

desperate  
SCREENWRITERS

"Hate On Me"

by  
Michael Jay

FADE IN.

INT. DARK ROOM - DAY

BIRD'S EYE VIEW of TONY laid out on a leather couch in a room with just a few thin streaks of sunlight illuminating it.

PULL AWAY to show another man, the PSYCHIATRIST holding a note pad and pen sitting in a recliner near by.

TONY

I thought I was over her. Then Latham moved in and... I don't know. I was wrong.

PSYCHIATRIST

(writing it all down)  
Mmm hmm. Continue.

TONY

She was, well, I'm not going to be daft and say we were soulmates or anything, but...

The man waits for Tony to finish. When he doesn't:

PSYCHIATRIST

But what, Mr. Black?

TONY

(dejected)  
She was special. The first girl I met here that never violated my commandments.

PSYCHIATRIST

Your... what?

NORMAL SCENE.

TONY

The ten Yank Girl Commandments I set when I first moved here. Thou shalt love Alias. Thou shalt not consider Voyager as part of Star Trek canon. Thou shalt not use the word 'soccer' in my presence. Thou-

PSYCHIATRIST

(cutting in)  
Mr. Black, I've noticed you haven't actually said her name.

Tony takes a moment to consider that.

TONY

I know. It hurts too much to say.

The psychiatrist smiles and leans forward in his seat.

PSYCHIATRIST

Well, Mr. Black, what would you say to a little bit of off-the-cuff treatment?

TONY

What did you have in mind?

PSYCHIATRIST

Hypnotic suggestion.

CLOSE UP on Tony's face as he frowns.

TONY

Uh, I don't know. Even if I believed in that stuff, I don't think you're the one to try it on it since you're not-

He stops mid sentence and his eyes narrow as a POCKET WATCH drops in front of his face, hanging from a chain.

The psychiatrist swings it side to side like a pendulum.

PSYCHIATRIST (O.S.)

Mr. Black?

TONY

(spaced out)  
Yes?

PSYCHIATRIST (O.S.)

What is the name of this girl you've been struggling to forget about?

TONY

Stacy.

PSYCHIATRIST (O.S.)

Stacy. Alright. Mr. Black, from now until the next time you have sex with another woman, every time you hear the name-

(while coughing)

- Stacy-

(stops; clears his throat)

(MORE)

PSYCHIATRIST (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
- you will immediately slap the  
nearest person. Do you understand?

TONY  
Yes.

PULL AWAY from Tony's face as the psychiatrist stops swinging the watch and glances at it.

PSYCHIATRIST  
Ah, damn it.

He walks out of frame. A few seconds later, more sunlight is let into the room. Then the lights come on.

The psychiatrist comes back in and snaps his finger in front of Tony's face. Tony blinks and comes to.

ZOOM OUT to get a full view of the room they're in.

It's a FURNITURE STORE.

PSYCHIATRIST  
So, Mr. Black, did you see anything  
you like?

Tony stretches and shakes his head.

TONY  
Beg your pardon?

PSYCHIATRIST  
You were here for a coffee table  
before we got to talking. See  
anything you like?

Tony looks around, as if he just remembered that.

TONY  
Oh, right. Uhm...  
(points off screen)  
How much for that one?

The psychiatrist walks over to the front door of the store and flips a sign from 'Out To Lunch' to 'Open.'

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

ARCADIO is sitting alone at a large circular table looking uncharacteristically nervous. He takes a break from anxiously twiddling his thumbs to check his watch.

MIRANDA comes into frame and sits down across from him.

Arcadio's face lights up, despite that thumb twiddling getting more vigorous.

ARCADIO  
Hey! You made it.

MIRANDA  
Against my better judgment.

The corner of Arcadio's mouth twitches, but he manages to keep his smile. He glances at and shuts off his ringing phone.

Miranda raises an eyebrow.

MIRANDA  
Is that her?

ARCADIO  
(caught)  
What? No, that's... Tony. No doubt to piss and moan about something.

MIRANDA  
You're a shitty liar, you know that? Is that why you just didn't say anything about this girl you knocked up?

ARCADIO  
(changing the subject)  
How about some coffee? You want some coffee? Maybe a chai tea latte?

Miranda sighs and crosses her arms. Arcadio grins and nods his head a little *too* enthusiastically.

