

Super Freak: Because of Rick James
a Funky Ass Musical

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ACT 1

SCENE 1

As the lights rise, TV HOST, a Caucasian male who is a late night host, wearing his suit and tie appears.

TV HOST

He's the talk of the town, the name that everyone is mentioning.

The light rises over BERRY GORDY, the older Motown Records executive, who signed Rick and many others.

BERRY GORDY

We're back on the map! We're back on the map! He did it! He brought Motown back baby!

The light rises over KELLY MISENER, a young Caucasian Canadian English, with an enchanting accent, whose the wife of Rick James.

KELLY MISENER

Sorry won't do it this time. It's like you always say.. nothing comes before your music, your mama, and your Mary Jane. I love you, I really do but this time I'm gone for good.

The light rises on LEROI, Rick James' younger brother, a mild manner, lawyer who may be more put together than the wild and free Rick.

LEROI

Mama said to turn yourself in Rick. She wants you to know she loves you, that she's rooting for you and knows you're gonna make it. She told me to tell you she believes in you more than anything in this world. You just gotta get pass this.

The lights rise over DJ REZZIE, an Indiana radio host.

DJ REZZIE

With another runaway smash album, I think it might be safe to say in the kingdom of Motown, there's a newly crowned prince.

The lights rise over PRETTY LADY, a beautiful young lady, who looks distraught, beaten, and high after a drug fueled encounter with Rick.

PRETTY LADY

Look here, either you're gonna meet my demands or I'm going to the press with my story of what you did to me. You have 24 hours to get me 2 thousand dollars and a shopping spree in Beverly Hills or else.

The lights rise over STEVEN TYLER, a 30 year old white male with long hair who is a fellow musician, friend, and often partyer with Rick.

STEVEN TYLER

He just has a glow to him, something special that I can't let go of. They counted him out in New York, Toronoto, Hollywood, and even Miami but he kept coming back. It's the glow man, it's the glow.

The light rises over MARVIN GAYE, middle aged, drug addicted, mild and sweet, singer/songwriter.

MARVIN GAYE

I just want to say hello to my friend, who's hosting my wife, Janis, this weekend in Buffalo at his home. I want to wish them both the best—now and in the future.

The lights rise over TEENA MARIE, a young beautiful white female who has the voice of soul.

TEENA MARIE

He's so bright now that all he has to do is shine his light, shine it on anyone and he creates a star. Look what he did for me and not just me, for so many others.

The lights rise over PRINCE, a young 21 year old singer whose image slightly resembles that of Rick.

PRINCE

I'm funk, I'm R&B, I'm rock, I'm soul, I'm PRINCE. I'm not trying to be him. If anything he wants to be me.

TV HOST

He wants to be..

LEROI

Heard.

TEENA MARIE

Respected.

MARVIN GAYE

Idolized.

KELLY MISENER

Loved.

STEVEN TYLER

Played.

DJ REZZIE

Famous

Nasty. PRETTY LADY

Paid. BERRY GORDY

Me. PRINCE

He wants to glow. EVERYONE

The lights fade into a dark glowing atmosphere as everyone exits.

SCENE 2

The year is 1979 and the STONE CITY BAND, a mixed and diverse group of musicians and singers including JOJO, an African American female background singer, DENISE, a Mixed race female background singer, LEVI RUFFIN, the Black male band leader, and TOM MCDERMOTT the Caucasian guitar player.

NO. 1 - GET UP - START

LEVI RUFFIN
Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls. Get off your asses and stand up on your feet! I want to hear you fill the Palace Theatre up Cleveland, OH.

A diverse group of concertgoers enter with excitement.

LEVI RUFFIN (CONT'D)
He is the King of Punk-Funk. He is the Pied Piper of Funk. He is the one.

One! EVERYONE

He is the two. LEVI RUFFIN

Two! EVERYONE

LEVI RUFFIN
Hell he is the damn three. Make some noise and show your excitement for Rick James and the Stone City Band!!

RICK JAMES, a young 31 year old, African American male who is a flamboyant, vibrant, talented, drug addicted, singer and musician, enters dressed in a performance outfit.

RICK JAMES

If you're ready to have a good time tonight Cleveland let me hear you say hell yeah.. I said if you're ready to have a funk'n good time tonight let me hear you say hell yeah.. Now scream!!!

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

(Singing)

THERE'S A SOUND I HEAR THAT MAKES ME WANT TO GROOVE
A NEW AGE SOUND, HAS IT'S OWN SET OF RULES
WHEN THE BEAT DROPS LOUD I CAN'T HELP BUT DO IT
CAN'T STAY IN MY SEAT THE SHIT IT MAKES ME LOSE IT

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

THE MORE THE BAND KEEPS PLAYING
THE MORE I FEEL THE BEAT
THE MORE THEY KEEP ON JAMMING
THE MORE I FEEL THE HEAT

IT MAKES ME WANNA
GET UP, GET UP, GET UP LOSE MYSELF IN THE MUSIC
GET UP, GET UP BUSTIN OUT AND FUNK IT TO IT
GET UP, GET UP, GET UP LOSE MY SELF IN THE MUSIC
GET UP, GET UP BUSTIN OUT AND FUNK IT TO IT

Rick James exits as MAMA BROWN, Sherman's mother, an older African American woman, dressed in her Sunday's best suit enters with others who are dressed semi formally holding graduation signs and balloons.

