERYL (cont'd)

(again; softly)

Don't hide it...

45 EXT. STREET - LATER - NIGHT

45

OMIT

46 EXT. CHERYL'S QUARTERS - LATER - NIGHT

46

The two of them, laughing gently together at a funny thought one just expressed.

The entrance. She turns toward him, exhales. Here we are.

CHERYL

...Thanks so much.

ANTWONE

Nah, thank you.

A beat where a kiss might go, but neither pushes it. So they stand there for a moment or two, as if neither wanting the night to come to an end, even though it has.

CHERYL

(finally)

Well...goodnight.

She's almost through the door when she hears Antwone suddenly speaking to her. In a foreign language. It's short and sweet, and he smiles shyly when he finishes.

ANTWONE

Japanese. I said, "It gave me great pleasure to be with you this evening."

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE (cont'd)
(shrugging)
They speak formal over there.

Cheryl, glowing in the dark night, moved, feeling the same strong pull toward Antwone that he's feeling toward her.

CHERYL
How do they say, "Maybe we could do it again sometime."

Antwone thinks, then speaks in Japanese again. Smiling softly when he breaks back in English:

ANTWONE
...I think.
(gesturing)
I'd better check my dictionary to see if I got it right.

CHERYL
You do that, now.

Antwone starts to back away, but doesn't get far. Because she steps forward and kisses him. Gently, but right smack on the lips. Innocent, but still charged. And it blows him away.

CHERYL (cont'd)
Goodnight again.

She disappears. Leaving him transfixed and motionless for a second, as if trying to preserve the kiss forever.

47 EXT. CHERYL'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

ANTWONE (O.S.)
Hell yeah I kissed her! She's my girl, right?!

CLOSE ON ANTWONE

ANTWONE (cont'd)
On the lips! But I'm not going to go into the intimate details of our relationship with you. I'm a gentleman!

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

The CAMERA pulls back and we see Antwone is walking alone, talking to himself.

48 INT. DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

45

Berta, at a table. An empty album before her, many small packets containing photographs beside it. She's culling through the pictures, deciding which to put in the album.

She holds one up, squints, smiles in recognition. Another one makes her shake her head wryly as she junks it in the trash.

BERTA

Dress made me look like a pizza.

Then a third. Which holds her attention for a moment, as a wistful look grows. A photo taking her back to another time, to a better time.

DAVENPORT (O.S.)

Hey there.

Said gently but it still seems to startle her. Davenport sees her jump, smiles contritely as he enters, eyeing the spread of prints.

BERTA

Just catching up. Let this pile grow too high.

Davenport murmurs acknowledgment. Starts to look at various shots. Now smiling at an image that brings back a pleasant memory.

DAVENPORT

Alaska.

Berta nods, unh-hunhs. Davenport now smirking as he mocks his appearance in several photos in a row.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Burn this one, OK? That one too.

BERTA

Get in line.

She smiles, indicates the waste basket where discarded prints are already mounting. Davenport leans in further, reaching now for the photo that touched his wife just a moment ago.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

He holds it. We peer over his shoulder. It's a shot of Berta and Davenport on a dock years ago. Both young, aglow. A magic, other-worldly sunset at their backs. His arm is pulling her close, their expressions radiating happiness, pure and simple.

DAVENPORT
A lifetime ago, hunh?

BERTA
Not to me.

Her tone is gentle, soothing, hopeful. A tone that impels him to look at her in spite of himself. She gazes at him openly, without reproach. With love. But quickly his eyes cast away.

BERTA (cont'd)
...How long, Jerome?

BERTA (cont'd)
I said how long. Or are you going to punish me forever.

DAVENPORT
(professional ignorance)
What are you talking about?

BERTA
Don't. Don't pretend you don't know what I mean.

DAVENPORT
I don't.

BERTA
(emotional; pained)
Look at me.
(he doesn't)
I-said-look-at-me.

Davenport turns, reluctant. Faces her, meets her gaze.

BERTA (cont'd)
(hushed)
I can't live like this.
(gestures helplessly)
I can't.

It hangs there inescapably. Until the sudden KNOCKING at the front door releases Davenport from its hold. Berta lowers her head as he disappears to answer it.

(CONTINUED)

Davenport, reaching the door as the knocking gets even more spirited and persistent. Making him frown as he opens it. To reveal Antwone in his doorway. Overflowing with energy.

ANTWONE

She kissed me!

Davenport almost has to shade his eyes, the heat and light and life that's shooting off the kinetic figure in front of him.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

She kissed me! I didn't push it at all, just walked her to the door, and she kissed me!

Antwone, overflowing. In a state of total wonder.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

My God, can you believe it!

DAVENPORT

(overwhelming)

Listen, um----

ANTWONE

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, knocking on your door, and everything but I had to, I had to talk to you.

Then Antwone registers Berta silently going upstairs in the background over Davenport's shoulder.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

Hey, um, hello! Uh, forgive me for busting in on you like this?

Berta half-smiles, raises her palm generously---Please, don't worry---as Davenport guides Antwone outside to the porch.

49 EXT. DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

49

DAVENPORT

This is highly irregular.

ANTWONE

I know, I know. But what am I going to do?!

(Davenport, blanking)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANTWONE (cont'd)
We're getting underway to Mexico next week, just when I'm getting real with this woman.

DAVENPORT
She'll be here when you get back.

ANTWONE
How do you know, maybe she won't---

DAVENPORT
Maybe nothing. If she got a fraction of the bounce you got tonight, she's not going anywhere.

Antwone, finally starting to slow down, as Davenport's logic starts to work through him. Nods. Nods again. You're right, you're right. He swallows, starts to step back.

ANTWONE
OK...OK, then. So I should just chill?

DAVENPORT
Yes. You should chill.

Antwone, nodding again, continuing to backpedal.

ANTWONE
Okay...I won't be doing this again.
Davenport gestures for him not to worry.

DAVENPORT
It's alright.
Antwone, now at the bottom of the porch steps waving.

ANTWONE
Thank you.
(Davenport waves back)
Goodnight.

DAVENPORT
Goodnight Antwone.

Davenport watches as Antwone starts to sprint down the street, once again consumed by the lift, the excitement, the joy his night has given him. Leaping over trash cans, whooping at the moon. Allowing himself to feel it all, undiluted by doubt.

50 INT. DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

50

Davenport reenters the house from the porch, closes the door, locks it. Walks to the stairwell, about to climb it when he stops. Registering that Berta is standing at the top of the stairwell, looking down at him.

BERTA (O.S.)

(softly)

who was that.

DAVENPORT

A patient.

(beat)

Had a first date tonight. He was so excited he couldn't wait to tell me about it.

Berta nods, smiles wistfully, taking it in for a moment.

BERTA

Don't cure him. Let's hope its infectious.

She disappears. Davenport remains at the foot of the stairs.

51 EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

51

A vast, all-encompassing panorama. The Belleau-Wood knifes through the water, bearing for the distant, just-now-becoming-visible shores of Mexico.

52 EXT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - TOP DECK - DAY

52

Antwone, Slim, Kansas City, Grayson, Berkley and Pork Chop at the rail. Straining their eyes till they can make out the distant land mass.

53 EXT. HARBOR - DUSK

53

We watch as the USS Belleau-Wood moves up the harbor toward it's birthing. The entire ship's crew are manning the rail in dress white uniform.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

VOICE OVER THE 1 MC
Liberty call! Liberty call! Liberty
call for sections one, two, four, and
five to expire on board tomorrow at 0
six hundred. Now liberty call!

It begins. The race to the gangway and freedom. Antwone
and his boys are leading the pack.

54 INT. NIGHTCLUB - LATER THAT NIGHT

54

The club is filled with sailors and women. Couples are
dancing to LOUD MUSIC. Kansas City, Slim, Pork Chop, and
Grayson in the middle of it, dancing with their dates.

PORK CHOP
(screaming)
Show me what you working with!

Antwone is seated at a table alone looking on. The table
is cluttered with beer bottles. The music CHANGES and
Grayson, Pork Chop, Slim, St. Louis and their dates join
Antwone at the table.

PORK CHOP (cont'd)
Fish!

GRAYSON
I don't know about you, but if my math
is right we're a lady short at this
table.

KANSAS CITY
Hey man, don't you know? Fish got
himself a girlfriend.

Grayson sneers. Well-is-that-a-fact.

SLIM
She Navy too.

PORK CHOP
Be writin' to her every minute he can
find.
(mock girl's voice)
"It's just soooo romantic"
(back to himself)
Make you wanna throw up, dun'n it?

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

Pork Chop howls, jostles Antwone to assure he's just playing with him. Antwone smiles, jostles Pork Chop right back as a SEXY WOMAN saunters over toward him.

SEXY WOMAN

(in Spanish)

Would you like to dance?

ANTWONE

I don't understand.

GRAYSON

You understand.

SEXY WOMAN

(in English)

Would you like to dance?

GRAYSON

She wants to mate. Do the dance. You understand.

SEXY WOMAN

Come.

KANSAS CITY

Go on Fish let her oil the old slave down.

