

1

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

1

A man, ANDRE WEST early 40's ruggedly handsome, exhausted. We'd expect this man to be clean shaven and with eyes that aren't nearly as burdened as his are.

He is sitting in his car gripping the steering wheel, eyes fixed just out of focus, his mind is elsewhere.

He checks back in and starts searching the car for change to put in the meter.

He rifles through finding all manner of miscellaneous objects a bookbag, a pair of glasses, an action figure, it's clear he h

as children.

He finds some loose change in the passenger seat and a key chain of a hula girl trying to shield herself from the snow with the words GREETINGS FROM CHICAGO, written on it.

He stares at it briefly and a memory, something precious and painful, glints on his eyes and he puts the figure in his pocket and exits the car.

2

INT. BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

2

The lobby is full of business types going back and forth without acknowledging one another

Andre should fit in, but he clearly feels out of place, something is different, this is no longer his element.

He moves toward the elevator and enters with a small crowd of business people who move swiftly as if they are of one mind.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

The elevator is dead quiet with the business types looking at cell phones or their expensive watches.

Andre looks around at them with low eyes, but they don't notice him nor each other, it is a cold ride.

The elevator stops on the tenth floor and the business types get out and an old CLEANING LADY fights the current to get in the elevator.

Andre gives her an awkward tight lipped grin and a short head nod and she smiles back for an unusually long time

ANDRE

Hi.

The woman continues smiling with no response and Andre's smile fades as he resumes staring directly ahead uncomfortably when the doors close again.

3

INT. BUILDING FIFTEENTH FLOOR - DAY

3

Andre exits the elevator glad to be away from the smiling cleaning lady and the business people.

He approaches a RECEPTIONIST, young woman, early 20's, dark eyeliner, with a seemingly cool demeanor, she chews her gum as intensely as she types, her tamed hair seems out of place on her.

ANDRE

Good Morning.

The receptionist continues typing without glancing upwards

ANDRE (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

No response and she continues typing.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

Miss? I have an appointment.

She continues working with no acknowledgment.

Andre is annoyed and casually pushes her cup of pens onto her keyboard.

The receptionist is surprised and also annoyed.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

I have an appointment with Dr. Myra.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I have your name please?

ANDRE

Andre. Andre West.

RECEPTIONIST

Have you ever seen the doctor before?

ANDRE

Not really. No.

RECEPTIONIST

What?

ANDRE

What?

RECEPTIONIST

What do you mean not really? You can't not really see a doctor. That's like being a little bit pregnant.

ANDRE

Well, I think it was obvious I meant no.

RECEPTIONIST

If you meant no, why not just say that?

ANDRE

Is this your first human conversation, is that why you misunderstood?

She mimics a robot voice

RECEPTIONIST

Yes it is, must eat human children for sustenance. Battery cells draining from overwhelming middle age.

ANDRE

What the hell are you going on about?

Receptionist stares at him interested

RECEPTIONIST

Okay, cool I'm done. Well I see you down here for ten o' clock and Dr. Myra is the third door down this hall.

ANDRE

(Sarcastic) Thanks. Sorry about the pens.

RECEPTIONIST

(Loudly) It's cool. Hey don't worry
psychotic premature ejaculation
happens to almost to one Americans
every year.

ANDRE

Come again?

The Receptionist hears the serious tone in Andre's voice and
backs off

RECEPTIONIST

It's a joke, I was joking.

She turns around quickly embarrassed and Andre walks up the
hall put off by the receptionist and shaking his head.

ANDRE

You must be crazy. (Mumbling)

4

INT. DR. MYRA'S OFFICE - DAY

4

We see a petite woman, DR. SHELBY MYRA, late 20's, brunette,
pretty, mousy looking, confident and clearly busy, is
scribbling at her desk furious with glasses much older than
her sitting atop her head. There are numerous pictures of Dr.
Myra and two dogs on her desk.

Andre comes in hesitant and nervous about this meeting.

DR. MYRA

Come in, please make yourself
comfortable. I'm just making a note
for another patient I'm working
with so I'll just be a moment.

Andre sizes up the doctor, taking in her youth.

DR. MYRA (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. I've just got a
quite a bit on my plate.

ANDRE

Too much for you to handle?