He gets up to leave just as AMY, wearing a modest sun dress with her hair up in a bun, drops a massive stack of papers on the table.

ARCADIO  
(surprised)  
Amy! I thought you were off in the woods praying for rain.

Amy rolls her eyes and scoffs.

AMY  
Unfortunately, we ran out of deer to sacrifice.

Amy turns and extends her hand to Miranda while taking a seat and setting her oversized purse down.

AMY  
Hi, I'm Amy Rees.

Miranda stares directly at Amy's stomach. Then she glances over to Arcadio, who shakes his head.

MIRANDA  
(shaking Amy's hand)  
Miranda.

ARCADIO  
Uhm, Amy, we're in the middle of something.

MIRANDA  
No, we weren't.

Amy starts to split her stack up into smaller piles, not noticing Arcadio silently pleading for mercy with Miranda, who holds firm. He eventually scowls and sits back down.

AMY  
(blissfully unaware)  
Mr. Gentile came back when he heard Paul resigned, so now I'm subbing for Paul's classes. Convenient that he leaves the week a major paper was due.

Amy pulls a carton of cigarettes from her bag and takes out a fresh pack. She lights one up, earning another frown from Arcadio.

ARCADIO  
When you'd move to cigarettes?

AMY  
It's just for my nerves. Before and after meals, showers, between classes, a couple before bed, when I'm grading papers, cooking dinner. So how's the new place?

Arcadio and Miranda swap bewildered looks as Amy inhales nearly half of the cigarette in one pull.

ARCADIO  
(bitter)  
Fine. Great. I think I'll get that coffee now.

CHAKIRA sits down in the last open chair at the table and sets down a holder with four fresh cups of coffee.

CHAKIRA  
 (distributing the coffee)  
 Way ahead of you, hazelnut. You still take that in your coffee, right?

ARCADIO  
 (blinks)  
 I never told you-

CHAKIRA  
 Please, don't ask. My sources only speak on the condition of anonymity.

Arcadio buries his hands in his face and sighs.

MIRANDA  
 So... Paul resigned? New place? I guess I've been out of the loop. Sounds like a pretty eventful trip.

CHAKIRA  
 (to Arcadio)  
 Speaking of which, I've got some of Paul's novels at my place. Be a doll and swing by to pick them up. I don't have his new address up in moose country.

ARCADIO  
 Don't know how since you seem to know everything else.

MIRANDA  
 Moose... wait, Paul's not here?

Chakira hands Miranda a cup of coffee. Miranda glances down at the coffee, then back up at Chakira.

CHAKIRA  
 Chai tea latte. I overheard. Anyhoo, yeah, Paul ditched us to patch things up with Mommy dearest. Which brings me to my next point...  
 (to Arcadio)  
 Still in the market for a new roomie?

ARCADIO  
I... well, we-

CHAKIRA  
'Cause I'm only paying month to month, so consider me on sale.

Deer. In. Headlights.

CHAKIRA  
Oh come on, it'd be like Paul never left!

ARCADIO  
Huh? You two are nothing alike!

CHAKIRA  
He likes big beefy men. So do I. What else do you want?

ARCADIO  
I... yeah, that's not a good idea.

AMY  
Why not?

MIRANDA  
Yeah, why not?

CHAKIRA  
It's a black thing, isn't it?

Arcadio opens his mouth to respond to Amy and Miranda before he stops and actually processes Chakira's query.

ARCADIO  
(turning to Chakira)  
What?!? I live with Mike. That's not it at all.

MIRANDA  
Then what is it, Arcadio?

Arcadio gives Miranda a withering look. She responds with a smug grin, clearly enjoying his squirming.

MIRANDA  
Is it because your friend here is a girl? Can't handle living with one?

ARCADIO  
No, it's not that. I... well, it's... I mean...  
(MORE)

ARCADIO (CONT'D)  
 you don't want to live with a bunch  
 of guys. I mean, what if we walk  
 around naked?

CHAKIRA  
 (sizes Arcadio up; grins)  
 This is supposed to dissuade me?

ARCADIO  
 What if Tony walks around naked?

Chakira's grin drops.

CHAKIRA  
 You got a point there.

ARCADIO  
 (glances at Amy)  
 Plus Mike's got a problem leaving  
 the toilet seat up. You don't want  
 to deal with that.

Amy coughs under her breath.

