

BLACK DON'T CRACK

Written by

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BLACK DON'T CRACK - "PILOT"

OUR CHARACTERS:

ANGELA WRIGHT -- (40 or 50 something -- but looks younger because black don't crack.) New York born and raised; Angela is our emotional center of the group. She and her diagnosis are the reason the women come back together again. She is sharp witted and our cheerleader. She believes she and her friends can all do better in life if they have each other. Angela is a fighter - while she fights for her life, she also fights for this friendship.

When her friends come back in her life, they find her stuck in place. She's working as a high school music teacher- a job she likes but doesn't love. Angela's real passion is singing, but she put her dream on hold to raise her son, **KHALIL**, by her late white cop husband, Joe. Angela's funny comes from her ability to cheer on and support her friends, even if she doesn't quite have her own life together. Angela's heart is big when it comes to the needs of her friends and family.

NIA HOLLIS-DAVIS -- (40 OR 50 something -- but looks younger because black don't crack.) If Ms. Manners had a black cousin it would be Nia. Since Nia was raised in a conservative bougie family - she can be a bit of a tight ass. For a brief moment in college, Nia found her inner "black girl" and loosened up. But she met a nice bougie boy with political aspirations -- future Republican Congressman **NATE DAVIS** -- put her law degree on hold -- and got married and SOLD OUT. Nia is a lovable neurotic. She processes stuff out loud and sometimes it comes out of her mouth at inappropriate times. She is our voice of positivity, even if a lot of the times, she's not sure what's going on. She's lived her life on the surface. Her friends constantly push her to get out of her comfortable comfort zone, dig deeper and be that girl she was in college.

TASHA MERRITT -- (40 or-50-something but looks way younger because black don't crack) Tasha is the "tell it like it is" friend we all have. AND SOMETIMES WISH WE DIDN'T. She calls our characters out on their shit. She has a plan for everyone's life, but her own. Tasha is an up-and-coming chef turned restaurateur -- who has just opened her own place -- an authentic, hip and fabulous Southern cuisine restaurant and bar. In College Tasha was the shy small town girl from Macon, Georgia. But after college, Tasha shook off the shy and became the toast of NY -- the chef you'd follow from restaurant to restaurant. Tasha is fabulous. Age is chasing her and she's beating it back with hot yoga, juice cleanses and Vitamin injections every step of the way. And as successful as Tasha is at business, Tasha's love life is the only thing that's not working. She's dated. A lot. But no guy ever stuck. Now later

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in life, she's finding out she was looking for the wrong thing.

CHARLES BELL -- African American. (40 or 50 something). Charles is a successful former pro-football player turned NYC restaurateur. He dated Tasha briefly in the past, but it didn't take. But the two have remained good friends and now business partners. Charles is charming and extremely charismatic. He is comfortable being the center of attention and holding court. He always has a story from the good old days. At first he seems a little self-involved and cocky, but at the end of the day, he's dependable and the kind of good guy you want in your corner. Charles is our Rooster in the Hen House. He can spar with the women and hold his own.

RECURRING CHARACTERS:

KHALIL WRIGHT -- (20's) Angela's son. Khalil is a college grad, (with a couple of useless degrees -- philosophy and English lit) who rents an apartment (at a family and friends discount) in his mama's brownstone. He has no steady job, but big ideas and big dreams of his own start-up. He's a self-starter, but unfortunately none of his self-starting start-ups have yet to take off. He'd be an opportunist if he could find any viable opportunities. But Khalil isn't a loser; in his words he's "winning" at life. And he's probably on the "verge" of something great, but because he was coddled by his mother and grandmother, he doesn't have all the tools he needs to make that move. He's okay staying so close to home as long as his mother and grandmama continue to take care of him. As self-centered as he sometimes comes across, he is fiercely protective of his family. He spends his spare time on all his social medial accounts and trying to find investors for his business.

NANCY WRIGHT -- (60's or 70's) Angela's white mother-in-law. (& Khalil's grandmother) Nancy is a widow who lives around the corner from Angela in a rent-controlled apartment. Nancy was a blue-collar working mom from Queens. She married a cop. And raised a cop. She loved her son. And so, she loves her son's son. Which is why even though she doesn't live there, she spends A LOT of time at Angela's. Which is unfortunate because she doesn't love her son's wife. She didn't approve of the marriage, but in the last twenty or so years... is coming around. Nancy can be a thorn in Angela's side, but the truth is they kind of need each other. (Both women have a healthy fear of dying alone) And at the end of the day the things they share -- the loss of a husband -- their love for Khalil -- these commonalities are what keep them from killing each other.

COLD OPEN

INT. EAST HARLEM SPIN CLASS - MORNING

WE'RE CLOSE ON **ANGELA WRIGHT**, BLACK, 50 BUT YOU'D NEVER BE ABLE TO GUESS IT... AND SHE'D NEVER ADMIT IT. SHE'S MID-CYCLING CLASS BLACK WOMAN STYLE WITH HER HAIR WRAPPED IN A SILK SCARF TO PREVENT IT FROM "GOING BACK" -- FOR THE WHITE FOLKS THAT MEANS SWEATING IT OUT. ANGELA IS TRYING TO HANG IN THERE BUT DAMN THIS CLASS IS HARD...

INSTRUCTOR

Turn up the resistance! Get your asses up that hill, rockstars!
Let's go!