DR. MYRA

Oh no of course not, I just prefer
the practical part of my job as
opposed to the administrative side.
So Andre...

He cuts her off

ANDRE

How old are you anyway?

Dr. Myra composes herself

DR. MYRA

Okay. Well. I am twenty-nine years old and I will be thirty in December.

ANDRE

So what you're like one of Gerald's interns or something? College credits right? I don't want to be a part of your post doctoral study. And what's up with all the dogs in these pictures? You a dog whisperer too?

Andre starts picking up pictures challenging her until he grabs one picture that isn't facing outward.

He looks at a picture of Dr. Myra and handsome young man hugging at a carnival.

Andre's temper has suddenly waned as he stares at the picture shaken, a reminder of he and his wife.

Dr. Myra addresses him calmly though her tone is stern.

DR. MYRA

I can assure you I'm not an intern and I am well practiced in my field. Your step father referred you because he said you needed help. Now, I'm not here to force you, but you seem to have unresolved feelings of some kind and I'd like to work with you if you're willing, but that's your choice. Maybe I'm wrong and you don't need any help, but judging by you coming in today and your disheveled appearance, you might need some help.

Andre softens and fiddles with hula girl key chain with one hand in his pocket

Dr. Myra notices, but says nothing

ANDRE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap, but this is a new thing and I'm exhausted. And you're so young it caught me off guard.

DR. MYRA

It's fine no problem at all, if it makes you more comfortable just pretend I'm a better looking version of Doogie Howser. Can I get you some water, a juicy juice, chocolate milk, fruit snacks maybe?

Andre furrows his brow a bit, but relents a smile

Dr. Myra pulls out a box juice and starts prepping to drink

ANDRE

I hated that show.

DR. MYRA

Me too! But I had a huge crush on Neil Patrick Harris, so much so that I gave myself a blood infection trying to tattoo our initials in a heart on my arm with a hot needle.

ANDRE

Did you happen to watch a lot of OZ when you were a kid too.

DR. MYRA

I made my friends call me Adebisi, sans the prison rape of course. Mostly.

There is a moment of uncomfortable silence

ANDRE

Should I talk about myself about now or rehash some weird shit from your childhood.

Dr. Myra shrugs

DR. MYRA

Do you want to talk about your kids?

ANDRE

Not really.

DR. MYRA
What would you like to talk about?

ANDRE
I'm not really sure. What did
Gerald tell you?

DR. MYRA
He didn't say much, just that his
stepson was having a tough time and
might need someone to talk to.

ANDRE
Well he didn't offer.

DR. MYRA
That can be tricky doing therapy
with a family member. Most people
find it a bit easier to open up to
a stranger; more objectivity.
Sometimes sharing intimate things
with family kind of let's them peep
your puddin as they say.

Andre looks at her confused

DR. MYRA (CONT'D)
Your puddin is your vagina in this
scenario.

ANDRE
My vagina? I don't have...(then)
Nobody says that!

DR. MYRA
Fine. If you say so, but let's talk
about you.

ANDRE
I guess I'm out of options. Between
Janet and the move from Chicago to
New York, I just feel like I'm
sinking.

DR. MYRA
Janet is your spouse?

Andre nods

DR. MYRA (CONT'D)
And what does she say about this?

A beat. Andre breaks eye contact

ANDRE

She...

The words struggle to come out as if serrated and hooked in his throat

He shakes his head

DR. MYRA

Can you tell me about your move?

ANDRE

It was...

He pauses

ANDRE (CONT'D)

A little messy.

POP TO:

5 INT. MAGNUS WALSH ADVERTISING FIRM - FLASHBACK NINE MONTHS 5
AGO

Andre sits at his desk looking solemn on the phone with his boss.

ANDRE

Yes mam. I'll stay late if I need to. That account will be wrapped up today. I'll take care of it.

Andre hangs up the phone and the sound of phones ringing, business chatter, fake laughing, and peoples' feet going back and forth seem to get louder as Andre sits frustrated and continues working.

He looks at picture of his family and another of he and his wife on their wedding day. In both pictures he and his family unabashedly happy.

He goes through more paper on his desk and finds himself looking at a hospital bill.

The words chemotherapy, and oncologist appear a number of times as he scans the paperwork, as well as large sums.