GRAYSON

(pulling Antwone to his feet)

Come on.

ANTWONE

No, I don't...

GRAYSON

You don't what?

SLIM

Leave him alone Grayson.

GRAYSON

I'm not bothering him. He never answered my question.

ANTWONE

What question?

GRAYSON

You don't what...Why haven't I ever seen you with a girl?

(to the others)

The man says he got a girlfriend?

Well, anybody met her? Huh? Anybody?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (2)

GRAYSON (cont'd)
Then how do we know he's not lying?
(back to Antwone)
Now the way I see this. It's not about
staying true to some baby back home.
Nuhn-uhn.

Grayson pauses, enjoying his run, as Antwone tries to be calm.

GRAYSON (cont'd)
But you know what...don't worry about
it sweetheart. He's a cherry boy.
Never been to the sugar shack and too
scared to go.

ANTWONE
(still controlled)
Fuck you.

GRAYSON
(standing too)
Hunh? What you say?

ANTWONE
You heard what I said.

GRAYSON
(in his face)
Fuck me? With all these women here?
Fuck me?

Grayson, moving closer. Antwone, the fire building. The others are scrambling to defuse the situation.

GRAYSON (cont'd)
(gas on fire)
See what I mean, brothers? Do-you-see-
the-point-I-am-making-here. I'm
starting to worry about you, Fish.

Antwone, about to blow. Grayson turns his back on him.

GRAYSON (cont'd)
All this pussy around here, and you
want to fuck me. Why you don't want no
woman?

ANTWONE
'Cause I'm tryin' to be faithful to
your mother.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (3)

Antwone, losing it, grabs a nearby chair and slams it across the table toward Grayson, followed by a drop kick to Grayson's chest that knocks him to the floor.

SLIM

Here we go again!

55 INT. DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

55

Rain POURS outside. Working at his desk as the phone rings.

DAVENPORT

(on the telephone)

Davenport.

(grimacing as he listens)

Jesus. What time does his plane get in?

Davenport pushes back from his desk, closes his eyes, stroking his brow, the phone still at his ear.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Yes. Yes, Matt, I understand. Just let me see him first, that's all I ask.

55B EXT. NAVAL BASE - BRIG - NIGHT -- RAIN

55B

A Humvee pulls up outside the brig. The driver stops, Davenport gets out and walks into the brig.

56 INT. NAVAL BASE - BRIG - ANTWONE'S CELL - NIGHT - RAIN

56

Edgy, Antwone paces back and forth, like a caged lion. Antwone turns and sees Davenport standing with a MARINE GUARD outside the cell bars.

DAVENPORT

I thought we were all done fighting.

Antwone remains quiet and resumes pacing.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

(to the guard)

Let me in.

The Guard uses keys to open the cell. Davenport steps in and the Guard locks the door behind him.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Your X.O. wired the statements of your shipmates.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

(pause)

You want to start from the beginning.

Davenport signals to the Guard to leave and the Guard exits.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

Antwone responds, but grows more and more edgy as Davenport walks with Antwone, pressuring him by gradually driving Antwone into a corner.

DAVENPORT

You may as well talk to me because nobody else wants to see, hear, or talk to you.

(pause)

I'm all you've got. I'm working with your commanding officer to get you released into my custody, but you got to tell me something.

ANTWONE

I don't know what to say.

DAVENPORT

Tell me about what happened.

ANTWONE

They were frontin' me.

DAVENPORT

What do you mean, fronting?

ANTWONE

Some of the guys were baggin' on me and I couldn't take it.

DAVENPORT

How so?

ANTWONE

Makin' jokes.

DAVENPORT

What kind of jokes?

ANTWONE

About me and women. I couldn't take it!

DAVENPORT

What kind of jokes about you and women can't you take?

ANTWONE

Jokes like I'm a virgin.

DAVENPORT

Are you?

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: (2)

ANTWONE

I don't know. I might be.

Antwone remains quiet.

DAVENPORT

Why do you think you've never been
with a woman?

ANTWONE

I don't know.

DAVENPORT

Think about it. There's gotta be a
reason. There's reasons for
everything.

Antwone remains silent.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

You're a good looking young man. There
must've been plenty of opportunities.

Antwone shrugs his shoulders.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Maybe you don't like women. Do you
like men?

ANTWONE

No. I like women.

DAVENPORT

Well maybe you just don't care about
sex.

ANTWONE

I care about it. I think about it all
the time.

DAVENPORT

So we're back where we started. How
come you've never been with a woman?

ANTWONE

I have.

DAVENPORT

Cheryl?

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: (4)

ANTWONE
No, when I was young. There was a
kiss.

DAVENPORT
Okay, how was it?

ANTWONE
Terrible...I threw up.

DAVENPORT
You kissed a girl and you threw up?

ANTWONE
No.
(pause)
She kissed me...and I threw up.

DAVENPORT
Why do you think you did that?

ANTWONE
(pause)
'Cause she put her tongue in my mouth.
(pause)
That's what she used to do.

DAVENPORT
Who? Antwone, who?

Antwone is frustrated, as if Davenport should know the
answer to the question.

FLASHBACK TO:

57 EXT. TATE HOUSE - CLEVELAND 1984 - SUMMER

57

OMIT

58 INT. TATE HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

58

Antwone, Dwight, and Keith are seated on the floor
turning the pages of an Ebony magazine. Antwone spots a
pretty woman.

ANTWONE
That's my momma.

KEITH
That ain't your momma, you said that
other lady was yours.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

I changed.

DWIGHT

You can't change. This one's my momma.

MRS. TATE (O.S.)

Nigga!

They drop the magazine and jump to their feet.

MRS. TATE (O.S.) (cont'd)

Nigga, you hear me calling you!

DWIGHT

(to Keith)

That's you.

KEITH

(takes off running to her)

Yes mu-deah here! Here I come!

MRS. TATE (O.S.)

(from upstairs)

NIGGA!

The boys look at each other for a beat, then Antwone points to Dwight, who nods. Yeah, the way she said "nigga" means me.

MRS. TATE (O.S.) (cont'd)

I said NIG-GA!!

DWIGHT

(calling)

Coming!

MRS. TATE

Dwight, Keith, get your behind's down here now! I told you not to mess up your good clothes. Nadine! We'll be downtown at the social services office. 'Twony, you stay with Nadine.

ANTWONE

(sadly)

Yes Mu-deah.

59 EXT. TATE HOUSE - DAY

Mrs. Tate chugs down the sidewalk in one direction with Dwight and Keith.

60 *

60 EXT. TATE HOUSE -- DAY

We fix on the closed front door, press in very slowly on it as the voice from within begins to be heard with increasing clarity.

NADINE (O.S.)

Hurry up, unbutton em all, that's right...come on...I said come-on.

The sound of a hard SLAP landing, then Antwone's feeble cry.

NADINE (O.S.) (cont'd)

Pull em down, you hear me?! Pull em right over my feet, yeah. Now get over here, close. Closer.

We're moving closer all the time, as Nadine's voice begins to melt. A woman drifting off to a twisted pleasure zone.

NADINE (O.S.) (cont'd)

Closer! Don't be 'fraid. Touch it now. You know you wanna. Touch it.

We move closer to the door. As if we could reach out to it.

NADINE (O.S.) (cont'd)

That's right, ooooooh. Now kiss it, go on, kiss it. I said kiss it.

Closer. Nadine no longer even aware of Antwone's weeping.

YOUNG GIRLS (V.O.)

Miss, Mary Mack, Mack, Mack, all dressed in black, black, black... with silver buttons, buttons, buttons all down her back, back, back.

NADINE

That's it. Give me sugar, baby.

YOUNG GIRLS (V.O.)

She asked her mother, mother, mother for fifteen cents, cents, cents...

SMASH CUT TO:

61 EXT. TATE HOUSE - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

61 *

YOUNG GIRL #1
...to see the elephants,
elephants, elephants, jump
the fence, fence, fence...

YOUNG GIRL #2
...to see the elephants,
elephants, elephants, jump
the fence, fence, fence...

Antwone runs between the girls breaking them apart,
angering the girls.

YOUNG GIRL #1
I'm not playing Antwone! I'm going to
tell your mother on you!

He's tearing past a group of girls skipping rope,
children riding bikes, playing street football etc. He
runs across the street to Jesse's and knocks on the
screen door.

62 EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

62

JESSE
What's up, man? Are you alright?

Antwone shakes his head. No.

JESSE
She did it again?

Antwone nods. Yes.

JESSE (cont'd)
She hit you too?

Antwone nods and Jesse becomes angry.

JESSE (cont'd)
It's okay, Antwone. Don't worry. You
can stay here for awhile. I'll look
out for you. Come on in.

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

63 INT. BRIG - NIGHT

63

-----and then we're back. The stillness, the hush.
Davenport, struck through the heart then lets a moment
pass for Antwone. For both of them. The rawest of
emotions here for each man.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

She had me doing things. I was only a little boy. If there was something I couldn't do she would beat me.

DAVENPORT

Do you think she molested Keith or Dwight?

ANTWONE

I don't know.

(beat)

I don't think so. Dwight would have fought back. Keith would have told.