LIZZO BLARES AS ANGELA SPINS, NOW SLOWLY. A SUPER SWEATY, **WHITE MAN** NEXT TO HER SPINNING FAST, FLINGS HIS HAIR, SPRAYING SWEAT ALL OVER ANGELA.

SWEATY MAN

(ENTITLED YELLING) BLAME IT ON THE JUICE. WERK!!

ANGELA

(TO SWEATY MAN) Uh, bike 12. I'm trying to keep sweat OFF my hair.

SWEATY MAN

Then maybe you should get to the back of the class, 13.

ANGELA STOPS PEDDLING.

ANGELA

Did you just "back of the bus" me?

SWEATY MAN

What? No. Cycling used to be about getting a serious workout, and now you people--

ANGELA

"You people?"

SWEATY MAN

Not you people. People that cycle 'cause it's trendy. Even though they're lazy.

ANGELA

Lazy. Like black lazy.

SWEATY MAN

What?! No! You're crazy, 13.

HER PHONE DINGS. SHE CHECKS IT.

SWEATY MAN (CONT'D)

(TO INSTRUCTOR) Bike 13 is on her phone.

INSTRUCTOR

No phones, 13!

ANGELA EYES THE SWEATY MAN.

ANGELA

Snitches get stitches, 12.

SWEATY MAN

I am powered by your negativity,
13! Haters give me strength!

(MORE)

SWEATY MAN (CONT'D)

(THEN) TURNS OUT I'M A HUNDRED
PERCENT THAT BITCH!

THE SWEATY WHITE MAN FLINGS HIS HAIR ONE MORE TIME. THAT'S
IT. IT'S ON. ANGELA PUSHES HIM OFF THE BIKE AS WE...

SMASH TO:

INT. ND ROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

CLOSE ON ANGELA'S FACE, SHE'S NAKED AND LAYING DOWN --

ANGELA

...and then they had the nerve to
ban me from the class. (GIGGLES)
Sorry. It's just, this is the most
action I've gotten since my husband
died.

PULL OUT TO SEE ANGELA IN THE STIRRUPS. **DOCTOR BETH WEBBER**, A
SMART AND SMART ASS 40-SOMETHING, WOMAN EXAMS HER.

DOCTOR WEBBER

You've been making that joke for
almost twenty years now.

ANGELA

And sadly, it's never a joke.

DOCTOR WEBBER

So how are you doing?

DOCTOR WEBBER CONTINUES TO EXAMINE ANGELA'S BREASTS UNDER HER
GOWN AS:

ANGELA

I've been busy with work and my son started a start-up, 'Moocha Munchies' whatever that means -- To be honest his "start up" sounds a little "made up." But at least he's not in my basement anymore. Of course, I rent him a room... and then there's my mother in law at my house all the time -- being all loud and white and white--

DOCTOR WEBBER STOPS HER EXAM, CONCERNED --

DOCTOR WEBBER

Hmmm... little bit of a lump.

ANGELA

Oh, she's a big white lump. But, like everything else in my life, I can handle her. I can handle anything.

DOCTOR WEBBER

No. Angela, I found a lump in your breast.

A BEAT.

ANGELA

Mother fu--

SMASH TO TITLE "**BLACK DON'T CRACK.**"

END COLD OPEN

SCENE A

INT. DOCTOR WEBBER'S OFFICE - LATER

DR. WEBBER WATCHES FROM HER DESK AS ANGELA PACES. NERVOUS AS HELL. SHE PICKS UP THE DOCTOR'S COFFEE MUG AND BEGINS TO CLEAN IT WITH A TISSUE. IT'S WHAT SHE DOES WHEN SHE'S NERVOUS.

DOCTOR WEBBER

We don't know definitively that
it's... cancer. But with your
family history-- Angela. Angela.
Angela, stop cleaning my office.

ANGELA

Huh? Sorry. Nervous habit.

SHE SITS.

DOCTOR WEBBER

With your family history we should
do a biopsy ASAP.

SHE TAKES A LONG BEAT, PUNCHED IN THE STOMACH. THEN BEGINS TO REARRANGE THE DESK.

ANGELA

Do you have any furniture polish?

DOCTOR WEBBER

For years, you've told me "I handle
everything alone." But this might
be too big for one person to handle
by themselves.

ANGELA

I have family.

DOCTOR WEBBER

Use them.

ANGELA

Girl, you know I can't use them.

They're nuts.

DOCTOR WEBBER

Then maybe friends...?

ANGELA

Why was that in the form of a question? I have friends. Good friends. Like my sorority sisters. We were ride or die in college. Especially my besties Tasha and Nia. They were my front and back in our pledge line. You ever been on line?

DOCTOR WEBBER

I have not, no.

ANGELA

Well, it's brutal. Every insecurity and fear is laid bare. You start in a line with strangers, but after weeks struggling together, you end up with the closest friends you could have. And Tasha, in front of me and Nia, behind me, were the closest. Like sisters.

(MORE)

ANGELA (CONT'D)

On our last night on line, I broke my heel grabbing cheese in a giant mousetrap, long story, and those two carried me over the hot fondue pit to get my pledge pin. We were Snap, Crackle, and Pop. I was Pop.

DOCTOR WEBBER

Well, Pop, call Snap and Crackle.

ANGELA

I haven't talked to them in years. Those bitches don't deserve me. Look, I'll be fine. Because I'm a--

ANGELA (CONT'D)

DOCTOR WEBBER

Strong black woman.