His coworker, MARK GARFIELD, mid 20's, trust fund kid, jock, lives in a bubble, approaches his desk.

MARK

Hey Andre, are you coming to the company party on Sunday?

Andre subtly hides the paper

ANDRE

No, I won't be able to make it.

MARK

Oh come on man, what do you have to do old man? You may as well bust out your good loafers and watch us have some fun.

ANDRE

I'm busy. I'll be with my wife.

MARK

Just bring her with you. You can be sticks in the mud together.

Andre uncomfortably shifts in his seat

MARK (CONT'D)

Oh by the way, the boss wants to see you about something and she seems pissed. She's probably got her monthly visitor if you know what I mean.

ANDRE

I got it.

MARK

Like she's Hindi in her pants.

Mark gestures to the middle of his head

ANDRE

Yup, no need to go any further. I understand. (Mumbling) inappropriate.

MARK

Because she's on her period I mean. The red dot like an Indian would be like the blood.

ANDRE

Okay Mark. Excuse me.

Andre crosses out of the room.

MARK

(To himself) Periods are gross.

Mark sips his coffee

INT. MAGGIE KRAUS'S OFFICE

Andre comes into the office and MAGGIE KRAUS, 70's, skin weathered by too much tanning and bit of surgery, gestures to hold on a minute while she finishes her phone call.

MAGGIE

(On the Phone) And I don't care what you have to do, but you get it done or so help me I'll have your balls in a mason jar under my desk, and I'll rest my martini on it at the end of everyday as a reminder of what happens to failures like you. Now get your ass back to it or so help me I'm gonna be up your ass and I don't use lube, honey! (A beat) I love you too.

She hangs up. She looks at Andre and shrugs.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Mothers, right?

Andre is speechless and confused

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Well, I say mothers, but she was more of a mammy.

Andre's jaw is dropped

ANDRE

You can't say mammy. It's inappropriate.

MAGGIE

What's inappropriate that's what she was. The black woman who took care of me while my mother was drinking. I'm sure your mother knows all about it.

ANDRE

My mother is a pediatric doctor.

MAGGIE

And the man who cuts my grass was an oncologist where he was from and the country my maid was from was so small, I think she use to be its president.

ANDRE

Jesus. How does that happen?

MAGGIE

Who knows they were decimated by poverty or polio or something I could give a shit about. I didn't bring you in here to chit chat. I need a status report on that advertisement sale Andre and I need it today.

ANDRE

That shouldn't be a problem, I just need...

She interrupts him

MAGGIE

What you need is to know this is potentially the biggest revenue increase we could have this year. Now, I put you on this because you had a great record up until a couple months ago, but if you can't handle it we may need to reconsider your position here.

ANDRE

It's just that my wife...

He can't get himself to admit she is sick, the words are stuck in his throat.

MAGGIE

You got a real nag huh? Well, wives are bitches that's why I never had one.

ANDRE

I didn't realize you were a lesbian.

MAGGIE

Well, I'm not, but it's inappropriate of you to ask. I mean if I were a lezzy, I'd be a good one, but I like my chilli con carne.

Andre dry heaves a little

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Just have the finalized paper work
from the sale on my desk before
today is out, for your own good.

Andre nods and exits

Maggie looks down at her vagina and gives an approving head
nod.

INT. HALLWAY

Andre is on a cellphone waiting on hold to speak to his
wife's doctor. He notices the time on the clock reads 2:50
P.M.

HOSPITAL RECORDING O.S. (O.S.)

Please continue to hold until the
party you are trying to reach is
located.

A series of quick cuts and the clock on the wall let us know
how much time has passed. It now reads 4:45 P.M.

ANDRE

Come on damn it! I just need five
minutes!

He bangs his hand into the wall screaming. Andre doesn't see
a female coworker stunned at his rage at the end of the
hallway.

He looks up and forces a smile, she runs off still stunned.

The hold music stops and a voice clicks onto the other line

NURSE (O.S.)

Saint Luca Oncology.

ANDRE

Oh god thank you, I wanted to find
out if there had been any changes
about his patient, my wife Janet
West.

NURSE (O.S.)

I see one moment please, let me get
the chart. Oh..(A beat) you'll need
to come in today sir.

ANDRE

What? What do you mean? What does
that mean? Just tell me.