DAVENPORT

She chose you because she knew you wouldn't talk.

Antwone nods.

DAVENPORT

Did you tell anyone?

ANTWONE

No.

DAVENPORT

So Jesse's the only one who knew what happened?

Antwone pauses, then nods his head.

ANTWONE

She's the only woman I've ever seen naked.

(looking away)

I'm almost twenty-five and I still haven't done it. It's embarrassing. I hate it.

Moments pass as Davenport searches for words.

DAVENPORT

They're releasing you into my custody. You'll be restricted to the base until your ship returns.

(pause)

I'll see what I can do about patching things up for you at the ship.

64 EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT - TWO WEEKS LATER
OMIT-SCENE MOVED TO 73A

64 *
*

65

65 INT. DAVENPORT HOUSE - DAY

Doorbell rings. Berta answers the door.

ANTWONE

Seaman Fisher. Antwone Fisher, ma'am.

BERTA

How can I help you.

ANTWONE

I'm here to see the Commander. I'm one of his patients. He told me to meet him here.

BERTA

He's not here yet. You can wait in the study.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

I see you're all ready for
Thanksgiving, ma'am.

BERTA

Don't call me ma'am. Call me Berta.
Are you going home for the holidays?

ANTWONE

No, but the chief cook is planning a
big meal on the ship. So I'll be here
for that.

BERTA

Well, that sounds good.

He trails off, silently debating whether to express a
thought that has popped into his mind.

ANTWONE

First thing I saw, first time I went
into his office? It was you. Your
picture. And I thought, she's got a
nice face, a good face. Maybe he's
alright if he married a woman like
that.

Berta suddenly swallows, turns away. Hiding her face from
him as if afraid she might buckle, lose it. Antwone,
stunned that such a neutral statement has bulls-eyed her,
is desperate to backtrack, to take away any hurt he may
have caused her.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

I'm sorry. Mrs. Davenport, please, I
didn't mean to say anything that might
upset you----

BERTA

(intent that he really
believe her)
It's alright, really, it's okay.
(awkwardly)
Is he?

ANTWONE

(detecting her awkwardness)
Ma'am?

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (2)

BERTA

Is he?

ANTWONE

Is he what?

BERTA

My husband. Is he alright?

ANTWONE

(awkward)

Oh. You know, he's alright. He's an officer you know.

BERTA

Yeah. I know.

DAVENPORT (O.S.)

(to Antwone)

Are you ready to get started.

Berta and Antwone turn and sees Davenport standing in the doorway, clearly having heard much of the conversation between his wife and Antwone.

66 INT. DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY - A MINUTE LATER 66

Davenport enters followed by Antwone. Then Davenport abruptly turns to him half-joking.

DAVENPORT

What are you some kind of undercover ladies' man? Don't be talking to my wife.

ANTWONE

I didn't say anything.

DAVENPORT

Yes you did I heard you.
(sitting behind his desk)
Have a seat.

ANTWONE

I was just trying to be nice.

DAVENPORT

Why don't you try being nice on that ship.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

(after a few moments)

I like your house.

DAVENPORT

Thank you. Tell me about your house.

Tell me about the day you left your family.

Antwone looks up, prompted back by Davenport's words, but still unfocused, as if needing another hint to fully reconnect.

ANTWONE

Hunh?

DAVENPORT

The day the Tate's threw you out.

ANTWONE

Oh, yeah...uh...It was back to the orphanage.

(pause)

They told me I needed to be somewhere where I could develop some social skills. Since nobody adopts teenaged boys and they couldn't find a place for me, they sent me to a reform school in Pennsylvania. That's where I picked up the excellent social skills I have now.

DAVENPORT

What then?

ANTWONE

Then I was on my own. The social worker took me to a shelter, gave me \$67, and said goodbye.

67 EXT. MEN'S SHELTER - CLEVELAND - LOBBY - DAY

67

OMIT

68 INT. MEN'S SHELTER - CLEVELAND - LOBBY - DAY

68

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

OMIT

69 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

OMIT

70 INT. REST ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

OMIT

*
*
*
*
*

71 INT. DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

71

Antwone is seated; Davenport is standing.

DAVENPORT
Right. How long did you stay in the
shelter?

ANTWONE
I left the next morning.

DAVENPORT
And?

ANTWONE
I slept on a few park benches, then I
came here.

DAVENPORT
Where? To my house?

ANTWONE
No, the Navy. I joined the Navy. So
there it is. The Antwone Fisher story.

DAVENPORT
Okay. That's enough for today. Now get
out of my house, I have a life to get
on with.

Antwone stands and Davenport walks him from the office.

72 EXT. FRONT OF DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - DAY - A MINUTE LATER 72

Antwone walks off the porch down the walk to the
sidewalk.

DAVENPORT (O.S.)
Seaman Fisher!

Antwone turns to Davenport who is exiting the house onto
the porch, and it looks like trouble.

ANTWONE
Sir?

(CONTINUED),

72 CONTINUED:

DAVENPORT
Get back here, now!

ANTWONE
What did I do?

DAVENPORT
Cut the jaw jacking and get back up
here, sailor.

Antwone makes his way back to the porch steps. Uptight,
Davenport looks down the steps at him. Antwone looks
worried.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)
I don't know what you're up to but you
had better be careful.

ANTWONE
I didn't do anything.

DAVENPORT
My wife is inviting you to
Thanksgiving dinner on Thursday. She
thinks you're charming. You have any
idea where she might have gotten that
impression, son?

ANTWONE
(completely bewildered)
No, I don't know. Maybe she just
responds to nice people.

DAVENPORT
Okay nice people. Thursday, fourteen
hundred. My family, my house, my
dinner table. Don't be late.

ANTWONE
Aye, aye sir.

Davenport turns and reenters the house, leaving Antwone
confused at the bottom of the steps.

73 INT. DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - MOMENTS LATER 73

Berta is seated at the kitchen desk with cook books, pad,
and pencil, planning the holiday meal. Davenport enters.

DAVENPORT
Add another mouth to the list.
Antwone's joining us for Thanksgiving.

(CONTINUED)

73

CONTINUED:

BERTA

He just told me how much he's looking forward to the meal they're planning on the ship.

DAVENPORT

Have you ever eaten that food?

CUT TO:

73A

73A EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

Antwone and Cheryl...the awesome panorama.

CHERYL

Wow. It's nice out here. How did you find this place?

ANTWONE

It's a lighthouse. I'm a sailor.
(beat)
It found me.

CHERYL

You knucklehead. You come out here a lot?

ANTWONE

Sometimes when I need to reflect and work on problems in my head I come out here alone.

(pause)

I sit sometimes for hours working out my issues.

CHERYL

I know what you mean.

ANTWONE

You got issues?

CHERYL

Do I?! Doesn't everybody?

ANTWONE

Listen Cheryl, I haven't been honest with you.

CHERYL

I knew it was another woman.

(CONTINUED)

73A CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

No, no. It's nothing like that.
(pause)

Do you remember when I told you I was
working on an important paper?

CHERYL

Yeah.

ANTWONE

I lied. I'm seeing a psychiatrist. His
name is Commander Davenport. His
office is at the clinic on mainside.
When you saw me coming out of the
clinic, I was coming from his office.
(pause)

So...if you don't want to see me
anymore, I'll understand.

CHERYL

Listen, you're not the only one who's
ever had their head shrunk.

ANTWONE

What do you mean?

CHERYL

I told you my father was a Vietnam vet
right?

ANTWONE

My life before the Navy was pretty
complicated, and it made me that way.
Complicated and ashamed.

CHERYL

Of what?

ANTWONE

Ashamed of feeling unwanted all my
life...of not knowing where or who my
parents are...of feeling so awkward
all the time, in a crowd by myself,
and with you.

(pause)

I'm even ashamed of being too shy to
say how much I really like you Cheryl.

CHERYL

Life's a trip.

(pause)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

73A CONTINUED: (2)

CHERYL (cont'd)
Would you believe I noticed you before
you noticed me? I was too shy to
approach you.
(pause)
Until I realized you were stalking me.

ANTWONE
Really?

CHERYL
Being shy is normal. I like it.

ANTWONE
I guess.

CHERYL
No, I mean it. I like that about you.

ANTWONE
I'm learning to.

CHERYL
I wish things weren't so complicated
for you.

ANTWONE
I'm working it out.

CHERYL
If there's anything I can do...

ANTWONE
(shyly)
You can give me another one of those
kisses, like you gave me last time.
(pause)
That seemed to help.

She leans in and kisses him on the mouth.

74 INT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - BERTHING - THANKSGIVING DAY - DAY 74

But Antwone's not at the Davenport's yet---he's getting
dressed in front of a mirror, practicing to his
- reflection.

ANTWONE
Happy Thanksgiving!
(now a subtler tone)
Happy Thanksgiving.
(now more forceful)
Happy Thanksgiving.

(CONTINUED)

74

CONTINUED:

None of which seems right. Nor the knot in his tie. Nor the tiny spot on his shirt that only he can see. In a moment he exhales, gazes at himself, all alone in the empty room.