Strong black woman.

DOCTOR WEBBER (CONT'D)

At least have somebody there for the biopsy. Can you do that?

ANGELA

Fine. (THEN) You know, I've come to feel that you and I --

DOCTOR WEBBER

Not me.

ANGELA

Right.

OFF ANGELA, SUDDENLY FEELING ALONE, WE:

CUT TO:

SCENE B

INT. ANGELA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

ANGELA ENTERS CARRYING GROCERIES TO FIND HER SON, **KHALIL WRIGHT**, 23, PUTTING WRAPPED BROWNIES IN BAGGIES. HER MOTHER-IN-LAW, **NANCY WRIGHT**, 75, IS DEEP INTO "WHEEL" ON TV.

ANGELA

Hey, can somebody help me...

NANCY

Shush! I can't hear what letter they're calling.

ANGELA

Use your eyes. That's literally Vanna's only job.

NANCY

Shush! (THEN) Why do you keep it so cold. Did you find that space heater I've been asking for?

ANGELA

(UNDER HER BREATH) There's a nice big one down at the Senior Home.

NANCY

What?

ANGELA

Your heater's in my trunk.

SHE CLOCKS KHALIL AS HE WRAPS THE BROWNIES.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Please tell me those aren't your
"special" brownies.

KHALIL

I really thought "don't ask, don't
tell" was gonna be our happy place.
(THEN) Sorry, Ma, but my oven
broke. And, as my landlord, you
should probably get on that. And,
uh... before you ask, rent's gonna
be a little thin this month.

ANGELA

How thin?

KHALIL

(HOLDS UP BAG) I could wrap a
brownie in it.

ANGELA

What happened to the money I gave
you? Or according to my Venmo
receipts, the money I didn't know I
was giving you?

KHALIL

Seed money.

ANGELA

For what?

KHALIL

...seeds. Was that not clear? You know I'm bustin' ass to get Moocha Munchies off the ground. And when I do, you know I got you.

ANGELA

Yeah, well... Look, son -- I went to the gynecologist today and--

SFX: KITCHEN TIMER

KHALIL

Pause. Another batch of money just finished baking. Ha. Baking.

NANCY

(RE: TV) Clam blank igger...?"
Sajak is one tricky Dick.

ANGELA TRIES TO IGNORE HER AND FOCUS ON HER SON, WHO IS NOW FOCUSED ON HIS BROWNIES.

ANGELA

And my doctor told me...

NANCY

"Clam... igger...?" Oh, I know --

ANGELA

Please don't say it.

KHALIL

Grandma might say it.

NANCY

N! Is it N? Say N!

ANGELA

Woman, it's clam digger! Why the
hell would it be Clam Nig- (BLEEP)?

KHALIL

(CAUTIOUSLY) You need a brownie?
I'll give you the friends and
family.

NANCY

She needs Jesus.

ANGELA

(SOTTO) I need to track those
sorority bitches down.

OFF ANGELA --

CUT TO:

SCENE C

INT. SOUTHERN TIP RESTAURANT /BAR - NIGHT

ANGELA SITS ALONE. **CHARLES BELL**, (40'S? 50'S? BLACK MEN ALSO DON'T CRACK.) A ONCE SUCCESSFUL PRO FOOTBALL PLAYER WITH MAD SWAGGER AND CHARM WORKS THE BAR.

CHARLES

What can I get you?

ANGELA

A cure for cancer? Ha! (OFF HIS LOOK) Um... I need to see the owner.

CHARLES

I'm the owner.

A BEAT. ANGELA LOOKS AT CHARLES CLOSELY.

ANGELA

Tasha? Oh. Wow. But... yay you!-- I mean... Loud and proud. Love is love, girl... man.

CHARLES

I'm not Tasha. I'm her business partner, Charles.

ANGELA

Oh. Oh of course you are. Even bossy man-hands Tasha couldn't pull off that Adam's apple.

SUDDENLY, **NIA HOLLIS-DAVIS**, AN EXPENSIVELY CLAD AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN OF INDETERMINATE AGE BUT **PROBABLY OVER 50**, ENTERS AND APPROACHES CHARLES.

NIA

Excuse me, I'm Nia Hollis-Davis.
Senator Nate Davis' wife. Not that
I like to throw around Senator Nate
Davis' name. I'm here to meet a
reporter from Vanity Fair. They're
doing an article on my long-term
relationship with my husband,
Senator-- (THEN NOTICING) Angela?
Angela Wright? What's happening?

ANGELA

Ah... hey girl.

NIA

I don't understand--

ANGELA

(RE: HERSELF) Vanity Fair.

NIA

Not dressed like that you're not.

What's going on here?

TASHA MERRIT, AN AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN, ALSO OF
INDETERMINATE AGE, BUT **AGAIN PROBABLY OVER 50**, ENTERS. SHE'S
A FABULOUS BOHEMIAN FREE SPIRIT WHO MARCHES TO HER OWN BEAT,
AND RIGHT NOW SHE'S ON A MISSION.

TASHA

Charles, the new shrimp supplier is
not going to work out. He's sending
frozen and I specifically asked for
fresh. I need you to -- (THEN
NOTICING) Angela? Nia?

THEY ALL STARE AT EACH OTHER, THEN:

TASHA (CONT'D)

Oh not today, Jesus.