AMY  
 About the only thing he can get up.

MIRANDA  
 (wry)  
 Come on, Arc. You've been with over  
 a dozen women since you moved here,  
 right? Is having one for a roommate  
 gonna be that different?

CHAKIRA  
 Now she's got a point.

MIRANDA  
 I bet you even slept with someone  
 when you were up in Canada, huh?

Deer in headlights again. Of a semi-truck. The non-answer  
 gives Miranda enough to make her conclusion.

MIRANDA  
 (shaking her head)  
 Oh, you sunavabitch.

Miranda quickly collects her things and leaves. Arcadio gets  
 up to go after her and bumps into a frail, male CAFE EMPLOYEE  
 whom he brushes past without a second thought.

CAFE EMPLOYEE

(to Amy)

Uhm, ma'am. We don't allow smoking  
in here.

Amy frowns and flicks her cigarette butt out of frame. The employee nods and saunters off.

Arcadio returns a moment later.

CHAKIRA

So... about that open spot in your  
place?

Arcadio pinches his nose and takes a sip of his coffee.

Half a second later, he SPITS out a cigarette butt.

INT. THE LOFT - TONY'S ROOM - MORNING

Tony's sleeping on his side, SNORING loudly with a hint of DROOL oozing out the side of his mouth.

The booming opening to Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' snaps him back to consciousness. He awakes with a jolt.

TONY

(groans)

Oh, what the hell is this?

INT. THE LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NEXT

Tony's panel door slides open and he sticks his head out.

Chakira is in the kitchen cooking an omelet while dancing in rhythm to the song.

TONY

Uhm... hello?

CHAKIRA

(waves)

Hey, roomie! Rise and shine!

TONY

Rise and-?

Tony ducks his head back in his room and comes back out holding his cell phone.

TONY  
 It's 6am, woman!  
 (beat)  
 What do you mean, roomie?

CHAKIRA  
 Arc woke me up when he came in from  
 work a couple hours ago.

TONY  
 (irate)  
 Roomie?!?

CHAKIRA  
 (singing along)  
*'Cause this is Thriller! WHOO HOO!*  
*Thriller night!*

Arcadio SLIDES out of the bathroom, dripping wet and only wearing a towel.

HE STRIKES A POSE!

ARCADIO  
 (also singing)  
*There ain't no second chance*  
*against the thing with forty eyes!*

They continue singing as Tony climbs down his ladder and quickly crosses the room to shut the radio off.

Chakira and Arcadio frown when the fun stops.

TONY  
 Okay, let's take this from the top.

Chakira and Arcadio share a look. They both shrug.

CHAKIRA  
 (singing a capella)  
*Its close to midnight...*

ARCADIO  
 (continuing the verse)  
*... and something evil's lurking-*

TONY  
 (shakes his fists)  
 I don't mean like that! What is she  
 doing here?

Arcadio blinks.

ARCADIO  
 ("duh")  
 Singing and cooking breakfast.

Tony's brow furrows.

TONY  
 It's too early for this. I need  
 coffee.

He goes to the coffee maker, the carafe already full of steaming hot coffee, and starts to pour himself a cup.

MIKE comes in, wearing workout clothes and an iPod that he's bobbing his head along to. He joins Tony at the coffee maker.

Tony, carrying a mug of coffee, walks over to Arcadio and grabs him by his arm, leading him over to the bay window at the back of the loft.

TONY  
 Tell me you didn't say she could  
 move in.

ARCADIO  
 Not so much in those words. More  
 like "here's a key. I'm leaving for  
 work."

Tony leans forward and sniffs the air between them.

TONY  
 Are you drunk?

ARCADIO  
 No! I haven't drank since... I got  
 in the shower a little while ago.

Tony takes a sip of his coffee and winces instantly.

TONY  
 Ugh!  
 (out loud)  
 What is this? Tar?

CHAKIRA  
 No, no, see baby, that's black folk  
 coffee. Double the punch. You  
 wouldn't understand.

TONY  
 It tastes like... chalk.

Mike, who is still grooving to his music, cuts in.

MIKE  
(elated)  
Mmm, now this is fucking coffee!

He takes his headphones off.

MIKE  
(to Chakira)  
It could only be you.

They share a smile.

Tony shakes his head in disgust and turns his attention back to Arcadio.