75

INT. DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

75

Family members, children, and friends are taking positions around the dining table. Davenport is taking his place at the head of the table.

DAVENPORT

Everyone. This is Antwone. Antwone, this is my family.

FAMILY

Hello, Antwone.

ANTWONE

Hi.

DAVENPORT

Meet my mother and father, right there.

Antwone sees Davenport's elderly mother and father, JOHNNY MAE and HOWARD, who both speak with a southern accent.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

Hi.

JOHNNY MAE

Come on over here next to daddy.

ANTWONE

(takes his place next to
Howard)

Yes, ma'am.

HOWARD

How are you doing, boy?

ANTWONE

I'm fine.

DAVENPORT

Let's join hands and bow our heads.

Antwone feels awkward as he bows his head and closes his eyes.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Heavenly Father, we come to you knee
bent and body bowed, in the humblest
way that we know how...

ON ANTWONE

he lifts his head a little, opening one eye.

ANTWONE'S POV

He cuts his eye to Davenport, then around the table.
Everyone is sincere about the prayer. Then his eye moves
onto a lit candle, then down onto a delectable bowl of
collard greens.

DAVENPORT (O.S.) (cont'd)

...We're grateful to have an
opportunity to share another
Thanksgiving Day as a family.

Continuing down the table, Antwone sees a platter of
fried chicken, then bowls of string beans, yams, corn
bread, mash potatoes, and more.

DAVENPORT (O.S.) (cont'd)

We're thankful for our health, oh
lord, and our friends who honor us
with their presence.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (2)

Antwone's eye finally sees the big juicy turkey, and stops.

BACK ON ANTWONE

Abreptly opening his other eye. He stares hungrily, licking his lips while his mouth waters,

DAVENPORT (O.S) (cont'd)
We also pray for peace for the world
and in our lives. Amen.

FAMILY

Amen.

Antwone quickly shuts his eyes, then lifts his head along with everyone else.

ANTWONE
(to the food)

Amen.

Everyone takes a seat.

DISSOLVE TO:

76 THE THANKSGIVING DINNER

76

in progress. The candle light, the laughter, the kid's antics, Howard's imitations, Berta's grace, Davenport's stolid yet human and engaging presence. The sound of forks, knives and plates clanging. Antwone feels welcome.

HOWARD
(to Antwone)
Don't be actin' bashful around me,
especially at the dinner table.

ANTWONE
I'm okay.

HOWARD
Alright then, let me see you dig in.
The food is free. When I was in the
service---
(stops eating a moment)
---back in World War Two. That's
before you were born. Anyway, I spent
the holidays in Europe on guard duty,
and I sure did miss my momma's holiday
cooking.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

JOHNNY MAE

Howard, leave that boy alone. Let him enjoy his dinner.

HOWARD

~~I~~ am not bothering him, Johnny Mae. You leave me alone.

(to Antwone)

You'd like to be home with your own family isn't that right? Eating your momma's cooking? Where you from?

ANTWONE

(looking at Davenport)
Cleveland.

HOWARD

(Antwone)

I bet you miss yo' momma's cooking, don't you.

ANTWONE

Excuse me.

Davenport looks on.

77 INT. DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - STUDY - LATER

77

Davenport, at the doorway, just coming in. Antwone nods. Yes, I'm OK. Davenport smiles, sensing that Antwone's absorbed the day fully. That it's been good for him. He steps over near the fire by Antwone's side. Antwone smiles at him.

DAVENPORT (O.S.)

You OK?

ANTWONE

(after turning to Davenport)

I never had a real Thanksgiving at the Pickett's. You have a very nice family.

DAVENPORT

Thank you.

Antwone takes a piece of paper out of his pocket.

ANTWONE

I wanted to bring you something to thank you for having me here today.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

DAVENPORT

A poem? Let's hear it.

ANTWONE

Why don't you read it. Okay?

Antwone hands the paper to Davenport, then turns his back to him and looks at the fire.

DAVENPORT

Who will cry for the little boy? Lost
and all alone. Who will cry for the
little boy? Abandoned without his own.

ANTWONE

Who will cry for the little
boy? He cried himself to
sleep.

WILLIAMS

Who will cry for the little
boy? He cried himself to
sleep.

Davenport stops reading and looks on as Antwone continues reciting the poem with his back still to Davenport.

ANTWONE

Who will cry for the little boy? He
never had for keeps. Who will cry for
the little boy? He walked the burning
sand.

(pause)

Who will cry for the little boy? The
boy inside the man. Who will cry for
the little boy? Who knows well hurt
and pain. Who will cry for the little
boy? He died and died again.

(pause)

Who will cry for the little boy? A
good boy he tried to be. Who will cry
for the little boy, who cries inside
of me?

DAVENPORT

Who will cry for the little boy?

Then we SEE Berta standing in the doorway and her eyes
are filled with tears.

ANTWONE

I will.

(turning to Davenport)

I always do.

Berta walks away.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (2)

DAVENPORT

That was beautiful Antwone.

ANTWONE

I told you I was good.

DAVENPORT

That's because you're honest, probably more honest than most people. Even in your anger. The one thing you aren't so honest about is your need for your natural family. I think you should look for your real family.

ANTWONE

Why should I go looking for them?

DAVENPORT

It would answer a lot of questions for you.

ANTWONE

I don't have any questions.

DAVENPORT

You're upset with them because no one ever came to rescue you. They may not have known.

ANTWONE

How could they have not known?

DAVENPORT

That would be a question for them. "Regard without ill will, despite an offense." That's Webster's definition of forgiveness.

ANTWONE

Why should I be the one to forgive?

DAVENPORT

To free yourself. So you can go on with your life.

ANTWONE

What I need to go looking for a family anyway? I got you, Doc.

Davenport is silent.

78 INT. DAVENPORT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

78

BERTA

I think he had a good time.

(Davenport is silent)

I mean Antwone...I think he had a good time, don't you?

DAVENPORT

(shrugging)

...Seemed like it.

BERTA

He did the nicest thing, at the door, when we were saying goodbye.

(pause)

He invited me to come to his ceremony next week.

Davenport stops in his tracks, turns to face Berta. What?

BERTA (cont'd)

He's graduating from his Japanese class.

DAVENPORT

(too quickly)

I know.

BERTA

He asked me to be there. To come with you.

DAVENPORT

What'd you tell him.

BERTA

I told him I'd be honored, Jerome.

79 INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

79

OMIT

80 EXT. PORT SIDE QUARTER DECK - DAY

80

OMIT

81 EXT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - FLIGHT DECK - DAY

81

OMIT

82 INT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - SHIP'S TRAINING CLASSROOM - DAY 82

Post ceremony. Antwone embraces Cheryl who then gracefully makes room for Davenport who is hovering nearby. He steps forward, extends his hand to Antwone.

DAVENPORT
Congratulations on your award. I'm sure it's well deserved.

ANTWONE
Thank you, Commander.
(beat)
I guess Mrs. Davenport couldn't make it.

DAVENPORT
No, she asked me to send along her congratulations.

Antwone nods, studies him for a moment, intuiting.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)
This is for you...a little gift.

ANTWONE
(taking it and reading it)
The philosophy and opinions of Marcus Garvey. Hmm. Thank you.

DAVENPORT
Is there somewhere we can speak in private.

Antwone hesitates, looks at Cheryl. Clearly they had some plans. But she nods at him easily. Go on, its cool. Antwone turns back to Davenport.

83 INT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - SHOWER ROOM - DAY - MINUTES LATER 83

ANTWONE
What's up Doc?

DAVENPORT
How are you?

ANTWONE
I'm good.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

83

DAVENPORT

That's what I thought. You're doing
real well, things are great.

ANTWONE

It was nice meeting your family. How
are they?

DAVENPORT

They're fine. What about your family?
Have you thought anymore about finding
them?

ANTWONE

I don't know. For what?

DAVENPORT

I just think...

ANTWONE

What are you talking about?

DAVENPORT

I just think there's nothing really
more important than family.

ANTWONE

What are you trying to say?

DAVENPORT

I'm proud of you. You've come a long
way.

ANTWONE

Okay...You told me that.
(no answer from Davenport)
What's wrong?

DAVENPORT

There's nothing wrong. This is very
difficult for me. Our sessions are
ended.

Antwone is feeling betrayed.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

I've taken the liberty of...

ANTWONE

What-da-yuh mean man, ended?

DAVENPORT

You have to continue to move forward;
you can't stall here.

(CONTINUED)

ANTWONE

We, you know we got to work on my problems. I almost got it figured out with you.

DAVENPORT

(moves in closer)

Listen to me. It's very important you find your own family. You'll never be complete until you do.

Antwone is in a rage. He kicks a waste paper basket over. Two sailors attempt to enter. Davenport kicks the door shut.

DAVENPORT

Get out!

ANTWONE (cont'd)

Nobody ever wants to stay! Everyone's always leaving me!

DAVENPORT

It's not leaving. It's moving on. People grow, and they move on. You've grown Antwone. It's time.

ANTWONE

It is leaving! Everybody leaves me! My mother! My father! My friends! Jesse! You!