The nurse is becoming flustered and emotional on the phone

NURSE (O.S.)

Please, I can't say sir, just come in as soon as you can, the doctor will tell you everything.

ANDRE

But wait, please. How is my wife?

The line disconnects. Andre stands in shock, he knows the news is bad.

Andre goes back to his desk and sits down and doesn't move for a time.

His office phone rings and like a signal he begins throwing things off of his desk and screaming.

Mark enters Andre's office oblivious as ever

MARK

Hey Andre, you got a real mess on your hands in here? What happened in here?

The office phone continues to ring. Mark looks at the phone and then Andre.

Andre stands breathing heavily then,

MARK (CONT'D)

Andre your phone is ringing?

Andre stares daggers at Mark and finally answers the phone.

ANDRE

Hello.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Well, imagine my surprise when I contacted our client find out they went with another agency because our contact, that being you, was unresponsive.

ANDRE

I can explain that it's just that...

MAGGIE (O.S.)

It's just that you can pack up your desk. You're out, enjoy cleaning toilets for living somewhere.

Andre drops the phone and grabs some of his things hurriedly

MARK

Hey are you redecorating your desk?
You should buy some stuff from my
girlfriend's etsy shop. She
crochets mouse pad covers and
picture frames. It's pretty lame,
but I figured you might like that
kind of thing or your wife, since
you guys are old and hate good
stuff like Iphones and shit.

Andre hears the last few words in slow motion and pushes Mark
to the ground and grabs a stapler

MARK (CONT'D)

What the hell!?

ANDRE

Mark, you're an entitled little
prick and you talk too much!

Andre tightens Mark's belt and staples it shut and also
staples the fly of his pants shut.

MARK

Jesus! What are you doing?

They continue fighting on the ground, but Andre jumps up the
victor.

ANDRE

Enjoy peeing your pants! I'm out!

Andre leaves with his box of belongings. Mark lay on the
floor.

MARK

Andre you didn't hang up your
phone.

BACK TO:

7

INT. DR. MYRA'S OFFICE - DAY

7

ANDRE

They fired me.

DR. MYRA
Yeah no shit! You stapled a guys
junk together.

ANDRE
His pants!

DR. MYRA
You're a ball stapler. How did
getting fired make you feel?

ANDRE
It made me feel fired. Made me feel
like a fired man with no income.
Like a guy who use to have money
and now he doesn't. Like someone
who has no way to pay for the kids'
schooling or the medical bills.

DR. MYRA
Your wife's medical bills?

Uncomfortable Andre acts as though he hasn't heard the
question.

ANDRE
Hmmm?

DR. MYRA
Well, you don't strike me as the
type to rack up bills on plastic
surgery for your wife.

ANDRE
Oh no? Maybe they were for me. I
bought my cheekbones on layaway.

DR. MYRA
Really, where did you get them
done?

ANDRE
Costco.

A pause, then they both laugh a little

ANDRE (CONT'D)
Only cost three seventy five for a
dozen sets so I bought a round for
everyone in the store.

They share a laugh and Dr. Myra goes back into her probing mode

DR. MYRA

So you moved right after being fired?

ANDRE

No, not right after, it was a couple months more of losing the house, the car and then we came to New York. It seemed like the best bet for the kids, and...

He pauses momentarily, this is difficult for him to say

ANDRE (CONT'D)

I needed the help.

DR. MYRA

And Janet how did she take the news?

Andre looks at her with eyes glassy with moisture, he won't let himself cry

ANDRE

I know what she would've said. She would've said, "There ain't nothing I need that your paycheck can deliver sucker."

He smiles for a moment as he remembers

DR. MYRA

Did she normally talk like a blaxpoitation character?

ANDRE

Frequently. I'm starting to think she is a blood relative to Dolemite.

His smile fades realizing he mentioned Janet in the present tense

DR. MYRA

It must be difficult without her. How are your kids managing?

ANDRE

They're all a wreck, but I don't know how to comfort them.

(MORE)

ANDRE (CONT'D)

Janet did most of the talking with the kids since I was out of town a lot for work. I don't really know them like I should.

