

ACT I

SCENE 1

(Sunday morning: The lights come up on the St. Paul Baptist church pulpit.)

Etienne Thomas, a handsome black man in his late 30's, is in the middle of a rousing Sunday morning sermon. He is dressed in a long black church robe with a red sash around his neck.

ETIENNE

The eyes of the Lord are ever watchful. You might think you gettin' away with somethin', might even happen from time to time with friends and family; but I say to you, Church, the eyes of the Lord are ever watchful.

Etienne pauses for a second, looking out over the congregation. He takes out a handkerchief, and wipes the sweat from his brow.

ETIENNE

David was one of the greatest kings of his time. In II Samuel, the eleventh chapter, he saw a beautiful woman one afternoon. Her name was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. David sent one of his messengers to bring her to him. Bathsheba came in unto David and laid with him. The woman conceived and later told David she was pregnant. David, upon hearin' this, planned the death of her husband Uriah. When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. But when the mournin' had passed, David sent for her and she became his wife. Well David home free now, right, Church? Like I said, the eyes of the Lord are ever watchful. You see this thing that David had done displeased the Lord. Therefore in II Samuel 12:12 & 19, because David sinned against the Lord the Child Bathsheba bared for him, became ill and died. Don't think you can hide anything from the Lord. Because you see, My God is not an absentee father, and he will keep his house in order; so Church, I suggest you do the same.

The lights go down on Etienne.

END SCENE 1.

SCENE 2

(That afternoon: The lights come up on the living room of Boudreaux's living room. A pack of cigarettes and empty beer cans litter the coffee table. We hear intermittent rumbles of thunder throughout the scene.)

Billy Thomas, a muscular black man in his late 20's with boyish good looks, is seated on the sofa smoking a cigarette. Dookey, a wiry black man in his late 20's, is seated in the chair. Both men are drinking beer, and tipsy.

DOOKEY

I'm tellin' you man, this the Saint's year. They done got rid of Brooks, and got that white boy playin' quaterback; he go'n take 'em somewhere.

BILLY

Dookey don't talk bad about Brooks, that was my boy.

DOOKEY

Billy, I ain't sayin' nothin' bad 'bout the man, but Brees, shoot, that boy got a arm. And with Bush and Deuce in the backfield, teams gotta respect the run, and that just go'n be openin' up the field for 'em. Hell, he threw for close to 400 yards last week; got 'em at 2 and 0. And after they spank Vick and the Falcon's ass tomorrow night in the Superdome, they go'n make everybody forget about Katrina. I'm tellin' you, this here they year.

Dookey leans over and gives Billy a pound. The two men laugh.

DOOKEY

Hey, you know Charlie hirin' people out there to pick pecans. They payin' somthin' like a dollar fifty a pound.

BILLY

Yeah I heard. You goin' out there?

DOOKEY

Hell no! I got a job.

BILLY

Well you got the wrong black man if you think I'm goin' out in that hot sun and pick pecans. I don't care how much they payin'.

DOOKEY

Yeah. Besides, come next week, neither one of us go'n have to worry about money no mo'.

BILLY

Ssshhh! Man, what's wrong with you? Keep your voice down.

DOOKEY

Can't nobody hear me. Michelle way in the back of the house; what she got bionic ears or somethin'.

BILLY

Just keep your voice down.

Dookey studies Billy for a few seconds.

DOOKEY

Look, Man, you ain't go'n punk out on me, is you?

BILLY

I don't know, Dookey, my old man was locked up in Angola for close to 20 years; he died in there. I ain't lookin' to make that no family tradition.

DOOKEY

I'm tellin' you this here is a sure thing. They ain't go'n even know what hit 'em.

BILLY

You sure nobody else don't ever go down there with ya'll?

DOOKEY

Just me, him, and a case full of money, probably close to \$300,000. Leave the bank and walk right down the street to the self-service branch. Go in the back and fill up them automated tellers.

BILLY

Nobody follow ya'll?

DOOKEY

I been workin' there for the past year; ain't nobody follow us yet.

BILLY

Why he always take you?

DOOKEY

Used to watch me play ball in high school, always want talk 'bout sports.

BILLY

Dookey, why you want do this? You got a job, get to work inside and everything; you need to be happy.