DAVENPORT

Jesse?

ANTWONE

(pacing the floor)

Yeah, Jesse.

DAVENPORT

(taken aback)

Jesse? What about Jesse?

ANTWONE

We shouldn't have gone to the store. That's what about Jesse!!

DAVENPORT

Why not?!

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: (3)

ANTWONE

The door!! Why do you think?! Cow
bells ringing in my head and everybody
leaves!

DAVENPORT

What about cow bells?! Tell me about
the cow bells!

ANTWONE

(crying)
My friend!

DAVENPORT

What friend? Jesse?

ANTWONE

Get away from me! Nobody's taking
anything away from me anymore!

FLASHBACK TO:

SMASH CUT TO:

84	INT. MEN'S SHELTER - CLEVELAND - BATHROOM - NIGHT	84	*
	OMIT		*
85	EXT. MEN'S SHELTER - NIGHT	85	*
	OMIT		*
86	EXT. CLEVELAND STREETS - NIGHT TO DAWN - LATER	86	
	Walking, head down, seeing nothing but the pavement in front of him as the darkness gives way to first light.		
86A	EXT. GREYHOUND STATION - NIGHT - LATER	86A	*
	OMIT		*

87

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - DAY

87

The same rugged, chipped front door. Antwone knocks. There's irritated grumbling in response from within, until the door opens. JESSE (19) goes from curses to delights in a flash.

Fish!

JESSE

Jesse!

ANTWONE

JESSE

(comes outside)

What's up, man?

(punches him on the arm)

Where you been at?

ANTWONE

(raising an open hand to slap)

I've been out wrestling with your momma again.

JESSE

(blocking the slap)

Don't have me kick your ass. You know you can't fight worth shit. Where you been at? Why didn't you say good-bye when you left?

ANTWONE

It's a long story, man.

JESSE

Where you living at?

ANTWONE

The men's shelter on Prospect.

JESSE

What you living there for?

ANTWONE

I don't have nowhere else to go.

JESSE

You can stay here.

ANTWONE

Your mother's not going to let me live here.

(CONTINUED)

87

CONTINUED:

JESSE

"She don't have to know. She works at night, she sleeps all day. Besides it's so many of us, she wouldn't notice you walking around the house anyhow."

ANTWONE

Cool!

(hunger's written on his face)

Hey. What do you all have in your refrigerator?

JESSE

What?

ANTWONE

I'm hungry!

JESSE

Come on.

They enter the house, slamming the screen door behind them.

88

INT. JESSE'S FAMILY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

88

Jesse is seated across the table from Antwone, who is licking his fingers finishing up a plate of food.

JESSE

Damn! Slow down, man...Remember that time Mrs. Tate wouldn't let you use her lotion and made you put cooking grease on your face and arms instead. You were running around all day smelling like a fried chicken dinner, telling everybody,

(laughing)

"I show is hongree." Now that was funny.

ANTWONE

Not as funny as your mother chasing your ass through the neighborhood with that brick. Remember that?! Now that was funny.

They both break into LAUGHTER. Jesse stands and walks toward the door. He turns to Antwone.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED:

JESSE

Fish. You know you're my best friend,
right?

ANTWONE

I ~~am~~? What you want?

JESSE

I'm glad, just glad you're back on the
block. I can't be glad my boy is back?

(pause)

I want you to do something for me
though.

ANTWONE

What?

JESSE

Just look out for me.

ANTWONE

Somebody after you?

JESSE

You my friend, right?

ANTWONE

Yeah man, quit trippin'.

JESSE

Let's hit the streets. I'll buy you a
pop.

Antwone gets up cramming a piece of cornbread into his
mouth.

SMASH CUT TO:

89 INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY - CLEVELAND 1994

89

Shoppers are present. Tight on pop fridge. Brings us to
Antwone. Antwone is at the refrigerator at the far end of
the store, selecting a soda pop.

Jesse is at the check-out counter near the front
entrance. He pulls a pistol from under his shirt and
points it at the MALE PROPRIETOR, who is behind the
counter. Antwone turns with soda in hand, walks towards
the counter.

(CONTINUED)

JESSE
All you shoplifting fools, on the damn
floor!

Everyone lays on the floor. A male PATRON is slow to get
to ~~the~~ floor.

ANTWONE
Jesse! What are you doing?!

JESSE
This ain't no riddle. This ain't
nothin' you got to figure out! Get
that fat ass down!

ANTWONE
Jesse!

With the pistol still pointed at the Proprietor, Jesse
grabs him by the shirt and pulls him closer to the
counter. The Proprietor's arms are limp at his sides.
Antwone is shocked.

JESSE
Break it off!

PROPRIETOR
What?

JESSE
(releasing him)
My money, break that shit off!

The proprietor moves slowly.

ANTWONE
What you doing, man?!

JESSE
You better get my loot?!

JESSE
Look out for me Fish!

Jesse turns towards Antwone, but is distracted by the
SOUND OF A COW BELL hitting the front door as an
unsuspecting CUSTOMER suddenly enters. Jesse, now
instinctively turning toward this sound, turning away
from the owner.

ANTWONE
(desperate)
JESSE!

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (2)

The Owner, who suddenly raises a hidden .45 and SHOOTS
Jesse in the head at point blank range.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

(primal)

NO!!!!

And we match the shot that shattered Antwone's dream at the story's beginning: Jesse was that black youth killed by the impact of a high-powered handgun fired inches from his skull.

Antwone, splattered with Jesse's blood, as the Owner pivots, points the gun at him. An unreal moment, as Antwone stares at him, waiting to be shot as well...before the Owner slowly lowers the gun, understanding that Antwone poses no threat.

And then Antwone bolts from the store, soda still in hand, his world shattered right before his eyes, as we cut to---

90 INT. WATSON'S FUNERAL HOME - DAY

90 *

OMIT

*

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

91

91 INT. USS BELLEAU-WOOD - SHOWER ROOM - DAY

Antwone and Davenport standing as before.

ANTWONE

By the end of the next day, I was in
boot camp.

(pause)

I've always felt like Jesse was the
lucky one. I envied him for it.

DAVENPORT

How lucky could he have been? He's
dead.

ANTWONE

HE LEFT ME WHEN HE KNEW HE WAS ALL I
HAD!

DAVENPORT

So you're angry with Jesse because you
feel like he left you?

ANTWONE

Yeah, a little bit...yeah!

DAVENPORT

You don't think that's selfish?

ANTWONE

Maybe.

DAVENPORT

You never answered my question. How's
Jesse the lucky one?

(CONTINUED)

ANTWONE

Because he didn't have to fight no more!

DAVENPORT

Neither do you.

Davenport wipes his face with a wet towel, then throws one at Antwone, hitting him in the head.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Wipe your face.

(jokingly)

We don't want anyone to think you've been in here crying.

ANTWONE

(wiping his face)

You think I'll make it.

DAVENPORT

I think you already have. What do you think?

ANTWONE

I think in another life, in another time, I would have been King.

DAVENPORT

You're up for reenlistment soon.

(pause)

Think about taking the discharge. No more hiding.

(walking to the door)

When you locate your family, contact me.

(beat)

I'd like to hear all about it.

A few moments, then Davenport turns to Antwone.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

I love you, son.

92 INT. BASE GYM - WEIGHT ROOM - DAY - ONE WEEK LATER

92

Slim, Pork Chop, Kansas City are standing around Antwone cheering him on as he is laying on a weight bench struggling as he pushes two hundred pounds of weight into the air.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

We see Grayson is lifting in another area of the room and Pork Chop is spotting for him. The young men all stop talking at once, looking off to the right.

As Antwone brings the weight back to the cradle, the weight becomes too heavy for Antwone as he sweats, grunts, groans as he struggles finally returning the weight to the cradle.

ANTWONE

(sitting up yelling)

Come on Pork Chop! You supposed to be spotting man!

Grayson sits up and gazes in the same direction. Antwone sees them stunned with their mouths open. Antwone turns to see what they're looking at.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

Hey Cheryl! What are you doing here?

ON CHERYL

standing in the doorway, beautiful in civilian clothes.

PORK CHOP

(amazement)

Damn!

CHERYL

I got off early.

ANTWONE

I'm done anyway.

SLIM

Who is she?!

ANTWONE

Oh. Okay, you-all don't know?

(braggadocios)

This is my girl. Her name is Cheryl.

Go on Baby, introduce yourself.

CHERYL

Hi.

ANTWONE

This is Slim and this oversized one is Pork Chop.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: (2)

CHERYL

So you're the Three Stooges. Where's Moe?

PORK CHOP

(pointing to Grayson)

He's ~~over~~ there.

ANTWONE

Hey, look here fellas. I'd like to hang around; you know, kick it and what not, but as you can see.

(pause)

I got things to do. Ya hear me?

SLIM

True.

PORK CHOP

Word.

ANTWONE

(gathering his gym bag)

Later.

Antwone walks over to Cheryl and kisses her on the lips.

GRAYSON

Alright player.

A92 INT./EXT. NAVY EXCHANGE - NIGHT

A92

*

Antwone is looking for Cheryl. He sees her and approaches her.