RACK FOCUS to the two of them, blurring out Mike and Chakira in the background.

ARCADIO  
What? Mike's all moping around since Paul's gone and throwing people out of windows when he's not. You're... you. I've got some stuff going on, hence the drowning of the sorrows and I don't wanna come home and be more depressed by you two sods. 'Sides, the place needs a more color.  
(beat)  
No pun intended.

TONY  
Arc... really though? A girl?

ARCADIO  
Look, I sort of got trapped into it, okay? Same agreement though. One month.

Tony sighs and nods.

TONY  
Fine. I guess a touch more life around the flat wouldn't hurt.

Arcadio walks away as we FOCUS on Mike and Chakira again.

They've both got STRAWS in the coffee pot and are just about finished draining it between the two of them.

EXT. LITTLE MAGIANNINO'S ITALIAN EATERY - DAY

Establishing shot of a modest Italian restaurant built into a shopping center.

INT. LITTLE MAGIANNINO'S - BAR - DAY

Mike, wearing a white button shirt, black vest, slacks, and a bow tie, strains a martini into a chilled glass and passes it to a customer, who hands him a credit card.

CUSTOMER

Thanks, MJ.

Mike nods and enters a tab into the computer using the credit card.

On the television above his head, a Boston Red Sox batter hits a homerun off a New York Yankees pitcher.

CUSTOMER

Aww, dammit. Hundred million dollar contract and that bum can't get any Ks past the fourth.

MIKE

He ain't your problem, it's your whole bullpen.

CUSTOMER

How do you figure?

Another customer at the end of the bar scoots closer to the conversation.

MIKE

Man, when your relievers are in double digit ERAs, it don't matter who your starters are. I grew up watching the Indians. Trust me, I know about mediocre pitching.

CUSTOMER

I guess you got a point there.

MIKE

Plus ain't nobody in your lineup batting worth a damn. How many fly balls have you guys been popping out when they should've landed foul? Your damn batting coach needs to teach these guys to start place hitting better.

CUSTOMER

That's true. Sox are weak in mid right and we can't get a ball there for shit.

Mike smiles and moves to the second customer.

MIKE

Need another beer, sir?

CUSTOMER 2

No, you can cash me out. You seem to know a lot about baseball. You play?

MIKE

No, sir. Just grew up a sports fan. I follow 'em all.

CUSTOMER 2

Even tennis? Golf?

Mike laughs to himself as he takes the customer's empty beer mug and drops his check.

MIKE

No, I said sports. Anything where the crowd's told to be quiet while the action's happening and politely applaud after ain't no sport.

They share a small laugh.

CUSTOMER 2

You ever write at all, kid?

MIKE

Just amateur stuff. Didn't go to school for it, so I can't really break into the biz. Moved out here hoping to get lucky.

The customer nods and hands Mike a small business card.

CUSTOMER 2

Give me a call when you get some free time.

He drops a fifty dollar bill on the bar and leaves. Mike reads over the card and smirks.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Looking at the bay window of the boys' loft.

TILT DOWN to LASSITER'S, the bar below the loft on the first floor.

As this is happening, we TIME LAPSE to night and a large crowd of people FADE into the shot.

INT. LASSITER'S - NIGHT

Amy's at a pool table, leaning down with a pool cue lined up for a shot and a cigar in her mouth.

She stands up again and scribbles what looks to be a complicated mathematical formula on a palm-sized note pad.

She pauses to think, tapping her pen on the note pad before her face lights up and she scribbles the rest of the formula.

She lines up again and takes her shot.

CUT TO A BIRD'S EYE VIEW as the cue ball curls around a solid, bounces off two walls, goes between two more solids, hits another wall, and pops the 8 ball from behind, knocking it into a faraway corner pocket.

NORMAL SCENE

Amy grins and holds out her hand as a guy holding another cue, her opponent, slaps a wad of cash into it with a grumble.

PAN RIGHT to Chakira sitting on the bar with a crowd of people around her. She's moving to the music and draining a tall glass of beer.

PAN RIGHT again to Mike, Tony, and Arcadio sitting at a table off in the corner.

ARCADIO

Do you think the teachers we had when we were younger were this... different outside of school?

TONY

I dunno, but there's more than a few I wouldn't have minded a night on the town with.

Mike rests his chin on his head and sighs.

MIKE  
 (whimsical)  
 Miss Fourman. Eleventh grade trig.