POP TO:

8

INT. ANDRE'S KITCHEN - FLASHBACK EARLIER IN THE WEEK

8

Andre awkwardly standing at the island waiting for an opening to speak to his daughter RAINA WEST, 14, naturally pretty no make up or glitz, but put together, mature and a little anal, as she prepares the lunches for herself and her siblings

ANDRE

Thanks for doing all this Ray.

RAINA

It's not problem Dad. I'm happy to help, I gotta take care of my boys.

ANDRE

You sound just like your mom.

Raina flickers with pride for just a moment and then it's gone and back to her task.

Andre awkwardly tries to make conversation

ANDRE (CONT'D)

Do you like music?

Raina continues working without looking up

RAINA

Are you making this like an awkward first date because that's what it feels like?

ANDRE

No what!? Gross. How would you know? Are you dating?

RAINA

No, I'm not dating and something a teenage girl never wants to hear from any member of the opposite sex is, gross when they ask if it's a date. Just F.Y.I. Your lunch is ready, refrigerate the sandwich and warm up the plantains in a microwave.

Raina leaves without looking at her dad

ANDRE

Come on back Ray! You're beautiful!
I'd totally date you. You're hot
okay?

Andre is defeated and then surprised, unaware his mother entered, MICHELLE WEST, 68, aging beauty, stern demeanor, stands shocked behind him.

MICHELLE

You're all messed up, huh?

BACK TO:

9

INT. DR. MYRA'S OFFICE - DAY

9

DR. MYRA

You called your daughter hot?

ANDRE

It was a misstep.

DR. MYRA

A misstep is yelling the wrong name during sex, even if the guys both kind of look alike. What you did was almost pedophilia.

ANDRE

Are you suppose to be this judgmental of your clients? I don't think this is working out.

Andre gets up to leave

DR. MYRA

Okay, leave if you want to because things are going so well for you, you couldn't possibly need my help. You have well adjusted kids and you seem completely stable, and have a great job. Are you sensing the sarcasm yet because there has been a lot so far, but I got more.

Andre stands with his hands on the door knob and doctor Myra watches to see if he is going to leave.

ANDRE

You don't get to judge me, or be cute with me. I just need you to listen.

DR. MYRA

(Buzzer sound) Angh! Wrong answer, I'm not here to stroke your ego or tell you how everything that happens is because you have a domineering mother or had a screwed up childhood.

ANDRE

I did have a screwed up childhood!

DR. MYRA

Welcome to the club! I don't know anybody with a good childhood and we all just eat shit and try again for the next day.

ANDRE

That's depressing.

DR. MYRA

That's why baby Jesus invented happy hour.

ANDRE

Listen! If we are going to do this, there need to be ground rules. You don't get to make snide jokes when I'm sharing with you and please refrain from inserting some weird anecdote about your life into the conversation. I don't want to think about you or anyone else right now! Just me. Okay?

Doctor Myra smiles knowingly and nods in agreement. Andre sits back down.

DR. MYRA

Fair enough. Now what about the other kids?

ANDRE

My sons.

POP TO:

10 EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - FLASHBACK EARLIER IN THE WEEK 10

Andre is picking up his oldest son, DARRIEN WEST, 17, lanky, awkwardly cute, hasn't gotten comfortable with his height, soft-spoken and timid, he seems like he's made of glass.

Andre sits in the car waiting for his son to come out and suddenly sees him darting out.

The other kids laugh at him. Andre honks to get his attention

Darrien comes running towards the car and slams into it at top speed before opening the doors and jumping in.

DARRIEN

Drive!

ANDRE

Hey Darrien, Are you...

DARRIEN

Hi dad. Drive! Now!

Andre peels out of the parking lot and they are on their way home.

ANDRE

Any particular reason you came running out of there like the school was on fire?

A beat.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

Wait, was the school on fire? Because we need to call somebody if it was and I'm hoping you didn't start it.

Darrien is looking nervous, sweaty, and burdened

DARRIEN

No, it's nothing Dad, well not nothing, have you ever liked someone who's giving you mixed signals.

Andre smiles

ANDRE

Oh yeah I've liked a lot of girls in my day.

DARRIEN

Yeah sure, girls, whatever. So this girl I like is really mean to me in the locker rooms, but always demands I give her my jockstrap.

ANDRE

Wait are the locker rooms co-ed? I don't know how I feel about that?