DOOKEY

\$400 a week? Man that ain't no money. White folks used to give me more than that when I was in high school.

BILLY

You was the best receiver in the state back then, you can't do nothin' for 'em now. You lucky they give you a job at all.

DOOKEY

Yeah, well I'm go'n make my own luck. Now you can lay 'round here and let your woman take care of you...

BILLY

Leave my woman out of this.

DOOKEY

All I'm sayin' is, this your chance to get some real money; make it so you can enjoy life for a change. Hell, 'Nique ain't go'n put up with yo' broke ass but for so long.

BILLY

I told you to stay out my business.

DOOKEY

I'm just tellin' you how it is; now we both know a woman like Monique can find another dude to take care of her in a heartbeat.

Dookey's words take the wind from Billy.

DOOKEY

Look, Man I ain't tryin' to pressure you into doin' this or nothin', we still boys either way. But I need to know if you down or not. 'Cause with or without you, I'm go'n make this thing happen.

BILLY

Yeah, I'm down.

DOOKEY

Alright, then.

Dookey holds out his hand for Billy to shake on it. Billy looks at him for a moment, then shakes his hand. Dookey moves back over to the chair.

DOOKEY

Go 'head and turn the game on.

BILLY

Still got a half hour 'fore it start; unless you want watch politics or church, might as well leave the TV off, 'cause that's all come on on Sundays.

Monique Boudreaux, a beautiful woman in her mid 20's, enters the house dressed in church clothes.

MONIQUE

Hey, Baby.

She walks over and kisses Billy, who quickly puts out his cigarette.

MONIQUE

It's 'bout to storm out there.

Monique freezes when she sees all the beer cans on the coffee table, and then looks over at Dookey.

MONIQUE

Hello, Dookey.

DOOKEY

How you doin', 'Nique? What the Lawd was talkin' 'bout today?

Monique rolls her eyes at Dookey, and walks around the sofa picking up the beer cans from the table. Billy, chuckling, stands to help her.

BILLY

Shut up, fool. (to Monique) I'm sorry, Baby. Let me get this. So, how was church this mornin'?

Monique stops picking up the beer cans, and eyes Dookey.

MONIQUE

Etienne spoke on keepin' your house in order. (to Billy) I tell you, Billy, that brother of yours sure does know the word.

BILLY

Yeah, that's one thing he know alright.

Monique goes back to picking up the beer cans.

BILLY

No, 'Nique, you go ahead and get out your church clothes. I'll clean this stuff up.

Billy takes the cans from Monique's hands.

MONIQUE

Okay, thanks, Baby. I'll be right back down to get the food ready.

Monique kisses Billy, and then exits to the hallway. Billy drops one of the cans and bends over to pick it up.

DOOKEY

Careful, don't bend over too far.

BILLY

Why?

DOOKEY

I just don't want to be tempted to look up that skirt you got on.

BILLY

At least I got a woman.

DOOKEY

Sound more like yo' mama.

BILLY

You should know, since you still live with yours.

DOOKEY

Now you know Mama bad off with that sickle cell. Since Frankie done got married and moved up there to Carolina she need somebody at the house to look after her. That ain't right, talkin' 'bout a man mama.

BILLY

First of all, I ain't say nothin' 'bout your mama, I'm talkin' 'bout you. And second of all, I don't need you to tell me how to handle my woman.

DOOKEY

I ain't tellin' you how to handle her; I'm just observin' the way you do.

BILLY

Well, keep yo' observations to yourself.

Billy, after having gathered all the cans, exits into the kitchen. Dookey leans over to the coffee table and takes out a cigarette. Billy re-enters as he is about to light it.

DOOKEY

I know you can't smoke in the house, but is it okay for me?

Billy walks over to him, and pulls the cigarette from his mouth.

BILLY

No. And I done told you twice to stay out my business; don't make me have to tell you again.

Billy stands next to Dookey, staring down at him. Dookey ignores Billy for a few seconds, and then...

DOOKEY

Look, you want watch football, or stand there watchin' me?

After a moment, Billy turns and walks over to the sofa taking a seat.

DOOKEY

You better sit yo' big cock diesel ass down; tryin' to jump all bad, you don't scare nobody.

BILLY

Keep talkin'.

DOOKEY

Shoot, you lucky it's the Lawd's day.

I ain't playin' with you, Dookey.