ANGELA

Come on Tasha, no need to call on
Jesus, we're friends. Sorority
sisters. Ride or die.

TASHA

We rode. And it died. Years ago.

ANGELA

And I'm thinking why did it die?
It's been so long, who really
remembers what happened?

TASHA

I remember we said we'd always be
there for each other and then you
both disappeared from my life.

ANGELA

I know, but I met Joe and--

NIA

And I was planning my wedding to--

ANGELA

TASHA

Senator Nate Davis.

Senator Nate Davis.

NIA

Shows how much you know. He hadn't
been sworn in yet.

(MORE)

NIA (CONT'D)

I wrote you both off when neither
of you came to the wedding.

TASHA

You had that crap in the Maldives.
No one even knows where that is.
Let alone can afford to go there.

NIA

It was the off season.

TASHA

Bitch, it was five thousand a
person. You never did think about
anybody but Nia. And, anyway, I was
done when I opened this restaurant,
my life-long dream, and neither of
you came.

ANGELA

Well... it was all the way in
Manhattan...

NIA

And for what? Some finger foods and
over-priced drinks? Besides I hated
you for not coming to Nate's
swearing in.

TASHA

That's because you blew off my
dirty thirty birthday.

NIA

'Cause you were thirty five and a liar. Always had to be "unique".

ANGELA

(JUMPING IN) Hey, come on, neither one of you came to my very local and very truthful baby shower, but I got over it, and here I am. Hug?

THE WOMEN STARE AT HER.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Look -- okay, we let life get in the way, and we weren't there for each other for some of the most important moments in our life but we're all together now, so...

NIA

What possible reason could you have to put us back in a room together?

ANGELA

Because... I might be dying.

(HOLDING UP HER DRINK) Cheers, bitches!

OFF THIS:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE D

INT. SOUTHERN TIP RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

THE KITCHEN IS BUZZING. TASHA CHARGES IN WITH ANGELA AND NIA ON HER HEELS. SHE IMMEDIATELY TAKES CHARGE.

TASHA

Everyone out. My friend needs to stress clean. (TO ANGELA) Go on girl hit those counter tops.

ANGELA STARTS TO WIPE DOWN THE COUNTERS AS A **WAITER** TURNS TO TASHA, HOLDING A PLATE OF FOOD.

WAITER

Chef, I still need the garnish on the shrimp and grits for table 5.

NIA

I'll take that.

NIA TAKES THE PLATE FROM THE WAITER -- THE KITCHEN STAFF SCURRIES OUT AS ANGELA STARTS TO SCRUB THE COUNTER TOPS AND NIA STRESS EATS.

NIA (CONT'D)

(RE: FOOD) Are these greens local?

(OFF TASHA'S LOOK) I'll chance it.

TASHA

(TO ANGELA) Spill it. What you got?

(TIP TOEING) The AIDS?

NIA

Tasha, this is not the eighties
when the government was trying to
scare our legs closed.

ANGELA

They found a lump in my breast.

A BEAT THAT SITS THERE.

NIA

You want this shrimp?

ANGELA

So... I know we haven't spoken in
years but I didn't know who to turn
to...

NIA

Stop.

TASHA

We got you.

TASHA AND NIA HUG ANGELA. A BEAT BEFORE CHARLES ENTERS.

CHARLES

Uh... can I set you all up in a
booth? 'Cause there's a lot of food
in here and way too much un-netted
hair.

OFF THIS.

CUT TO:

SCENE E

INT. SOUTHERN TIP - MUCH LATER

ALMOST CLOSING TIME. JUST ANGELA AND TASHA SIT "DEEP IN THEIR CUPS" IN A BOOTH. A LOT TIPSY. CHARLES PUTS DOWN DRINKS.

CHARLES

Another round of your college favorites. Lemon drop. Alabama Slammer. And I had to go to the 7-11 for the wine cooler. Enjoy.

CHARLES LEAVES. ANGELA EYES TASHA.

ANGELA

Charles seems nice. Are you two together?

TASHA

We were. But it was one and done. We are over. Trust.

ANGELA

So if I live, can I hit that?

TASHA TAKES A MOMENT.

TASHA

You're going to be fine. (THEN) And if you want him, he's all yours. I finally got my life where I want it. It's perfect. I don't need some man in it creating drama. Like Nia.

ANGELA

What? She and Nate seem happy.
He's called her four times tonight.

TASHA

Yeah, it's called an alibi. Girl,
Nate's a big time player player. He
was in here a couple of months ago
with some little side piece who
couldn't have been more than twenty.

ANGELA

Does Nia know?

TASHA

She has to know. Women always know.
She's just frontin'. Remember when
her parents got divorced and she
said her mother was just going on
tour with Prince?

ANGELA

Yeah. She wore that raspberry beret
for a week.

TASHA

I mean, come on, you'd have known
if Joe was stepping out...
(CATCHING HERSELF) I mean... you
know what I mean.

ANGELA

He's been gone a long time now.

TASHA

Don't know how you got through
that.

ANGELA

I still had you two back then.

AS THIS SITS. NIA RETURNS.

NIA

Nate is fine with me staying a few
extra nights. Says he's gonna miss
me, but he has work to catch up on.

TASHA THROWS ANGELA A LOOK. ANGELA THROWS IT BACK.

ANGELA

(TO NIA) You can stay with me.

NIA

...or a hotel. No shade, but I need
my Egyptian sheets or I will die.