DARRIEN

I meant lunchroom and by jockstrap I meant my pudding.

ANDRE

That's less alarming, I'm not ready to be a grandfather.

DARRIEN

I think that's mostly not an issue.

ANDRE

Well, she might just be shy. Did you try just telling her how you feel?

DARRIEN

I sent them a text, but then they sent it to everyone they know. And somebody created a fake Facebook with my picture where my name is Darrien "ButtPirate" West. See?

Darrien shows his father the account

ANDRE

Those are a lot of photo-shopped penis's next to your face. That is just the most penis's.

DARRIEN

That you've ever seen?

ANDRE

No, I just think that is the most penis's. The maximum amount allowed anywhere.

DARRIEN

I thought I'd at least get to be in a sex tape for this kind of notoriety.

Andre starts to remark that last comment, but stops himself

ANDRE

All you can do is be yourself kid.

DARRIEN

(Sarcastically) I'll make sure to tell that to the tiny digital dicks all over my reputation. Thanks dad.

Darrien embarrassed and frustrated quits trying to explain and shuts down

BACK TO:

11

INT. DR. MYRA'S OFFICE - DAY

11

DR. MYRA

You told him to be himself?

Andre gives harsh glance at Dr. Myra and she throws up her hands in surrender.

ANDRE

Well, what should I have said?

DR. MYRA

Not that, that sounds like dime store parent advice that no kid ever actually listens to. You can't tell a teenager to be themselves, tell them to be anybody else. Be Sonic the Hedgehog, be Ike Turner, be a young Tim Gunn, in your son's case.

ANDRE

What's that now?

Dr. Myra doesn't acknowledge Andre's question about her last statement.

DR. MYRA

I'm just saying at that sensitive a time, most kids are still too scared to just be themselves because they aren't sure who they are yet. Sometimes, it's just easier to make up a character you play at school and that way you can make decisions, because you're not as worried about what people think.

ANDRE

That's actually not terrible advice.

DR. MYRA

I made it to some of my classes, so no biggie.

ANDRE

My youngest he's the biggest mystery to me. He use to be so happy, but now he seems uninterested in everything, but his backpack.

POP TO:

12

INT. ANDRE'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - EVENING

12

KORI WEST, 10, at a glance seems shy, more like observing, intelligent, but aloof

Kori is sitting at the living room table doing a puzzle

Andre enters and tries to take the opportunity to connect with his son.

ANDRE

Hey little man.

KORI

Shhh. I'm concentrating.

Andre whispers

ANDRE

Are you doing a puzzle?

KORI

Nope.

Andre looks at the table and reaches for a box that says, Puzzles For Kids. Andre frowns for a moment

ANDRE

Do you need any help?

KORI

Are you any good at puzzles?

ANDRE

Yeah I'm great at puzzles.

Kori thinks for a moment

KORI
No thanks.

ANDRE
Well, why not?

KORI
It'd be too easy if you helped me.
I want to be industrious.

ANDRE
Well what if I said I was terrible
at puzzles?

KORI
Then I'm better off alone aren't I?

Andre about to leave, notices a large backpack assuming it is
homework

ANDRE
Well maybe I can help with your
homework?

Andre reaches for the backpack

KORI
No!

Kori grabs the instruction book from the puzzle and slaps his
father full force in the face.

ANDRE
Ahhh!

Kori grabs the bag and scurries away

KORI
Sorry dad!

BACK TO:

ANDRE
It's a hopeless situation right? I
should just be waiting to see them
as reality show contestants.

DR. MYRA

I think each situation is different, but there is always opportunity to improve things.

ANDRE

It's alright my mother thinks I'm a bad parent too and I think she's right.

DR. MYRA

I think parenting styles differ from parent to parent and one style over another may not have prevented this. Like my mother took the twenty seven scotches a day approach to parenting. That's a definite bad one, but most are subjective.

Andre looks at Dr. Myra with a look that says "you're kidding right?"

POP TO:

14

INT. CAR - FLASHBACK A FEW DAYS AGO

14

Andre sits in the backseat of his car as his stepfather, GERALD SHARP, 63, well kept, fit, friendly and distinguished, drives him to a job interview.

His mother, Michelle, sits in the passenger seat reading the newspaper and her son.