BILLY

Just turn the game on.

DOOKEY

Billy looks on the coffee table for the remote control; not finding it, he feels under the sofa cushions.

Where the remote?

BILLY

How I'm supposed to know? You don't never let me hold it.

DOOKEY

Both men start looking for the remote. Monique enters from the hallway, now dressed in shorts and a t-shirt.

It's behind the sofa.

MONIQUE

Monique exits into the kitchen. Billy & Dookey both race for the remote; Billy wins. He picks up the remote and holds it away from Dookey. Monique re-enters.

Billy, where the chicken? I don't see it in the refrigerator.

MONIQUE

Huh?

BILLY

You said you would pick up the food while I was at church. I can't fry chicken without the chicken.

MONIQUE

She got a point there.

DOOKEY

You ain't got nothin' else in there to fix?

BILLY

Damn Negro, I thought we was go'n have fried chicken.

DOOKEY

Never mind. I'll go myself. Where's the change from the money I gave you for gas?

MONIQUE

Billy does not respond.

MONIQUE

You do have money left over don't you?

BILLY

I had to get all this beer and stuff.

DOOKEY

You spent all the money on liquor?

BILLY

Shut up, Dookey!

MONIQUE

Billy what am I supposed to fix in there with no food?

BILLY

I don't know, you'll come up with somethin'. Look, I'm sorry.

MONIQUE

Yeah, you sure are.

DOOKEY

Why don't you tell her to shut up?

Monique starts to exit to the hallway, but Billy grabs her by the throat pushing her up against the wall.

BILLY

What did you say?

Dookey jumps from his chair.

DOOKEY

Damn! Man, what's wrong with you?

BILLY

I'm sorry, am I?. We'll see how sorry I am.

Billy pulls back his hand to slap Monique, but the cold metal touch of .38 Caliber snub nose revolver against his temple paralyzes him. Michelle Boudreaux, a sexy 20 year old woman dressed in a t-shirt and shorts, has stepped into the room from the hallway, and calmly holds the gun to Billy's head.

DOOKEY

Oh Lawd!

Dookey runs out of the house.

MICHELLE

You don't take your hands off my sister, there ain't go'n be much of you left to see anything.

The lights go down on the scene

END SCENE 2.

SCENE 3

(Continuous: The lights come up on the Thomas' breakfast area. The sound of thunder continues to occasionally be heard throughout the scene.)

Etienne is seated at the table drinking coffee and eating a slice of sweet potato pie. He is dressed in a shirt and tie, with black dress pants. Juanita Thomas enters from the hall dressed casually. She is an attractive black woman, in her late thirties.

JUANITA

It start raining out there yet?

ETIENNE

No, but it's on it's way.

Juanita walks over to the table looking down at Etienne's plate.

JUANITA

Etienne you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

ETIENNE

What?

JUANITA

Don't play dumb with me; that's your third piece of sweet potato pie.

ETIENNE

Ain't make sense to save that little sliver of pie that was left; it wasn't enough to serve nobody.

JUANITA

What about the first two chunks you had?

ETIENNE

Well I knew you ain't want none of it.

Etienne laughs. Juanita sighs, and takes a seat at the table.

JUANITA

That's not even funny. I don't know what's wrong with my stomach.

Etienne starts to chuckle.

JUANITA

What?

ETIENNE

Nothin'; it's just who playin' dumb now?

JUANITA

What you talkin' about?

ETIENNE

Juanita a woman your size wasn't built to eat no seafood platter, hush puppies, and a bowl of gumbo all in one sittin'; not to mention bread puddin' for dessert.

JUANITA

See there, that's a shame. A minister lyin' on his wife like that, and on a Sunday no less.

ETIENNE

I ain't lyin'; got the bill from last night to prove it too.

JUANITA

It was my birthday. I deserved to enjoy myself, and everything just look so good.

ETIENNE

Yeah, and now you payin' for it.

JUANITA

Lord knows that's the truth. How was service this mornin'?

ETIENNE

Good, good turn out. Of course I'm sure the Saints playin' tomorrow night instead of today had somethin' to do with that.

JUANITA

People ask where I was?

ETIENNE

Uh-huh.

JUANITA

What you told 'em?

ETIENNE

Told 'em the truth; say you was at home with your head in the toilet.