*

*

ANTWONE

I'm going on leave.

CHERYL

When?

ANTWONE

After you put in a request for leave.

(pause)

So you can go with me.

CHERYL

I just came back. They're not going to let me go again this year.

ANTWONE

Ask for emergency leave. Tell them that someone close to you is in desperate need. They'll let you go.

(CONTINUED)

CHERYL
Why would I do that?

ANTWONE
Because I really want you to go with
me, Cheryl.

Antwone reaches into his gym bag and pulls out a pair of
airline tickets and hands them to Cheryl.

ANTWONE (cont'd)
They're open tickets.

CHERYL
(looking at the tickets)
To Cleveland? You're going to try and
find them.

ANTWONE
Yeah, I got to find them.
(beat)
But I'm not sure what to say to them.

CHERYL
Well, I'd say my name is Antwone
Fisher. I'm a handsome, handsome young
man who happens to be your son,
brother, nephew, uncle or cousin.
(beat)
Just like that.

ANTWONE
Just like that?

CHERYL
That's how I would do it.

ANTWONE
Huh. I still want you to go with me.

93 EXT. AIRPORT - CLEVELAND - DAY

93

The runway. Wheels touching down. Sparks, skids.

ANTWONE (V.O.)
First the light-skinned girls, they
got adopted the quickest. Then the
light skinned boys...then the dark-
skinned girls...and then, last but not
least, the dark-skinned boys.

94 INT. ORPHANAGE - DAY

94

OMIT

95 INT. DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES - DAY - LATER

95

~~Antwone, at~~ the information window. Trying to remain polite with the SNIDE CLERK.

ANTWONE

Yes. I was a ward of the state. So I'm just trying to locate my file, my childhood records.

SNIDE CLERK

You're in the wrong place.

ANTWONE

(measured, contained)

Well can you tell me where the right place is?

The Snide Clerk shuffles some papers before giving it up.

SNIDE CLERK

Ninth floor, room 902.

96 INT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES - ROOM 902 - DAY

96

Antwone standing at a sign. CLOSED FOR LUNCH. He turns toward Cheryl, his expression taut. Starting to lose patience here.

97 INT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES - ROOM 902 - DAY

97

Antwone, first on line, snaps to as ANOTHER CLERK saunters up to the window. Slowly. Unenthusiastically. Grimacing when he sees the queue of people waiting. He grunts at Antwone. So?

ANTWONE

Just trying to get a copy of my childhood records.

ANOTHER CLERK

Ward of the state?

(Antwone nods)

Starting when.

ANTWONE

At birth.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

Another Clerk puts his hands up, shakes his head. Whoa, now. Only too happy to put a damper on things.

ANOTHER CLERK
Wrong department. Need to go to Family Services.

Antwone, willing to stay cool, speaking very slowly:

ANTWONE
I was just there.

CHERYL
We've-already-been-there!

ANOTHER CLERK
Great. So you know where it is.
(past him)
Next!

98 INT. DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES - LATER - DUSK

98

*

Only two people before them now. But the Snide Clerk shrugs, puts up his sign---CLOSED FOR THE DAY---and indicates the only other window now open, with a thousand people on line.

ANTWONE (O.S.)
No. No. NO.

Said with such force that every head swivels toward Antwone, as if expecting a man with an Uzi. But while there is anger and frustration, there is also control.

ANTWONE (cont'd)
We've been here since nine o'clock this morning. Nine o'clock. And I'm not leaving until somebody helps me get my records. Somebody!

CHERYL
Please!

A black supervisor, MONA NYPRIS, approaches through the crowd that's been frozen in place by Antwone.

MONA
I'd be happy to assist you, but you can't raise your voice like that in here.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

(gesturing)

Look. We've been getting the run-
around for over eight hours.

Mona nods. She knows. Aware what a nightmare this can be.

MONA

That's about average. Follow me.

(CONTINUED)

Received: 8/24/01 10:10:11

Pink Revision 09/24/01 101.
98

98 CONTINUED:

*

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: (2)

99 INT. DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES - MONA'S OFFICE - DAY 99 *

Close on photo of a young boy up for adoption. Supervisor MONA NYPRIS is filling out a form. Antwone and Cheryl are seated across the desk from her.

MONA

Last contact with your mother?

ANTWONE

I was two months old.

MONA

With father?

ANTWONE

Never.

MONA

Place of birth.

ANTWONE

Ohio State Correctional Facility for Women.

Mona looks up from her scrawling. She had been prepared for a city, a town. Studies him with interest. He smiles back at her dryly.

MONA

I'll be right back.

Antwone looks as Mona stands to exit.

100 INT. DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES - MONA'S OFFICE - DAY - LATER 100 *

Antwone, waiting with Cheryl. The door opens. Mona has a folder in her hand. He stands, looks into her eyes. You got it? Mona nods. Hands him a pen to sign the release form.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

MONA
Best of luck. Mr. Fisher.

101 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

101

Not the Ritz, but clean. Antwone sits on a bed with Cheryl, staring at the folder on his lap. Takes a deep breath. Looks deep into Cheryl's eyes. And then he opens it.

A series of angles as time passes, as we chart the impact of what Antwone reads upon his features. Bewilderment, humor, bitterness, disbelief, poignant recollections...

But at the end of his reading, as Antwone puts the folder down, as he locks eyes with Cheryl, we register clearly that the answers he was seeking have not been found.

CHERYL

Have you thought about going to see your foster mother?

ANTWONE

Who? Mrs. Tate? Nooooo, nooooo, no. I'm not going back there.

CHERYL

Why not? She might know something about your family.

ANTWONE

No!

He stands, goes to the window. Cheryl follows in a moment, comes up behind him, wraps her arms around him, rests her head against his back. Soon Antwone turns, so that they are facing, and a charge goes through each. A beat, then Cheryl loosens her skirt, lets it slide to the floor. Next, her blouse. Nothing cheap or tawdry here--- quite the opposite.

She unbuttons his shirt; his skin tingles where her fingers brush his flesh. She kisses him, then again. Then once more until he swallows the fear, kisses her back. Pure emotion.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

I've never done this.

Cheryl doesn't care; all she cares about is drawing Antwone closer to her, feeling his arms holding her, then falling onto the bed with him, where they engage in the most caring way of lovemaking. Beautiful, difficult. Painful, tender...

102 INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAYBREAK

102

Cheryl, sleeping in bed at first light. She gazes over to Antwone. A moment as they smile shyly at each other, radiating the power of the night they spent together, and then Antwone takes a deep breath.

ANTWONE

(quietly)

Take a ride with me?

103 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY

103

OMIT

104 EXT. MEN'S SHELTER - DAY

104

OMIT

105 EXT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

105

OMIT

106 INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

106

OMIT

107 EXT. TATE HOUSE - DAY

107 *

So much as it was, all these years later.

108 INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

108

Cheryl pulls the car to a stop across the street from it. She squeezes his hand as he steels himself before stepping out.

CHERYL

(softly)

They can't hurt you now, Antwone.

He nods, hesitates, then opens the door.

109 EXT. TATE HOUSE - DAY

109 *

Antwone stares. Then very slowly ascends the stairs to the front door. Takes a moment once he's there, and then rings the bell. In a flash the door swings open. Nadine.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

NADINE

(without even looking)
If you selling shit, just keep on walking.

Antwone, rigid, stays silent. She peers at him, studies his face for a second, and then the jaw drops.

NADINE (cont'd)

Oh my God. Is that you? Antwone?

She beams, steps toward him as if about to embrace him.

ANTWONE

Don't-you-touch-me. Yeah, it's me, all grown up. I'd like to speak to Mrs. Tate.

She's speechless.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

You gonna get her or what?

NADINE

You want to come in?

ANTWONE

No.

Nadine exits into the house. Antwone looks around. Seeing it's familiarity he gets a chill. Then we HEAR...

MRS. TATE (O.S.)

Lord have mercy! Where that chil' at?!

Then the very elderly Mrs. Tate enters the doorway, all bright-eyed to see Antwone. He stands back.

MRS. TATE (cont'd)

Nigga! Come hug mi' neck!

Mrs. Tate steps onto the porch and throws her arms around Antwone. Antwone's arms remain at his sides. She releases him and Antwone steps back. Nadine enters the doorway then steps onto the porch.

MRS. TATE (cont'd)

(pleasantly)

Nigga. You don't know how to come home? Where you been?

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED: (2)

ANTWONE

(composed)

I came for one thing. Whatever you can
tell me about my real family.

MRS. TATE

I don't know nothing about your real
people.

ANTWONE

A name. A number. Anything.

MRS. TATE

I tole you No! Na' come along---

She startles. Because he's just shaken off the hand she'd
put on his arm to nudge him inside. And because she can
see the fire radiating from every part of him.

ANTWONE

I remember everything. Everything. You
could have helped me but instead you
beat me to dust!

Nadine puts her head down, tries to escape inside. But
the force in his voice stops her in her tracks.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

And you!

NADINE

(dismissing him)

I don't know what you talk---

ANTWONE

Yes-you-do. I was only six years
old...

MRS. TATE

Na' listen boy---

ANTWONE

(turning to Mrs. Tate)

No-you-listen-to-me!

MRS. TATE

(affronted; flaring)

Who the hell do you think----?!

ANTWONE

(exploding)

I-SAID-YOU-LISTEN-TO-ME!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED).

109 CONTINUED: (3)

ANTWONE (cont'd)
I'M-TALKING-NOW! THIS-IS-MY-TIME! DO-
YOU-UNDERSTAND-ME!?! *

Mrs. Tate and Nadine cower in the doorway, petrified.
Antwone composes himself immediately. Almost finished
here. Almost.

He steps closer to them. They shrink back fearfully.

ANTWONE (cont'd)
(the pride)
No matter what you did, how hard you
tried, you couldn't destroy me. No.
No. You see I'm still standing. I'm
still strong.
(beat)
And I always will be...NIGGA!

Antwone turns, fighting back tears. He walks down the
steps toward Cheryl in the car. Almost there when Mrs.
Tate calls out to him. He turns. See that Nadine has
fled. Hears Mrs. Tate saying something too softly to be
understood. *

He moves toward her. The woman looks shamed. Older,
smaller, more diminished and pathetic than ever before.
Her head down, mumbling, so that he has to move closer in
order to hear.

MRS. TATE
(barely audible)
Elkins, it was Elkins.
(finally facing him, finally
intelligible)
Your father's name was Edward Elkins.

Antwone, as these words rush jolt him through to his
core.

110 INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY INTO NIGHT

110

The desktop, as a stack of telephone books smack down
next to the phone. Antwone and Cheryl look at the clock---
just past noon. They roll up their sleeves and begin.

CHERYL
Yes, hello, I'm looking for the family
of an Edward Elkins.

Later, as the fading light measures the passage of time,
as their determination doesn't flag.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

That's right, he died about twenty
years ago, I'm his son and---
(reacting as he gets loudly
hung up on)
Thank you. Have a nice day now.

Later, as shadows lengthen, as Antwone and Cheryl keep
on.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

Edward. No. Ed-ward. E-D-W-A-R-D. I'll
try to speak more clearly.
(gesturing)
No. I'm not Edward. I'm looking for
the family of an Edward.
(having to laugh)
E-D-W-A...

Later still, as darkness falls.

CHERYL

Thank you anyway. You've been very
nice....Thank you.

She hangs up, rubs her eyes wearily. Stares at the clock.
It reads 11:20 PM. Antwone sighs at the open telephone
book before him, and wills himself back to work. Squints.
Dials.

111 INT. ANNETTE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

111

Dark, tidy, warm. ANNETTE ELKINS (40's) sits up, switches
the phone to her other ear. Alarmed and surprised.

ANNETTE

Edward? Who's this calling here about
Edward Elkins.

112 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

112

Antwone feels a surge go through him, one that reaches
Cheryl too. She freezes, looks over at him, reads the
body language.

ANTWONE

My name is Antwone Fisher. I don't
mean to disturb you, I'm just trying
to locate my family.

ANNETTE

Edward Elkins has been dead---

(CONTINUED),

112 CONTINUED:

ANTWONE

Yes, I know. A long time.

(quietly)

He was my father.

ANNETTE

(fighting it)

Wait a minute, who is this calling up
here outta nowhere, who gave you my
number?

ANTWONE

I got it from the phone book. I been
calling Elkins all day, all over this
city and state.

(softly)

I got no reason to lie to you ma'am.

ANNETTE

Well Eddie never mentioned no Antwone.

ANTWONE

I don't think he knew my mother was
pregnant. She was away in prison.

Annette rubs her temples, shakes her head. Feeling
herself start to sway toward Antwone, but still resisting
it.

ANNETTE

You know how he died?

ANTWONE

Yes ma'am. He was murdered by one of
his girlfriends. She shot him through
the door.

Antwone stands, heart pounding, his entire body tingling
as Cheryl scrambles over to hold him.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED: (2)

ANNETTE (cont'd)

Oh my God.

(pause)

What brings you to appear twenty-five
odd years later; in the middle of the
night?

ANTWONE

It's a long story, but I'm in the
Navy. I'm stationed on the West Coast.
I have to go back in a few days.

ANNETTE

Well, you gotta come by the house
before you go.

(pause)

Take down my address and come by
tomorrow.

Antwone nods, listens, writes. Then, interjecting:

ANTWONE

I have a friend with me, if it's OK...

(looking at Cheryl)

Thanks. I'm sure she's looking forward
to meeting you too.

Back to Annette, just as blown away as he is.

ANNETTE

If Edward was your father, you talking
to your aunt, you hear me, son? You
talking to your aunt Annette, your
daddy's baby sister.

Antwone, trying not to lose it, nods his head. Gently
puts down the receiver, turns to Cheryl in a daze.

ANTWONE

(in wonder)

I found them...I found them.

113 EXT. ANNETTE'S HOUSE - DAY

113

Antwone and Cheryl, edging their way down Annette's
street, checking house numbers against a piece of paper
in his hand.

114 INT. ANNETTE'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

114

Antwone and Cheryl are seated on the sofa. After a beat a
MALE VOICE is heard.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

SPINOZA (O.S.) *

I don't know. What do you think? *

Pull back to reveal, SPINOZA, JAMES, and Annette all
standing in front of the sofa, looking at Antwone and
Cheryl. *

ANNETTE *

Well there's one thing there ain't no
denying, he looks like Eddie. *

ANTWONE *

I do? *

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED: (2)

JAMES

Yeah, you look just like him. *

ANTWONE

Uh, I brought my birth certificate.

Antwone stands, hands it to James. *

JAMES

Born in '76. The year Edward died.

ANTWONE

He died in June. I was born in August.

ANNETTE

Now what you say your mother's name
is? *

ANTWONE

Eva Mae Fisher. *

JAMES

Eva?! I know Eva. That's Jess' sister. *

ANNETTE

Who? *

JAMES

Jess. *

ANNETTE

You mean, Fish? *

JAMES

Yeah. Fish. Jess Fisher. The boy's
name is Antwone Fisher. That's Jess
Fisher's sister, Eva Mae. You know,
Mae-Mae. She lives over there on Hodge
Street. *

ANNETTE

I don't remember no Mae-Mae. *

ANTWONE

So you know where she lives? *

ANNETTE

(pause) *

You don't know her? *

ANTWONE

No ma'am. *

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED: (3)

JAMES
You wanna meet her?

ANTWONE
(looking around a bit)
I, I don't care. Yeah.

JAMES
You sure? 'Cause we can take care of
this right here and now.

Antwone looks at James, then back to Cheryl.

ANTWONE
(uncertain)
I'm ready.

JAMES
Let me get my cap.

James stands to leave the room.

CHERYL
You want me to go with you?

ANNETTE
(sensing it)
No, why don't you stay here with me
baby.

JAMES
(comes to doorway)
Let's ride.

114A INT. JAMES' CAR - MOVING - DAY

114A

Total silence.

114B EXT. DILAPIDATED TENEMENT - DAY

114B

A blighted tableau. The car pulls to a stop by the curb.

114C INT. JAMES' CAR - DAY

114C

James gestures. This is it. Antwone breathes deeply,
looks at him for reassurance. Almost like a child to a
guardian.

ANTWONE
Not gonna let nothing happen to me?

(CONTINUED)

114C CONTINUED:

JAMES
(touched to his core)
No, Antwone. I'm not going to let
nothing happen to you.

He waits for Antwone to open the door. In a moment he
does.

114D INT. DILAPIDATED TENEMENT - DAY

114D *

The hallway outside Eva's apartment. James looks at
Antwone. And knocks.

EVA (O.S.)
Jee-sus Chri'....who that?

JAMES
Eva Mae Fisher? It's James Elkins,
Edward's brother.
(off the silence)
Did you hear me, Eva? It's James---

EVA (O.S.)
(sudden; accusatory)
Whatchoo want?

JAMES
Can we come in?

There's a very long pause, followed by a sigh of
resignation, then the sound of three locks being opened.
But not the door.

EVA (O.S.)
Can't get no peace, nuhn-hunh...

They hear her retreating. James turns the knob.

JAMES
Hey Eva.
(pointing to Antwone)
Who is that?

EVA
That's Johnny.

JAMES
No. That's Antwone Quenton Fisher.

(CONTINUED)

114D CONTINUED:

EVA
(loosing her footing)
Ooh God! Ooh my God! Oh no Lord! Oh my
God, please no!

JAMES
Who is Antwone Quenton Fisher, Eva?

EVA
(hanging her head)
That's my first born child. Oh God,
Lord have mercy no.

JAMES
(to Antwone)
Have a seat.

ANTWONE
I don't wanna sit down.

James sits at the table. Eva stands and walks around as if looking for something. She stops, looks at James, but is speaking to Antwone.

EVA
You want something to eat?

ANTWONE
You talking to me?

EVA
(looking at James)
Yeah.

ANTWONE
No.

Eva walks away from James circling her right ear with her right index finger, making the familiar "crazy" sign. Eva begins stirring a pot on the stove. The CLANKING sound is the only sound. A few long beats pass.

JAMES
I guess there's nothing going on
around here.

Antwone nods to his uncle that he'll take it from here, that he can go now. James looks twice to make sure. Antwone's certain. James steps back.

JAMES
I'll be in the car.

(CONTINUED)

114D CONTINUED: (2)

Antwone nods, sits down across from Eva as James leaves. Watches his mother as her wails become less pained and woeful as she works to collect herself. At last Eva stands. Moves to the stove, stirs a pot, making sure never to look at him.

He stands too. Approaches her, tries to make eye contact. She won't let it happen. Antwone swallows. The moment has come:

ANTWONE

(pained; haunted)

Why'd you never come for me?

A hurtful silence, and then Eva slowly puts down her spoon. And with that, she finally looks at Antwone directly for the first time. A looks that's curt, unadorned, without a shred of human feeling for him. Antwone feels a stab, but stands in.

ANTWONE

Didn't you wonder where I was? What I was doing? What I had become, or even if I was still alive? Didn't you?

Eva shrugs her shoulders. *What can I tell you, boy?* He looks at her, looks down, then looks out the window at the far end of the apartment. And begins.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

I've taken care of myself. I have.

Eva, head down. His tone is hushed, reflective, piercing.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

I've never been in trouble with the law. I've read hundreds of books, written poems, painted pictures. I've traveled the world. I've served my country.

Eva, not moving a muscle.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

I speak two languages; I'm working on a third. I have friends I can count on. I haven't fathered any children. I've never done drugs or even smoked a cigarette. I've made my way through terrible times and stayed strong.

(CONTINUED)

114D CONTINUED: (3)

Eva stares at her cooking. Antwone pauses, rubs a hand across his mouth. Steps closer to her. Beginning to tear up.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

I used to dream about you. My mother.
~~My mother.~~ What you'd be like, how
 you'd look, your voice, your smile,
 even your scent. For all these years I
 wondered, I dreamed. Didn't you miss
 me?

Eva. Still motionless. Antwone steps a little closer.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

On the way to school each day I'd
 imagine you were just around the next
 corner, and when I'd get there you
 would see me. In my mind you were
 always there---you just couldn't find
 me. So I'd race to the next corner.
 You'd be there. I knew you would.

(blinking)

You would be there. And you'd buy me
 ice cream. And then you'd take me home
 with you.

He wipes each eye dry. Quickly, without fanfare or
 melodrama.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

(just above a whisper)

I'm a good person. I'm a good man.

It hangs there. Every word. Then Antwone silently turns
 and walks out. Eva hears the door shut and, in tears,
 reaches for the kitchen table, trying to steady herself
 as she sits....

114E INT. ANNETTE'S HOUSE - DAY

114E

James' car pulls in front and comes to a stop. James and
 Antwone exit, making their way to the house.

They reach the stairs and take them up when suddenly the
 front door swings open and there stands Horace wearing a
 joyful smile.

HORACE

How you doing Antwone? I'm your Uncle
 Horace.

(CONTINUED)

114E CONTINUED:

Annette pushes past James and Horace and grabs Antwone's
hand.

ANNETTE

Get out of the way Horace! Come on
baby.

*
*
*
*
*

115 INT. ANNETTE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

115

Annette escorts Antwone through the entry-way into the house leading to two huge oak doors lined with relatives welcoming Antwone.

THE GATHERING

(whispering)

It's Antwone. Antwone's here. There he is...That's him...Looks just like Eddie!...My God will you look at 'em...

There may only be twenty-five or thirty there, but for Antwone it feels like the whole world is embracing him. The relatives follow behind him as he moves towards the doors.

EDA

I'm your Aunt Eda. We didn't know you existed. If we had we would have done anything to have you with us.

(pause)

We just didn't know.

JEANETTE

I'm your Aunt Jeanette. Come hug my neck!

ANNA

(hugging Antwone)

And I'm your Aunt Anna. How you doing boy?!

(pause)

How are you doing?

ANTWONE

(growing overwhelmed)

I'm fine.

SPINOZA

(turning to his wife)

This is my wife T.

SPINOZA'S WIFE

How you doing good lookin'?

As they continue toward the doors the others begin to greet him.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED:

EDDIE

I'm your cousin Eddie. My father named
me after your dad. This is my brother
Ray.

RAY

What's up man?

JAMES

The rest of you nuts can introduce
yourselves later.

(to Antwone)

We got something to show you.

They finally reach the oak doors and they are opened by
twins, one door each. Antwone steps into the room and
there is Cheryl waiting emotionally among the dozen or so
most elderly members of Antwone's family. Then Annette
pushes her way into the room and takes Antwone by the
hand and sits him at the head of the table that is
covered with steaming breakfast foods. Cheryl weeps tears
of joy.

Everyone crowds the room taking seats at the table and
filling their plates. Antwone looks over at Cheryl: she
smiles.

(CONTINUED) ,

115 CONTINUED: (2)

116	INT. JAMES' CAR - MOVING - DAY	116	*
	OMIT (Moved to 114A)		*
117	EXT. DILAPIDATED TENEMENT - DAY	117	*
	OMIT (Moved to 114B)		*
118	INT. JAMES' CAR - DAY	118	*
	OMIT (Moved to 114C)		*
119	INT. DILAPIDATED TENEMENT - DAY	119	*
	OMIT (Moved to 114D)		*

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED:

120 INT. PLANE - NIGHT

120

ECU on Antwone, so that for a moment we don't know where he is. Then, even after we widen to reveal him sitting next to the sleeping Cheryl in an uncrowded plane, we remain riveted to his face.

His face. Where the struggle to stay calm and self-possessed despite the power of the emotions rushing through him takes place before our eyes. Where we register the strength Antwone must draw upon to contain himself, to keep it all inside.

Until at last his expression gives way. And he turns his face into Cheryl's shoulder, closes his eyes, and we see the force of what he's feeling flood from every molecule within him...

121 EXT. SAN DIEGO PANORAMAS - NEXT MORNING - DAYBREAK

121

A series of still angles on familiar sights as the sun's just breaking over the horizon. The Naval base complex; the Belleau-Wood at its mooring; the beach; the coffee house where Antwone and Cheryl had their first date; the pier. Ending with exterior of Psychiatric Clinic.

122 EXT. PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC - DAY

122

In khaki uniform and ribbons Davenport exits the building and continues down the walkway.

ANTWONE (O.S.)

I'm not a virgin anymore.

Davenport turns and sees Antwone leaning against the building. He is now a second class petty officer, with two red hash marks, full dress blues and a dixie cup.

DAVENPORT

Glad to hear it.

Antwone walks over to him.

ANTWONE

I took your advice. I found my family.
(swallowing)

I found my mother. And she told me what I've always known---but never had to hear till she said it.

(beat)

In my heart I forgive her, but if I never saw her again?

He gestures to express it wouldn't matter. Davenport waits.

ANTWONE (cont'd)

(softly)

Funny, huh. To feel that way about your own mother.

(facing Davenport)

But anyhow I did it. And I owe it to you to tell you, you were right.

DAVENPORT

(as if jarred by this)

You owe me?

ANTWONE

You were right.

DAVENPORT

No.

ANTWONE

(affirming it)

I needed to go find them.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

DAVENPORT

(shaking his head)

If I was right, it was for all the
wrong reasons.

Antwone, struck by this. He doesn't move a muscle as
Davenport looks out at the gathering light.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

(so quiet, so still)

My wife and I were gonna have at least
six kids, maybe seven. Until we
learned that we wouldn't have any,
that my wife could not conceive. And
it gutted her to the bone.

(CONTINUED)

Davenport, a thoughtful, piercing, reflective tone we've never heard from him before.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

But I knew what to do for her. She needed treatment...she would have it. The best psychiatrist...the man who trained me. While I, the strong one, the well one...went about the business of killing my love for her. Very subtle, very slow...it was our little secret. You see my wife had failed me, and I'd have to make her pay.

(beat)

And I did.

Antwone, blown away. Davenport stands, walks over to him and addresses him directly, face to face, for the first time now.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

Until one day, when a young man came into my life and blew up that little secret, right in my face...and put me to shame in a way I never dreamed possible.

Antwone, feeling a lump begin to swell up in his throat.

DAVENPORT (cont'd)

And you say that you owe me? You've got it wrong. I'm the one that owes you...everything. You possess such a wonderful blend of courage, strength and tenderness. You're resilient, intelligent, and a very wise young man. You've beaten everyone who has ever beaten you. You're the champion.

Davenport steps back and salutes Antwone.

Antwone takes a moment, then returns the salute. Davenport drops his salute, then Antwone.

DAVENPORT

You hungry sailor?

ANTWONE

Uh, I don't know.

(pause)

I could eat.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED: (3)

Antwone and Davenport walk up the sidewalk engaged in
conversation. We rise up over the Naval Base and then the
majestic skyline of ship's masts is revealed.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

SUPERIMPOSE:

*

*In memory of my father, Edward Elkins, whom I never had
the pleasure and the honor to know.*

THE END