TONY  
 Miss Stark. Sixth form history.

ARCADIO  
 Miss Chapel. First year of primary.

Mike and Tony turn to Arcadio.

TONY  
First year of primary?

MIKE  
 Ain't that like kindergarten?

ARCADIO  
 Oh trust me, the way she used to  
 wink when she gave me my alphabet  
 blocks to play with?  
 (nods; grins)  
 She wanted me.

MIKE  
 (blinks)  
 You were fucking five!

Arcadio shrugs and drains the rest of his beer.

ARCADIO  
 Some are late bloomers. Some ripen  
 early.

TONY  
 (beat)  
 You're a sick sick man.

They sit in silence for a moment. Tony looks around and his eyes fall on a slender, gorgeous brunette standing at the bar.

TONY  
 Excuse me, I think I just spotted  
 my future first ex-wife.

Tony gets up, takes a deep breath, and heads towards the future ex-Mrs. Black.

MIKE  
 (to Arcadio)  
 So what's up with you and Miranda  
 or are you still not talking about  
 that?

Arcadio feigns ignorance in his expression, but Mike rolls his eyes.

MIKE  
 Come on, yo. I ain't so much as  
 heard you mention her name since  
 Canada.

ARCADIO  
 You ready for another beer? I'll  
 get you one.

Arcadio gets up from the table. Mike grabs his wrist to stop him.

MIKE  
 You're feeling guilty because of  
 whatever went down with that tour  
 guide?

ARCADIO  
 Why would I feel guilty? Not like  
 Miranda was anything serious.

Mike gives him a "get real" look.

ARCADIO  
 Seriously, nothing's going on. I  
 just got bored with her. Time to  
 move on. How about that beer?

Arcadio pulls his wrist free and walks away just as Amy giddily bounces over, either high on life or the obscene amount of MONEY she's carrying.

Mike starts looking elsewhere. Anywhere but at her.

AMY  
 I can't believe you guys don't hang  
 out down here more often! This  
 place is great.

MIKE  
 (re: Amy's money)  
 Nice haul.

AMY  
Game's simple physics. I could do  
it in my sleep.

She splits off some of her earnings and sets it on the table  
in front of Mike.

AMY  
This is for you.

Mike glances down at the cash and his eyes widen.

MIKE  
Huh? For me?

AMY  
For the caravan mishap. I really  
did feel bad about that. It's not  
all of the fifteen hundred though.  
Just a start.

Mike looks down at the money again, then back to Amy.

MIKE  
(smiling)  
This is... pretty cool of you.

Amy sits down in Arcadio's spot.

AMY  
Yeah, well, you coming up short in  
that instance was my fault, so at  
least I could you there. Hey, maybe  
you could use the money to avoid  
coming up short in-

MIKE  
Hey! Damn, I take it all back. You  
ain't gonna let that go, are you?

AMY  
If things were reversed and I was  
the dead head in bed, tell me you  
and your boys wouldn't be having  
heaps of fun with me.

Mike opens his mouth to respond.

Then shuts it. Fair point.

AMY  
Plus isn't a little good-natured  
ribbing natural between friends?

MIKE  
Yeah, well who said we were  
friends?

Amy puts out the butt of her cigar and lights up a cigarette.

AMY  
Ouch.

Amy HISSES and makes a claw motion with her hands.

AMY  
Aren't we catty tonight?

MIKE  
'Cuse me for not wanting to relive  
a pretty damn embarrassing evening  
in my life every time I see you. It  
ain't endearing.

AMY  
(bitter)  
As drunk as you were, I'm surprised  
you remember. How's living with  
Chakira going?

MIKE  
It's been...

He trails off and the two of them look over to the bar.

PAN LEFT to the bar where Chakira is HOOTING and gyrating on  
the bar to the cheers of everyone nearby.

PAN RIGHT back to Mike and Amy.

MIKE  
Loud. Very loud. Didn't you say  
your lease was up soon? Why didn't  
you two move in together?

AMY  
Me and Chokkie? I dunno. I like  
her, but she's... odd.

Mike raises an eyebrow.

MIKE  
She's odd?

TONY AT THE BAR

The bartender sets two glasses of white zinfandel in front of Tony and his ex-wife-to-be. She picks hers up and starts to take a sip when:

TONY  
 (ultra posh accent)  
 Oh, before you drink, would it be pretentious of me to propose a toast?

The girl BLUSHES and nods. Tony picks up his glass and clears his throat.

TONY  
 Here's to...  
 (thinks)  
 ... a long life and a merry one. A quick death and an easy one.

Tony gazes deep into the girl's eyes and continues:

TONY  
 A pretty girl and an honest one.  
 A cold drink and another one.  
 (sighs)  
 For in water, one sees one's own face, but in wine one beholds the heart... of another.

They cross arms and sip.

Tony (faux) bashfully grins and looks away.

TONY  
 I'm sorry. It was over the top I know. I'm just a traditionalist at heart, I guess.

The girl sets her glass down and rests her chin on her forearm.

GIRL  
 (slightly slurred)  
 I have no clue what you just said, but it sounded so nice.

TONY  
 Well, I can't take credit for that. Been to more than my fair share of weddings, so I've kept a few good ones I've heard in memory.  
 (sighs)  
 (MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)

Someday, at my own wedding, I hope someone toasts my nuptials just as eloquently.

GIRL

You want to be married someday?

TONY

More than anything in the world. Traditionalist, as I said. Some men might be satisfied with just gallivanting about, spending every night in a different bed with a different woman, but I prefer a more stable relationship.

(beat)

A quiet night in, spent snogging with a loved one is more my taste. I'm only out here tonight because of the hormone bombs that are my two roommates.

(winks at the girl)

Though, the night is rapidly improving.

One could almost see the waves of bullshit emanating from Tony's pores.

TONY

Forgive my manners, I've not introduced myself. I'm Anthony J. Black. My mates call me Tony.

He takes her hand and gently kisses the back of it.

GIRL

I'm Stacy.

ZOOM IN on Tony's face as his eyes widen.

He rears back and SLAPS Stacy as hard as he can, knocking her to the ground.

The music in the bar abruptly stops.

MIKE AND AMY

Dumbfounded stares from both, ripe with lots of blinking.

AMY

Whoa.

MIKE

The fuck was that?

## CHAKIRA AND ARCADIO

Chakira's still up on the bar, bent over at the waist. Arcadio is on the bar behind her in a doggy-style position.

They're both frozen in place.

CHAKIRA

Uh...

ARCADIO

Well, that's new. Normally, it's the girl slapping him.

## TONY AND STACY

Oblivious to the fact that everyone in the bar is staring right at him, Tony looks down at Stacy and shakes his head like he just came out of a trance.

TONY

(blinks)

Oh God, are you alright? Did you trip and fall?

STACY

What the fuck was that?!?

Tony leans down to help her back up, but she slaps his arms away.

STACY

Get the hell away from me.

TONY

What? Why are you so upset?

STACY

You slapped me, you fucking asshole!

Tony blinks.

TONY

I did no such thing! You're off your rocker.

A hand clamps down on Tony's shoulder. He turns to see it's that of a BOUNCER, with another one right behind him.

BOUNCER 1

You need to get your ass out of here before I have you arrested.

TONY  
I didn't do anything.

Both bouncers grab him under his arms and start to drag him out.

BOUNCER 1  
Let's go, pal.

TONY  
(struggling)  
No! I didn't do anything. Take your hands off me!

He's dragged out the door with the crowd still staring. Once he's out the door, the music resumes and everyone goes back to what they were doing.

INT. THE LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tony walks in the door, now sporting a black eye. He doesn't bother turning the lights on. Just tosses his jacket to the floor as he crosses the room and climbs the ladder up to his room.

FADE TO:

INT. THE LOFT - TONY'S ROOM - LATER

Once again, Tony's snoring peacefully.

A sudden blast of TECHNO MUSIC wakes him up.

TONY  
(groans)  
Oh, now what?

INT. THE LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NEXT

Tony slides his door open to see the loft is jam packed with everyone that was in the bar downstairs!

The lights are still off and everyone's waving GLOW STICKS around.

Tony climbs down and pushes his way through the crowd, eventually locating Chakira, Arcadio, and Mike by the kitchen.

Mike's pouring shots of tequila for everyone.

A billow of SMOKE comes in from the side and gets Tony to cough. He waves it away and looks in that direction to see Amy lighting up a fresh cigarette.

TONY  
How many have you had today?

AMY  
Just three.  
(beat)  
Packs.

Tony shakes his head and turns his attention to the others.

TONY  
What is going on here?

MIKE  
That's what I want to know. What's up with you going Tyson on that chick downstairs?

TONY  
(blinks)  
Look, I don't know what you all think you saw, but I did not lay a finger on that woman.

ARCADIO  
Tone, you slapped her like she said Megan Fox was ugly.

Tony immediately whirls around and SLAPS Arcadio.

TONY  
Blasphemer! Don't ever say-

MIKE  
Hey! Knock that shit off. Tone, you developing Tourette's or something?

TONY  
I honestly don't remember slapping her. She told me her name and next thing I knew, she was on the ground and... we're off topic!

He sweeps his arm around the room, motioning to the sea of humanity.

TONY  
Why are all these people here?

CHAKIRA  
 (while dancing)  
 Party don't stop 'cause the bar  
 closed, honey.

TONY  
 We have work in the morning!

Arcadio leans back and looks at Tony's behind.

ARCADIO  
 Wow.  
 (beat)  
 It's so far up your arse I can't  
 seen it from here!

Mike GUFFAWS as he pours salt between his thumb and  
 forefinger.

TONY  
 I'm serious!  
 (points to Amy and  
 Chakira)  
 You two are teachers! Don't you  
 have to be alert for your students?

AMY  
 (to Chakira)  
 He's got a point.

CHAKIRA  
 Oh whatever. Spring a pop quiz and  
 get a teaching assistant to proctor  
 it while you nap in the teacher's  
 lounge. Damn, woman, you've got a  
 lot to learn.

Mike, Tony, and Arcadio swap looks and frowns.

MIKE  
That's why teachers do pop quizzes?

Tony shakes his head and opens up one of the drawers to  
 retrieve a pair of EAR PLUGS.

TONY  
 Night, all.

Tony slinks off. The rest of them shrug and take the showers  
 (except Amy).

Tony ascends his ladder again.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

The music starts to fade as we TIME LAPSE to morning.

INT. THE LOFT - TONY'S ROOM - MORNING

CLOSE UP ON Tony's face.

More snoring. More drool. He wakes up with a yawn and rolls over-

- to see Chakira laying right next to him!

TONY

Gah!

CHAKIRA

(waking up; cheery)

Mmm... morning, roomie!

TONY

What are you doing in here?

CHAKIRA

Well, my bunk was full. A couple people slept over 'cause they were too drunk to drive.

Tony sits up and slides his door open.

INT. THE LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NEXT

Tony pokes his head out to see, well, none of the actual floor. Every square inch is covered with sleeping people!

FADE TO MOMENTS LATER

Tony's precariously stepping over the sleeping people, moving towards the bathroom.

He YELPS and falls on top of three people when the opening to Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' startles him.

He looks up to see Chakira walking away from the stereo system.

Oblivious to the people being smothered by his girth underneath him, he watches Chakira scale the ladder to her room and knock on the door.

The bouncer that threw Tony out comes out and starts to climb down.

Followed by the woman Tony slapped.

Followed by another random person.

And another.

And another.

And another.

PUSH IN on Tony's face.

TONY

It's like a bloody clown car.

FADE TO:

INT. THE LOFT - TONY'S ROOM - MORNING

Title over: THE NEXT MORNING

'Thriller' begins again, once more waking Tony up.

INT. THE LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NEXT

Tony sticks his head out to see Arcadio on top of a tall ladder with the beginning of a tape measure held to the ceiling.

Mike's holding the ladder in place while Chakira is holding the other end of the tape measure to the floor.

CHAKIRA

It's... nineteen and a half feet.

Arcadio nods and lets go of his end, letting the tape recoil into the base.

TONY

What are you doing?

CHAKIRA

(deadpan)

Measuring for the stripper pole.

TONY

What stripper pole?

ARCADIO

Oh, we didn't tell you about that?

Tony rolls his eyes and ducks back into his room.

INT. THE LOFT - TONY'S ROOM - MORNING

Title over: THE NEXT MORNING

'Thriller' wakes up Tony.

INT. THE LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NEXT

Tony stomps up to the stereo and yanks out the power cord!

Behind him, Arcadio SLIDES out of the bathroom in his towel and stops.

ARCADIO  
(turning around)  
Oi! What happened to the music?

Tony produces a pair of SCISSORS and cuts the power cord!

TONY  
(triumphant)  
There'll be no more of that.

He drops the cord and walks out of frame.

INT. THE LOFT - TONY'S ROOM - MORNING

Title over: THE NEXT MORNING

You guessed it. 'Thriller' again.

INT. THE LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NEXT

Tony pops his head out.

ZOOM IN on a small BOOMBOX on top of the stereo equipment.

REVERSE ANGLE as Tony walks up and SMASHES it with a HAMMER!

Behind him, Arcadio SLIDES out of the bathroom in his towel and stops. He turns around and throws his hands up.

INT. THE LOFT - TONY'S ROOM - MORNING

Title over: THE NEXT MORNING

Right on schedule. 'Thriller' starts again.

INT. THE LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NEXT

Tony sticks his head out.

ZOOM IN on a new radio.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - MORNING

The radio sails out of the windows and SMASHES into pieces when it lands in the middle of the street.

INT. THE LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NEXT

Arcadio SLIDES out of the bathroom in his towel and is promptly tackled by Tony!

ARCADIO  
(wrestling with Tony)  
What the fuck, Black?

Chakira, over in the kitchen making coffee, looks terribly amused.

CHAKIRA  
(licking her lips)  
Mmm... someone get the baby oil.

TONY  
(struggling with Arcadio)  
Mike! Get down here!

Mike sticks his head out of his door and frowns.

As he's climbing down the ladder:

MIKE  
This better be good. I was dreaming about winning the NBA title and getting a night with Lisa Leslie.

TONY  
Chakira, I apologize you have to be here for this, but I think we need to put your place here to a vote.

Tony is straddled on top of Arcadio holding both of his wrists down.

MIKE  
You woke me up for that?

ARCADIO  
Tony.  
(beat)  
I'm naked under this towel.

Tony looks down, frowns, and leaps off of Arcadio.

TONY  
I'm sorry, I just don't think-

CHAKIRA  
It's okay, guys. No need to vote.

TONY  
Beg your pardon?

CHAKIRA  
This is my last day here. I signed  
on a gorgeous studio across town  
last night.

Tony's face briefly lights up before he recovers and shakes  
it off.

TONY  
Oh... well, I'm sorry things didn't  
work out.

ARCADIO  
(shaky)  
You're not taking the stripper  
pole, are you?

Mike wraps his arms around Chakira.

MIKE  
Well, honey, I'm sad to see you go.  
At the very least, the music around  
here was better.

He gives her a kiss on the cheek.

MIKE  
I've had about enough of The Clash  
and AC/DC.

ARCADIO  
'Cause we paid for that up front.

CHAKIRA  
Awww, boys. I'll still stop by.

TONY  
Don't threaten us!

ARCADIO  
(dejected)  
I'd already booked a private party  
on the premise of having it here.

Chakira laughs and heads towards the bathroom.

CHAKIRA

You boys just don't know how to  
have fun. I'll invite you to the  
housewarming though.

As she disappears into the bathroom, we FADE TO:

INT. THE LOFT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Title over: THE NEXT MORNING

Arcadio's sprawled out on the couch. Aside from Tony's  
rhythmic SNORING, the place is pretty quiet.

CLOSE UP on the sink in the kitchen. There's a small drip  
ECHOING through the loft.

CLOSE UP on the control console for the air conditioning  
unit. The LED reads 'Current Temp: 67° F'

It goes to 68 and the fan clicks on.

CLOSE UP on the analog clock hanging on the wall in the  
kitchen. The second hand TICKS as it goes through its cycle.

PUSH IN on Arcadio as he sighs.

ARCADIO

(whining)  
It's too quiet.

He gets up from the couch and walks over to the stereo.

TILT DOWN to show the power cord reattached with duct tape.

TILT UP as he turns the stereo.

Yep. 'Thriller' returns.

Arcadio plops down on the couch and lets out a relieved sigh-

- Just before Tony wraps a rope around his neck from behind  
and begins to strangle him!

ARCADIO

(gagging)  
Tony!

PULL AWAY from these two. Tony has murder in his eyes and  
pulls harder on the rope.

ARCADIO  
(still gagging; louder)  
Tony!!!

**FADE TO BLACK.**

L.I.T.  
(singing)  
*I'm... in... over my head...*

**END OF SHOW**