MICHELLE

You've been a crappy father

ANDRE

Thank you for the confidence booster Mom. You always know just what to say.

GERALD

I think you needed a bit more of a lead in with that strong of an opinion.

MICHELLE

Oh is that right Gerald? Is he right Andre, do I need to use kid gloves with you, okay then. Nice weather we're having (short pause). You're a terrible father.

ANDRE

You would know since you married one! Not you Gerald.

MICHELLE

Don't speak poorly about your dead father!

ANDRE

Oh I'll talk about dad however I want because he forced me to play football and I hated it, but he said it would help me be less of a girl!

MICHELLE

Yeah, I guess it didn't help much.

ANDRE

The point is he was always going on about how I had to man up, but do you remember how he died? Drowned in a men's room stall in women's underwear.

MICHELLE

We still don't know what happened conclusively.

ANDRE

The police report that as a frequent cruising spot and semen from several men were found in his beard and eyelashes. I think it's pretty clear what happened?

MICHELLE

He had his flaws, but your father was there for you.

ANDRE

You mean how gin and illicit mailman sex were their for you?

MICHELLE

Sometimes I'm surprised that they even recognize you with all the time you spent away. No wonder you didn't know Janet got sick.

Andre is shocked and hurt by that one. Michelle shifts uncomfortably realizing she's crossed a line.

Gerald stops the car suddenly.

GERALD

No wait a minute god damn it!
That's enough. You're both being
unreasonable and hurtful and that's
your business, but you won't do it
in my car in front of me. Are we
clear!?

ANDRE

We just...

GERALD

You shut it! All I want to hear is,
"Yes, we're clear."

ANDRE

We're clear.

Michelle giggles a bit at Andre being put in his place.

GERALD

I don't know why you're laughing
Michelle, you are far too old to be
acting as immaturely as you have
been.

MICHELLE

Old? I'm not...

Gerald interrupts

GERALD

Honey you're gray in the hair, you
have crows feet and you droop and
sag in places I'd prefer you
didn't, but I love you and you're
being an ass.

The car is silent for a moment.

GERALD (CONT'D)

We're actually here. Good luck on
the interview.

Andre awkwardly fumbles out of the car

ANDRE

Thanks for the ride.

BACK TO:

ANDRE

The worst part is that my mom is right. Janet knew how to juggle everything perfectly and I missed out on my family for work.

There is a heavy quiet between them as Andre has to compose himself.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

Even when I'd go away for a week or two at a time, Janet always found time to mail me a post card or a little key chain or something from home. She'd always write a little card that said, I love you, wish you were here. I tried to write her back, but I'd forget, I'd always forget.

DR. MYRA

Your wife sounds sweet.

ANDRE

She was and I wish I could just have her back. There are so many bad people in the world, so many and my wife is gone. Most of my coworkers use to cheat on their wives all the time and the worse part is I understood why. They were unhappy at work and were unhappy at home, so they just picked up anything to break up the monotony of it all. Give yourself a story before you die, I guess.

DR. MYRA

People get married for different reasons. I read a survey that most people get married not out of love or even security. According to the survey they get married out of fear.

ANDRE

Fear? Of what?

DR. MYRA

Dying alone on the kitchen floor. Not passing on the seed of their line or some other delusion.

(MORE)

DR. MYRA (CONT'D)

But most people don't get to love at all. You're lucky.

ANDRE

I'm not lucky. I'm pissed off that I loved my wife and she got sick. I'm pissed that I have to live with my mom and my kids hate me, and I have no idea what I'm doing. I hated my job, and worked there for years and have nothing to show for it, but regret. My life is incredibly unlucky.

DR. MYRA

Well now we know something about you that you didn't know before.

ANDRE

What that I hate marketing and sales jobs?

DR. MYRA

Yes, knowing that is a determining factor in figuring out who you are and taking the time to do some introspection is going to be key with connecting with your kids.

ANDRE

Doc, I would love to go on an Eat, Pray, Love Journey, but the only one of those things I have the time or money to do is pray and I'd really rather eat.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

I just wish I could ask Janet how she did it.

A beat. Dr. Myra has an idea

DR. MYRA

So why not ask her?

Andre scowls at the suggestion

ANDRE

What are you talking about? Haven't you heard a word I said this whole time?

