

NOTORIOUS

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INT. PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM - NIGHT

Today is the first party of the rest of your life. That's how this HIP HOP CROWD is dancing. Like the future is theirs. Beautiful women and sharply-dressed men grind, flirt and floss. It's the *VIBE* magazine party.

Suddenly, "Hypnotize" by Biggie Smalls ERUPTS THROUGH THE SPEAKERS and the surge of adrenaline takes the crowd to another level. There are no societal shackles or chains here. Free at last. Free at last. Thank God and hip hop, motherfuckas are free at last.

- LOS ANGELES. MARCH 9, 1997. -

CHRISTOPHER WALLACE, six-three, three hundred pounds, suavely dressed, sits at a table with the flashy owner of Bad Boy Entertainment, SEAN "PUFFY" COMBS. Both men have battled, taken the hill and planted the flag. Tonight, they toast each other with three hundred dollar champagne.

PUFFY

Let's change the world.

CHRISTOPHER

Can't change the world if we don't change ourselves.

They clink glasses.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Christopher ambles along slowly with his cane. He is flanked by friends, DAMIEN, GREG and CEASE. They walk to a green Suburban...

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - NIGHT

The Suburban drives away from the Petersen Automotive Museum and stops at a red light...

INT. THE SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Christopher rides shotgun. He and the rest of his friends are in a particularly good mood, laughing and joking.

Christopher looks out the window.

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - NIGHT

A BLACK CHEVY IMPALA pulls up alongside him, cradling a MAN whose face we do not see. A NINE MILLIMETER sticks out the window and FIRES OFF HALF A DOZEN ROUNDS. EACH GUNSHOT ECHOES LIKE A HOWL.

The EMPTY SHELL CASINGS fall to the ground in SLOW MOTION, hitting the pavement with quiet PINGS. SCREAMS AND PANDEMONIUM ENSUE. The SQUEAL OF TIRES as the Impala escapes away into the night. Christopher's head TILTS TOWARD CAMERA, lifeless. SUDDEN SILENCE. Then A SOULFUL GOSPEL SONG BREAKS THROUGH. "I want Jesus to walk with me. I want Jesus to walk with me..."

INT. FRANK E. CAMPBELL FUNERAL CHAPEL - DAY

A twenty-four-year-old SISTER sings. It is her voice we are listening to. This is FAITH EVANS.

Faith struggles to keep her emotions in check. THIS IS NOT A PERFORMANCE. IT IS A CONFESSION. "When my heart is almost breaking, I want Jesus to walk with me."

Christopher Wallace lays in a casket sporting a white suit and matching white derby. If gangsters could be angels, they'd look like this.

The chapel is JAM PACKED. A fire hazard. MARY J. BLIGE, HEAVY D, BUSTA RHYMES, MAYOR DAVID DINKINS, Puffy AND HUNDREDS OF OTHERS -- a community of sorrow.

Faith's emotion builds. The song reaches its climax. Finally, she breaks. Tears fall as she heads to her seat.

VOLETTA WALLACE, regal, late forties, walks to the podium. Her eyes are the only dry ones in the house. She is simply cried out. Voletta opens her Bible, reads from the Book of Job with a slight Jamaican accent.

VOLETTA

For there is hope of a tree, if it
be cut down, that it will sprout
again and that the tender branch
thereof will not cease...

As Voletta continues to read from the Bible, her voice is overtaken by VOICE OVER.

VOLETTA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I decided to read from the Book of
Job, not to comfort anyone here.
(beat --)
Half the people who came were
sincere.

VARIOUS ANGLES on distraught mourners.

VOLETTA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The other half came because it was
the place to be. Music people had
a habit of doing that. Being where
they were supposed to be.
Sometimes I resented them.
Sometimes I resented my Christopher
for getting mixed up with these
people in the first place.

Voletta closes her Bible. Heads back to her seat.

VOLETTA (CONT'D)
Theirs was a world where Black men
were called niggers, women were
called bitches and marijuana was
breakfast, lunch and dinner.

CAMERA MOVES IN ON Voletta.

VOLETTA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
No, I didn't read those scriptures
to comfort them. I read them to
comfort me. I read them because I
did not want to hate God for taking
away my Christopher...

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

A two bedroom apartment. Not fancy but nice. An honor roll
certificate from St. Peter Claver Elementary hangs on the
wall. COUNTRY MUSIC sung by Charley Pride plays from a
modest stereo. Voletta, twenty-eight-years-old, is at the
stove frying eggs and bacon.

- BROOKLYN. MAY 1981. -

Voletta walks across the room, puts food on her plate and on
the plate of a husky, ALMOST SEVEN-YEAR-OLD CHRISTOPHER who
has a LAZY LEFT EYE. She sits across from him as he starts
to dig in.

VOLETTA
 (sternly)
 Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER
 Oh, sorry.

He clasps his hands together and closes his eyes.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
 Heavenly Father, thank you for this
 food we are about to receive, for
 the nourishments of our bodies.
 Amen.

VOLETTA
 Amen.

Christopher begins to wolf down the food.

VOLETTA (CONT'D)
 Slow down, boy. You're gonna'
 choke.

As Christopher continues to eat --

CHRISTOPHER
 Ma, why you always have to play
 this corny ole music?

VOLETTA
 I happen to like this music.

As the tempo of the song picks up, Christopher jumps out of
 his seat doing his version of a square dance.

CHRISTOPHER
 Yeehaw!

VOLETTA
 That's enough.

CHRISTOPHER
 I made you smile.

VOLETTA
 I'm not that easy.

CHRISTOPHER
 Are to.

VOLETTA
 Try me.

He sits back down and the contest is on. Christopher and Voletta stare dead into each other's faces. Neither one flinching or blinking. His will against her will. Finally, Voletta bursts out laughing.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes! Yes!

VOLETTA

Okay, okay. But that still gives you no right to insult my music.

Christopher continues to devour his food.

VOLETTA (CONT'D)

Guys like Charley Pride tell stories. You could see what they're singing about.

CHRISTOPHER

Sorry, Ma. But all I see is corny. So can I have some more please?

Christopher holds out his empty plate. Voletta takes it and gets him some more food.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Voletta steps off the MTA Bus with Christopher. He's dressed in his school uniform, a yellow shirt, slacks and plaid tie.

VOLETTA (V.O.)

When I was nineteen, I came to the States to create a better life for myself. Before I knew it, I got pregnant with Christopher and everything changed.

Voletta walks Christopher to St. Peter Claver Elementary. She gives him a hug then Christopher bops inside.

INT. ST. PETER CLAVER ELEMENTARY - CLASSROOM - DAY

A Catholic school. Predominantly African-American. MISS SLOAN, a young White woman, walks down the aisles as the students take a test. Most of the students wince as if they are in pain. Christopher breezes through the test like it's the easiest thing in the world.

VOLETTA (V.O.)

I wanted to make sure he'd have the chance to create a better life for himself. And I figured a good education would be the key.

Miss Sloan notices him from across the room and approaches. She glances down at his paper, whispers encouragingly.

MISS SLOAN

I see you studied hard for this, Christopher.

Christopher looks up, earnestly.

CHRISTOPHER

No, Ma'am.

He goes back to knocking out the test as Miss Sloan, taken aback, walks away.

EXT. ST. PETER CLAVER ELEMENTARY - DAY

It is recess. Kids play basketball and freeze tag.

Christopher sits on a bench thumbing through a magazine with his best friend, HUBERT. They see pictures of The Crash Crew, The Funky Four, The Treacherous Three and The Sugar Hill Gang. Then, they come across ANOTHER PICTURE.

HUBERT

Yo, check out Kurtis Blow.

Christopher rolls up the magazine pretending it's a microphone. He raps.

CHRISTOPHER

"Clap your hands everybody,
if you got what it takes.
'Cause I'm Kurtis Blow
and I want you to know..."

CHRISTOPHER/HUBERT

"That these are the breaks."

They laugh and slap each other five. Christopher turns the page of the magazine and sees another cool picture.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, snap. Love Bug Starski. Yo Hubie, can I get this one?

HUBERT

Alright.

Christopher carefully tears out a picture of Love Bug Starski. At the last second, it rips. Hubert laughs.

HUBERT (CONT'D)

Dag, you fucked it up.

Hubert gets up, joins some other kids in a basketball game. Christopher desperately salvages what's left of the picture.

EXT. ST. JAMES PLACE - DAY

It is a neighborhood street lined with brownstones and small apartment buildings. Voletta walks with Christopher as she peruses his test. Christopher notices a souped-up Maxima with shiny rims parked at the light. The DRIVER is a cool and confident YOUNG BLACK MAN. His license plate reads, "Money." Voletta jockeys for Christopher's attention.

VOLETTA

One hundred percent. I'm proud of you, Chrissy-Pooh.

CHRISTOPHER

Ma, don't call me that anymore.

VOLETTA

I forgot. You're all grown up now.

CHICO, an eight-year-old Black kid, rides his bicycle over.

CHICO

Hey Mrs. Wallace, there's some nig... I mean, man, waiting for you in front of your building.

When Voletta turns her head, Chico grabs his nuts, taunting Christopher. Christopher grabs his nuts, taunting Chico.

VOLETTA

Let's go, Chris.

Christopher straightens up, goes with his mother.

VOLETTA (CONT'D)

Thank you, Chico.

CHICO

You're welcome.

As Voletta and Christopher near their building, Voletta stops stunned. A tall West Indian man, SELWYN, is there.

CHRISTOPHER
Who's that?

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christopher in pajamas, sits next to Selwyn playing Atari. They laugh like old friends. Christopher wins.

CHRISTOPHER
Yes!

SELWYN
Either I'm really terrible or
you're really good.

CHRISTOPHER
Nah, I'm really good. I beat most
of my friends, too.

VOLETTA
Okay Mister. You go brush your
teeth and get in bed. I'll be
there to tuck you in.

Christopher gets up, turns to Selwyn --

CHRISTOPHER
Good night.

SELWYN
Good night, son.

Selwyn extends his hand. Christopher looking down, shakes it. He notices Selwyn's OLD AND WORN SHOES, which contradict any status the man pretends to hold.

SELWYN (CONT'D)
Uh uh. When you shake a man's
hand, look him in the eyes.

Christopher raises his head and looks Selwyn directly in the eyes. Selwyn smiles. Then Christopher turns and heads for the bathroom.

SELWYN (CONT'D)
He's something else.

VOLETTA
Yes. He is.

SELWYN
 Maybe you should put him on a
 diet --

VOLETTA
 (of all the nerve --)
 Excuse me?

SELWYN
 Uh, nothing. You have any more
 tea?

Voletta gets up, pours tea in a tea cup, and hands it to Selwyn. He touches Voletta's hand as he takes the cup.

SELWYN (CONT'D)
 How about some sugar?

Voletta stares at him, then snatches her hand away. She grabs a bowl of sugar and slams it on the table. Voletta sits back down on the couch as Selwyn sweetens his tea.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Christopher uses Scotch tape to hang the tattered picture of Love Bug Starski. Through the closed door, he hears the MUFFLED CONVERSATION of his parents.

SELWYN (O.C.)
 Things are complicated, Voletta. I
 know you don't want to hear that
 but that's the truth.

VOLETTA (O.C.)
 Things are complicated for me, too.
 That doesn't mean I'm going to
 abandon our son for five years.

Christopher goes to his boom box, turns on the radio, moves the dial to 107.5, Mr. Magic's Rap Attack.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Selwyn holds out two hundred dollars.

SELWYN
 You want the money or not?

VOLETTA
 That depends. When is the next
 time you're going to see your son?

SELWYN

My wife and I... the divorce hasn't gone through. After that's done --

VOLETTA

You really are sad.

Voletta calmly takes the two hundred dollars from him, folds it up and places it back in his hand.

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

When I came to Brooklyn, Selwyn and I got real close real fast.

VOLETTA (CONT'D)

Good bye, Selwyn.

Selwyn, ashamed, picks up his jacket and walks out.

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

It wasn't till after I was pregnant that he admitted to being married. He wasn't man enough to accept his responsibility. So I vowed to become Christopher's mother and father.

Voletta closes the door after Selwyn. She stands angry as she wipes tears from her eyes.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Through the radio, Mr. Magic makes an announcement.

MR. MAGIC

(through the radio)

Time for Mr. Magic to pause for the cause and pay tribute to a true icon. Bob Marley was laid to rest today. He died from cancer at the age of thirty-six. Our prayers go out to the family, and Bob, this one goes out to you.

"No Woman No Cry" BEGINS TO PLAY. Christopher looks out the window and sees Selwyn walk down the dark street, back slumped over as he turns the corner. That dude might as well be dead. Instinctively, Christopher knows he'll never see him again.

He turns around as Voletta gently opens his door.

VOLETTA
You okay?

CHRISTOPHER
Yup. You okay?

VOLETTA
Yup. What are you doing?

CHRISTOPHER
Listening to Bob Marley. He died
from cancer.

VOLETTA
I know.

CHRISTOPHER
He told good stories too, right?

VOLETTA
Yes, he sure did.

Christopher, processing this --

CHRISTOPHER
So how come God let him die?

VOLETTA
I don't know.
(after a beat --)
But at least his life stood for
something.

They listen to Bob Marley for a few moments.

VOLETTA (CONT'D)
Time to say your prayers.

Christopher kneels down by his bed to pray as Voletta TURNS
OFF THE STEREO. He gets back up and climbs into bed.

CHRISTOPHER
Good night, Ma.

VOLETTA
Good night, Chrissy-Pooh. I love
you.

CHRISTOPHER
I know.

Voletta gives him a kiss on the cheek and tucks him in.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Voletta turns on the TV, watches COVERAGE OF BOB MARLEY'S FUNERAL. The pall bearers, eight soldiers dressed in white, place Marley's casket in a pick-up truck. Thousands line up along the sides of the road to watch the casket go by...

INT. FRANK E. CAMPBELL FUNERAL CHAPEL - (PRESENT)

Voletta sits in her seat, staring off in space with a blank expression. She turns as she sees her four-year-old granddaughter, T'YANNA, clutching the hands of her mother, JAN.

Jan is an attractive, heavy-set woman, twenty-six-years-old.

JAN (V.O.)

'Night before his funeral, Chris said he was fine. 'Said to stop tripping 'cause he was still alive. The messed up thing is, that was a dream and this was for real.

Jan listens to the musical group, 112, SING A TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER. She holds on to her daughter for dear life...

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BEDROOM - DAY

There are posters and cut-outs from magazines on the wall. "Beauties of the Week" from Jet. Run-DMC posing in front of the Empire State Building. A Mercedes Benz ad. Herbie Hancock. SALT-N-PEPA from *Word Up*.

The stereo plays DR. DRE'S AND ED LOVER'S Wake Up Show. AS A SONG BY RAPPIN' DUKE ENDS --

ED LOVER

(through radio)

We got some Hollywood news, Dre.

DRE

(through radio)

Yeah? What they doing in La La Land?

ED LOVER

(through radio)

Believe it or not, NBC is developing a new sitcom centered around the Fresh Prince...

As Dre and Ed continue to banter, CAMERA PANS to a boy weighing over two hundred and thirty pounds, laying in bed, eyes closed. This is CHRISTOPHER AT SEVENTEEN-YEARS-OLD.

VOLETTA (O.C.)
Christopher! Are you up, yet?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah.

VOLETTA (O.C.)
You're not still laying in bed, are you?

CHRISTOPHER
No.

- APRIL, 1990. -

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

Christopher puts down his knapsack, sits for breakfast with Voletta.

VOLETTA
Say the grace.

CHRISTOPHER
Good food. Good meat. Good Lord, let's eat.

VOLETTA
Christopher!

He laughs as he begins eating.

CHRISTOPHER
What? You don't think Jehova has a sense of humor?

VOLETTA
He must have if he made you.

CHRISTOPHER
You're a real comedian, Ma.

VOLETTA
Who were you yacking on the phone with last night?

CHRISTOPHER
Jan.

Voletta rolls her eyes.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
I understand. It's normal for a
mother to feel jealous when her son
cares about another female.

VOLETTA
Who told you that garbage?

After a beat --

CHRISTOPHER
Jan.

VOLETTA
For crying out loud.

Christopher laughs. He kisses his mother on the cheek, grabs his knapsack and heads for the door.

JAN (V.O.)
By the time he was seventeen, his
mother became a Jehova Witness.

EXT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - ROOF - DAY

Christopher emerges from the stairwell onto the roof as the blood red sun welcomes him. He walks to a corner where there is a pile of garbage bags. It is a makeshift tarp, covering something. Christopher moves the bags.

JAN (V.O.)
And while Mrs. Wallace was
protecting her soul, she was
worrying about Chris'.

There is a foot locker with a combination lock. He runs the numbers and opens it. Inside the locker, there are bunches of clothes. Izod, Fila, Adidas...

JAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But Chris, he had other things to
worry about.

Christopher takes off his grimy sneakers, stuffs his dogs into a bright white pair of Ballys. A gold chain and gold ring emerge from his pocket.

CHRISTOPHER
Shit!

Christopher has SMUDGED HIS SNEAKERS. It is a chink in his armor, contradicting the bad-ass status he is striving to hold. He spits on his hand, wipes off the smudge.

Then he reaches in his knapsack, pulls out a .45 and puts it in his jacket pocket.

EXT. FULTON STREET - DAY

Put the Jamaican patty store, no-name chicken place and Arab grocery on the postcard. Christopher stands there on the corner, sporting his jewelry as he plays dice with EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD CHICO.

CHICO

That kid, Ralston is looking for you. Talking mad shit like he's gonna bust your ass.

Christopher takes a swig from his can of Welch's grape soda.

CHRISTOPHER

Ralston? That pointy-head bastard?

CHICO

He's hunting your ass down, son. Like a gun slinger.

CHRISTOPHER

Later for him. I'm fixing to bankrupt your ass, Chico.

Christopher rolls the dice.

JAN (V.O.)

One day at school, Chris was fooling around in class, and his teacher got mad and told him he was gonna end up a garbage man. He went home that day and figured out a teacher made twenty-two thousand a year and a garbage collector made twenty-eight. So he went back the next day and told the teacher to kiss his black, garbage-collecting ass.

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD HUBERT runs down the street.

CHRISTOPHER

Yo, Hubie. Where's the fire, son?

Hubert slows to a walk.

HUBERT
If I'm late for class, my coach
gets on my ass.

Though they were home boys in grade school, their lives have
taken different paths.

HUBERT (CONT'D)
You all right?

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah. You?

An awkward moment as a CRACKHEAD walks up.

HUBERT
Yeah. We should play ball or
something.

CHRISTOPHER
Let's do that.

Hubert nods and jogs off.

JAN (V.O.)
Chris never had anyone around to
show him how to be a man, so he
learned how to do the things a man
does, on his own. As far as he was
concerned, a man held it down and
made money.

The Crackhead is a thirty-year-old man named, LENNOX. He is
not homeless or destitute, but well on his way. As
Christopher and Lennox slap each other five, Lennox slips
Christopher a twenty dollar bill.

Christopher walks to a gated window behind him where a small
brown paper bag is lodged next to his .45. He sticks his
hand in the bag, pulls out a couple vials of crack,
discreetly hands it to Lennox.

Lennox crosses away as Chico makes a transaction with one of
his customers. He keeps his stash lodged behind a loose
brick on the wall.

SANDY, a pregnant woman, rushes over.

CHICO
This look like a Lamaze class? I
told you, we don't hook up no
pregnant bitches.

SANDY
If you don't want money, I could
freak you. Any way you want.

CHRISTOPHER
Ohhh shit!

Christopher cracks up, almost in tears.

CHICO
With all the freaks that be out
here, why would I want to get with
a pregnant, crack-headed one?

Sandy backs away and walks off. Christopher jokes with him.

CHRISTOPHER
Why you frontin'? You know damn
well that's your wife.

EXT. AROUND THE CORNER - DAY

A fourteen-year-old brother named, CEASE, sees two uniformed
cops, GARCIA, twenty-eight-years-old, and WRIGHT, thirty-two,
pin Lennox against a wall. Lennox rattles off a few words
and they let him go.

EXT. FULTON STREET - DAY

Garcia and Wright SPEED UP IN THEIR SQUAD CAR and hop out.

CHRISTOPHER
Batman and Robin. Why you always
fuckin' with us?

Wright walks up.

WRIGHT
'Cause your big Orca ass is easy to
spot.

The cops throw Chico and Christopher against the wall and pat
them down. Christopher's eyes move to the gated window,
hoping they do not discover his stash and gun. The cops come
up empty.

CHRISTOPHER

Could have told you we was clean.

Garcia stands toe to toe with Christopher.

GARCIA

Your luck's gonna run out. Sooner
or later.

The cops turn around and head back to their car as both boys
grab their nuts in defiance.

The cops drive off. Cease rushes up.

CHRISTOPHER

Yo Cease, thought I told you the
corner ain't no place for you.

CEASE

You know that crackhead, Lennox?

Christopher nods yes. Cease tells them what he witnessed.

JAN (V.O.)

Chris created a family on the
corner. And on the corner, in this
family, he was the head of his
household.

Christopher becomes irate...

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Christopher, Chico and Cease corner Lennox against a wall.
Christopher pistol whips him with the .45. Then they kick
Lennox while he's on the ground.

INT. JUNIOR'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Brooklyn's super-sized coffee shop where New Yorkers travel
from all five boroughs to get a slice of cheesecake. Jan
sits at a table with Christopher.

JAN

Oh, a friend of yours told me to
tell you he was looking for you.
Some guy named, Ralston.

CHRISTOPHER

Ralston stepped to you? What did
he say?

JAN

He said you'd know what was up.

Christopher takes this in, seething. Jan looks down, playing with her food.

CHRISTOPHER

So what you being so quiet for?

JAN

Just thinking.

CHRISTOPHER

Think out loud.

JAN

All right. I was thinking about how we've been seeing each other now for three months. And how I really don't want to see anyone else.

CHRISTOPHER

Shit. My dumb ass just walked into the "commitment" talk.

JAN

Pretty much.

Jan looks at him, not letting him off the hook.

JAN (CONT'D)

So?

Christopher contemplates.

CHRISTOPHER

(talking himself into it)
All right... all right. Fuck it.

JAN

"All right, fuck it?"

CHRISTOPHER

I'm saying, I ain't trying to be out there like that. I'm committed to you if you're committed to me.

JAN

I'm committed to you.

As they gaze into each other's eyes, Christopher busts out a Marvin Gaye joint.

CHRISTOPHER
 (singing)
And when I get this feeling, I need
sexual healing...

Jan blushes.

JAN
 You are sick.

INT. JAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Christopher sits in an arm chair. Jan is on top of him. They get busy as Marvin Gaye plays in the background...

EXT. FULTON STREET - DAY

Chico mans the corner alongside SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD DAMIEN.

CHICO
 Look who's back from vacation?

Christopher ignores him.

CHRISTOPHER
 What up, Damien?

DAMIEN
 Yo, someone's been looking for you, kid.

CHRISTOPHER
 Don't say, Ralston.

DAMIEN
 I won't say it. But he's got the whole neighborhood thinking your ass is scared.

Something has caught Christopher's attention.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
 Yo, you hearing me?

CHRISTOPHER
 Look at these motherfuckas. It's like they're all going to a funeral.

Damien and Chico turn to see A BUNCH OF PEOPLE EMERGE FROM THE SUBWAY. They are predominantly African-American.

Some wear business attire, some blue collar clothing and some second-hand wardrobe. NONE OF THEM HAVE SMILES OR PLEASANT EXPRESSIONS. Zombies walking into an existence of bleakness. Their legacy of pride, hidden and trembling in shadows.

DAMIEN

That's just how people look. If they were walking around grinning from ear to ear, you'd think they were crazy.

Then --

CHICO

Ah, hell no!

Chico suddenly notices Sandy, the pregnant woman standing across the street. She'd sell her unborn child to get high.

CHICO (CONT'D)

You believe this shit?

CHRISTOPHER

Yo, I got it.

Christopher walks across the street. He and Sandy talk. They make a transaction and she walks off.

As Christopher walks back to his friends --

CHICO

The fuck did you just do?

CHRISTOPHER

Gave the rat its' cheese.

CHICO

How you gonna give crack to someone who's pregnant?

CHRISTOPHER

Someone's gonna get her paper. Might as well be me. Besides, I ain't get into this game to be no social worker.

DAMIEN

You foul, Chris.

CHICO

Yeah. You a foul motherfucka.

CHRISTOPHER
 We all foul motherfuckas.
 (then)
 I'm gonna go find Ralston. Ya'll
 coming?

Christopher walks off. After a beat, Chico and Damien follow.

EXT. FULTON RECORDS - DAY

RALSTON, a muscular brother with gold tips on his teeth, jokes with FRIENDS as Christopher rolls up with his boys.

RALSTON
 'Bout time your punk ass stopped
 running.

CHRISTOPHER
 Now I know you out your damn mind.

A SMALL CROWD starts to form.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
 You've been saying you're gonna
 fuck me up. So let's go.

Christopher and his crew glare at Ralston and his crew. KIM, a small, attractive teenager wearing conservative business attire and a Bloomingdale's name tag, walks up. Ralston plugs something into a boom box. It is a microphone.

A TRACK PLAYS and Ralston FIRES OFF A RAP, bragging about being Bed-Stuy's reigning champ. Then he cuts down Christopher. He says he is whack, fat, etc. It is a verbal assault and some in the crowd laugh with delight. THEN CHRISTOPHER TAKES THE MICROPHONE.

There is a light inside of Christopher, often too discarded to shine. However, the high beams are on right now. Using the emcee moniker, CWEST, Christopher BEGINS RAPPING. Verbally, he throws a jab, right-hook and obliterates Ralston. To call this a beat down would be an understatement.

Bed-Stuy has just witnessed the confirmation of the neighborhood's greatest rapper, leaving Kim and the rest of the crowd in awe.

EXT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - ROOF - NIGHT

Christopher walks onto the roof. He puts his Ballys back into the locker, puts his grimy sneakers back on and collects his knapsack where he puts his .45 back in. Then he places his jewelry back in his pockets.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christopher walks in. His mother calmly sits at the table, hands clasped.

CHRISTOPHER
What up, Ma dukes.

Christopher gives her a kiss on the cheek.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Man, it smells good up in here.

He looks at the stove, and as if he's Howard Cosell --

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, right here before your very eyes, Voletta Wallace has done it again. She has made her gold medal curry chicken, her gold medal rice and peas, and her gold medal plantains. And now, right before your very eyes, her fat ass son is gonna eat every damn thing in sight.

Christopher starts to scoop up food for his plate.

VOLETTA
Sit down, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER
One minute, Ma.

VOLETTA
Sit down!

Christopher, taken aback, walks over and sits.

CHRISTOPHER
What's wrong with you?

VOLETTA
Twenty days.

CHRISTOPHER

What?

Voletta hands him a piece of paper. Christopher begins to read it, knowing he's busted.

VOLETTA

You haven't gone to school for twenty days.

CHRISTOPHER

All right, look. I tried, Ma.

VOLETTA

What hell do you mean, "tried?"

CHRISTOPHER

I went back for three weeks straight. And I learned that two point six hundred and sixty-six miles is the minimum distance that Pluto is from Earth. I learned the Shang Dynasty in China ended in forty B.C. And, I learned that don't mean nothing in the real world.

VOLETTA

In the real world you need an education.

CHRISTOPHER

So I could end up like everyone else around here? People with college degrees living from paycheck to paycheck?

VOLETTA

How the hell do you know how people are living?

CHRISTOPHER

I know three people came to my class on career day. Some computer technician. A store owner. Even a doctor. And all of them looked like poor, broke-down niggas.

VOLETTA

Watch your mouth!

CHRISTOPHER

Fine. All of them looked like
broke-down "individuals." Maybe if
we lived next door to Donald Trump
or Bill Cosby, it would be
different. But I can't see myself
sitting in no school to end up like
them.

VOLETTA

Then you'll end up a bum. Boy,
don't you have enough sense to see
that?

Christopher pulls the jewelry out of his pockets.

CHRISTOPHER

I have enough sense to see bums
don't have chains. Bums don't have
rings.

He pulls out a wad of cash.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

And "boys" don't have money.

Voletta looks at the wad of money, shaken.

VOLETTA

You want to end up dead or in jail?
Is that what you're trying to do in
those streets? Get the hell out!

She pushes him.

VOLETTA (CONT'D)

You're a disgrace.

Christopher is stung by that.

VOLETTA (CONT'D)

I said get out!

EXT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Christopher walks out of the building, carrying duffle bags
and a suitcase. From above, Voletta watches him through the
window...

DAMIEN (V.O.)

The type of kid who came straight home from school, did his homework and spent the rest of the night reading the Bible, was never gonna be Chris.

INT. FRANK E. CAMPBELL FUNERAL CHAPEL - DAY

The service has almost concluded. Damien and the rest of the congregation line up to view Christopher's body one last time.

Damien approaches the casket, lets out a deep sigh.

DAMIEN (V.O.)

Chris wasn't no half-ass hustler.

EXT. FULTON STREET - DAY

Christopher is standing on the corner IN THE RAIN.

DAMIEN (V.O.)

He once told me rain, sleet or snow, a mailman may not show up. But a crackhead will always come.

A CRACKHEAD approaches Christopher. They make a discreet exchange.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Damien, Chico and Christopher share popcorn and weed as they watch "Juice" starring TUPAC SHAKUR. Christopher stares at the screen, entranced.

DAMIEN (V.O.)

But, I could see, something started rattling inside his dome.

INT. DAMIEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Damien sits on the couch, glancing at Christopher. Christopher sits on the other end devouring a pizza, drinking Welch's grape soda and intently watching a video with Death Row Records stars, SNOOP and DRE.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
 He started to seriously wonder if
 there was something else he could
 do.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

A crowded basement in Bed-Stuy. No air conditioning, just a couple of old fans. Damien, Chico and Christopher walk in.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
 It was like, we would show up at a party and one of the neighborhood kids like Jay-Z would be on the mic.

A TEENAGE JAY-Z ROCKS THE MIC.

DAMIEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Sometimes it was Busta --

A YOUNG BUSTA RHYMES ROCKS THE MIC.

DAMIEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And they'd have the crowd going bananas. Then before we knew it, someone would recognize Chris.

An outgoing teen named, MONEY L, picks up the microphone.

MONEY L
 Check it out ya'll. M.C. Cwest is in the house! Come on Cwest. Get up here and do some damage!

People in the crowd urge Christopher to take the mic. Christopher concedes and heads to the microphone, walking past Kim.

The D.J. puts on a NEW BEAT. Christopher begins FREESTYLING.

TIGHT SHOTS on the people dancing. Intense faces feeling his flow. However, no one's face is more intense than Kim's. She looks as if she's waking up for the first time in her life. As Christopher works the crowd into a frenzy.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
 Chris was like a cat dating two chicks. One chick was Hip Hop. The other chick was Drug Dealing.

CHRISTOPHER
 (to the crowd)
Say, make money, money. Make
money, money, money...

EXT. PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL - DAY

A Greyhound Bus. The destination sign reads, "Raleigh, N.C." Several PASSENGERS board the bus including Christopher and a tough looking guy named, ROBERT.

CROWD (V.O.)
Make money, money. Make money,
money, money...

INT. RALEIGH MOTEL ROOM - DAY

DAMIEN (V.O.)
 The thing is, hip hop was his chick on the side. Selling drugs was his wife. He and this cat named Rob, found out crackheads in Raleigh were shelling out twice as much cash for rock than they were in N.Y. So they went to see for themselves.

Christopher and Robert, using razor blades, slice crystallized rock and put it in vials. Christopher looks up, glancing at the TV. "Let's Do It Again" starring Cosby and Poitier is on. HE HEARS THEM MENTION A GANGSTER'S NAME, "Biggie Smalls." CAMERA PUSHES IN as Christopher pauses, taking this in.

EXT. RALEIGH DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
Make money, money. Make money,
money, money.

Christopher is on the corner making hand-to-hand transactions with CRACKHEADS who are White, Black, and Brown. Robert is on the opposite corner.

CROWD (V.O.)
Make money, money. Make money,
money, money.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
The money they were making in
Raleigh was no joke. But sometimes
when shit is too good to be true...

A BLACK GUY walks up, slips money in Christopher's hand.
Christopher slips him a vial. Then, the Black Guy shows
Christopher his police badge.

DAMIEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Shit is too good to be true.

Robert hurries away as he sees Christopher being busted.

INT. PENITENTIARY - DAY

Christopher, in prison attire, talks on a pay phone as other
inmates wait their turn in line.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
He talked to his moms every day
from the pen.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

Voletta is on the phone, READING from the Bible.

VOLETTA
Yea, though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death, I
will fear no evil...

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Christopher lays on his cot, staring at the ceiling.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
Then all of a sudden, Hip Hop got
sick and tired of being his chick
on the side.

INT. 50 GRAN'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

50 GRAN, a brother in his twenties, stands behind a pair of
turntables. Cease, Chico, Damien and Christopher mellow out
drinking forties and smoking weed. In the background, Mary
J.'s "Real Love" video plays on the MUTED TV.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
 In nine months he was out and I
 brought him to the basement of a
 D.J. I knew named, 50 Gran.

Christopher gets up and grabs the mic.

50 GRAN
 That mic ain't no toy.

CHRISTOPHER
 Good, 'cause I ain't playing.

- JANUARY, 1992. -

50 Gran smirks and plays a song called, "Blind Alley."
 Christopher starts RHYMING. After a few verses --

50 GRAN
 Hold up.

Christopher looks at him. Is something wrong?

50 GRAN (CONT'D)
 Shit. If you're gonna put it down
 like that, I gotta record this
 motherfucka.

Damien smiles. He knew Christopher would make a believer out
 of him. 50 Gran slides a cassette into the tape deck and
 presses record. Christopher starts RHYMING again.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
 The tape he made with 50 Gran got
 to another D.J. named, Mister Cee.

A FLASH OF THE CASSETTE BEING SLAPPED INTO MISTER CEE'S HAND
 GOES ACROSS SCREEN.

INT. MISTER CEE'S HOME STUDIO - DAY

MISTER CEE, a cool-looking brother with high tech equipment,
 pops ANOTHER TAPE in a tape deck.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
 Mister Cee wanted to re-do the tape
 with better equipment.

Christopher RHYMES as Mister Cee PLAYS THE MUSIC.

INT. SOURCE MAGAZINE - DAY

DAMIEN (V.O.)

Then he sent it to Matty C at the Source.

A FLASH OF THE CASSETTE BEING SLAPPED INTO MATTY C'S HAND GOES ACROSS SCREEN.

A young White guy, MATTY C, listens to the cassette. He bobs his head, digging the tape.

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

And Matty C got it to someone who would change Chris' life.

A FLASH OF THE CASSETTE BEING SLAPPED INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S HAND GOES ACROSS SCREEN.

INT. UPTOWN RECORDS - PUFFY'S OFFICE - DAY

Puffy sits in his chair with his back to CAMERA.

As CAMERA COMES AROUND, we see Puffy listening to THE CASSETTE, bobbing his head. He picks up the remote control and TURNS UP THE VOLUME.

EXT. UPTOWN RECORDS - DAY

Christopher and Mister Cee bop into the building.

INT. UPTOWN RECORDS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Christopher and Mister Cee stand greeting Puffy and ANDRE HARRELL, the well-dressed owner of Uptown Records.

MISTER CEE

Puff... Dre... this is Biggie Smalls.

FROM HERE ON, WE CALL CHRISTOPHER, BIGGIE.

Biggie's big hand devours Puffy's. Puffy is taken aback by Biggie's appearance. Biggie wears a bandana, camouflage pants and looks more like a liquor store robber than an entertainer.

PUFFY

Good to meet you.

BIGGIE
What up, yo.

Then his hand swallows up Andre's.

ANDRE
How you doing?

BIGGIE
It's all good.

PUFFY
Ya'll have a seat.

They all sit down.

PUFFY (CONT'D)
How long you been rhyming?

BIGGIE
Since I was a little shorty.

ANDRE
So you must have a whole book of
rhymes.

BIGGIE
Nah. I mean, I used to write
everything down. But Herbie
Hancock says, sometimes you gotta
go beyond thinking. So, that's
what I try to do. I don't think.
A nigga just flows.

ANDRE
You feel like flowing off the dome
for us?

BIGGIE
Right now?

ANDRE
Yeah. Right now.

BIGGIE
Alright.

Proving that this is off the top of his head, Biggie raps about having a flow that can last forever. He kicks it about being at Uptown. Then in his rhyme he says, when he shook Andre's hand, he remembered the only fucking thing his father ever taught him. "Look a man in the eyes when you shake his hand."

Puffy and Andre are blown away...

INT. SYLVIA'S SOUL FOOD RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The legendary Soul Food tourist trap in the heart of Harlem. Biggie, Mister Cee, Puffy and Uptown intern MARK PITTS, sit at a corner table.

Puffy looks at Biggie, takes in the whole thug package.

PUFFY
You still hustling?

BIGGIE
Should I tell you what you want to hear?

PUFFY
I think you just answered me.

BIGGIE
Look, if you got real paper coming my way, I'm out the game.

PUFFY
How old are you?

BIGGIE
Nineteen.

PUFFY
By the time you're twenty-one, I'll make you a millionaire.

Biggie looks over at Mister Cee -- "Is this guy for real?"

MISTER CEE
Yo Puff, Big don't need nobody gassing him up.

PUFFY
I wouldn't waste his time or mine.

The strength and cockiness in his voice silences them.

PUFFY (CONT'D)
Uptown's paying the bills but Bad Boy is my shit. I wanna make it like an East Coast Death Row. You feel me? But we can't build a label on an artist who's locked up or dead. Can we, Mark?

MARK

Can't do it.

Biggie takes this in.

PUFFY

We can change the fucking game,
Biggie. Change the fucking world.
But the decision is yours. Either
you wanna be on the corner or you
wanna be in the studio.

EXT. FULTON STREET - DAY

Biggie goes back to the corner, approaches Cease, Damien and Chico. He looks at them. They look at him.

BIGGIE

They want to sign me.

Cheers erupt as Biggie's best friends give him love.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Mary J. Blige, Mark Pitts, Puffy, PRODUCER D-DOT and an ENTOURAGE OF OTHERS sit listening to the PLAYBACK. Biggie sits off to the side, focused and bobbing his head. This is the "Real Love Remix."

PUFFY

(to Mary J.)

Whatchu think?

MARY

It's hot.

Puffy turns to Biggie.

PUFFY

Yo, Big. You ready?

Biggie nods.

PUFFY (CONT'D)

Remember. I need some happy shit.

Biggie stands up and takes the booth as if he is meeting his destiny. Everyone watches Biggie, wondering if he's going to step up or choke.

Mary J. eyes him... Puffy eyes him... the ENGINEER eyes him.

Biggie, fumbling to get the headset over his big head, breaks the thing.

BIGGIE

Oh shit.

People in the studio fall out laughing. The Engineer produces another headset and puts it on for Biggie.

As the laughter continues --

PUFFY

Alright, ya'll. Chill the fuck out.

The laughter subsides. Puffy turns to the Engineer --

PUFFY (CONT'D)

Playback.

The PLAYBACK kicks in and Biggie kicks his verse.

BIGGIE

"Look up in the sky, it's a bird,
it's a plane. Nope, it's Mary J.,
ain't a damn thing changed.
Kickin' ill flava, with the Teflon
Don. Record shop, getting props.
She got it goin' on..."

Biggie finishes his verse and comes out of the booth. No one says a word to him. Then --

PUFFY

Ladies and gentlemen, this clumsy motherfucka just got his cherry popped.

Mary J. gives him a hug and the rest of the applause comes chiming in.

EXT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Mark pulls up in his car with Biggie sleeping in the passenger seat. He looks over at Biggie who is SNORING WITH DROOL COMING OUT OF HIS MOUTH. Mark cracks the hell up.

MARK

Yo. Yo, Sleeping Beauty.

Biggie wakes up.

MARK (CONT'D)
We're here.

BIGGIE
Oh. Good looking out.

MARK
Don't mention it.

Biggie starts to exit, then stops.

BIGGIE
So this shit is really about to happen, huh?

MARK
You gonna be the biggest thing to hit the hood since the Jherri Curl.

BIGGIE
What about my deal?

MARK
The lawyers are working it out. Don't worry, your ashy ass is on its way.

Biggie laughs and heads into his building.

DAMIEN (V.O.)
Soon as Chris started to get his shit together, he moved back in with his moms. This time around, his mind was set on making her proud.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Biggie enters, heading straight for the fridge. He pulls out sandwich food. Voletta walks out from her room.

BIGGIE
Thought you'd still be in bed.

VOLETTA
I couldn't sleep. How'd it go?

BIGGIE
I just laid down a track for Mary J. Blige and she couldn't stop hugging me.

VOLETTA
I'm happy for you.

Biggie notices her cool demeanor.

BIGGIE
Look, Ma, I know I've been a big disappointment to you, but this music thing, it can help me be a positive person. Oh, and guess what my new name is gonna be?

VOLETTA
Christopher Wallace?

BIGGIE
Real funny. See there's some corny kid in Cali who calls himself Biggie Smalls. He had the name first. So Biggie Smalls is gonna be like a nickname I use. My new name is gonna be The Notorious B.I.G. Guess what B.I.G. stands for?

VOLETTA
Look, Christopher...

BIGGIE
Business Instead of Game.

VOLETTA
I went to the doctor today.

Voletta fights to maintain her composure.

VOLETTA (CONT'D)
They ran a bunch of tests last week and needed to give me the results.

Biggie hears the alarm in her voice.

BIGGIE
Tests for what?

VOLETTA
A lump in my chest. I have cancer.

BIGGIE
What?

VOLETTA
I have breast cancer.

BIGGIE
But, you're gonna be okay, right?

VOLETTA
They have to act aggressively if
I'm going to have a chance.

BIGGIE
If you're going to have a chance?

VOLETTA
My surgery is next week and --

Biggie slams over a chair. Turns away, pissed.

BIGGIE
Fuck... Fuck!

VOLETTA
Chris... Chris, I'm scared, too.
But God will see us through.

BIGGIE
God don't always do what he's
supposed to do.

VOLETTA
Come here.

Biggie can't move. Voletta walks to him, gently turns him
around.

VOLETTA (CONT'D)
Come here.

Biggie completely loses it. He breaks down in her arms.

EXT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT ROOF - NIGHT

Mark and Biggie lean against a wall, sharing a forty, not
uttering a word. Then --

MARK
I was only fifteen when my mom got
cancer. Fucking stayed on my knees
praying for her. After she died, I
was done with God. Ain't prayed
since. But... I'm praying. I'm
praying for your moms. Okay, Big?

Biggie looks at Mark. Then nods.

BIGGIE

Okay.

They go back to sharing the forty.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Voletta lays asleep as DOCTORS and NURSES perform surgery...

INT. FRANK E. CAMPBELL FUNERAL CHAPEL - DAY

Mark watches as Damien and other pallbearers carefully wheel the casket towards the exit. Tears threaten to fall from his face. He tries to remain strong.

MARK (V.O.)

I went to see his moms in the hospital. She made me promise to look after him in case she didn't make it.

The front doors of the chapel open and the pallbearers lift the casket.

INT. VOLETTA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

MARK (V.O.)

I told her she would live but that I would look after her son anyway.

Flowers and cards adorn her window sill. Biggie sits by Voletta's side, looking at all the I.V.'s hooked up to her. She opens her eyes.

VOLETTA

Hi, Chrissy-Pooh.

Biggie smiles.

BIGGIE

You know I hate that name.

VOLETTA

Oh. I forgot. You're all grown up now.

BIGGIE

The doctor says you're going to be all right. See, all that drama for nothing.

VOLETTA
Remind me to punch you.

Biggie laughs. Then he gently gives her a hug.

MARK (V.O.)
Mrs. Wallace was right. God did
see her through.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Biggie is in the booth as Puffy, Mark, Wayne and the Uptown
ENTOURAGE listen.

MARK (V.O.)
Now Puffy wanted to see if God was
with him.

BIGGIE
"I love it when you call me Big
Poppa, the show stoppa, the rhyme
droppa. Supercat pass the glock, I
see you shivering, check the flava
Biggie Smalls is delivering..."

MARK (V.O.)
The East Coast gave birth to hip
hop. But before we knew it, it was
the West Coast selling all the hip
hop records.

IMAGES OF WEST COAST RAPPERS FLASH ACROSS THE SCREEN. NWA.
HAMMER. DR. DRE. SNOOP DOGG. TUPAC.

MARK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Puffy set out to put the East Coast
back on the map and make Bad Boy
Records a household name. Biggie
Smalls would be his messenger.

Biggie steps out of the booth as Puffy nods his approval.
They listen to the PLAYBACK.

EXT. FULTON STREET - DAY

Biggie plays dice with Damien and Chico as Cease looks on.
Biggie sees Kim walk by and the two of them make eye contact.

With smirks on their faces, Damien, Chico and Cease stare at
Biggie. Biggie puts on an innocent face as if to say,
"What?"

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

Biggie and Kim kick it against a fence as a GROUP OF JAMAICAN BROTHERS play soccer on the basketball court.

KIM

Your boys are getting suspicious.

BIGGIE

That's 'cause your fine ass keeps popping up everywhere. I ain't sweating it, though. They never had a platonic relationship with a female.

KIM

Have you?

BIGGIE

No.

Kim laughs.

KIM

Looks like you miss being on the corner.

BIGGIE

Can't stop being with my peoples just 'cause I'm making records and shit.

KIM

So it's all coming together?

BIGGIE

(nods)

I'm on a mission. After my first album drops, I wanna set up a group and put down Cease, Chico and cats from the neighborhood. Gonna call them Junior M.A.F.I.A.

KIM

I got skills, too.

BIGGIE

What are you talking about?

KIM

I can rhyme.

Biggie laughs.

BIGGIE
That's a good one.

KIM
Whatever.

Annoyed, Kim turns away.

BIGGIE
Alright, so let me hear.

KIM
Why? So you could laugh?

BIGGIE
I ain't gonna laugh. At least not
to your face.

Kim takes a deep breath THEN KICKS A VERSE. Her voice has a nice quality. Biggie is somewhat impressed.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
That's tight.

KIM
But?

BIGGIE
But you gotta put more Bed-Stuy in
your voice. Shit out here is life
or death for motherfuckas. You
need to convey that.

Kim, accepting his challenge, kicks the verse with more "Bed-Stuy" in her voice. She awaits the verdict. Then --

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
All that sexiness and talent, too?
Damn.

Kim blushes.

EXT. BED-STUY STREET - NIGHT

The "Real Love Remix" BUMPS FROM A CAR STEREO as Biggie and Damien walk down the ave sharing a blunt.

BIGGIE

That shit is humiliating. My shit is playing on the radio and I'm broke as hell. I need to get back on the corner for a minute.

DAMIEN

Didn't Puffy and them say they'd drop you if you kept hustling?

BIGGIE

They also said my deal would be done and I'd be making real loot.

Suddenly, WHOOP. WHOOP. A police car converges. Oh, shit. Pure instinct takes over. Biggie and Damien bolt and turn the corner...

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - NIGHT

As they round the corner, Damien pulls an ounce of weed out of his jacket, throws the bag and blunt into the gutter. Biggie yanks his .45 out of his waist, dumps it into a mailbox.

Then Damien and Biggie split up, running in opposite directions. The squad car briefly pauses, then pursues Biggie.

Biggie, running out of steam, turns the corner and stops dead in his tracks. COPS stand there with their weapons drawn.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Damien and Biggie are both seated at a table, hands cuffed behind their backs. Biggie's old nemesis, Garcia, stands there enjoying this.

BIGGIE

The fuck you looking at, Officer Asshole?

GARCIA

I made Detective now. Thanks to you dumb motherfuckers, I may get another promotion.

Garcia pulls out Biggie's .45. It is in a Ziploc bag. He places it on the table in front of them.

GARCIA (CONT'D)

Ain't like when I was a kid. No sir. If you had a switchblade or brass knuckles, you were a bad dude. People knew to leave you alone. Now, we got thirteen-year-olds just waiting to cancel the big niggers on the corner so they could start running shit themselves. I mean, what the fuck is the world coming to when a drug dealer can't even walk the streets at night? Tell me Chris, what do you put on first? Your socks, your jacket, or your piece?

BIGGIE

I ain't never seen that gun before.

GARCIA

Really? So then it must be yours, Damien.

DAMIEN

Nah.

Garcia chuckles.

GARCIA

Okay, you dumbfucks. Let me tell you how this is going to work. One of you is going down for carrying an illegal, unregistered firearm. Which one, I don't give a shit. But no way both of you motherfuckers are walking out of here.

(looks at his watch)

I'll give you one minute.

Garcia exits.

BIGGIE

He's just trying to make us sweat.

DAMIEN

If we play hardball with him, he'll dust it for prints.

BIGGIE

We'll cross that bridge when we get there.

DAMIEN

By then it'll be too late. Look,
you got priors. You're looking at
five, easy. If I plead guilty,
they'll give me two and a day.

Biggie shakes his head.

BIGGIE

My gun. My bid.

DAMIEN

Listen to me. What you got going
on, don't come around every fucking
day. When a motherfucka like you
makes it, we all make it. You feel
me? You're not going back out on
the corner, Big. Not when you got
a chance to do something. And not
with me taking this bid for you.

Biggie is at a loss for words. Garcia comes back in.

GARCIA

So?

DAMIEN

Socks.

GARCIA

What?

DAMIEN

I put my socks on first.

Garcia smirks, takes a key and uncuffs Biggie.

GARCIA

I'm sure it's just a matter of time
before I see you again, Chris.

Biggie looks back at Damien then exits.

INT. HOWARD UNIVERSITY THEATRE - NIGHT

A banner reads, "Howard University Homecoming." A THOUSAND
HIP HOP HEADS stand at their seats, dancing as a RAP GROUP is
on stage.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark sits with Biggie as Biggie smokes weed to calm down.

MARK (V.O.)

Biggie would never admit to it, but for the first time, before going out on stage, I saw fear in his eyes. He felt like he owed it to Damien not to fuck up. He owed it to his moms not to fuck up.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

A RAP GROUP is on stage as Biggie nervously peers out at the audience.

MARK (V.O.)

I told him, he just owed it to himself.

Puffy walks up behind him.

PUFFY

Damn. That's a lot of motherfuckas out there. You ain't feeling weak in the knees are you?

BIGGIE

Me? Hell no.

PUFFY

Good.

Puffy crosses away. Then weak in the knees, Biggie turns back to the audience...

INT. BACKSTAGE - MINUTES LATER

The EMCEE holds a backstage microphone.

EMCEE

And now, coming to you from Bedford-Stuyvesant, Bad Boy recording artist, Biggie Smalls!

LESS THAN HALF THE AUDIENCE CLAPS. Who the fuck is Biggie? Biggie glances over at Mark, Puffy and Kim. They give nods of encouragement. Biggie hears the musical cue for "Party and Bullshit." He heads out on stage.

INT. THE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

From Biggie's POV, THE CROWD LOOKS EVEN BIGGER FROM THE STAGE. Biggie BEGINS RHYMING with all the Bed-Stuy attitude he can muster. He rocks Timb's, jeans and a loose-fitting shirt. Basically, he's dressed the same way he dressed on the corner. Cease and Money L (the guy from the local Bed-Stuy parties), walk out with him. They are his hype-men, CHANTING ALONG AS IF THEY ARE HIS CHORUS. The crowd is lukewarm. They are feeling Biggie out. He's going to have to earn this.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Puffy, Mark and Kim watch, hoping Biggie can win this crowd over.

PUFFY

C'mon. Go get it, Big man.

Then TUPAC appears backstage and Puffy greets him.

INT. THE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, a GROUP OF GUYS spill onto the stage as A FIGHT BREAKS OUT. Biggie turns, looking alarmed and unsure.