ANGELA

Oh? Cause I might die for real.

A BEAT.

NIA

So... I'll stay with you.

ANGELA

It's so good to know I still have
my front and my back.

NIA

Definitely.

TASHA

Always.

ANGELA

I just have to get home, grade some papers, and finish Khalil's laundry.

TASHA

Wait, go back -- Finish Khalil's laundry? Isn't he a grown ass man?

ANGELA

I'm just trying to make things easier while he gets his life together.

TASHA

O... Kay... (THEN) And you're still teaching? What happened to your singing? You said you were gonna be the next Whitney.

NIA

Of course if she dies, she could be. (OFF THEIR LOOKS) I'm sorry I get all nervous around cancer...(TO ANGELA) not that you have it. I can't handle these wine coolers.

TASHA

(TO ANGELA) Seriously, what happened to your singing career?

ANGELA

I got pulled over by this fine ass white police officer and as soon as I looked into his eyes, I was married and pregnant. Five of the best years of my life. After he died, I inherited his white mother-in-law and her amazing recipe for white folk pimento cheese loaf and started teaching and raising a three year old. And that's it. (THEN, SPIRALING) Wow. My obit is going to be both short and sad.

TASHA

Okay, we are not going to sit here crying in my top shelf liquor talkin' about dying. We are all still very much alive.

NIA

Who's all? This bitch got cancer. (REALIZING) Oh, god, I've got to stop drinking these.

TASHA

That's it. Heffas we are going out.

CUT TO:

SCENE H

INT. CLUB INFINITY - NIGHT

IT'S A KARAOKE/DANCE CLUB. ANGELA AND TASHA, COCKTAILS IN HAND, GET DOWN ON A DANCE FLOOR. **THREE TWENTY-SOMETHING GIRLS** SING A NOT GREAT, VERSION OF ARIANA'S "THANK YOU NEXT."

TASHA

Damn. I'm pretty sure my hip should not be making any of these noises.

ANGELA

Do you know the stages of cardiac arrest because I think I'm in two of them.

THEY LAUGH, ACCIDENTALLY BUMPING ONE OF THE TWENTY-SOMETHING **GIRLS**.

GIRL #1

(ANNOYED) Hey! Excuse you.

ANGELA/TASHA

Sorry, boo.

THEY LAUGH AGAIN, AS THE GIRLS CONTINUE TO SING. ANNOYED. NIA CROSSES OVER.

NIA

I know we're having fun, but can we leave before they turn the lights on? I felt something scurry past my foot on the way to the bathroom. Which was out of toilet paper and smelled like pee pee, by the way.

TASHA

"Pee pee?" Lord, you sound like my Grandmother. Oh, God tell me we're not that old.

ANGELA

You know what? I'm having a great time. I honestly haven't felt this young in years. Why did I stop doing things like this?

TASHA

I don't know why. But I know when. No one has (RE: DANCE) "running man-d" since the eighties.

ANGELA

Oh, I got your "running man."

ANGELA TURNS AND BUMPS THE SAME GIRL FROM BEFORE.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Oops. My bad. Again.

GIRL #1

O.M.G. Why are you even in here?

GIRL #2

Didn't realize this was Senior Citizen night.

GIRL #3

If I'm all sad up in the club when I'm seventy somebody shoot me.

ANGELA

Seventy? I should shoot you now.
And I could, because I know where
my mother-in-law hides her lady
gun. (THEN) Oh my god.

TASHA

What is it? Your heart?

ANGELA

No. I just realized I'm the same
age my mother was when she died.

A BEAT. AS THE WOMEN TAKE THIS IN.

NIA

You're not your mother.

TASHA

And definitely not my mother, she
was a drunk by our age.

ANGELA IS DEEP IN WHAT THIS MEANS.

ANGELA

But that biopsy tomorrow could
change every --

TASHA

Tomorrow is tomorrow. Tonight we're
going to kick some millennial ass
up in here.

NIA

But very respectfully.

TASHA

And like I said- we have a helluva
lot more living to do.

TASHA GRABS A MIC AND HANDS IT TO ANGELA.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Girl, you remember our sorority
talent show senior year.

NIA

(RE: HER PHONE) I already texted
the song to the DJ.

"SHE WORKS HARD FOR THE MONEY" BY DONNA SUMMER STARTS
PLAYING. ANGELA SINGS LEAD AS THE THREE DO AN AMAZING DANCE
STEP TO THE SONG. ANGELA IS KILLING IT. THE CROWD GOES WILD.
THE WOMAN DANCE TOWARD THE YOUNGER GIRLS BACKING THEM AWAY.
OFF THIS VICTORY.

CUT TO:

SCENE J

INT. LYFT CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

A DRUNK ANGELA, TASHA, AND NIA SIT IN THE BACK OF A LYFT.

ANGELA

We. Did. That.

TASHA

We did. But mostly you.

NIA

Who's old?

A BEAT.

ANGELA

Real talk? We old. And so is
everything on my body from (RE: HER
NECK) here down.

ANGELA TAKES ICE FROM A PLASTIC CUP AND RUBS IT ON HER KNEES.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Ladies, I've been thinking. This is
so nice. We've found each other
again. And we shouldn't let this
go. Let's not lose this. We could
do this all the time. Ride or die.

NIA

I don't know. Sure it was fun, but
I'm a bit busier than you two.