DR. MYRA

Yes of course, but what I'm suggesting is an exercise to help you work out your feelings for your wife and help you with your children.

ANDRE

Okay, what do you suggest?

DR. MYRA

The same letters that you and Janet use to write to each other. Keep writing them. Use them to ask her things you want to know about the family or how she would've handled a problem.

ANDRE

I don't know. I'm not sure.

DR. MYRA

Like I said before, I'm not here to force you, but I think this exercise will bring more positive memories of your wife to the foreground of your mind and could help you deal with some of that guilt you have for not being around.

ANDRE

I'll consider it. I think that's all I can take for now.

DR. MYRA

Should I have my assistant put you in for an appointment next week?

ANDRE

I'm not sure. Maybe. I'll think about it.

DR. MYRA

Well, you know where to find me.

Andre starts toward the door.

DR. MYRA (CONT'D)

Oh and Andre.

Andre turns around to her.

DR. MYRA (CONT'D)
I'm pretty sure your older son is
gay.

Andre nods, but his emotion isn't clear. He throws a hand up
signaling farewell.

Andre leaves the office. Dr. Myra laughs to herself a little.

DR. MYRA (CONT'D)
What is wrong with me?

16

INT. BUILDING FIFTEENTH FLOOR - DAY

16

The Receptionist is playing solitaire intently as Andre
passes.

RECEPTIONIST
How was your suppository?

ANDRE
Not bad. Slow and steady you know?

The Receptionist giggles and Andre smiles

RECEPTIONIST
Hey, do you need to make another
appointment?

ANDRE
Not sure yet.

RECEPTIONIST
You should. Dr. Myra is really
good.

ANDRE
Nothing like stoic advertisement
for an insane doctor. Have you ever
thought about a career in outside
sales or marketing?

RECEPTIONIST
Yeah I have thought about it and
then I take some pills to stop the
screaming.

ANDRE
Take care of yourself. You got a
name?

RECEPTIONIST

Yeah, I'm Jade, but most people just call me "excuse me Miss."

ANDRE

Bye Jade. Go home and hug your parents when you see them.

JADE

Gross. No.

Andre gets onto the elevator. He is standing next to the same strange cleaning woman as before. She smiles widely. Andre smiles back and he maintains his smile with her. The doors close with both smiling at each other, like some strange still life.

CUT TO:

17 INT. DINER - AFTERNOON 17

Andre sits with a plate of food barely touched staring at his hula girl key chain

CUT TO:

18 INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON 18

Andre has the hula girl key chain standing on the table as he taps his pen to paper in frustration.

CUT TO:

19 INT. CAR - LATER AFTERNOON 19

Andre is picking up his kids from school each one of them aloof and disconnected.

Andre goes to touch his older son's hand and he flinches away.

He looks at the hula girl key chain again.

CUT TO:

20 INT. ANDRE'S HOME - LATER AFTERNOON 20

His mother and father in law are sipping coffee and watching a movie when the kids come rushing in to their corners of the home.

Andre shakes Gerald's outreached hand and touches his mother's shoulder

Andre makes his way to his bedroom and on the dresser are the pictures of he and Janet on their wedding day and the family photo where they all were grinning from cheek to cheek.

Andre grabs the hula girl key chain and puts it on the dresser as well as a pen and a piece of paper

Andre begins writing his letter to Janet

We hear Andre's voice as he writes and we see each of his kids briefly in their rooms with his voice

CUT TO:

INT. DARRIEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Darien stands in a mirror shirtless and flexing his long limbs, but is deflated at how miniscule he is.

ANDRE V.O

Dear Janet, I lost you.

CUT TO:

INT. RAINA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Raina sits labeling everything in her room and adjusting things to be perfectly in it's place.

ANDRE V.O

I lost our family, but I'm going to get them back.

CUT TO:

INT. KORI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kori makes sure the door is locked and then we see him pull out his heavy back pack from earlier. He reveals a large photo album thought forgotten in their old house. He flips through the book and we see pictures of the family, unbelievably happy together, like another time.

ANDRE V.O

I wish I had more time with you and
I wish you were here. Love always,
Dre.

INT. ANDRE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Andre signs the letter looks at the hula girl figurine in his hands. He smiles and places it in his pocket.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW