

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: Houston, TX. Modest 3-bedroom single story house. 3 small rooms all with separate doors.

AT RISE: Voiceover fading out .The sun is rising.

SCENE ONE

(We see IRIS and JUNIOR outside on the porch. Junior is holding his cellphone but hugging Iris around the waist. She is holding groceries in her hand, they have just returned from the corner market in PJ's and Crocs.)

JUNIOR (to IRIS)

No we were the PK kids. That crazy preacher's sons, son number one, two or three. Dad use to say this is my number two son James Junior.

IRIS

Did you ever ask why he named you Junior and not Amiri?

JUNIOR

Never crossed my mind (into the cell phone) Yep Nigga. I'm still here, What time? Oh shit, you guys have already landed, cool. No, fool, Mom is still sleep...I'm outside. They don't know. Yeah Iris is right here. Just get here! Pop is Pop, this is Mom's day. Yes... bet, Holla.

IRIS

Derick don't forget the flowers. Oh, was I too loud?

JUNIOR

Now she said...Oh you heard, Cool, peace out. (hangs up) Them fools are going to be here soon. You good? You didn't sleep well.

IRIS

I never sleep well here but it saves us money. Everybody not rich like Derick. He does not expect me to call him Big D?

JUNIOR

Big Dangerous D will always be little Derick or son number three. Don't worry my pop will cut him down to size. We haven't all been together since our wedding. That's over seven years. It's going to be a good day.

IRIS

Does Daddy know that we know he can lose the church tonight? Junior, your mom sounded scared. I could hear her crying this morning.

JUNIOR

Sister Margret has already split the church. That's all I know. Doubt she has the votes to get Pop out but Mom said the congregation ain't happy with Pops, he is old school. It would be nice to come home and preach here every Sunday.

IRIS

I thought home was in Dallas, babe you don't need to keep fighting your daddy's battles. Things are going good for us. I am almost done with school. Keisha is about to graduate. She will be off to college next year and we will finally have some us time. You notice she just calls you dad now.

JUNIOR

Only when she wants some money or flunking another quiz, but she's my baby. Hey let's get a quick shower in before my pops uses up all the hot water.

IRIS

You are the only daddy she has ever known. Our church needs you. Plus, you need to keep teaching. You seem to like it, we are coming into our own time, babe. Now let me get this breakfast started while you shower.

JUNIOR

I thought we could shower together. My parents are probably trying to get a quickie in themselves.

IRIS

No, that's how I burnt the biscuits yesterday (mocking him) "It won't take ten minutes, babe, just put the oven on warm."

JUNIOR

Come on now, I can run out and get Shipley's before Pops even makes coffee...

IRIS

You want doughnuts over my pancakes? Wow.

JUNIOR

I never asked you to be great cook but us cooking in the bedroom is what I love the most (they kiss)

IRIS

You're a good kisser for a preacher's kid but the answer is still no. I am making your mother blueberry pancakes and your father fresh honey butter biscuits if I have to die trying.

JUNIOR

(she blocks a second kiss) It smells like rain. Damn, it's Houston, hot, muggy, even this time of the morning.

(Lights up in master bedroom.)

MOM

I'm sorry, Jimmy. I tried, This chemo.

DAD

It's alright, Emily. We ain't got nothing but time. Now just try and rest. I'm going to go make some coffee. I heard them going out the house a little while ago. I need to get my coffee before Iris smoke us out the kitchen. I don't know how James Junior married a black woman from the south who can't boil water. Sweet girl but, Lord, those biscuits were hard as a rock yesterday.

MOM

Now stop it. She takes care of Junior. Everybody can't cook. You spent too many years used to me cooking for all my men. You're spoiled rotten. You only married me for my looks and my cooking skills.

DAD

Nobody else could make pound cake better than my grandmother except you. Where else was I supposed to go.

MOM

You chased me long before you knew I could cook. Chased all my boyfriends away, all of them. Who roommates with my boyfriend just to keep tabs on me?

DAD

And if I hadn't been drafted to NAM he would not have stayed your boyfriend.

MOM

Yes, my first love but you scared him, uhm this chemo...Does things to the mind.

DAD

Time for your meds young lady.

(JUNIOR and IRIS enter the kitchen)

JUNIOR

(on his cell phone whispering as they enter the kitchen) All right, Derick see you guys in a minute. (hangs up) My brothers are almost here. Pop isn't up yet...It's going to be a perfect birthday. You are still the sexiest woman I've ever seen.

IRIS

Daddy has not even started his coffee. Good. Just leave the bags on the counter.

JUNIOR

They ran to pick up some different flowers. You know Derick, big is too small if extra-large is available. We still have time for a quickie, flower shop is 20 minutes away (as she smacks his hand)

IRIS

Babe, not now. Serious.

JUNIOR

I am sorry about your biscuits. Just 10 minutes, soft and quiet.

IRIS

I mean ten and no moaning, I swear you are relentless sometimes.

(They exit to the guest bedroom)

DAD

I keep hearing them march in and out that front door. Junior must have gone to get Shipley's, at least I hope he got doughnuts over the alternative. We can just go out for a light birthday breakfast if you're feeling well enough.

MOM

Maybe, we will see, medicine has been easy on my stomach the past few days. You talked with Junior and Iris yet, about the church? Junior is putting his whole life on hold trying to see if he needs to come home to help you with the church. I think they should stay in Dallas myself. Until all this mess here is settled. She is about to graduate seminary herself.

DAD

Junior is ready to come home. This is his church now. We have talked. I know my number two son. (starts to put on a robe and slippers over his PJ's)

MOM

Water for my pills. I'm going to lay back down. We will talk to them before they go, Keisha is graduating this year so you should at least think about her. No ice, please. That is our only grandchild so far.

DAD

We will talk about it tonight. Just rest. We can have a nice birthday lunch at The Patio Bar-B-Q in Downtown. We can talk about taking over the church in the morning before they go, water with no ice. (knock at the front door as DAD enters from his bedroom)

DAD

At this hour, who is it, I know I gave Iris the extra key. (doorbell rings)

MOM

(from bedroom) Who's that this early? Jim, who is it???

DAD

(Pulls out his mask from his robe pocket) Just rest. Probably a delivery. You know the boys always send something on your birthday, especially that Derick. (Looks out the peep hole in the door) WHO IS IT? (looks through the peep hole) Smitty? (opens the door as SMITTY starts to knock)

SMITTY

Morning, Pastor. Now I know it's early, but hear me out, it's important. Anybody else in here?

DAD

What on Earth are you doing here this early? Man, it's not even 8am. And you up to something calling me Pastor before noon, Smitty. Hurry up, letting all my cool air out the house. (SMITTY enters)

SMITTY

We need to talk and Pastor, I needed to see you. You didn't answer the emails and phone calls of the deacon board. I went by your office yesterday. James, Jimmmmmmy!!! Man you should have called me back.

DAD

What in the Hell has you so worked up? Stop pacing and spit it out before you wake up may whole house, Nigga!!!

SMITTY

Fire and brimstone, Pastor.

DAD

Stop and all this Biblical mumbo jumbo SMITTY ...!!!

SMITTY

As your friend, Jim, not as your deacon, as your friend. Have you gotten a lawyer, Jimmy? That bitch has the votes. We lost 2 more votes last night. We are not tied anymore. She can get us voted out tonight. Nigga we lost, you won't be Pastor. New Focus Baptist Church is over.