(MORE)

NIA (CONT'D)

As a senator's wife, I have White House lunches, committee meetings and free tickets to the Kennedy Center. My life is just so big and Nate depends on me for so much...

TASHA

(CAN'T TAKE IT) Nia. Stop.

NIA

I'm sorry. What?

ANGELA

Tasha... don't.

TASHA GLANCES OVER AT ANGELA THEN TURNS TO NIA.

TASHA

Just tell us the truth about your "amazing" life. Please. It's us. Why do you keep faking the funk?

NIA

What are you talking about?

ANGELA

Hello? Black woman maybe dying...

TASHA

(TO NIA) You could never just be real with us. Everyone knows the good Senator is cheating on you.

NIA

That's a lie.

TASHA

(TO NIA) Is it? He's been in the restaurant, flaunting it all over town and you're just sitting there looking like boo boo the fool.

NIA

Well...well... at least this fool has a life. The only thing you, pardon my French, screw with is that restaurant.

TASHA

Fu--(BLEEP) you. How's that for French?

NIA

(TO TASHA) It would be the most action you've had in a while.

TASHA

(TO LYFT DRIVER) I'll just get out here.

THE LYFT PULLS OVER. TASHA GETS OUT.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(TO ANGELA) Sorry, girl.

SHE'S GONE.

NIA

I'm sorry, Angela. I don't think the three of us together will ever be a good idea.

NIA GETS OUT TOO, LEAVING ANGELA ALONE WITH THE DRIVER.

ANGELA

(CALLING OUT AFTER) Except for
tomorrow morning, right? (A BEAT,
THEN) Ever been to a biopsy buddy?

LYFT

Are you kidding? I was top
oncologist in Uzbekistan. I have
my kit in the trunk. Open your
shirt.

ANGELA

I think I'll just get out here too.

AND WITH THAT ANGELA GETS OUT TOO. OFF THIS:

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SCENE K

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

CLOSE ON ANGELA SITTING IN HER HOSPITAL GOWN. ALONE. SHE CHECKS HER PHONE. NOTHING. A BEAT. TASHA RUSHES IN.

TASHA

I'm here. I'm here. (LOOKS AROUND)

And no Nia. Figures. Even now --
she's a terrible friend.

NIA RUSHES IN TO HEAR THIS.

NIA

Seriously? I was right behind you.
I just stopped at what clearly
should be a cleaner bathroom for
two seconds.

TASHA

It's touch and go in here. A lot
can happen in two seconds.

NIA

Like me swinging on you with a bed
pan.

TASHA

Try it, old lady.

NIA

I will. (REALIZING IT'S A BEDPAN) I
just need something to hold it
with. Or I could just--

NIA PICKS UP A PILLOW AND SWINGS IT AT TASHA.

TASHA

(TO ANGELA) Excuse me girl...

SHE TAKES A PILLOW FROM BEHIND ANGELA'S HEAD AND SWINGS IT AT NIA.

ANGELA

Tasha! Nia! Please...

JUST THEN, DOCTOR WEBBER ENTERS.

DOCTOR WEBBER

What the hell?

ANGELA

Doctor Webber, meet my support system who are going to have a lot to atone for once I'm gone.

DOCTOR WEBBER

I hate to remove you from whatever this is, but they are readying the room. Just a few more minutes.

DOCTOR WEBBER EXITS. REALITY SETS IN AS THE TEMPERATURE IN THE ROOM CHANGES. ANGELA IS SCARED AND HER FRIENDS KNOW IT.

ANGELA

Okay, okay. I'm scared. I can't stop thinking about my Mom. One of you say something good.

NIA

Angela, sweetie, think positive.

TASHA

That's dumb. She doesn't want to think positive, positive means she's got cancer. (THEN) Think negative, girl.

ANGELA

If this turns out okay, I'm changing my life. I'm gonna be all about me. I'll stop funding every start up my son starts up. And I'm sending my mother-in-law to whatever home will take her. And I'm walking around my house naked.

NIA

Let it all hang out girl.

TASHA

Yeah, girl, but keep your shades drawn. Gravity is not your friend.

NIA

Don't say that. She's fragile.

TASHA

But it's true.

NIA

I know that. But you don't have to say it.

ANGELA

Do you know why I called you two?
Because with all your many faults-

TASHA

I'm sorry, what--

ANGELA

Let me finish, with all you come
with, I knew your flighty ass would
tell me what's what. (TO NIA) And I
knew your narcissistic ass would be
super annoyingly positive. And you
can't yell at me, because I could
have cancer.

DOCTOR WEBBER ENTERS WITH A FEW ORDERLIES ENTER.

DOCTOR WEBBER

We're ready.

NIA AND TASHA GIVE ANGELA'S HAND A SQUEEZE AND THEN BACK AWAY
AS THE ORDERLY WHEEL ANGELA OUT OF THE ROOM.

ANGELA

Play nice.

CUT TO:

SCENE 1

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

TASHA AND NIA SIT IN SILENCE, THE TENSION STILL THERE.

TASHA

I can't stop thinking about when
Angela lost her Mom in college.

NIA

Yeah, that was rough.

A BEAT. A LITTLE BIT OF AN OLIVE BRANCH.

TASHA

If it wasn't for you and your
absolutely annoying ability to never
see the negative, she wouldn't have
gotten through junior year.

NIA

C'mon. She had your fly-by-night,
say it like it is, behind fattening
her up.