The crowd tenses up and some start moving to the exit.

BIGGIE

Chill... Chill...

(in a Rodney King voice)

Can't we all just get along?

THE GUYS WHO WERE FIGHTING START DANCING, and the audience realizes this was all part of the show. THE ENTIRE AUDIENCE LAUGHS. Biggie now has them eating out of the palm of his hand.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Tupac cracks the hell up, impressed with the gag.

INT. THE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Biggie is in the zone, in the moment. He could stay here forever.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

An after-party. Puffy and Mark are macking on WOMEN. GROUPIES and HANGER-ONS vie for attention. Tupac sits off to the side, sharing weed with Biggie.

TUPAC

On my life, your shit is gangsta,
partner.

BIGGIE

Man, I'm just trying to be like
you, Duke.

A HOT LADY walks by, eyeing Tupac.

TUPAC

I'm telling you, yo. Where you at
right now is the best time. When
you just coming up, slayin' cats.
'Cause once you on top, trust me.
That's when all the bullshit
starts. Make sure your ass has a
five-year-plan.

BIGGIE

I may not be alive in five years.

TUPAC

Well in case you are, have a plan
in place. Be clear on where you
want to be. 'Cause in this game,
motherfuckas wanna see you rise to
the top just so they can knock you
back down. Then you got fake-ass
bitches, fake-ass family, fake-ass
friends, all trying to get a piece
of you.

BIGGIE

If it's all bad, why fucking do it?

TUPAC

Why does a TV reporter stand in a
war zone with bombs going off and
shit? We hold a mirror up to
society. Don't ask me why we do
it. I just know that's what the
fuck we do.

Then Tupac glances at the Hot Lady.

TUPAC (CONT'D)
 Besides. How else can a nigga
 shine?

Tupac gets up and whispers to the Lady. They head to the back room together.

Biggie sits back checking out the whole crazy scene. Women glance at him flirtatiously and GUYS look at him with envy. He picks up the telephone on the end table and dials.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jan picks up the phone.

JAN
 Hello?

BIGGIE
 It's me.

JAN
 How'd it go?

BIGGIE
 Incredible.

JAN
 Really?

BIGGIE
 Crowd was going bananas. Even
 Tupac gave me love.

JAN
 Oh my God.

He sees Kim across the room and she sees him.

BIGGIE
 So I just wanted to holla at you.
 Gotta go, alright?

JAN
 Alright. I love --

But Biggie has already hung up.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The lights are off, streetlights from outside illuminate the floor where Biggie and Kim go at it. No music in the background. Their lovemaking feels urgent... like life or death... like Bed-Stuy...

BIGGIE (V.O.)

"Where Brooklyn at? Where Brooklyn at? Where Brooklyn at? Where Brooklyn at?"

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

The marquee reads, "Tupac Live."

HIP HOP HEADS lose their minds. This is where Ali once fought Frazier. Now the audience is witnessing two of hip hop's greatest of all time. Biggie and Tupac stand side by side, FREE-STYLING IN FRONT OF THOUSANDS. They share the stage with BIG DADDY KANE, SCOOB, and SHYHEIM.

BIGGIE

"Biggie Smalls; the millionaire, the mansion, the yacht, the two weed spots, the two hot glocks. That's how I got the weed spot..."

After Biggie devastates the audience, it's Tupac's turn.

TUPAC

"Let the cops put their lights on. Chase me nigga. Zig zaggin' through the freeway. Race me nigga. In a high speed chase with the law, the realest motherfucka that you ever saw..."

THE CROWD ERUPTS IN APPLAUSE AND CHEERS. Biggie and Tupac, feeling on top of the world, give each other a pound.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Fans crowd around Tupac and Biggie, getting their autographs. Adoring women overtly flirt with both of them. Biggie Smalls is becoming a sex symbol.

INT. JAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Biggie sits on the couch with a nervous Jan.

JAN
I'm pregnant.

BIGGIE
How you know?

JAN
I know, Chris. I went to the
doctor and everything.

Biggie stands up, stunned as he is taking this in.

JAN (CONT'D)
So, if that fucks up your world,
I'm sorry.

BIGGIE
Jan, if you're having my baby,
don't you know what the hell that
means?
(then)
It means you are my world.

Jan goes to him and they hug tightly.

EXT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

Mark and Puffy talk with Biggie.

MARK (V.O.)
While Big was telling us the news
about his shorty on the way, we
were telling him our news about
Uptown.

PUFFY
I got fired.

A FLASH OF UPTOWN RECORDS. PUFFY IS BEING ESCORTED TO THE
ELEVATOR BY SECURITY PERSONNEL. ANDRE WATCHES FROM HIS
OFFICE.

MARK
Dre told him there could be only
one lion in the jungle.

BIGGIE
What about my deal at Uptown?

PUFFY
There is no deal.

BIGGIE
Fuck!

Biggie takes in the hard blow, sits down.

PUFFY
Look, I got some things lined up.
I'm taking the Bad Boy name and
we're gonna set this shit off
right. I just wanna know if you're
still with me.

BIGGIE
Yeah. Yeah. That goes without
saying.

Biggie and Puffy shake on it.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

Voletta walks in surprised to see Biggie at the stove,
cooking.

VOLETTA
What are you doing?

BIGGIE
Making curry chicken.

VOLETTA
I see that. But why?

BIGGIE
We're celebrating.

VOLETTA
Boy, you trying to get us sick.
That's too much curry. Here --

Voletta moves in and starts taking over.

VOLETTA (CONT'D)
So, what are we celebrating.
Something with Uptown?

BIGGIE
Nah. Puffy got fired.

VOLETTA
What?

BIGGIE
But he's getting some other things
going. We're celebrating something
else, grandma.

Voletta stops in her tracks.

VOLETTA
Excuse me?

BIGGIE
I'm gonna be a dad.

VOLETTA
You can't be that stupid.

BIGGIE
Damn Ma. You ain't gotta talk to
me like that. Jan's pregnant and
we're ready to do this.

VOLETTA
Do what? Bring a baby into this
world that you can't take care of?
Is that fair to a baby?

BIGGIE
I can take care of a baby.

VOLETTA
Babies need food, diapers, how are
you going to afford all that?

BIGGIE
Puffy is gonna look out.

VOLETTA
Puffy doesn't have a job. Which
means, you don't have a job.

BIGGIE
Look, I wasn't looking to start no
argument. I just thought...

VOLETTA
I'd be happy?

BIGGIE

Yes.

VOLETTA

Don't burn your food.

Voletta angrily crosses away, leaving Biggie to mull it all over.

"UNBELIEVABLE" BY BIGGIE SMALLS KICKS IN. "Live from Bedford-Stuyvesant, the livest one, representin' B-K to the fullest, gats I pull it, bastards duckin' when Big be buckin'..."

INT. JAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

It is a mess. Dishes piled up. Dirty laundry. Jan, with morning sickness, is at the toilet throwing up. Biggie is in the bathroom doorway, not the allure he was hoping for.

INT. SCARSDALE HOUSE - NIGHT

The small house has been transformed into a full-fledged office by Puffy, Mark, HARVE PIERRE, NASHIEM MYRICK, D-Dot and OTHER BAD BOY REGULARS. Puffy sits at the head of the table, conducting a meeting.

He writes something on a legal pad and shows it to his team. It reads, "LIFE IS NOT A GAME."

INT. BABY FURNITURE STORE - DAY

Jan and Biggie are shopping for a crib. Biggie looks at an expensive price tag, feeling the enormous pressure...

INT. SCARSDALE HOUSE - DAY

The "Life is not a game" mantra is tacked to a bulletin board. As everyone else mans the phones, Puffy hangs another mantra, "ONLY THE FITTEST AND MOST AGGRESSIVE WILL SURVIVE."

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET (BROADWAY) - DAY

Puffy, Harve and Mark pass out flyers with the Bad Boy logo. Plastering it on walls, sidewalks, everywhere.

EXT. FULTON STREET - DAY

Biggie is kicking it with Chico. Chico makes hand-to-hand transactions. Biggie, eyeing the easy money is tempted and impatient...

INT. EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Puffy, as if fighting for his life, pitches Bad Boy to an intrigued CLIVE DAVIS.

INT. SCARSDALE HOUSE - DAY

MUSIC DIPS DOWN as Puffy stands next to Mark who is on the phone.

MARK

I told you to hang the fuck in there. We've been working day, night and everything in between to get shit going.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. FULTON STREET - DAY

Biggie talks on a pay phone with Mark.

BIGGIE

Can't keep hanging, yo. I got a shorty on the way and I need money like yesterday.

MARK

We have your money. Here, talk to Puff.

Puffy takes the phone.

PUFFY

Clive Davis just signed Bad Boy to Arista. Now I want you to say this, "Whatever money problems I was having, they're over."

BIGGIE

Puff, don't fuck with me.

PUFFY

Say it.

BIGGIE

"Whatever money problems I was
having, they're over."

Elated, Puffy screams into the phone.

PUFFY

Bad Boy, motherfucka!

Biggie laughs.

MUSIC BACK UP.

INT. ANDRE HARRELL'S OFFICE - DAY

Disgruntled, Andre Harrell reads the Billboard article
announcing BAD BOY'S MULTIMILLION DOLLAR DEAL.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Jan is on the table, screaming as she pushes out a LITTLE
BABY GIRL.

INT. PUFFY'S NEW OFFICE - DAY

Biggie is with Puffy, Mark, D-Dot and OTHER BAD BOY
EMPLOYEES. They happily toast with champagne and Biggie
receives his check.

INT. JAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Biggie and Jan trail Voletta as she walks to the baby's room.
Voletta is still angry at Biggie and Jan for being so
irresponsible. Then as she gets to the crib, her heart
melts. T'yanna, a beautiful brown baby, looks up at her.
VOLETTA IS SO MOVED, SHE BEGINS TO CRY.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Biggie on the mic rapping "Unbelievable." It's real now.
His dreams are in sight, his money is right and he's going
for it...

END MUSIC SEQUENCE.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Tupac and Biggie hang out. They have smoked a lot of weed and they are working on their third drink. THEY ARE TALKING DIRECTLY TO A VIDEO CAMERA.

TUPAC

We just here celebrating Biggie Smalls' signing a deal with Bad Boy Records, know what I'm saying? We're both under the same Zodiac. This is my Gemini twin.

BIGGIE

Truth that. True that.

TUPAC

Now I'm high as a motherfucka but we gonna do a little freestyle.

Tupac KICKS A FEW A CAPPELLA VERSES and then it's like Magic Johnson passing the ball to Jordan as Biggie SPITS LYRICS. They laugh, admiring and appreciating their own artistry.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

The limo rolls through the streets of Manhattan. Biggie and Tupac ride in the back.

BIGGIE

Big ups, dawg. On everything you've done for me. Know what I'm saying? Schooling my ass to the game, letting me share the stage with you so the whole world could see I'm the best rap artist in the game.

TUPAC

Next to me, motherfucka.

Biggie laughs.

BIGGIE

Keep dreaming. But I'm saying, thanks.

TUPAC

C'mon Family. You know I got your back. But yo, don't sleep on the five year plan.

Then Tupac notices TWO SEXY WOMEN exiting a store.

TUPAC (CONT'D)
Oh shit. Pull over!

The Chauffeur pulls the limo over. Tupac sticks his head out the sun roof.

TUPAC (CONT'D)
Yo, oye mami, what's up? Where you
fine-as-fuck bitches going?

The Women come over to the limo. Tupac and Biggie step out...

MARK (V.O.)
C. Delores Tucker, a female
activist, was not feeling how rap
artists portrayed women in their
music.

A FLASH OF C. DELORES TUCKER ADMONISHING TUPAC GOES ACROSS
FRAME.

The Women get in the limo with Tupac and Biggie.

MARK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Crazy thing is, Tupac would call a
woman a bitch and they would act
like he called them a queen.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Biggie is standing on the patio terrace having sex with one of the women. Tupac is in a room having sex with the other.

INT. PHOTO STUDIO - DAY

Puffy proudly watches as a PHOTOGRAPHER snaps photos of his artists -- rapper CRAIG MACK, singers Mary J. Blige, Faith Evans and of course, The Notorious B.I.G.

Biggie is supposed to be looking at the camera. However, he keeps glancing in the wrong direction. In the direction of Faith.

INT. PHOTO STUDIO - LATER

Biggie, hawking Faith, watches as she shows SOMEONE pictures. Biggie grabs two bottles of water and walks over to her.

BIGGIE
Puffy says we all family at Bad
Boy. So I figure, this is the
least I could do.

FAITH
Oh. Um, thank you.

BIGGIE
I just want to know why I'm the
only one in here you didn't show
those pictures to.

Faith laughs.

FAITH
I'm sorry. Maybe I have been
showing off a bit. They're of my
daughter.

BIGGIE
What's her name?

FAITH
Chyna. She just turned one.

Biggie looks at the photos.

BIGGIE
She's beautiful.

FAITH
Thank you.

BIGGIE
Like her mom's. Now I know why God
made men first.

FAITH
I'm scared to ask but, why?

BIGGIE
He had to do a rough draft before
completing the final version.

Faith cracks up.

FAITH
Wow. Does that line actually work?

BIGGIE
You tell me.

EXT. BROOKLYN PROMENADE - NIGHT

Lights from the Manhattan skyline reflect on the water.
Biggie and Faith stand by the railing, checking out the view.

FAITH

I sang in the choir. Since I was little, everybody told me I'd have a career singing. But, you know, I was always hoping to make my career doing the human beat box.

BIGGIE

I know you ain't trying to say you could beat box.

Faith laughs.

FAITH

Any requests?

BIGGIE

Give me some old school flavor.

Faith launches into a "Fat Boys" style human beat box. Biggie can't believe it. She actually has skills. He cracks up, then goes into an OLD SCHOOL RHYME.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)

Yes, yes, ya'll. To the beat
ya'll. It's like on and on and on
and on. It's like hot butter on,
the on, the popcorn...

They crack each other up.

INT. JAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jan irons some of T'yanna's clothes as she talks with Biggie.

JAN

You think we could go shopping this weekend? T'yanna needs some more dress outfits.

BIGGIE

I'll give you the money.

JAN

It's more fun if we go together.

BIGGIE
That's what I wanted to talk about.

JAN
Shopping?

BIGGIE
No. Jan, we need to take a break.

JAN
From what?

BIGGIE
Each other.

Jan stops what she is doing. She did not see this coming.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
Things are moving so fast, I'm just trying to not let this business run me over. Know what I'm saying? I need to focus right now.

JAN
Focus?

BIGGIE
On my career.

JAN
That is such bullshit, Chris! I was with you before you even became Biggie Smalls.

BIGGIE
I ain't saying you weren't.

JAN
You need someone in your life who's not fake. I'm not fake, Chris.

BIGGIE
I ain't trying to hurt you.

JAN
Fuck you.
(then)
I thought we were gonna actually be the one family around here that wasn't gonna split up. No visitation bullshit. No step moms or step dads down the line. I'm so stupid, it's funny.
(MORE)

JAN (CONT'D)
 Almost as funny as you telling me
 I'm your world.

BIGGIE
 At the time, you were.

The truth of that statement gives Jan pause. She decides right then and there, she won't fight to keep him.

JAN
 What about T'yanna?

BIGGIE
 I'd never abandon my daughter.

Jan takes this in, nods.

JAN
 You can go now.

Biggie kisses six-month-old T'yanna who's asleep in her crib and walks out.

INT. MARK'S CAR - DAY

Mark drives through Bed-Stuy.

MARK (V.O.)
 I could see that working with Big
 was going to be a full-time job.
 So I teamed up with my cousin,
 Wayne, and we became his managers.

Mark glances over at the passenger seat where WAYNE BARROW, late twenties, is reading "This Business Of Music."

MARK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Wayne was a former naval officer
 with a good business mind. But he
 might not have known what he was
 getting himself into.

EXT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

Biggie stands on the stoop talking with Mark and Wayne.

BIGGIE
 Me and Faith tied the knot.

WAYNE

Hold up. Are you saying, you met her a month ago and now you're married?

BIGGIE

That's what I'm saying.

WAYNE

In the Navy we would have said your fucking mind went adrift. Don't you know, the wrong relationship can capsize your entire life?

MARK

Point is, you don't even know the girl.

Just then, Faith pulls up in her ride. Biggie smiles, opens her door.

BIGGIE

Hi.

FAITH

Hi.

They kiss for a LONG TIME. Mark and Wayne roll their eyes.

BIGGIE

Mark and Popeye the Sailor over here think I don't know anything about you.

Faith takes this in stride.

FAITH

Hi, Mark. Hi, Wayne.

MARK

Hey, Faith.

WAYNE

Hi.

BIGGIE

C'mon Few, let's show them how I knew we were a perfect match.

WAYNE

"Few?"

BIGGIE
Faith Evans Wallace.

WAYNE
(sarcastic --)
Of course.

FAITH
Big, I don't want to do it, it's
silly.

BIGGIE
C'mon. Just a little.

Faith licks her lips then does her BEAT BOX.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
Yo, can you believe she knows how
to do this?

Then to Faith --

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
Alright. Let's hit him with the
footwork.

Biggie and Faith begin doing THE ROBOT. Mark and Wayne look at both of them like they're out of their damn minds. Then, they finish their routine with a dramatic pose.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
Now you understand?

After a beat --

WAYNE
In some crazy ass way, I think I
do.

That's good enough for Mark. He and Wayne get into their car and drive off.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Voletta, Faith and Biggie sit at the table finishing a hearty Jamaican meal. As Faith laughs --

FAITH
Wait. "Chrissy-Pooh?"

BIGGIE
Ma, why you gotta tell her that?

VOLETTA

There was a time you used to like that name.

BIGGIE

I never liked that name.

VOLETTA

(then, to Faith)

His favorite book was "Winnie the Pooh." And the boy in the story was Christopher Robin. So...

FAITH

I love it.

VOLETTA

Come. Let me show you some pictures.

Faith and Voletta move from the table and go through the photo album.

BIGGIE

I thought you wanted to go out.

FAITH

In a minute.

Faith starts looking through some old photos.

BIGGIE

Hey, Ma. Don't show her the one --

Too late. Faith cracks the hell up.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Biggie is on the couch, bobbing his head while Faith is in the booth, singing her ass off to the "One More Chance" track. They eye each other through the glass. She is singing to him. He feels every word...

MINUTES LATER --

The room is cleared. Biggie pushes Faith against the wall and they make love.

EXT. FRANK E. CAMPBELL FUNERAL CHAPEL - PRESENT

Mourners stand around, hugging each other in disarray as pallbearers carry the casket to the hearse. Faith looks around, witnessing the scene and it all feels surreal.

FAITH (V.O.)

One day I met Biggie, next thing I know, we're playing house. That's what our marriage felt like most of the time. Like playing house. And one of the rules of the game was that we could not spend quality time with each other.

She looks over at her two children, Chyna, age five and C.J., three-months-old, as they are being tended to by a RELATIVE. Faith walks over, bends down and hugs her children as her tears begin to flow.

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

Puffy had us on the road, in the studio, on set shooting videos...

Puffy comes over, gives Faith a hug.

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

We were everywhere except with each other.

The casket is slid onto the back of the hearse and THE DOORS OF THE HEARSE SLAM SHUT.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - BIGGIE'S ROOM - DAY

FAITH (V.O.)

For the first weeks of our marriage, Big lived at home with his mother.

Biggie plays a Sega Genesis video game.

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

He told me he was worried about his mom being without him.

THE DOORBELL RINGS. Biggie looks out his bedroom door, sees Voletta open the front door for Faith. Faith and Voletta hug.

FAITH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But I think he was worried about
being without his mom.

Faith goes into Biggie's bedroom and kisses him. Then she sits on the bed and plays the video game with him.

FAITH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It was like we were high school
teenagers dating each other.

INT. FAITH AND BIGGIE'S CONDO - DAY

A spacious condo. Moving boxes everywhere. Faith and her daughter, Chyna, unpack.

FAITH (V.O.)
Eventually, we bought a condo in
Brooklyn. Chyna and I did all the
unpacking while Big was on tour.

INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

Cease and Money L hype up the audience as Biggie raps. The crowd is dancing along as if every syllable is gold.

FAITH (V.O.)
When there was time off, we got to
see each other.

INT. JUNIOR'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Biggie sits with Faith and Chyna.

FAITH (V.O.)
Problem was, members of the group
he was creating were always around.

CAMERA REVEALS, seated at their table is Chico, Cease and Money L.

FAITH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Biggie said they were the
neighborhood guys who were always
there for him when he was coming
up.

INT. JUNIOR'S RESTAURANT - DAY

FAITH (V.O.)
But that list of neighborhood guys
kept getting bigger and bigger.

Biggie and family are seated at a table with FIVE Junior
M.A.F.I.A. members. THEN SEVEN. THEN EIGHT.

FAITH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And there was the girl in the group
who always seemed to have a stink-
ass attitude.

From the OPPOSITE END of the table, Kim looks at Faith,
glaring.

INT. FAITH AND BIGGIE'S CONDO - EVENING

The boxes are all unpacked and it feels like a real house.

FAITH (V.O.)
Big never got a driver's license.
He liked having someone there to
drive him.

A FLASH OF CEASE DRIVING BIGGIE AND FRIENDS IN A SUV GOES
ACROSS FRAME.

FAITH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He was the type of guy that needed
a lot of people around.
(then)
I didn't.

Faith and Chyna sit with each other, eating dinner. The
DOORBELL RINGS. Faith looks through the peephole, surprised.
She opens the door to find Jan and one-and-a-half-year-old
T'yanna there.

FAITH (CONT'D)
Yes?

JAN (V.O.)
Is Chris home?

FAITH
No.

JAN
You know when he'll be back?

FAITH
No.

JAN
Can you give him a message for me?

FAITH
I'm listening.

JAN
Tell him he needs to visit his
daughter.
(then)
C'mon T'yanna.

Jan walks off.

INT. CONCERT HALL - DAY

Biggie is on stage, RAPPING with Kim and the Junior
M.A.F.I.A. As hardcore as Kim is on stage, the love she has
for Biggie is in her eyes.

DEBBIE, an overly enthused fan, SCREAMS from the audience.

DEBBIE
Oh my God! I love you! I love
you, Biggie Smalls!

Kim looks at Debbie, annoyed.

INT. BIGGIE AND FAITH'S CONDO/BIGGIE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Faith is on the phone with Biggie.

BIGGIE
We killed them.

FAITH
For real?

BIGGIE
I had females crying for me like I
was Michael Jackson and shit.

FAITH
Well, tell them hoes to beat it.

BIGGIE
That's cold.

FAITH
Anyway, I'm proud of you, baby.

BIGGIE
Thanks Few.

FAITH
Big, maybe you should visit your daughter.

BIGGIE
What? Where's that coming from?

FAITH
Jan came by with her.

BIGGIE
Was she rude?

FAITH
Not rude enough to hurt my feelings.

BIGGIE
I'll go see her soon. Oh, listen. Mark met some chick and I'm going to let them use my suite tonight. So don't bother calling over here, alright?

FAITH
You're letting Mark use your room?

BIGGIE
Yeah, I mean, it ain't that big of a deal.

FAITH
Sounds stupid. That's all.

BIGGIE
That's 'cause it is stupid. But I already told his ass yes.

Reluctantly --

FAITH
Alright. Well, I love you.

BIGGIE
Yeah. I love you, too.

Biggie hangs up. Then Faith hangs up, suspicious. She sits there a moment, contemplating. She picks the phone back up and dials a number.

FAITH
Hi. Can you watch Chyna?

EXT. KENNEDY AIRPORT - DAY

Faith gets out of a cab, marches to the airport...

EXT. ATLANTA HOTEL - DAY

Faith gets out of another cab, marches to the hotel...

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

Faith gets off of the elevator, marches to a room and knocks on the door. She covers the peephole with her hand. No answer. She knocks harder this time.

A WOMAN answers back.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Yes.

FAITH
Housekeeping.

WOMAN'S VOICE
No thank you.

FAITH
Sorry Ma'am, I can't hear you through the door.

Faith hears the door BEING UNLOCKED. It cracks open and standing there wearing practically nothing is Debbie, the super enthused fan.

WOMAN
I said...

Faith pushes the door open and goes inside.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Biggie, half-naked, jumps out of bed.

BIGGIE

Shit!

Faith grabs Debbie by her hair with one hand and punches her in the face with the other.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)

Fay! Fay, wait!

Faith beats her down, shoves the woman to the floor leaving her a bloody mess.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)

Damn, Fay, I wasn't even fucking her.

Faith, looking at her half-naked husband --

FAITH

No? Well, too bad 'cause you should have been.

Faith steps over Debbie and storms out.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

FAITH (V.O.)

I guess the one I should have beat down was Big. But I knew there were females out there throwing their ass in his face. It was more of an ego thing than anything else. Like letting these females know, they couldn't snatch what I got.

Chyna goes down a slide and Faith is there to catch her.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - DAY

FAITH (V.O.)

But as big as my ego was, it wasn't shit compared to Big's.

Chyna eats a popsicle as she walks down the street with Faith. Then --

MAN'S VOICE

Faith? Is that you?

Faith turns around, sees a guy named, MEL.

FAITH
Mel? Oh my God.

Faith and Mel hug.

MEL
How is everything? You know our
choir ain't the same without you.

Suddenly, Biggie calls out.

BIGGIE (O.C.)
Yo, Fay! Yo! Fay!

Biggie sits in the passenger seat of an SUV driven by Cease.
Chico and TWO OTHER JUNIOR M.A.F.I.A. MEMBERS sit in the
back.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
Yo, Fay! Let me hold Chyna a
minute!

Faith, somewhat embarrassed --

FAITH
I'm sorry, Mel. Hold on for a
second.

Faith picks up Chyna, walks to Biggie and glares at him.

FAITH (CONT'D)
When did you get back?

BIGGIE
Just now. Ain't you glad to see
me?

Biggie gently grabs Chyna and gives her a kiss as the other
four guys hop out of the SUV.

They rush to Mel and ATTACK HIM with punches and choke holds.

FAITH
Wait! Stop! What the hell are you
doing?

They beat Mel good and leave him on the ground, moaning.
Faith angrily runs back to Biggie.

FAITH (CONT'D)
(to Biggie)
What the hell is wrong with you!
That's my friend from church.

BIGGIE
Were you fucking him?

FAITH
No!

BIGGIE
Well, you should have been.

Biggie puts Chyna back down on the ground and drives off with his crew.

EXT. MANSION - DUSK

- 1994. -

An impressive, contemporary WHITE MANSION IN THE HAMPTONS. A VIDEO CREW rushes around and a MAKE-UP ARTIST puts powder on Voletta's face. She stands against a rail with the setting sun behind her.

Puffy is behind the camera, directing. He turns to Biggie.

PUFFY
Yo Big, you sure your moms is okay?
She's looking stressed and shit.

BIGGIE
Let me talk to her.

Biggie crosses to Voletta.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
You alright Ma Duke?

VOLETTA
Puffy wants me to stand out here reading this magazine. If I'm going to read a magazine, I'll do it in my living room, not at some stranger's house in the Hamptons.

BIGGIE
It's called acting.

VOLETTA
It doesn't feel right.

BIGGIE
Why? You don't think I'm capable of buying a crib like this?

VOLETTA

I think you're capable of anything,
Christopher.

(then)

I always have.

Voletta finds herself getting emotional.

BIGGIE

Hold up, Ma. Don't tell me you're
crying.

Voletta wipes away her tears.

VOLETTA

I'm sorry. I was just thinking
about how far you've come.

BIGGIE

That's all Puffy wants you to do.
Think about how far I've come.
Only smile. Angela Bassett ain't
got nothing on you. Okay?

VOLETTA

Okay.

Biggie kisses his mom, crosses back to Puffy and nods.

PUFFY

You ready Ms. Wallace?

VOLETTA

Yes.

PUFFY

Start the playback!

The PLAYBACK kicks in. It is "Juicy."

PUFFY (CONT'D)

Action!

Voletta holds the magazine in front of her as Biggie's voice is heard on the PLAYBACK. "...Now my moms pimps a AC' with minks on her back. And she loves to show me off, of course. Smiles every time my face is up in The Source..." Voletta lowers the magazine and gives a smile of pride towards the camera.

PUFFY (CONT'D)

Cut!

Everyone claps for Voletta.

MUSIC DIPS DOWN BUT CONTINUES...

EXT. TOWER RECORDS - DAY

FAITH (V.O.)

By the time Big's album dropped, it was like the crack epidemic all over again. Only this time, they were addicted to his voice.

HUNDREDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE stand in line, waiting to go inside.

CHORUS: "You know very well who you are. Don't let 'em hold you down, reach for the stars..."

INT. TOWER RECORDS - DAY

FAITH (V.O.)

Big wasn't just putting clever lyrics together. He was telling stories. You could picture everything he was saying.

BIGGIE: "And if you don't know now you know..."

Mark and Wayne stand off to the side as Biggie sits at a table signing copies of his CD "Ready to Die." There are so many fans here, it seems as though the line will never end. And Biggie, cool as can be, welcomes his fans well aware that this is where he should be.

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

And once the world heard "Juicy," hip hop was changed forever.

A FLASH OF BIGGIE PERFORMING "JUICY" IN FRONT OF AN ELATED AUDIENCE. He is no longer wearing jeans and Timbs. He is draped in leather and sports Versace sunshades. "I made the change from common to thief, to up close and personal with Robin Leach..."

AUDIENCE MEMBERS RECITE THE LYRICS WITH HIM. IT NO LONGER FEELS LIKE A CONCERT. IT FEELS LIKE A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

A FLASH OF SUBURBAN WHITE GIRLS BLASTING "JUICY" FROM THEIR CAR. "Lunches, brunches, interviews by the pool, considered a fool 'cause I dropped out of high school. Stereotypes of a Black male misunderstood, and it's still all good."

A FLASH OF TWO LITTLE BOYS THUMBING THROUGH VIBE MAGAZINE AND RECITING BIGGIE'S TRUTH ALONG WITH HIS VOICE. "Super Nintendo, Sega Genesis. When I was dead broke, man I couldn't picture this..."

AS THE MUSIC SLOWLY FADES AWAY...

FAITH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Hip hop had its national anthem.
Twenty-five years ago, Shaft was
the baddest brother in the hood.
Now, it was Biggie Smalls.

An OLDER WOMAN in the Tower Records line talks to Biggie.

OLDER WOMAN
(tearful)
My grandson was killed selling
drugs. If he would have heard your
song, maybe he'd still be alive
today.

She hugs Biggie. Then a ROUGH LOOKING GUY approaches Biggie.

ROUGH GUY
Yo partner, thanks for representing
for all us niggas out on the
corner, hustling. Most people
don't know what we go through.

FAITH (V.O.)
Big was just trying to make music.
But people that were selling drugs
thought Big was a role model. And
people that were against drugs,
thought Big was a role model.

As Biggie has his head down --

MAN (O.C.)
I just want to say that I think you
are so sexy...

Biggie looks up and sees Damien standing there in line, pretending to be a fan. His two year bid is over. Immediately, Biggie embraces him.

A FLASH OF BILLBOARD MAGAZINE. IT RANKS "JUICY" AS THE NUMBER ONE RAP SONG AHEAD OF SNOOP, TUPAC AND EVERYONE ELSE.

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL - NIGHT

Biggie, Cease, Chico and Damien sit in a luxurious suite smoking weed and drinking champagne.

DAMIEN

Fuck. Since I've been locked up,
you niggas been living like this?

BIGGIE

It ain't like this every day. Puff
had me doing press and shit.
Niggas ain't trying to come to Bed-
Stuy to interview your ass.

In the background, Richard Pryor's "Live On the Sunset Strip" plays. The volume is down low. They barely pay attention as Pryor, in his legendary concert, talks about going to the Motherland. "And the voices said, do you see any niggers? And I said, no... I've been here three weeks and I ain't even said the word..."

CEASE

You know we been holding a spot for
you in Junior M.A.F.I.A.

DAMIEN

The fuck for? I ain't a nigga who
can rap.

CHICO

There's other shit you could do.

BIGGIE

You could be their manager, nigga.

DAMIEN

What does a manager do?

CHICO

Most important thing a manager does
is make sure the finest freaks come
back to the dressing room.

They laugh.

BIGGIE

Hold up. Let me get a minute with
D.

CEASE

Alright. Welcome home, nigga.

DAMIEN

Thanks.

CHICO

Real good seeing you again, nigga.
Catch you later.

DAMIEN

Yeah, nigga. I'll get with you.

Chico and Cease exit. Biggie turns off Richard Pryor.

BIGGIE

D, ain't a day go by I don't think
about what you did.

DAMIEN

Just did what needed to be done.

BIGGIE

Yo, I set something aside for you.

Biggie hands Damien a manila envelope. Damien opens it to
find thousands of dollars.

DAMIEN

I didn't do it for a pay-off.

BIGGIE

Don't matter. It's yours.

Biggie and Damien hug.

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Clothes are on the floor.

KIM (O.C.)

Don't your wife miss you?

BIGGIE (O.C.)

Why you want to talk about her?

KIM (O.C.)

I just wanna know if she does you
like this...

CAMERA MOVES INTO THE HOTEL BATHROOM. Off the REFLECTION on
the mirror, we see Kim make love to Biggie in the tub...

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL - AN HOUR LATER

Kim is in bed with Biggie, laying on his chest. Biggie's CELL PHONE RINGS. He grabs it.

BIGGIE
Yeah?... Maybe I ain't been
answering my phone 'cause I been
busy... What?... You sure?

Biggie hangs up.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
Shit.

KIM
What's wrong?

BIGGIE
You gotta go.

KIM
What?

Biggie rushes around, throwing her clothes at her.

BIGGIE
Mark says Faith is coming up.

KIM
So, let her come.

BIGGIE
Don't fuck around.

KIM
What you see in her that you don't
see in me?

BIGGIE
I said, get your shit on bitch!

Kim is taken aback by his tone. Biggie feels bad.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
Look --

Kim angrily turns away, gets her clothes back on.

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kim is waiting for the elevator. It arrives and she steps on just seconds before another elevator arrives. Faith steps off and walks down the hall. THE DOORS TO KIM'S ELEVATOR HAVE NOT CLOSED YET.

As Faith walks down the hall, instinctively she turns around and the doors to Kim's elevator close in the nick of time.

Faith knocks on Biggie's door. The door opens and Biggie stands in the doorway acting groggy.

BIGGIE

Hey, baby.

INT. QUAD RECORDING STUDIOS - NIGHT

A WHOLE ENTOURAGE OF PEOPLE, Biggie, Andre Harrell, Junior M.A.F.I.A. and Puffy. Lil' Kim is in the booth recording her verse for "Player's Anthem."

Biggie is on the board, supervising with "UN"RIVERA and Puffy.

LIL' KIM

"No question, confession, yes it's
the lyrical. Bitches squeeze your
tits, niggas grab your genitals..."

In mid-rhyme, Biggie stops her.

BIGGIE

Nah. That's not working.

LIL' KIM

What do you mean?

BIGGIE

Ain't the way I wrote it.

LIL' KIM

I know. I changed it.

BIGGIE

Change it back.

LIL' KIM

What about my voice? It's my record.

BIGGIE

Yo, I'm running Junior M.A.F.I.A.
So stop being so fucking difficult.
When I tell Cease to do something --

LIL' KIM

Well, I ain't Cease, nigga!

BIGGIE

Damn it, bitch!

LIL' KIM

Who you calling a bitch, nigga! I
didn't hear you talk this shit when
you were eating my pussy.

Guests turn their heads. Biggie pulls Kim to the side.

BIGGIE

What the fuck was I supposed to do?
Faith is my wife.

LIL' KIM

I thought if I didn't pressure you,
we'd build something special.
Something where I wouldn't be
treated as some fucking ho in your
hotel room.

BIGGIE

Yo. I really can't deal with this
shit right now.

Kim's bluster disappears. She starts CRYING. She's suddenly
like a little girl.

LIL' KIM

I always do for niggas. And nobody
ever does for me. And I'm sick of
that shit! I'm fuckin' sick of it.

She storms off, slamming the door behind her. Cease looks
over, shakes his head.

EXT. QUAD RECORDING STUDIOS - ROOF - NIGHT

Cease is on the roof, smoking a blunt. He looks down,
spotting a familiar face.

CEASE

Yo, Pac!

EXT. QUAD RECORDING STUDIOS - NIGHT

Tupac is with his friends, STRETCH, FRED, and ZANE. He looks up at Cease.

TUPAC
Yo, what up Cease!

CEASE
What up? You coming up now?

TUPAC
Yeah!

CEASE
Alright, I'll let them know you're here.

Tupac walks into the building.

INT. QUAD RECORDING STUDIOS - NIGHT

Andre and Puffy huddle off to the side.

ANDRE
I knew you was ready to fly. Just wanted you to do it on your own.

PUFFY
So you were doing me a favor when you gave me the ax? 'Cause it didn't sound that way.

ANDRE
So call it tough love. I wouldn't want no hard feelings between us.

PUFFY
Don't sweat it. We good, Dre. We good.

As Biggie plays back Lil' Kim's track, Cease walks in.

CEASE
Yo, I just seen Pac downstairs, he's coming up.

Biggie nods.

BIGGIE
Cool.

INT. QUAD RECORDING STUDIOS - LOBBY - NIGHT

Tupac and his boys walk in past a MAN wearing army fatigues and a hat down low. They head to the elevator walking past a SECOND MAN at a table who is reading a newspaper. He's also wearing army fatigues.

Tupac presses the "up" button, waits for the elevator. Suddenly, THE MAN who was at the door rushes in the lobby wielding a NINE MILLIMETER. THE SECOND MAN also pulls out a NINE.

MAN
Everybody on the floor! You know
what time it is!

Tupac, shell-shocked, doesn't move. His friends drop to the floor like a sack of potatoes. The two men surround Tupac.

TUPAC
'The fuck ya'll want?

The first man holds his gun to Tupac's stomach.

SECOND MAN
Take your motherfuckin' jewelry
off!

TUPAC
What?

SECOND MAN
Fuck this. Just shoot him.

Both men FIRE on Tupac. Tupac drops. While Tupac is on the floor, they stomp him and snatch his jewelry.

INT. QUAD RECORDING STUDIOS - NIGHT

Tupac, a bloody mess, comes into the studio, surveying the room. Everyone looks shocked to see him. He is bleeding from his head and body. A guy named, LIL' SHAWN, screams out.

LIL' SHAWN
Oh my God. Pac, you gotta sit
down.

TUPAC
Fuck you! Fuck all you,
motherfuckas!
(MORE)

TUPAC (CONT'D)

Which one of you niggas set me up?
I'm here right now motherfuckas.
What!

Then Tupac looks at Cease.

FLASHBACK

AN IMAGE OF CEASE STANDING OUTSIDE ON THE ROOF FLASHES ACROSS
FRAME.

Tupac puts two and two together. He looks at Cease. Then he
looks at Biggie and Puffy who are standing together.

THE SOUND OF AN AMBULANCE.

PUFFY (V.O.)

I could look back on that day and
see that was the beginning of the
end...

EXT. FRANK E. CAMPBELL FUNERAL CHAPEL - DAY

Puffy tries to hold it together and plays general to divert
his emotions. He directs a few mourners to their limos and
hugs a few others.

PUFFY (V.O.)

Biggie didn't get in the rap game
to become a motherfucking criminal.
He got in the rap game to stop
being a criminal. That didn't
matter though. Once Tupac said he
thought me and Big set him up, the
media went bananas like a bratty-
ass kid with a new toy.

VARIOUS MEDIA SOUND BYTES WIPE ACROSS FRAME. MTV. BET.
CNN. UPN. TUPAC NAMING BIGGIE AND PUFFY AS THE ONES WHO SET
HIM UP.

INT. PUFFY'S OFFICE - DAY

BIGGIE

Pac was my boy. Why would we try
to kill him? That make sense to
you?

PUFFY

Nah. Just lay low. This shit will
blow over.

PUFFY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And for whatever reason, it seemed
 like Pac couldn't stay out of the
 news.

AN IMAGE OF TUPAC GETTING ARRESTED FLASHES ACROSS FRAME.

PUFFY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He was accused of rape and even
 though most of us couldn't believe
 that shit, he became a magnet for
 trouble. We tried to stay clear of
 that motherfucka.

ANOTHER IMAGE OF TUPAC SPITTING AT NEWS CAMERAS FLASHES
 ACROSS FRAME.

PUFFY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He beat the rape charge. Beat the
 sodomy charge. But they found him
 guilty of sexual misconduct.

A NEWS REPORT WITH MONICA GALE FLASHES ACROSS FRAME.

MONICA GALE
 Tupac Shakur has been sentenced to
 a maximum of four and a half years
 in prison for sexually abusing a
 fan. The state judge in New York
 condemned the twenty-three-year-old
 for his arrogant abuse of the
 victim..."

AN IMAGE OF SUGE KNIGHT VISITING TUPAC IN JAIL FLASHES ACROSS
 FRAME.

PUFFY (V.O.)
 The door was wide open and Suge
 Knight walked right in. After a
 handwritten contract --

A FLASH OF TUPAC AND SUGE SIGNING A CONTRACT.

PUFFY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And one million dollars for an
 appeal bond, Pac was free. Suge
 and Death Row had its newest artist
 and the so-called East Coast/West
 Coast rivalry was about to jump
 off.

VARIOUS IMAGES. Tupac dissed Bad Boy. Snoop flashes signs
 for West Coast. East Coast rappers dissing the West.

NEWS AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES WITH EAST COAST/WEST COAST RIVALRY AS THE HEADLINE. BET... MTV... UPN... RIVALRY... RIVALRY... RIVALRY...

PUFFY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Then Suge deliberately threw
kerosene on the flame and
everything erupted.

COVERAGE OF THE SOURCE AWARDS. SUGE KNIGHT ON STAGE WITH TUPAC AND SNOOP. SUGE SAYS, "ANY ARTIST OUT THERE THAT WANT TO BE AN ARTIST AND WANT TO STAY A STAR AND DON'T WANT TO WORRY ABOUT THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ALL UP IN THE VIDEOS, ALL ON THE RECORDS -- DANCING, COME TO DEATH ROW!...THE EAST COAST AIN'T GOT NO LOVE FOR DR. DRE AND SNOOP DOGGY DOGG? AND DEATH ROW? YA'LL DON'T LOVE US?...THEN LET IT BE KNOWN THAT WE GOT NO LOVE FOR THE EAST COAST THEN!" BOOS RAIN DOWN.

PUFFY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We tried to go about our
motherfucking business. But it
became a runaway train. And Big
couldn't get off. Especially after
Faith posed with Tupac.

A FLASH OF FAITH AND TUPAC AT THE HOUSE OF BLUES. THEY TAKE A PICTURE TOGETHER.

A FLASH OF TUPAC'S "HIT EM' UP" VIDEO. TUPAC CALLS BIGGIE, "PIGGY." THEN HE SAYS, "I FUCKED YOUR WIFE."

EXT. PARKER MERIDIAN HOTEL - DAY

Chico pulls up in the SUV.

CHICO
Puffy's got her doing interviews,
right? You can't just barge in,
Chris. What if she's in the
middle --

Biggie hops out and storms into the hotel.

INT. PARKER MERIDIAN HOTEL - DAY

Biggie bangs on a door. Faith opens it.

INT. FAITH'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Biggie grabs her.

BIGGIE
You fucking bitch!

Faith breaks away and runs from him. Biggie picks up a chair and slams it into the floor repeatedly.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
I can't believe you fucked him!

Faith runs into the bathroom and locks herself inside. He goes to the bathroom door and starts banging on it.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
Open the door!

FAITH (O.C.)
(crying --)
No!

Biggie kicks the door but it won't budge. Damien walks through the open hotel room door.

DAMIEN
Chris. Go downstairs, man. You know somebody done called security by now. Chris.

Biggie looks at him, then walks out of the room.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
Fay. Open up.

FAITH
No.

DAMIEN
Come on, Ma. It ain't like that. I just want to make sure you're okay.

There's a long pause. The door opens. Faith is a mess. She comes out shaking, unable to speak. Damien puts his arm around her.

INT. BAD BOY RECORDS - PUFFY'S OFFICE - DAY

Biggie sits, facing Puffy, Wayne and Mark as if he's on trial.

WAYNE

You can't be running through four star hotels like it's the ghetto and shit.

BIGGIE

So my motherfucking mind went adrift. That what you want to hear?

A beat of silence.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)

For real, I feel like I'm going crazy. Mark, you call Faith?

MARK

(nods)

She doesn't want to talk to you.

Biggie takes this in --

BIGGIE

I don't know why this motherfucka wants to do me like this, but it's time I shut Pac's mouth.

Biggie gets up, starts to leave.

PUFFY

Wait. Look, let me holla at Big for a minute.

MARK

We'll be outside.

Mark and Wayne exit.

BIGGIE

This what you meant about us changing the world?

PUFFY

Not exactly what I had in mind.

BIGGIE

Half the time, this shit doesn't seem like it's worth it. I'll give it to Pac, though. He warned me, there's a lot of bullshit to deal with once you're on top.

PUFFY
Maybe this is a test.

BIGGIE
What kind of test?

PUFFY
God's way of seeing if you could
rise above the bullshit and rise to
the occasion.

BIGGIE
How? By saying sticks and stones
while Pac runs his bitch-ass mouth?

PUFFY
By being smarter than you were
before. The way you saw the world
from the corner can't be the same
way you see the world now.

BIGGIE
Way I used to see the world was
much clearer. I felt trapped like
I had no future. Figured I'd sell
drugs till I was killed or locked
up for the rest of my life. Since
this rap shit started jumping, I
didn't have that feeling anymore.
Not till now. 'Cause this
motherfucka is taking it to the
streets and calling me out. We all
know the rules. I ain't no boy
scout who can let this shit slide.

PUFFY
If being a boy scout is what it'll
take to keep you from being
trapped, then Big, become a
motherfucking boy scout. Can't
change the world if we can't change
ourselves.

INT. FAITH AND BIGGIE'S CONDO - DAY

Faith is packing up her clothes and belongings. The door
begins to open but is halted by the security chain.

BIGGIE
Few... Few, it's me. Can you open
the door? C'mon. I want to talk
to you. Please.

Faith unchains the door. Biggie walks in and she slaps the shit out of him.

FAITH
 You made me feel dirty and cheap
 and scared to fucking death, Big.
 How fucking dare you!

Faith turns away shedding angry tears. Biggie notices her suitcases and boxes.

BIGGIE
 Can you listen to me a minute?

FAITH
 It's over. It was over a long time ago. I just didn't have the courage to admit it.

BIGGIE
 I'm sorry about bugging the fuck out the way I did. Sorry about a lot of shit. I reached some kind of breaking point and shit.

FAITH
 That makes two of us.
 (then)
 Why didn't you just look me in the eyes and ask me?

BIGGIE
 Okay. So I'm asking. What happened with you and Pac?

FAITH
 I saw him at the House of Blues. We took a picture. End of story.
 (then)
 Okay?

Biggie nods.

BIGGIE
 End of story.

FAITH
 At least, now you have an idea of what it feels like to be cheated on.

Faith starts packing again.

BIGGIE
I don't wanna let you go.

FAITH
You want to end up in the same
fucked up place? 'Cause sooner or
later that will happen. You know
that.

Biggie comes from behind her, gently kisses her neck. She starts to give in and faces him.

FAITH (CONT'D)
This doesn't change things.

They kiss and sink to the floor...

PUFFY (V.O.)
After Big and Faith split up, he
bought himself a spot in Jersey.

A FLASH OF DAMIEN, CHICO AND CEASE HELPING BIGGIE CARRY BOXES INTO HIS JERSEY HOME.

PUFFY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Despite the bullshit with Pac,
money was rolling in. And Junior
M.A.F.I.A.'s album went gold.

A FLASH OF JUNIOR M.A.F.I.A.'S ALBUM "CONSPIRACY" GOES ACROSS THE SCREEN.

PUFFY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Even Mrs. Wallace went to see them
in concert.

A FLASH OF VOLETTA IN THE FRONT ROW OF A CONCERT. SHE IS AGHAST AS LIL' KIM SITS ON STAGE AND OPENS HER LEGS, REVEALING SHE IS NOT WEARING ANY DRAWERS UNDER HER SKIRT.

PUFFY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That was the last time Mrs. Wallace
went to see Junior M.A.F.I.A.

INT. SHRINE AUDITORIUM - DAY

The Soul Train Awards. There's a red carpet outside lined with FANS standing behind metal gates. A ROW OF PAPARAZZI, constantly FLASHING at something and a phalanx of BLACK and WHITE LIMOS.

PUFFY (V.O.)
Things were going so well, I
started to think the only ones who
could stop us were ourselves.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Biggie is in his tux, shoeless. He tries stuffing his feet into a pair of dress shoes.

Damien sits in the corner, reading a magazine.

BIGGIE
What size are these?

MARK
Fourteen, like you asked.

BIGGIE
These ain't no fourteens.

He looks at the bottom, inside the heel. He sees a number twelve inside. He throws the shoes across the room.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
Always fuckin' problems!

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Mark steps out as Puffy and his bodyguard, BIG SEXY, approaches.

MARK
They sent over the wrong size shoes. He's not going on.

PUFFY
What? Now ain't the time for a damn temper tantrum.

MARK
He's got a lot on his mind, Puff.

Puffy turns to Big Sexy.

PUFFY
Give us a minute.

Big Sexy steps away.

PUFFY (CONT'D)

Look, I got a lot on my mind. You don't wanna fuck with Don Cornelius. He'll ban every act on Bad Boy if we fuck this up.

MARK

Fay's pregnant.

PUFFY

What? But they split up.

Mark shrugs.

MARK

You know how it goes.

PUFFY

We ain't got time for this shit.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Puffy goes in the dressing room and sees Biggie sitting in the corner. Big Sexy, Puffy's bodyguard, trails behind.

PUFFY

You want me to cry? Is that what it's gonna take? Then I'll cry. Big, don't do this to me. Don't do this to you.

BIGGIE

I don't go on if the shoes ain't right.

Damien comes in.

DAMIEN

The Big and Tall shop don't have it either.

Big Sexy looks down at Biggie's shoes.

BIG SEXY

What size you wear?

MUSIC UP: THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.'S "ONE MORE CHANCE."

INT. SHRINE AUDITORIUM STAGE - DAY

CLOSE on Biggie's shoes. They're a little shabby but they fit.

WIDEN TO REVEAL --

Biggie in his tux, rocking with the mic in his hand.

BIGGIE

First thing first, I poppa freaks
all the honeys. Dummies. Playboy
bunnies. Those getting nothing...

On stage right, with TUXEDOED DANCERS in back, Puffy stands out in a white tux. Also on stage is Faith, with the slightest pouch starting to show.

FAITH

(singing)

"Biggie give me one more chance."

IN THE AUDIENCE --

Tupac, Suge and a FEW DEATH ROW ENTOURAGE MEMBERS linger. Biggie is too busy rocking to notice Tupac and his friends stand up in the middle of the performance, and walk out.

EXT. SHRINE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Biggie, Cease and Damien make their way out to where the valet stand is.

A RED HUMMER pulls up. The back window rolls down. It's Tupac. He yells directly at Biggie.

TUPAC

Outlawz, motherfucka!

Biggie just stares at Tupac. There's a wildness in Tupac's eyes that can only be described as blood. Suge gets out of the car and starts walking forward. Without words, Damien pulls out his nine. Cease starts yelling at Tupac. A SWARM OF FRUIT OF ISLAM SECURITY GUARDS separate the two camps. The Hummer pulls off. Biggie stands there in disbelief.

BIGGIE

That was some theatrical shit. He really thinks he's Bishop from "Juice."

DAMIEN

You say the word, we put an end to
all this shit. Permanently.

Biggie shakes his head.

BIGGIE

We're not gonna play into it.

EXT. NEW YORK SKYLINE - DAY

The voice of radio personality, WENDY WILLIAMS, is heard.

WENDY WILLIAMS (V.O.)

I know everybody's on the edge of
their seat to hear the latest drama
from Bad Boy Records and Death Row
Records. Scandalous! Last week it
was guns and shouts at the Soul
Train Awards. Now we have the most
scandalous news of all -- Faith is
pregnant. But there's only one
problem. Who's the daddy?

INT. GEORGIA DOME - NIGHT

Biggie stands tall on stage. HALF THE CROWD cheers. The
OTHER HALF OF THE CROWD boos. Biggie takes this in, glances
at Damien and Cease standing off stage. He turns back to the
crowd.

BIGGIE

Yo! Yo, check it out!

The CROWD QUIETS DOWN.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)

I had this friend, know what I'm
sayin'. Me and duke were real
cool. At least, I thought we were.
But that's the thing about this
business. Jealousy and envy will
get you twisted, it will turn your
best friend into your worst enemy.
He warned me, but I didn't believe
him.

FROM BEHIND HIS TURNTABLE -- D.J. ENUFF smiles and cues up
the beat.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)

This song was made months before anything happened to Tupac. It was supposed to be on Mary J. Blige's album, but Uptown Records thought the shit was too hardcore. But he won't believe me. Maybe nobody will. But frankly, at this point, I don't give a fuck. So Pac, this goes out to you.

D.J. Enuff lets the beat go. The crowd goes CRAZY. Biggie nods his head to the heavy bass and piano line.

Backstage, Cease grabs a mic and runs on stage. Puffy stands backstage, head bobbing.

CEASE

Get high motherfuckas! Ready to die, motherfuckas!

PUFFY (V.O.)

Biggie kept his mouth shut for a long ass time. He decided not to strike back physically. But on this night at least, he verbally threw an uppercut. Maybe it wasn't the most Christian thing to do, but I think it was something all of us who were down with Big needed.

BIGGIE

"Who shot ya? Separate the weak from the obsolete. Hard to creep them Brooklyn streets. It's on nigga. Fuck all that bickering beef..."

The crowd literally jumps up and down. The energy is energetic. Biggie raps so hard, he sweats through his clothes. It's a public battle and declaration. He's not scared of Tupac. And he's not going away quietly.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)

"Slip and break the eleventh commandment. Thou shalt not fuck with raw C-Poppa. Feel a thousand deaths when I drop ya..."

The East Coast crowd is cheering Biggie on.

PUFFY (V.O.)

If this East Coast/West Coast beef was about to become a war, on this night, Biggie became general and thousands of soldiers enlisted.

Biggie looks down at the front row when he notices a tall, thin WOMAN with striking eyes. She smiles at him as she grooves to the beat.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Biggie talks to the striking woman. Her name is TIFFANY LANE A.K.A CHARLI BALTIMORE. She pulls out a disposable camera.

CHARLI

Let me take your picture.

Biggie smiles and takes the camera from her.

BIGGIE

Nah. Let me take yours.

FLASH.

PUFFY (V.O.)

Big met Tiffany Lane a.k.a Charli Baltimore. She would help keep his mind off the stress. And become the next rapper he would discover.

A FLASH OF BIGGIE AND CHARLI PERFORMING IN THE "GET MONEY" VIDEO GOES ACROSS FRAME.

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

Ain't no way to describe the effect Big had on women. He was either driving them crazy in a good way, driving them crazy in a bad way, but he was always driving them crazy.

INT. LEXUS - NIGHT

Faith, now seven months pregnant, is driving. The radio is turned to Hot 97. Lil Kim's song "Queen Bee" is on. Faith grooves to it despite herself. But then Faith gets deeper into the REMIX VERSE with the cuss words bleeped out.

KIM

(through the radio)

"Let me stress. The tatoo on your
breast. Big. You're rockin' my
property. PYP. Play your
position. Know I got ya wishin'.
You never started dissin'. Plus I
give head better than you. My
pussy gets wetter than you. I fuck
much better than you. I dedicate
this song to ya ass like R. Kelly.
And that twin Pac up in your
belly."

Suddenly, Faith does a full U-turn.

INT. DADDY'S HOUSE (RECORDING STUDIO) - DAY

Kim sits with Puffy and another PRODUCER, going over some lyrics. The door opens and Kim barely has time to blink when Faith rains down punches on her. Puffy pulls her away. Faith's hair is messed up, she has lost an earring, but her smile says it all.

INT. NEW JERSEY HOME - NIGHT

Biggie and Cease watch Pay-Per-View, where Mike Tyson beats up on Bruce Seldon. The CAMERA catches Tupac and Suge sitting ring-side.

CEASE

There goes your boy.

BIGGIE

Yeah, right.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Biggie is on the toilet. He reads *VIBE's*, Juice Issue. He and Puffy are on the cover.

CLOSE ON the headlines. It reads, "East Versus West."

Then --

CEASE (O.C.)

Oh shit!

INT. NEW JERSEY HOME - NIGHT

Biggie walks back to the den and finds the TV reporting on the shooting of Tupac.

NEWS REPORTER

Once again, rapper and actor, Tupac Shakur has been rushed to University Medical Center in critical condition after being gunned down and suffering multiple gunshot wounds. This coming just hours after attending the Mike Tyson and Bruce Seldon heavyweight boxing match...

CRIME SCENE PHOTOS OF THE SHOOTING FLASH ACROSS FRAME.

Biggie is stunned. Suddenly, his cell phone rings. Cease's cell phone rings. Biggie's home phone rings.

CEASE

(on his cell)

Yeah, we watching the shit right now...

Cease turns to see Biggie answer the phone.

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

Yo, I was like twelve, thirteen-fucking-years-old when I first started seeing Big Chris on the corner. He was the closest thing I ever had to a role model.

EXT. FRANK E. CAMPBELL FUNERAL CHAPEL - DAY

Cease gets into one of the limos.

CEASE (V.O.)

He eventually let me hang with him on the corner. But he didn't want me hustling. He said the drug game was too dirty for my hands to touch.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Cease, distraught, looks out the window as Damien sits down next to him.

CEASE (V.O.)
Six days after Pac got shot in
Vegas, he died.

A NEWS REPORT OF TUPAC'S DEATH FLASHES ACROSS SCREEN.

CEASE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Given the circumstances, Chris
coulda' been celebrating. I told
him, at least we don't have to
worry about him any more. He said
that was a fucked up way to look at
it. But the thing is, the rap game
was becoming more ruthless than the
crack game...

INT. NEW JERSEY HOME/BROOKLYN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Biggie talks on the phone with Voletta.

INTERCUT:

VOLETTA
I saw his mother on TV. She's a
strong woman but I feel so bad for
her. You planning to go to his
funeral?

BIGGIE
Wouldn't be a good idea.

VOLETTA
Well, I'm going to say a prayer for
his mother. Such a senseless
waste.

INT. NEW JERSEY HOME - DAY

Tupac's voice, loud and clear.

TUPAC (O.C.)
We just here celebrating Biggie
Smalls' signing a deal with Bad Boy
Records...

Biggie is watching the VIDEO of him and Tupac, as they sat
side-by-side FREESTYLING in the nightclub. Biggie smokes a
blunt. This is his memorial service for Pac.

INT. LEXUS TRUCK - DAY

Cease sits behind the wheel of the parked truck and Charli Baltimore sits in the back.

They are waiting on Biggie who is outside of a pizza store.

CHARLI

Why does he like to be with so many different women?

CEASE

If you're asking if he cares about you, I think the answer is yes. If you're asking if you're the only one, you gotta talk to him.

CHARLI

That wasn't the question.

CEASE

You want your answer. Look at Big.

Through the SUV window they see Biggie sign an autograph then bite into his pizza.

CEASE (CONT'D)

He's got a big appetite.

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

It wasn't till she accepted my answer that I realized why so many sisters put up with bullshit. It ain't 'cause they don't want better. It's 'cause they think brothers can't do no better.

Biggie gets back in the SUV, kissing on Charli's neck. Then Cease tries to start the truck. It won't move.

BIGGIE

What are we waiting for?

Cease keeps TURNING THE KEY but THE TRUCK MAKES WEIRD NOISES.

EXT. LEXUS DEALERSHIP - DAY

A SERVICEMAN comes out.

SERVICEMAN
We have a loaner that you can use.
Free of charge.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Biggie, Cease and Tiffany look at the beat-up Dodge Astrovan.

BIGGIE
Let's get home before we get caught
riding in this piece of shit.

INT. DODGE ASTROVAN - DAY

It's RAINING cats and dogs. The van slides all over the road.

BIGGIE
Slow down, man.

CEASE
I'm trying. These fuckin' brakes
keep locking up.

Cease looks up and sees the OFF RAMP. He guns the wheel right. THE ASTROVAN SLIDES.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The Astrovan CRASHES. THE VAN SLAMS THE GUARD RAIL AND VEERS INTO THE ROAD ON THE OTHER SIDE. A sickening crunch as it lands.

INT. ASTROVAN - DAY

Cease is leaned back against the front seat, blood pouring from his mouth. Charli is unconscious, her head pressed up against the cracked bloody windshield. Biggie is trapped between the seat and the dashboard, dazed and fighting consciousness.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

SEVERAL MINUTES LATER an ambulance is parked nearby as FIRE FIGHTERS cut open the upside down vehicle with HYDRAULIC SPREADER-CUTTERS.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Biggie lays in a hospital bed, his leg elevated in traction. Puffy, Mark and Wayne talk to him from around the room, but their VOICES GO IN AND OUT in his painkiller haze.

MARK

The doctor says you'll walk again.
It's just gonna take some time,
alright?

PUFFY

Shit, be happy it's just your leg.
Cease lost the whole top row of his
teeth and Tiffany's forehead is
fucked up.

BIGGIE

I had a dream that Tupac got
killed.

The three guys exchange looks.

WAYNE

Wasn't a dream, Big. That really
happened.
(then)
Big?

Biggie starts to drift off.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Biggie lays alone in the room watching MTV on the overhead TV. KURT LODER reports on his accident. But his name is no longer just his name. It has taken on the burden of Tupac's shooting, of the East Coast/West Coast feud, of all that is wrong with hip hop. As the verbal assault continues from the TV, Biggie grows agitated, helplessness fueling fury.

Suddenly, he snatches the TV remote and hurls it at the television. The remote shatters into pieces and drops harmlessly to the floor as the report continues...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

The room is quiet. Biggie lays still in the bed, staring up at the ceiling, with nothing but his tortured thoughts.

The door pushes open.

WEST INDIAN MAN (O.C.)
Good morning.

No response from Biggie.

WEST INDIAN MAN (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Gotta admit, I never heard of you.
My daughter told me who you are.
I'm a blues man myself. Now if you
were B.B. King, I'd of had your
autograph by now.

Biggie finally turns, sees the orderly, JEFF, a tall middle-aged man with a West Indian accent.

BIGGIE
You remind me of my father.

JEFF
I'm honored.

BIGGIE
That's not a compliment. I haven't
thought about him in years.

JEFF
In years? That doesn't sound
right.

BIGGIE
Not everything is right. If it
was, I wouldn't be here.
(beat, then --)
What did your daughter tell you
about me?

Jeff changes Biggie's I.V.

JEFF
She said you're the greatest rapper
of all time. And that you spit it
like you live it.
(smiles)
Whatever that means.

Biggie turns away.

JEFF (CONT'D)
It's funny. When you're on your
feet, you only look ahead. But
when you're on your back, you spend
your time staring at the ceiling.
(MORE)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Looking for God. Can't get more
right than that.

BIGGIE

Do me a favor? Get the fuck out of
here.

Jeff, rattled, walks out. Biggie lets out a frustrated sigh,
then slowly turns his head to the ceiling.

EXT. NEW JERSEY HOME - DAY

Biggie is in a wheelchair. T'yanna, now four-years-old, sits
on her dad's lap and Jan stands behind them.

BIGGIE

Okay. Five, four, three, two, one.

Jan pushes them as fast as she can, the wheelchair becoming a
rocket ship. T'yanna cracks up as if this is a ride at an
amusement park...

INT. NEW JERSEY HOME - DAY

Biggie teaches T'yanna "The Breaks." Jan stands in the
hallway watching.

BIGGIE

(rapping)

Clap your hands everybody...

T'YANNA

(rapping)

Clap your hands everybody...

BIGGIE

If you got what it takes...

T'YANNA

If you got what it takes...

BIGGIE

'Cause I'm Kurtis Blow...

T'YANNA

'Cause I'm Kurtis Blow...

BIGGIE

And I want you to know...

T'YANNA

And I want you to know...

BIGGIE
That these are the breaks...

T'YANNA
That these are the breaks...

BIGGIE
Break it up, break it up, break it
up!

T'YANNA
Break it up, break it up, break it
up!

Biggie cracks up. And from the hallway, so does Jan.

INT. NEW JERSEY HOME - NIGHT

Biggie has fallen asleep in front of the TV and T'yanna
sleeps on his chest.

Jan stares at the two of them, wishing she could freeze this
moment. She picks T'yanna up and carries her to bed.

INT. NEW JERSEY HOME - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Biggie starts to wake up as Jan walks back into the room.

BIGGIE
Damn. What time is it?

JAN
Almost nine-thirty.

BIGGIE
Shit. If I was in the studio I
could go to the crack of dawn. But
that little girl wore me out.

Jan laughs.

JAN
Try doing that seven days a week.

An awkward pause.

JAN (CONT'D)
I didn't mean it like that.

BIGGIE
Okay if you did.

JAN
 You mind if we crash for the night?
 I'd hate to move her right now.

BIGGIE
 Yeah, it's all good.

Jan picks up the Chinese food take-out boxes on the table, starts to bring them to the kitchen.

JAN
 Would it be messed up if I told
 you, I'm kind of glad you had that
 accident.

BIGGIE
 Yeah. That would be messed up.

JAN
 I won't say it then.

Jan crosses to the kitchen.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

Biggie, sitting in his wheelchair, wears a shower cap at bedside. Faith is SCREAMING IN PAIN.

HOURS LATER

Large, black hands hold a tiny, light-skinned BABY. Biggie in his wheelchair, rocks his son to sleep. Faith is fast asleep, exhausted from labor.

VOLETTA
 (whispering)
 Can I hold my grandson, now?

Voletta reaches for the baby, but Biggie won't give him up.

BIGGIE
 (whispering)
 One more minute, Ma!

Voletta chuckles.

VOLETTA
 Okay.

Damien tips in, carrying flowers. Everyone continues to whisper.

DAMIEN
Hey, peoples.

VOLETTA
Hi, Damien. I'm going to get some tea. When I come back you're going to have to pin down Christopher so I can hold the baby.

DAMIEN
You know I got your back Miss Wallace.

Voletta exits.

BIGGIE
Say hello to your nephew.

Damien studies him.

DAMIEN
He's beautiful. Little nigga looks like a light-skinned you.

BIGGIE
Damn. Can't this motherfucka be in the world for one day before being called nigga?

Damien laughs.

BIGGIE (CONT'D)
What?

DAMIEN
I'm sorry. But is motherfucka really that better?

Damien and Biggie laugh.

EXT. HOSPITAL PATIO - DAY

Biggie wheels himself on the patio, pulls out a pen and hospital stationary.

Biggie writes, "Five Year Plan." Then he begins to work it out.

INT. NEW JERSEY HOME - DAY

T'yanna is on the floor playing with dolls as Biggie talks with SOMEONE on the phone.

BIGGIE
I'm kicking it with my daughter.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. KIM'S CAR - DAY

She is talking to Biggie from her cell phone.

KIM
Okay. I'm on my way.

BIGGIE
That ain't a good idea.

KIM
Why not?

BIGGIE
This is supposed to be our alone time.

KIM
So what the fuck, I gotta let you get me pregnant to see you now?

BIGGIE
I'll call you later.

KIM
Don't bother nigga. Fuck you.

BIGGIE
Fuck you too, bitch.

Biggie hangs up, turns to see T'yanna looking startled.

EXT. NEW JERSEY HOME - DAY

Biggie wheels himself in his chair as T'yanna sits on his lap.

BIGGIE
My pops taught me only one thing,
but I never forgot it.
(MORE)

BIGGIE (CONT'D)

He told me to look at a man in the eyes when you shake his hand. Now, I'm gonna teach you something I never want you to forget. Okay?

T'YANNA

Okay.

BIGGIE

You're daddy's princess, Te Te. So no matter what, for any reason, never let a man disrespect you and call you a bitch. Got it?

T'YANNA

Yes, Daddy.

Then Biggie does a few tricks with his wheelchair that causes her to laugh.

INT. BIGGIE'S SUV - DAY

Cease drives. Biggie is in the passenger seat. Chico and Damien are in the back. They drive through Bed-Stuy, through the streets, sounds and people who shaped them all.

Biggie looks out of the window seeing the corner he used to hustle on, the alley where he beat up Lennox the drug user who ratted on him and the record store where he battled Ralston, the sucka M.C.

DAMIEN

I talked to Mark today.

BIGGIE

Yeah?

DAMIEN

He's worried about you. Wants me to convince you to go back into the studio.

Cease chimes in.

CEASE

It's been two years since "Ready to Die" came out.

BIGGIE

So he talked to you, too?

Cease, busted --

CEASE

Yeah.

BIGGIE

So what did ya'll tell him?

CHICO

They should have told him you would get back into the studio when you're good and fucking ready. 'Cause no one could talk your hard-headed ass into anything anyway.

They all laugh. Then as they pull up to a red light, SOMETHING OUTSIDE CATCHES BIGGIE'S ATTENTION.

CEASE

Later for the studio. Big Chris is thinking about starting a clothing company. And a restaurant, right?

Biggie nods but his attention is drawn elsewhere.

DAMIEN

A restaurant would be hot. But I want to be the motherfucka who's interviewing the waitresses.

As the guys joke about the waitress qualifications --

The person who Biggie is staring at comes into frame. IT IS SANDY, THE ONCE PREGNANT CRACKHEAD WHO BIGGIE SOLD DRUGS TO. She seems to have gotten herself together. She is dressed nice and even more amazing, she holds the hand of a FIVE-YEAR-OLD BOY who looks just like her.

Biggie is mesmerized and his heart is pounding...

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

With the use of a cane, Biggie walks to the dinner table. Crowded around the table are Biggie, Cease, Damien and Chico. Miss Wallace places food on the table and sits with them. Voletta closes her eyes and bows her head. The guys look at each other, taking the cue. They take off their caps and all bow their heads.

Biggie says the grace.

BIGGIE

(heartfelt)

Dear God... thank you.

Then Biggie looks up but everyone's head remains bowed. Finally, Cease peeks, then Damien, then Chico.

DAMIEN
That's all?

Chico starts to laugh.

CHICO
Damn man. At least drop God is good, God is great.

His boys start cracking the hell up. But Voletta gets it.

VOLETTA
I think it was perfect.

She starts eating and everyone else digs in as well.

INT. NEW JERSEY HOME - DAY

Biggie picks up the phone and dials a number.

BIGGIE
Yo Mark, I think I'm ready to get back to work...

BIGGIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"Hah, sicka than your average Poppa, twist cabbage off instinct, niggas don't think shit stink, pink gators, my Detroit players, Timb's for my hooligans in Brooklyn..."

AS THE "HYPNOTIZE" TRACK PLAYS...

INT. FAITH'S HOUSE - DAY

Biggie picks up his son C.J. from out of his crib and kisses him on the cheek.

BIGGIE
Daddy will see you in a few weeks.

"HYPNOTIZE" CONTINUES AS THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN AND VARIOUS SHOTS OF CALIFORNIA COME INTO VIEW.

BIGGIE (V.O.)
"Girls walk to us, wanna do us, screw us, who us?"
(MORE)

BIGGIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Yeah Poppa and Puff. Close like
Starsky and Hutch..."

EXT. VIDEO SHOOT/THE RIVER - DAY

Puffy and Biggie splash through the water in a speedboat as a CAMERA CREW films them rapping to the "Hypnotize" track.

This is not a "hood" video. It's a mini-action movie. ASSAILANTS from black helicopters shoot at them and they are trying to evade them as Biggie and Puffy wear designer clothes that may cost more than the entire budget of other video shoots.

CEASE (V.O.)
 For most people, this video was hot. But for Chris, it symbolized his life. He evaded and survived so many fucking obstacles. Even though his father bailed on him, even though he made bad choices, he was no longer in jail, he was no longer on the corner slanging rock and he was not dead. Just like the video, when you thought you had him cornered, he slipped away.

EXT. HYPNOTIZE VIDEO SHOOT - DAY

Puffy and Biggie rap to the track as they stand in front of a cage where there is a black leopard. They are trying to get the scene right and hope that the leopard will cooperate. Suddenly, the leopard growls and Puffy jumps, startled. Biggie falls to the ground laughing his ass off. This is the happiest we've seen him. The future is bright.

INT. TATOO PARLOR - DAY

Biggie and Damien sit in a parlor on Sunset Boulevard as TWO TATOO ARTISTS work on their forearms. They are getting the twenty-third psalm put into their flesh. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil..."

THE MUSIC TRAILS OFF as:

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

Voletta watches the Soul Train Awards and sees Biggie, all dressed up, walk out on stage.

INT. SHINE AUDITORIUM - THE SOUL TRAIN AWARDS - NIGHT

Biggie stands at the podium with Brian McKnight, musical group, 112, and Puffy.

MEMBER OF 112
And the Soul Train Music Award goes
to...

Biggie steps up and suddenly several BOOS RAIN DOWN FROM THE BALCONY.

BIGGIE
What's up, Cali?

The boos ESCALATE...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Biggie is on the phone with Voletta.

INTERCUT:

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

VOLETTA
You sure they were booing? I
couldn't tell.

BIGGIE
They did some audio trick for the
East Coast feed, made it sound like
applause.

VOLETTA
I don't like you being out there.

BIGGIE
I think me being out here is gonna
put an end to all this nonsense.

Voletta has a look of concern on her face, mother's instinct --

VOLETTA
I want you to be careful, Chrissy-
Pooh.

BIGGIE
I hate it when you call me that.

VOLETTA
I forgot. You're all grown up now.

INT. CHEVY SUBURBAN - NIGHT

- SEPTEMBER 8, 1997. 9:00 P.M. -

Biggie rides in the passenger seat. In the truck with him are Damien, Cease and a guy named, GREG, who is driving. Biggie talks on his cell.

BIGGIE
Ya'll see how sexy I looked last night?

INTERCUT:

INT. JAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jan laughs.

JAN
You're sick, Chris. But yes, we saw you. You looked a'ight.

BIGGIE
I may have to spend time out here promoting the album and shit. You think T'yanna can come out? My mom's could maybe bring her. We could do the whole Disneyland thing.

Jan smiles, elated.

JAN
I wouldn't have a problem with that.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

A BLACK IMPALA SS sits on twenty-tvos with white walls. The car is so lovingly polished, you can see your face in it.

INT. FAITH'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

She rushes around getting dressed as her cell phone rings. She picks it up.

FAITH

What.

INTERCUT:

INT. CHEVY SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Biggie is on the other end.

BIGGIE

You coming to the party?

FAITH

I'd be dressed by now if people would stop calling.

BIGGIE

Well yo, when you get back to New York I want you to send C.J. out here with my mom's.

FAITH

Big, what are you talking about?

BIGGIE

I'm gonna be out here for a while and I want my kids to be here.

FAITH

Let me think about it, okay?

BIGGIE

What's there to think about?

FAITH

Look, I can't do this now.

Annoyed, Faith hangs up. Biggie hangs up, pissed.

INT. PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM - NIGHT

It is the *VIBE* party and the place is packed wall-to-wall. Slowly, the crowd's attention gets diverted to the front door. THE BAD BOY ENTOURAGE HAS ARRIVED.

First it is Puffy, flanked by BODYGUARDS who enter. Then it is Biggie with his boys Mark Pitts and D-Dot. And it's as if the whole East Coast - West Coast rivalry has instantly been washed away. They walk through the club as if they own the town -- and they do. Everyone looks at Biggie -- the women, the men, the celebrities, you name it.

And now as Biggie moves through the crowd receiving love, he gets it. He doesn't just represent Bed-Stuy. With all of his positive attributes and shortcomings as well, he represents Compton, Watts, Crenshaw, etc.

RUSSELL SIMMONS gives Biggie a pat on the back. Andre Harrell raises a champagne glass to him. Biggie is their everyman. Their Manchild in the promised land. And he soaks it all in...

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

The garage is immaculate. There is a WORKBENCH with a nine millimeter disassembled. A LIGHT-SKINNED BLACK MAN cleans and oils the weapon, taking great care with every single piece. WE DO NOT SEE HIS FACE.

There are FOUR POLICE SCANNERS on the edge of the bench.

Once the gun is cleaned, the man puts it in a blue duffle bag.

INT. PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM - NIGHT

Puffy and Biggie sit with each other. THIS IS THE SCENE FROM THE START OF THE MOVIE.

PUFFY

You feel all this love we're getting?

BIGGIE

(nods, then --)

I just wanna give it all back.

Suddenly, "Hypnotize" PLAYS.

PUFFY

Looks like you just did.

The crowd dances as if this was the first party of the rest of their lives. They need this... they want it.

PUFFY (CONT'D)

We did a hell of a lot in a short amount of time.

BIGGIE

We ain't done, kid.

Puffy raises his glass of champagne.

PUFFY
Let's change the world.

Biggie raises his glass.

BIGGIE
Can't change the world if we don't
change ourselves.

They clink glasses.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The tires on the Impala spin around as the car busts through the night...

INT. BLACK IMPALA - NIGHT

It moves through the L.A. streets. On the passenger seat is the blue duffle bag and the police scanners are on the floor...

INT. PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM - NIGHT

As the party is in full effect, Biggie glances over to another table and sees Faith. She notices Biggie looking and angrily turns away.

EXT. PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM - NIGHT

There is a police barricade as one of the streets is blocked off. The black Impala drives up to the barricade and an OFFICER notices the LAPD placard on the dash. He lets the car go through. Simultaneously, Faith hops in a town car and leaves.

INT. PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM - NIGHT

ANOTHER SONG IS BEING PLAYED. And just as the party is in full swing, FIRE MARSHALS ENTER. The CHIEF heads to the D.J. booth.

- MARCH 9, 1997. SHORTLY AFTER MIDNIGHT. -

The Chief whispers a few words to the D.J. and THE MUSIC STOPS. People in the crowd groan.

D.J.
Sorry everyone, but they're saying
it's a fire hazard. We're getting
shut down.

EXT. PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM - NIGHT

The angry crowd disperses.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Puffy stands with Big Sexy, another bodyguard named, KENNETH,
and TWO OTHER SECURITY GUYS.

The VALET brings Puffy's Suburban rental and he and his crew
hop in.

Mark, D-Dot and a guy named, TRACEY LEE, hop into a WHITE
LIMO. Biggie stands waiting with Damien, Cease and Greg.

Biggie, talking on his cell --

BIGGIE
How 'bout when I get back, we sit
down and figure out what the fuck
we're doing?

INTERCUT:

INT. KIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kim, on the phone talking to Biggie.

KIM
We could do that. You all right?

BIGGIE
Yeah. You?

KIM
Yeah.

BIGGIE
Later then.

KIM
Later.

Biggie hangs up. An attractive, young woman named, TISHA,
approaches.

TISHA
Biggie, can I have an autograph?

GREG
Sorry, he ain't doing autographs
tonight.

As Tisha backs away, Biggie notices the Bob Marley T-shirt she is wearing.

BIGGIE
Hold up. We gotta make it quick,
sweetheart.

Tisha hands him a sheet of paper and he signs. Then the Valet arrives with Biggie's Suburban rental.

The Bad Boy caravan pulls off together. Puffy's Suburban, in the lead. Biggie's Suburban, second. And the limo, bringing up the rear.

EXT. PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM - NIGHT

The Bad Boy caravan cruises down Fairfax...

INT. BIGGIE'S SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Biggie's "I'M GOING BACK TO CALI" PLAYS as Biggie and the guys bob their heads...

INT. MARK'S LIMO - NIGHT

Mark is on the cell phone.

MARK
Yo, Wayne. You wouldn't believe
the love Cali has for Biggie...

INT. PUFFY'S SUBURBAN - NIGHT

As Kenneth is on Fairfax, the light at Wilshire is about to change red. He starts to slow down, when --

BIG SEXY
Run the light. Run the light.

Kenneth guns it and the car runs the light, making a left in front of Johnnie's Cafe.

INT. BIGGIE'S SUBURBAN - NIGHT

They get caught at the light. Biggie, Damien, Cease and Greg continue to bob their heads, laughing and joking.

Cease turns his head and looks out the window. Before he can react, he sees the BLACK CHEVY IMPALA PULL UP. SUDDENLY, HALF A DOZEN GUNSHOTS EXPLODE INTO BIGGIE. SCREAMS AND PANDEMONIUM ENSUE.

EXT. FAIRFAX BOULEVARD - NIGHT

THE IMPALA SPEEDS AWAY. Puffy runs out of his Suburban from across the street. Kenneth and the other bodyguards follow. They reach Biggie's Suburban. He's soaked in blood. Damien and Cease are screaming hysterically. Greg is shell-shocked.

PUFFY
Biggie! Biggie!

Biggie sits, barely breathing. Puffy jumps in the back.

PUFFY (CONT'D)
Where is the nearest hospital?
Greg!

Kenneth opens Greg's door.

KENNETH
Let me drive, yo.

Greg gets out and Kenneth speeds off.

EXT. L.A. STREETS - NIGHT

THE SUBURBAN RACES DOWN THE STREET, DODGING TRAFFIC AND RED LIGHTS. Then it pulls up in front of CEDARS SINAI. Puffy and Damien jump out yelling, "We need help! We need help!"

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Puffy is on his knees praying. Damien and Cease pace frantically.

EXT. MARK'S LIMO - NIGHT

The limo speeds up screeching. Mark dashes out.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

As Mark runs in...

MARK
Where's he at?

DAMIEN
Surgery.

MARK
What they say?

DAMIEN
Nothing yet.

EXT. CEDAR SINAI HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A SMALL CROWD OF FANS start to arrive. People hold hands outside, praying. Faith pulls up in a cab. She rushes to the front and a COP stops her.

COP
We're not letting any more in.

A FAN jumps in.

FAN
That's his ex-wife.

The Cop backs away.

CAMERA stays with Faith. She walks down the hall, shaking. Someone at the desk directs her. Faith goes down another hall. She finds everyone in the waiting room.

FAITH
Is he okay?

MARK
We're still waiting.

FAITH
Me... Me and Big, we had a stupid argument on the phone. I... I hung up on him.

Mark hugs her as she bursts out in tears.

MARK
It's okay. It's okay.

The DOCTOR approaches.

Faith holds her breath. Everyone, with looks of desperate hope --

DOCTOR
I'm very sorry. He's gone.

Faith crumples. Cease holds his head in anguish. Puffy punches the wall. Damien falls back in a chair, sobbing. Mark nervously grabs his cell. His hand is shaking. His whole body is shaking. The tears won't stop.

MARK
We got to... We got to tell Miss Wallace...

He dials and then loses his composure. Helplessly, he looks at Damien.

MARK (CONT'D)
I... I can't...

Damien takes the phone.

INT. VOLETTA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Voletta is sleeping when the PHONE RINGS. The clock reads five-twenty-one a.m. Voletta picks up the phone.

VOLETTA
Hello?

DAMIEN'S VOICE
(sobbing)
Miss Wallace!!! Miss Wallace!!!

CAMERA moves in on Voletta as the phone drops out of her hands.

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK.

EXT. FRANK E. CAMPBELL FUNERAL CHAPEL - DAY

The musical score is an instrumental version of "No Woman No Cry."

Mourners outside, cry. Others sit in limos, ready for Biggie's final ride through Brooklyn. THE HEARSE AND LIMOS MOVE OUT.

INT. VOLETTA'S LIMOUSINE - DAY

Voletta sits in the limo between Biggie's children, C.J. and T'yanna.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - DAY

The hearse and caravan of limos cross the Brooklyn Bridge. And as soon as the motorcade turns the corner, WE SEE THEM...

A WALL OF PEOPLE line the streets. Homemade signs that say WE LOVE YOU BIG POPPA. WE WILL MISS YOU. THE GREATEST RAPPER WHO EVER LIVED.

CLOSE UPS. VOLETTA, FAITH, CEASE, DAMIEN, KIM, WAYNE, CHICO, MARK, T'YANNA, and PUFFY. They are all moved and blown away by what they see.

EXT. ST. JAMES PLACE - DAY

Biggie's old block is crammed with so many PEOPLE that you can't see the sidewalk. People stand on top of cars. If nothing else, WE SEE A COMMUNITY.

BIGGIE (V.O.)

I used to say I was ready to die.
But at the time of my death, maybe
for the first time ever, I was
ready to live.

INT. VOLETTA'S LIMOUSINE - DAY

Voletta looks out of the window, witnessing this outpouring of love. It is reminiscent of Bob Marley's funeral.

BIGGIE (V.O.)

I went from being Chrissy-Pooh to
Biggie Smalls to Daddy to... to a
man. That's something no one can
take away from me. That was my
greatest achievement...

Tears fall from Voletta's face as she rolls down the window, waving to the crowd. They shout out their love and admiration for Voletta's boy, Christopher a.k.a. Notorious B.I.G. a.k.a. Chrissy-Pooh a.k.a. Daddy.

The caravan moves down the same streets that Voletta walked with Biggie when he was a kid. It passes the Brooklyn apartment at 226 St. James.

Then someone plays "Hypnotize" from a boom box and it turns into a block party. It's as if Biggie has been resurrected. PEOPLE ARE DANCING AND CHEERING WITH TEARS IN THEIR EYES.

These people here are not broke-down. Their legacy of pride is not trembling or hiding in shadows. No. They are defiant. Determined. They are... hip hop.

HIGH ANGLE OF BIGGIE'S BLOCK PARTY. BIGGIE'S NEIGHBORHOOD. BIGGIE'S MUSIC.

WE SLOWLY FADE OUT.

SUDDEN SILENCE. And then...

FADE IN:

At 226 Street St. James, we find the real T'yanna and the real C.J. and the real Voletta Wallace holding up a framed picture of Christopher Wallace.

BIGGIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
This album is dedicated to all the
teachers that told me I'd never
amount to nothing...

The "Juicy" video fills the screen. And Biggie Smalls still has us bobbing our heads...

IF YOU DON'T KNOW NOW YOU KNOW.