TASHA

She spent senior year in the gym
taking off those thirty pounds my
mac and cheese put on her.

THEY LAUGH, LESSENING THE TENSION A BIT. THEN:

NIA

I'm glad we were there for her.

TASHA

Well... that's what a sister does.

A BEAT. THEN:

NIA

What did you see at the restaurant?

With Nate?

TASHA

He was in a corner booth with a young girl. They ordered the special which was problematic because we were out of the sole --

NIA

Tasha... please, do you, just say it.

TASHA

He kissed her. She was damn near sitting in his lap. But what do I know? Maybe it was just his daughter. Do you guys have a white daughter with a store bought ass who shops at ho depot?

JUST THEN THE ORDERLIES WHEEL ANGELA INTO THE ROOM. NIA AND TASHA RUSH TO HER SIDE.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Hey girl --

NIA

You awake? You okay?

ORDERLY

She's gonna be a little loopy for a while. But otherwise she's fine.

ANGELA

(TO TASHA) Heeyyy, Nia Bobeea.

TASHA

I'm Tasha.

ANGELA

(TO TASHA AGAIN) Nia. I just want you to know that I didn't come to your wedding because I was jealous. Your life was so perfect and I was just a school teacher. I was the one who said go after what you want.

NIA

You always encouraged us.

TASHA

That's why it hurt when you didn't come to my opening.

ANGELA

(TO NIA) And Tasha. I didn't go after my dream and I was jealous that you did. That's why I didn't come. Well that and those prices.

NIA

She ain't wrong. Forty six bucks for a piece of steak?

TASHA

It has shaved Perigord truffles!

ANGELA

(TO NIA) Tasha...

NIA

I'm Nia.

ANGELA

Can you two please stop jumping
around and confusing me. (THEN)
We all got stuff to apologize for.
Why didn't you go to the opening of
that one's restaurant?

A BEAT AS NIA DECIDES TO ADMIT SOMETHING TO HER TWO OLDEST
FRIENDS. EVEN THOUGH IT'S HARD AS SHIT. BUT, FUCK IT...

NIA

I didn't want to bring Nate around.
If you'd seen us together you
would've seen how unhappy I was.

TASHA

She's right. I would've read it
right away and called her ass out.

NIA

Exactly. (BEAT) And I loved that
about you. But I also hated it. You
could always see when I was hiding
something.

TASHA

Because you were really bad at it.

ANGELA

Here's the thing, we can be strong
alone. But it's so nice to (SINGS)
"...get a little help from my
friends" (THEN) Now, will one of
you tell those other two bitches
that?

CUT TO:

SCENE M

INT. ANGELA'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

ANGELA, TASHA AND NIA DO A STEP ROUTINE FROM THEIR SORORITY. THEY ARE AMAZING.

NIA

I still can't believe we remember
so much of it.

TASHA

We should take this on the road.

ANGELA

We can't do that. Because when we
heat up, everyone would smell all
this menthol.

NIA

Good point.

TASHA

Icy/Hot break?

LAUGHING, THE WOMEN SIT AND PUMP CREAM FROM A MAGNUM SIZE BOTTLE OF ICY/HOT. ANGELA'S CELL PHONE RINGS. EVERYBODY EYES IT, NERVOUSLY.

ANGELA

My doctor.

ANGELA TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND PICKS UP HER PHONE.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

(ON PHONE) Doctor Webber... Uh
huh... I understand... yes... I
will. Okay. Good-bye.

ANGELA HANGS UP. A BEAT AS NIA AND TASHA STARE EXPECTANTLY.

TASHA

Well?!

ANGELA

It's positive.

NIA

Yes! Thank God! (OFF ANGELA AND
TASHA'S FACES) Oh. Right. Positive
is Negative. Dammit. I'm sorry.

TASHA

Angela...

ANGELA

Yes. Okay. It was malignant. But
Dr. Webber said they got it early.
And the margins were clear...

TASHA

Then that's good, right?

ANGELA

Yes. I don't know. I think so. I
have to go see her next week.

NIA

And we're going with you.

THEY HUG ANGELA AS KHALIL ENTERS.

KHALIL

Hey, Ma, so I've put Moocha
Munchies on hold because I might be
on a kind of watch list.

(MORE)

KHALIL (CONT'D)

So I'm starting an infused tequila business. Tequil by Khalil -- What you think?

TASHA

(TO KHALIL) Boy, did you know your mother had a biopsy this week?

KHALIL

What? (TO ANGELA, CONCERNED) Are you okay?

NANCY ENTERS.

NANCY

(TO ANGELA) You had a biopsy? Oh, please I've had like five. Always negative.

ANGELA

Well, mine wasn't.

KHALIL

Mom...

KHALIL HUGS HIS MOM HARD.

NANCY

You're gonna be okay. I know it. You just have to be. I need you. I mean, you're annoying and bossy, but Khalil likes you, so...

ANGELA

Nancy... thank you. (THEN) And you're not going to be without me.

(MORE)

ANGELA (CONT'D)

They caught it early and the Doctor seems optimistic. So it's okay. And let's not talk about it anymore, okay? I need time to process.

A BEAT. THEN:

NANCY

How much time do you need? Because I need to get me to my foot doctor by two.

ANGELA

Sure. Okay. Fine, we'll just leave a little early...

TASHA

Oh hell no. (TO ANGELA) Remember what you said in that room. You're going to start to stand up for yourself. Be all about you.

ANGELA STEELS HERSELF. BUT TAKES COMFORT IN KNOWING HER FRIENDS HAVE HER BACK.

ANGELA

Nancy, I'm not taking you today. I am not your personal assistant. And Khalil, I love you, but you need to get a real job. Things around here are going to change. Because I can't take care of you and myself.

KHALIL TURNS TO NANCY.

KHALIL

I'll take you grandma. (THEN TO
ANGELA) And... I love you mom.

KHALIL HUGS HIS MOM. THEN HUGS HER AGAIN. HARDER. ANGELA
SMILES AT HER SON. KHALIL AND NANCY LEAVE.

ANGELA

(TO TASHA AND NIA) Baby steps. But
I will get there.

NIA

And you're not doing all this
alone. I'm not going to back to DC
until we get you through this.

ANGELA

But you have your life--

NIA

No I don't. (A BEAT, THEN)
Confession time: I've known about
Nate this whole time. I saw what he
was doing. I said nothing. I
couldn't let anyone see those
cracks. Not even my best friends.
My sisters. (BEAT, THEN) Screw it!

SHE WHIPS OUT HER CELL PHONE AND PUNCHES A NUMBER, THEN:

NIA (CONT'D)

...Yes, please tell the Senator
it's his wife... Really? He's in a
meeting. Yes, I'd love to leave a
message.

(MORE)

NIA (CONT'D)

Tell him, our shitty farce of a marriage is over. Oh and tell him, I know he's cheating and I'll see his cheating ass in court. For cheaters.

SHE HANGS UP, STILL SHAKING. NOT BELIEVING WHAT SHE JUST DID.

NIA (CONT'D)

Did I just blow up my life?

TASHA

And cuss and use a lot of extra words, but you did the right thing. And it's going to be okay.

NIA

Is it? Being a senator's wife is all I've known.

ANGELA

(TO NIA) We got you, girl.

TASHA

Yes. We do. Just like on line... we got your back and your front. Over the fondue pit. We won't let you fall.

ANGELA

(TO NIA) You're a strong black woman who's gonna pick up the pieces and keep it moving. Just like me.

TASHA

And you know we'll carry you if we have to. Just promise you'll keep encouraging us. (TO NIA) And promise your crazy ass will stay our voice of positivity. 'Cause we need it.

NIA

If you promise to keep calling us on our shit.

TASHA

You got it. And from now on, we're going to be real and honest with each other. So you should know the real reason I pulled away from you guys.

ANGELA

NIA

Nia?

Angela?

TASHA

No. (BEAT) I like women.

NIA

Hashtag me too. Girl, we're all on that train.

TASHA

No. I LIKE women.

ANGELA

(GETTING IT) Oh.

ANGELA AND TASHA WAIT A BIT FOR NIA TO CATCH UP. THEN:

NIA

(GETTING IT) Oh. (WHOA) Oh. (THEN)

This doesn't have anything to do
with me getting divorced, does it.

OFF THIS, WE:

FADE OUT:

TAG

INT. EAST HARLEM SPIN CLASS - DAY

ANGELA THROWS A TOWEL OVER A BIKE. THE SWEATY MAN FROM BEFORE STARTS TO CLIMB ON A BIKE NEXT TO ANGELA.

ANGELA

Uh uh. That one's taken.

HE STARTS FOR THE ONE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF HER.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Uh uh that one too.

SWEATY MAN

You can't hold bikes.

TASHA (O.S.)

She's not.

TASHA AND NIA WALK UP AND MOUNT THE BIKES.

ANGELA

(TO MAN) I think there are a couple
free back in the sweating section.

SWEATY GUY SCOWERS AND TURNS AWAY.

NIA

Was that a little harsh?

ANGELA

He'll be okay. He's a white man in
America. (TO NIA) So how's Nate
taking it?

NIA SHOWS HER PHONE.

NIA

Twenty-three voice mails. Thirty-four text messages. And a video of him crying in the shower. Not great.

THE MUSIC STARTS. THE WOMEN START PEDALING.

TASHA

So I sort of chatted up a woman at the restaurant last night.

ANGELA

How'd that go?

TASHA

Well, she started talking about my aura and tops and bottoms and I panicked and told her I needed to go sear some meat. Which I'm pretty sure she thought was a sex thing. Anyway, this lesbian thing is gonna take some time.

NIA

Or you could... try men again.

TASHA

Why, cause they've worked out so well for you?

SWEATY MAN

Are you three here to exercise your bodies or your mouths?

ANGELA

Hush up, 16, old friends talking.

NIA

I just find it peculiar ...that
someone can roll along and suddenly
just flip a switch and turn lesbian.

TASHA

I wish I could flip a switch and
turn you off.

ANGELA

I don't find it peculiar at all.
(TO NIA) You rolled along in your
la di da life as a wife to senator
until you got smacked with the fact
that he's a lying, cheating, no-
account son of a bitch. I'm doing
me, skipping my happy ass along til
bam, I get sucker punched by
cancer. Sometimes life just sneaks
up and slaps you into reality.

SWEATY MAN

(TO INSTRUCTOR) Bikes 12, 13 and 14
are talking and not pedaling!

ANGELA

You know what, 16. Life's too short
and I've got cancer.

ANGELA PUSHES HIM OFF THE BIKE AS WE...

END OF SHOW