MAMA BROWN

Ooooo I'm so excited, I'm so excited. There he is! Here comes my Sherman, here he comes!

SHERMAN BROWN, a small and meek figured 18 year old African American male, who is somewhat geeky, and naïve, wearing his graduation robe, enters followed by GRADUATES, a few other students also dressed alike, including DAISY the mild and modest friend of Sherman.

MAMA BROWN (CONT'D)

SHERMAN!! Woo Hoo!! I love you Sherman!! Your daddy wasn't feeling well baby but he sends his love and \$20! You know he would've come if he could but mama's here. I love you baby!

GRADUATES

Sherman's a loser, Sherman's a loser.

The graduates, minus Daisy, begin laughing.

SHERMAN

(Embarrassed)

Stop it Mama. You're embarrassing me.

MAMA BROWN

He's always telling me to stop it but he doesn't mean it. He loves his mama, don't you baby?!

PRINCIPAL, dressed in his graduation robe enters carrying diplomas.

PRINCIPAL

Upon the recommendation of the faculty and upon authority of the trustees of Chappelle School District I confer upon each of you your high school diplomas. Congratulations class of 1979!

The crowd cheers as Sherman walks over to his mother.

MAMA BROWN

Ohh Sherman. The first Brown baby to graduate high school AND go off to college. I think I'm gonna start crying.

SHERMAN

I'm not leaving today mama.

MAMA BROWN

I know but I'm so excited. Oh how I wish your daddy was here. Let's go out and celebrate!

SHERMAN

I'll be there in a second mama, I want to tell Daisy congratulations.

Mama Brown pulls a cupcake out of her purse.

MAMA BROWN

Ooh Daisy. Here's the cupcake you made for my future daughter-in-law. Sherman and Daisy sitting in the tree k-i-s-s-i-n-g.

Mama Brown hands it to Sherman and exits.

Sherman hands the cupcake to Daisy.

SHERMAN

Congratulations Daisy! We did it. I made you something to celebrate.

DAISY

Oh my God, thank you Sherman! This is so sweet. This is the best day of our lives and in a few months we're going to be freshmen partying it up in college.

SHERMAN

Maybe.

DAISY

You still haven't got your acceptance letter? Don't worry my friend told me that they still send them out over the summer. You had better grades than me, I know you'll get accepted.

Mama Brown enters with her polaroid.

MAMA BROWN

Sherman, you and Daisy get closer. This is my new One Step Polaroid. I want to take a picture of you two.

Mama Brown snaps a photo as Graduates watch and laugh.

SHERMAN

Mama please stop!! I'm going to the car.

Sherman exits.

MAMA BROWN

Wait a second Sherman I think the picture is just supposed to pop out.. Trust me you'll want to remember this day forever!

Mama Brown pulls the picture from the camera as she, Daisy, and the others exit as Levi steps forward.

LEVI RUFFIN

Motor City are you ready for the funk master himself? The originator, the architect, the genius, the most talented man in music? Let's tear off the roof for the innovator of funk Rick James!!!

MANAGER, the stressed out music manager for Rick, pushes Rick, who is wearing a different performance outfit and visibly a little drunk, out on stage.

RICK JAMES

Come on Detroit, I want to see you out there. Wave your funk signs high. Come on!! Put em up! I see you!!

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

(Singing)

I GOTTA HAVE IT BABY THE MUSIC IS MY DRUG
GOT ME OUT HERE FEIGNING FOR A HALF NOTE OF IT'S LOVE
CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHT WHEN FUNK IS ON MY MIND
MAKES ME LOSE CONTROL WHEN THE RHYTHM HITS RIGHT

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

THE MORE THE BAND KEEPS PLAYING
 THE MORE I FEEL THE BEAT
 THE MORE THEY KEEP ON JAMMING
 THE MORE I FEEL THE HEAT

IT MAKES ME WANNA
 GET UP, GET UP, GET UP LOSE MYSELF IN THE MUSIC
 GET UP, GET UP BUSTIN OUT AND FUNK IT TO IT
 GET UP, GET UP, GET UP LOSE MYSELF IN THE MUSIC
 GET UP, GET UP BUSTIN OUT AND FUNK IT TO IT

*Rick exits as DOCTOR, wearing a medical coat along
 with Mama Brown and Sherman, dressed casually enter.*

DOCTOR

Mrs. Brown I think you should sit down while I tell you this.

MAMA BROWN

No doctor I'm strong, I can handle it. Tell me, what's the matter with my husband?

DOCTOR

He has prostate cancer.

SHERMAN

Cancer? It can't be. Daddy is perfectly fine, he's just been a little tired lately but he's not dying, Mama tell him.

DOCTOR

The good news is that we caught it early on and it's treatable it's just that Mr. Brown is going to have to be down for a while.

MAMA BROWN

What do you mean be down? And how long is a while? A week? A month? I can't lose my husband doctor, I cannot lose my him.

DOCTOR

It depends on how well he responds to treatment. I can assure you, I'll do the best I can.

Doctor exits.

SHERMAN

You okay mama?

MAMA BROWN

God is a healer Sherman. We just have to have faith.

SHERMAN

Maybe I shouldn't leave and go to college with daddy sick. Who's going to take care of you two?

MAMA BROWN

I lift my eyes to the hills from which cometh my help. My help comes from the Lord. God's got us Sherman and He's got you too. Nothing's getting in the way of you going to college.

Mama Brown and Sherman exit as Levi steps forward.

LEVI RUFFIN

Get on your feet Dallas, TX!! Wave your funk flags high in the air and get ready for the man, the legend, Mr. Mary Jane himself, the funky King Rick James!!

Everyone looks around as Rick doesn't enter.

LEVI RUFFIN (CONT'D)

I said the funky King himself, Rick James!!!

Again, Manager finally pushes Rick James out in another performance outfit.

RICK JAMES

(Singing)

IT'S LIKE HEAVEN TO ME TO HEAR THE BASS LINE GROOVING
THE WAY THE OFFBEAT RINGS YOU CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL IT
MAKES ME FEEL SO GOOD THE SHIT IT IS BANANAS
IT'S THE NEW SOUND NOW JUST CALL IT PUNK FUNK JAMMIN'

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

THE MORE THE BAND KEEPS PLAYING
THE MORE I FEEL THE BEAT
THE MORE THEY KEEP ON JAMMING
THE MORE I FEEL THE HEAT

IT MAKES ME WANNA
GET UP, GET UP, GET UP LOSE MYSELF IN THE MUSIC
GET UP, GET UP BUSTIN OUT AND FUNK IT TO IT
GET UP, GET UP, GET UP LOSE MYSELF IN THE MUSIC
GET UP, GET UP BUSTIN OUT AND FUNK IT TO IT

RICK JAMES

Where's my ganja?!

Jojo walks over and hands Rick his weed.

JOJO

I have it right here Rick.

RICK JAMES

Thank you baby, that's what I needed. That's Jojo McDuffie ladies and gentlemen and next to her is Denise Matthews. Say hi to the people Denise.

DENISE

Hi people.

RICK JAMES

And funk'in' it up is the Stone City Band led by Levi Ruffin.
Where you at band?!

LEVI RUFFIN

We're with you Rick!

RICK JAMES

Cotton Bowl are you ready to fire it up?? I can't hear you, I said are you ready to fire it up? You not ready baby, can I fire it up for you?

Rick James lights up his blunt and begins smoking as Manager comes running in, panicked, and stressed along with LEROI, Rick James' younger brother.

MANAGER

What is he doing out there Leroi?

LEROI

He's funk'in it up. Look at the people they're excited.

MANAGER

The police just told him he can't smoke on stage. They got the damn swat team here ready to lock his ass up the moment he gets off stage.

LEROI

This ain't the church choir man and besides can't nobody make Rick James do anything other than what Rick James feels like doing.

MANAGER

I hope he feels like going to jail then.

RICK JAMES

The cops say if I light up they'll haul my ass off to jail? Y'all gonna let them do that?...

STONE CITY BAND

Hell nah.

RICK JAMES

They're always trying to tell me; "Rick you can't smoke on stage." Well guess what Dallas? We're gonna smoke anyways! And if the police bother me, you tear this mother sucka up!! We'll riot all night!!

MANAGER

I gotta stop him.

LEROI

Good luck with that!

Manager runs out and tries to stop Rick from smoking.

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

IT MAKES ME WANNA
GET UP, GET UP, GET UP LOSE MYSELF IN THE MUSIC
GET UP, GET UP BUSTIN OUT AND FUNK IT TO IT
GET UP, GET UP, GET UP LOSE MYSELF IN THE MUSIC
GET UP, GET UP BUSTIN OUT AND FUNK IT TO IT

After a little back and forth fun, Manager is able to grab the joint from Rick.

Chased by Rick, Manager exits as Daisy, dressed casually enters behind Sherman also dressed casually.

DAISY

How's your dad doing?

SHERMAN

He's okay. He's just weak and can't do much right now.

DAISY

And Mama Brown? How is she?

SHERMAN

She's Mama Brown. She's doing just fine.

DAISY

I don't know about you but I'm on a countdown till we get out of here and go to college.

Sherman doesn't say anything.

DAISY (CONT'D)

What's wrong? You still haven't heard anything?.. Look Sherman, I'm sure you'll get in but you should tell your parents something. They may be able to help.

SHERMAN

Honestly I don't know about college right now Daisy. I'm not sure it's what I want to do and on the flip side my folks sacrificed a lot for me, it might be time I have to do the same for them.

DAISY

What are you saying?

SHERMAN

I applied for a job here in Chappelle and I'm thinking about staying to help them out.

DAISY

Your parents wouldn't want you to do that.

SHERMAN

We were barely making it before my dad got sick and with him down there's no way we're going to survive.

DAISY

But Sherman, you're the first..

SHERMAN/DAISY (CONT'D)

"Brown baby to graduate high school and go off to college."

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

Trust me, I know the lyrics.

DAISY

Besides, you've always wanted to be a lawyer.

SHERMAN

My parents want me to be a lawyer or an engineer, even a doctor. They don't care just as long as I go to college but that's their dream... not mine.

DAISY

Well what's your dream Sherman?

SHERMAN

..... I.... I... I'm still trying to figure that out.

Sherman exits.

DAISY

Sherman... Sherman.. wait!

Daisy follows him as Levi steps forward.

LEVI RUFFIN

Memphis I need you to come get it with the Stone City Band, I need you to bust out of the L7, I need you to get ready to fire it up with Rick James!!!!

Rick doesn't enter as everyone looks around for him.

LEVI RUFFIN (CONT'D)

I said with Rick James!!!!

Rick still doesn't enter.

LEVI RUFFIN (CONT'D)

I said Rick James!!!

Manager pushes a disheveled Rick James, dressed in another performance outfit, out on stage carrying a confederate flag.

MANAGER

Get on stage man. You're late.

RICK JAMES

Funk it up baby. Come on Little Rock.

STONE CITY BAND

Memphis!!

RICK JAMES

So we ain't in Little Rock?! I knew that shit. I'm just funk'n with you. Today I went to Elvis's house and guess what I learned?

STONE CITY BAND

What?

RICK JAMES

That the motherfucker wasn't home!

Rick rips the flag in half.

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

IT MAKES ME WANNA

GET UP, GET UP, GET UP LOSE MYSELF IN THE MUSIC

GET UP, GET UP BUSTIN OUT AND FUNK IT TO IT

GET UP, GET UP, GET UP LOSE MYSELF IN THE MUSIC

GET UP, GET UP BUSTIN OUT AND FUNK IT TO IT

Manager comes over to a Rick who is lighting up.

MANAGER

You can't keep getting the cities wrong man. Their mayors get offended.

RICK JAMES

All them mutha fuckas sound the same to me.

MANAGER

They're not the same. They're all different and plus Elvis is a legend in this city, you can't come out here and offend him. You gotta get it together Rick. We can't keep doing this every night.

RICK JAMES

But "WE" ain't doing this. I am! So shut the FUNK up.

Rick James and Manager exit as Sherman, half dressed, comes running in putting on his work uniform.

SHERMAN

I gotta go Mama! I'm late! Bye!

Mama Brown, in her night robe, enters behind him.

MAMA BROWN

Sherman what is the matter with you? You're driving me and your daddy crazy bustin' out of here like a bat out of you know where.

SHERMAN

Sorry mama, I'm late for work!

MAMA BROWN

Sherman I told you I didn't want you taking that job. You got to get ready for college.

SHERMAN

It's just a summer job for now mama. I'm only working at the Jay Victoria Theatre so that I can help you and daddy.

Sherman continues getting dressed

MAMA BROWN

No part-time job at a theatre is going to take care of us Sherman. But you going to college is going to take care of not only you, but me, your daddy, Daisy, and all the little Sherman Jr.'s you and Daisy have one day.

SHERMAN

I'm not dating Daisy.

MAMA BROWN

And you won't be at the rate you're going. A good girl like Daisy doesn't want a man who works part time at a theatre. She's gonna want a college man that OWNS a theatre.

SHERMAN

I know mama but for right now this job is going to help so I can't be late on my first day.

MAMA BROWN

Me and your daddy will be fine Sherman, you hear me? We always have been and always will.

Sherman grabs his things and exits.

MAMA BROWN (CONT'D)

And we're going to talk about this summer job when you get home.. You need to be preparing for college not working!

Mama Brown exits as Manager walks in.

STONE CITY BAND
 (Singing)
 IT MAKES ME WANNA
 GET UP, GET UP, GET UP LOSE
 MYSELF IN THE MUS-

MANAGER
 Stop the music, stop the
 music!!!

NO. 1 - GET UP - END

MANAGER (CONT'D)
 How are you guys having a mic check without Rick? The show is
 in a few hours, where the hell is he at?

*BOSS, the manager of the Jay Victoria Theatre, a star
 stricken, power hungry, boss, dressed in the theatre
 uniform enters.*

BOSS
 Hello, hello, hello. Hope I'm not interrupting anything. I'd
 like to be the first to welcome you to Chapelle, Indiana and
 the Jay Victoria theatre. It is our extreme pleasure to host
 you all in our fine city.

MANAGER
 (Annoyed and dismissive)
 Thank you.

BOSS
 I tell you, we've had all the big acts here. Diana, Aretha,
 and even the Jacksons! So we're very excited to have Rick
 performing tonight. You know a funny story, one time when
 Gladys Knight and the Pips were here -

MANAGER
 I'm sorry, can I help you with something?

BOSS
 Oh no it's me whose here to help you. Whatever you need, I'm
 here at your service just call my name and -

A disheveled Kelly and Rick enter with Leroi.

KELLY MISENER
 I can't take it anymore James. I'm done! All you do is think
 about yourself!!!

RICK JAMES
 And all you do is complain.

KELLY MISENER
 I complain because you're a liar, cheater, and an egomaniac
 and I'm tired of it.

RICK JAMES

You're not that innocent ya damn self.

KELLY MISENER

You said you loved me James. I left my life in Canada to marry you. My family disowned me.

RICK JAMES

Ya family disowned you because you were getting balled by this black -

EVERYONE

(Interrupting)

Rick!!

KELLY MISENER

Why can't we just be happy?

RICK JAMES

I would take you anywhere you want to go even on my private Lear jet; we could fly to Mexico. We could lay 'round in the grass and even make love on the sand. I'm saying you could be my lady and I could be your man but it's always a damn merry go round with you. A damn cycle.

LEVI RUFFIN

Hell yeah, that was live as hell Rick.

TOM MCDERMOTT

You need to write that down.

KELLY MISENER

And that!! You're always writing. What about me James, what about me?

RICK JAMES

I'm a musician, I'm a singer, I'm Rick James. Of course I'm always writing.

KELLY MISENER

And who the hell am I supposed to be?

LEROI

Rick James' wife.

KELLY MISENER

I'm more than just Rick James' wife. I have a name and my own identity. It's not always about you. I have needs too.

RICK JAMES

And I NEED YOU to shut the hell up.

KELLY MISENER

(Yelling)

You can't shut me up! You can't shut me up!

Kelly begins screaming.

MANAGER

Will you two please calm down and be civil with each other?

KELLY MISENER

There's no being civil with this man!

RICK JAMES

Kelly's just mad because after 3 years of marriage she's still trying to fucking find herself.

KELLY MISENER

It's been FIVE years James; five flaccid years and yes I'm still trying to find out why I'm in this sham of a marriage!! We barely live together.

RICK JAMES

That's because you keep running back to your ex boyfriend when I'm supposed to be your husband.

KELLY MISENER

That's because you keep cheating on me!!!!

MANAGER

Can you please stop yelling?!.. Mr. James, I really need you to join the band and do your mic check for tonight's show.

KELLY MISENER

I'm having marital issues and the show's the only thing important to you people.

EVERYONE

You people?!

TOM MCDERMOTT

Who the hell you calling you people?!

KELLY MISENER

Don't you even try and go there with me.

MANAGER

Mrs. James, maybe you could come with me and we find you somewhere to cool down and relax.

KELLY MISENER

Who are you talking to because Mrs. James is an old bag that lives in Buffalo. That's not me.

RICK JAMES

My mama's name is Mrs. Gladden home boy so I don't know who the hell she's talking about.

KELLY MISENER

I'M TALKING ABOUT HER!!!

RICK JAMES

You better watch ya mouth talking about mama. You know there's 3 things I don't play about. My mama, my music, and my Mary Jane.

KELLY MISENER

Kiss my ass James!

RICK JAMES

No you kiss my ass hoe!

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine first.

RICK JAMES

You kiss mine first.

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine.

RICK JAMES

Kiss mine.

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine.

MANAGER

Could you maybe help out here some Leroi?

RICK JAMES

Kiss mine.

LEROI

No way man. I stay out of their shit.

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine.

RICK JAMES

Kiss mine.

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine.

MANAGER

Anybody?

RICK JAMES

Kiss mine.

EVERYONE

No!

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine.

Kiss mine.
RICK JAMES

Kiss mine.
KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine.
RICK JAMES

Sherman, dressed in his work uniform, burst in carrying a plate of cookies.

SHERMAN
Sorry I'm late, I made everyone some...

He accidentally bumps into the band, dropping their instruments and belongings down.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)
Cookies.

LEVI RUFFIN
What the hell man?

TOM MCDERMOTT
Don't you see us right here?!

JOJO
Who is this weirdo?

SHERMAN
Sorry, that was an accident. Sorry.

DENISE
Oh you're sorry alright.

MANAGER
This day can't possibly get any worse. Ladies, take Kelly in the other room and calm her down please and could one of you please help the band? Let's pretend we have a show people.

Jojo, Denise, Kelly, Manager, and Rick exit.

BOSS
Sherman you were supposed to be here 17 minutes ago. To be early is on time, to be on time is late, and to be 17 minutes after is unacceptable. Did you use a tricycle to get here?

SHERMAN
I'm sorry, it won't happen again.

BOSS
It had better not. One more mishap from you and your first day will be your last.

Boss helps the Stone City Band pick up their instruments. Rick walks over to Sherman who is fixing himself up.

RICK JAMES

Hey you come here. What city is this?

SHERMAN

Chappelle, Indiana.

RICK JAMES

Chappelle? What kind of stupid ass name is that? Is it even on a map? Look, my old lady is in bitch mode today and I need a quick hit. Do you know where I can get one?

SHERMAN

Ummm.... Well.... I guess I can help you. Here you go.

Sherman reaches over and hits Rick.

RICK JAMES

Are you crazy fool?

SHERMAN

You asked for it.

RICK JAMES

I asked for a hit. I need a mutha fuckin hit!

SHERMAN

OK.

Sherman reaches over and hits Rick again.

RICK JAMES

What the hell is wrong with you?! I need a HIT, not a hit.

SHERMAN

You want it harder?

Sherman reaches over and hits Rick again as Boss notices and runs over.

RICK JAMES

Boy what's wrong with you? Don't you know I will beat yo ass?!

BOSS

What's going on over here?!

RICK JAMES

This dummy put his hands on me. He's trying to mess up my pretty.

Hands on you?!!

LEROI

Oh hell nah.

LEVI RUFFIN

Hold me back!

TOM MCDERMOTT

Everyone erupts with anger as Manager, Jojo, Denise, and Kelly enter.

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Everyone calm down, please calm down.

BOSS

What's is it now?!

MANAGER

Just a minor mix-up. I'm sure this can easily be explained. Nothing I can't handle... Sherman start explaining!

BOSS

He asked me for a hit so I hit him.

SHERMAN

What?! Are you serious?!

EVERYONE

Please tell me you didn't.

BOSS

You have to be kidding me.

MANAGER

Don't you know who he is?

EVERYONE

No.

RICK JAMES/SHERMAN

That's a freakn' kid.

MANAGER

That's Rick James.

BOSS

So what.

RICK JAMES/SHERMAN

So what?!

EVERYONE

SHERMAN

Please just let me explain. This is my first day on the job and I'm only 18, I don't know anybody.

RICK JAMES

I mean he looks kind of old, you would've asked him too. Don't his ass look old?

LEVI RUFFIN

His ass looks old.

RICK JAMES/SHERMAN

You really can't blame me.

MANAGER

I've told you over and over you can't keep getting high before you perform.

BOSS

You're not even supposed to be talking to the talent.

MANAGER

You get paid to sing about Mary Jane NOT do it!

BOSS

You're the exact reason I don't hire teenagers.

MANAGER/BOSS (CONT'D)

I've had it up to here with you.

RICK JAMES/SHERMAN

With who?

EVERYONE

With you!!

MANAGER

This is the final straw.

BOSS

I told you if there was another incident..

MANAGER/BOSS (CONT'D)

That'd I be done.

RICK JAMES

What's that supposed to mean?

SHERMAN

Please don't say it.

MANAGER/BOSS

You've left me with no other choice.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

I quit.

BOSS

You're fired.

MANAGER/BOSS (CONT'D)

And that's that.

Manager and Boss exit.

RICK JAMES

You can't quit on me. Don't you know who I am?

SHERMAN

Fired?

RICK JAMES

I don't need no damn manager anyways.

SHERMAN

I can't get fired.

RICK JAMES

What's everybody standing around for we gotta show to do. Hey kid, don't worry about finding me that hit looks like you need to find a new job.

SHERMAN

I really needed this job.

RICK JAMES

And I really needed that hit but life goes on.

Rick starts to get ready for the performance, barely paying Sherman any attention.

NO. 2 - WHAT WILL I DO NOW? - START

SHERMAN

You don't understand. My dad is sick and my mom is trying to take care of him. I need this job to help them.

RICK JAMES

Oh yeah? Congrats, Happy Birthday, whatever you said kid. I would say stay around for the show but we're sold out so you better be getting out of here. Good luck and congrats again.

SHERMAN

Fired?

RICK JAMES
 (To Stone City Band)
 Dinner break everyone!

Everyone exits except for Sherman.

SHERMAN
 My first job and I'm fired. This can't be real.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)
 (Singing)
 WHY CAN'T LIFE BE EASY?
 DOES IT ALWAYS HAVE TO BE SO HARD?
 EVEN THOUGH TODAY IM GRATEFUL
 WHY WEREN'T I BORN WITH THE LUCKY STARS?
 TO HAVE EVERYTHING, I EVER NEEDED
 AND NOT WORRY WHERE IT COMES FROM
 TO BE LIKE THE RICH AND FAMOUS
 WILL MY HAPPY DAY EVER COME?

WHAT WILL I DO NOW? HOW WILL I FACE TOMORROW?
 WHAT WILL I DO NOW? JUST TO KEEP MY HEAD ABOVE WATERS
 I WON'T GIVE UP, I CAN'T CAN'T GIVE IN, ALL I KNOW IS THAT
 I MUST WIN EVEN IF IT BREAKS ME AT LEAST I DIDN'T DIE
 SO TOMORROW'S ANOTHER TRY

IT SEEMS LIKE LIFE IS ALWAYS
 KICKING AND PUSHING ME DOWN
 IT SEEMS LIKE LIFE IS ALWAYS
 HOLDING ME TO THE GROUND
 HOW I WISH TO BE FREE FROM THIS PRISON
 TO DO AND LIVE HOW I PLEASE
 TO WALK IN LIFE WITH CONFIDENCE
 BUT THAT ALL SOUNDS LIKE A DREAM

WHAT WILL I DO NOW? HOW WILL I FACE TOMORROW?
 WHAT WILL I DO NOW? JUST TO KEEP MY HEAD ABOVE WATERS
 I WON'T GIVE UP, I CAN'T CAN'T GIVE IN, ALL I KNOW IS THAT
 I MUST WIN EVEN IF IT BREAKS ME AT LEAST I DIDN'T DIE
 SO TOMORROW'S ANOTHER TRY

HAVEN'T YET FOUND THE ANSWERS BUT I KNOW THEY ARE AHEAD
 WHAT WILL I DO NOW?

Sherman exits.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 3

NO. 2 - WHAT WILL I DO NOW - END

As the lights rise Mama Brown, Daisy, and PRAYER WARRIORS, a group of old women dressed in their church clothes, are circled up praying.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

First giving honor to God who is the head of my life. I like to say I'm glad to be in the house of the Lord one more time.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

Umm excuse me sister but technically we're at Sis. Brown's house.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

She's gotta point.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

The Lord lives in Sis. Brown which means He lives in this home which means this is is house. Amen?

PRAYER WARRIORS

Amen!

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Like I was saying. If it had not been for the Lord who was on my side I don't know where I would be. Cause he's brought me from a mighty long way. I could've been dead, sleeping in my grave but God is good.

PRAYER WARRIORS

All the time.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

And all the time.

PRAYER WARRIORS

God is good.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

He's been my bridge over troubled waters. A shelter in the time of storm. He's a mother to the motherless and a father to the fatherless.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

He's even a husband to the hoes-band less.

DAISY

The hoes-band less?!

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

I'll explain it to you later.

Sherman enters, unseen by the others.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

But right now we call on him as a doctor.

PRAYER WARRIORS

Doctor!

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

God the news of Bro. Brown's cancer may have gotten worse but we know you to be a healer. Heal him God and let his days here on Earth be long. In Jesus' healing name we pray.

PRAYER WARRIORS

Amen.

MAMA BROWN

Oh wait, I want to add one more thing. God thank you for seeing Sherman through high school and guide him through college. Even in the midst of this test he's the very reason his father and I smile every day. Thank you for the man you're molding him into. He's really gonna help our home with this summer job. Amen.

EVERYONE

Amen.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Okay prayer warriors we gotta get to Sis. Bass' house, she needs us to pray a strong sexual demon out of her.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

Just like we did Sis. Judson and Sis. Bolen huh? Sounds like I'm gonna need my oil for this one.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

Maybe your handcuffs too.

MAMA BROWN

Bye warriors.

PRAYER WARRIORS

Bye Sis. Brown.

DAISY

I better be going to Mama Brown. I'm praying for you.

Daisy and Prayer Warriors exit.

MAMA BROWN

Hey Sherman, didn't see you come in. You off already? Back in my day when The Isley Brothers came to Chappelle we would twist and shout till the morning sun.

SHERMAN

The concert's not exactly over yet. I have something I want to tell you mama.

MAMA BROWN

Before you do that baby I gotta tell you something. The doctors called today. Daddy's cancer's progressing faster than we expected. I'm believing God to be in control but I'm gonna need your help.

SHERMAN

Anything mama, anything.

MAMA BROWN

With all the medical expenses, everything you contribute from your summer job is gonna go a long way. Now hear me clearly, you going to college is still the absolute most important thing to me and your father but we really appreciate your help. I am so proud of you, I love you baby.

SHERMAN

I love you too mama.

MAMA BROWN

I guess I'm gonna have to stop calling you baby now that you're a working man huh? My Sherman, first a high school graduate, now a working man, and next a college freshman. You are a triple threat. There is nothing my bab.. I mean my big man could ever do to disappoint me. Now what is it you wanted to tell me?

SHERMAN

That... uh.. That I'm not actually off of work yet I just came home to grab some lunch but I gotta be heading back now.

MAMA BROWN

They don't feed you up there? You love to cook and now that you know that you can prepare for tomorrow.

SHERMAN

Yeah you're right. I gotta get back mama. I'll be home later.

MAMA BROWN

Okay. You be safe honey. See you later.

Sherman exits and the lights fade.

SCENE 4

RICK JAMES (V.O.)

Keep it funky Chappelle, Indiana! Thank you and good night.

Sounds of the crowd cheering play. As the lights rise the Stone City Band is packing up their instruments as Boss enters.

BOSS

Wonderful job, wonderful. The show was phenomenal!

Sherman enters.

SHERMAN

Excuse me boss.

BOSS

Sherman! What are you doing here? I thought I fired you.

SHERMAN

You did but you can't. I mean you can but you shouldn't.

Rick James, dressed casually and wearing a robe, enters and begins socializing with some of the band.

BOSS

Sherman I don't have time for this.

SHERMAN

I need my job back, please. See my dad is sick with cancer and my mom can't afford -

Rick begins to pay attention to the conversation.

BOSS

(Interrupting)

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Does this look like The Phil Donahue show to you? You must think I'm Medicaid. Well I'm not. I took a chance on you Sherman and it didn't work. You're never going to be anything more than a failure and a hoodlum. Now get out of here before I have you thrown out!

Boss exits as Sherman stands in frustration.

RICK JAMES

Hey kid.

SHERMAN

My name is Sherman, not kid! What do you want this time cause I'm not hitting you again.

RICK JAMES

Trust me, you clearly ain't the one to help me with that. What was that talk about?

SHERMAN

I got fired... Partially because of you.

RICK JAMES

There's a million jobs out there, you'll find another one..
But what's this about your dad?

SHERMAN

He has cancer.

RICK JAMES

Ain't that some shit. Your dad has cancer and mine was a
cancer.

SHERMAN

What does that mean?

RICK JAMES

Stupid SOB went to get some milk and never came home when I
was about 10. Just up and left us. 8 kids and a wife.
Happiest moment of my childhood if I'm being honest. I'm
actually named after the bastard.

SHERMAN

There's another Rick James?

RICK JAMES

Often imitated but never duplicated. There will never be
another Rick James. My name is James Johnson Jr. Rick James
is a stage name. James Johnson keeps Rick James on the
ground.. kind of sort of. I heard your boss call you a
hoodlum. Shit, hoodlums must be different in Indiana.

SHERMAN

I'm not really a hoodlum.. My momma would kill me.

RICK JAMES

And my momma would've killed the hoodlum. Funny story.. Back
in Buffalo my teacher told me once I'd be either a hoodlum or
a great entertainer. Stupid bitch was right... I'm both.

SHERMAN

Must be nice to be rich and famous never worrying about
anything.

RICK JAMES

Whether you're rich or poor, life's still cold blooded.

SHERMAN

It's like the man is always holding us back.

RICK JAMES

That's a cliché from the ghetto. I don't believe that the man
holds me from shit and that I can't get up out a situation.
Anyone can get out of anything. It's about motivation.

SHERMAN

I am motivated.

RICK JAMES

So then why the hell are you sitting here with your head down looking stupid? You got to walk, talk, and act motivated then you'll find your glow.

SHERMAN

That's easier said than done.

RICK JAMES

Who said shit about easy? It's called doing life and life is hard but you play the hand you're dealt. See my mom use to dance with Katherine Dunham but when my old man left she became a numbers queen to keep us all eating and from it she even sent my brother Roy to one of the top law schools. Moms will do anything for their kids.

SHERMAN

And kids should do anything for them. Which is why I need this job. I have to go beg for it back.

RICK JAMES

Hold on a second. I don't give a damn what David and Otis said, I'm too proud to beg and I don't want to see you do it either. Look here kid, you got fired today and I had someone quit. Seems like you need a job and I need someone to do whatever the hell they did. What do you say?

SHERMAN

You want me to sing with you?

RICK JAMES

Hell nah! I'm giving you the chance to come on the road with me. Be my roadie, my gopher.

SHERMAN

Like a rodent?

RICK JAMES

Dammit, I'll explain it later.

SHERMAN

I don't know.. and besides do you think I'll fit in?

RICK JAMES

No.. But that's okay. I didn't always fit in either. Fitting in isn't important, busting out's what is. Plus I'll pay you triple whatever this hell hole does. You know to help ya mom and dad. Now hurry up and say yes I just said I don't beg.

NO. 3 - I'M GOING TO L.A. - START

SHERMAN

Yes!! Alright! I'll do it. I'll be your gopher.

RICK JAMES

Well go pack your bags. We're leaving for LA in the morning.

Rick James exits.

SHERMAN

(Singing)

THIS IS A DREAM COME TRUE
SOMETHING I NEVER THOUGHT I NEEDED
SOMETHING I NEVER EVEN IMAGINED
AND IN MY LAP IT JUST LANDED
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE ONE TO NEVER DREAM IN COLOR
BUT NOW IT SEEMS THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO DREAM FURTHER

I'M GOING TO L.A., L.A.
THE CITY FULL OF ANGELS
GOING TO L.A., L.A.
WHERE DREAMS ARE BIG AND TRUE
I'M GOING TO L.A., L.A.
PALMS TREES AND FULL OF BEACHES
GOING TO L.A., L.A.,
WHERE I'LL FINALLY FIND ME
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE ONE TO HOPE
BUT NOW IT'S TIME TO LIVE
LIVE MY DREAMS, LIVE FOR ME, LIKE I SEE ON TV

Mama Brown enters.

MAMA BROWN

Hey Sherman, how was the rest of your shift?

SHERMAN

I got fired.

MAMA BROWN

Fired?!

SHERMAN

Fired! Stupid SOB went to get some milk and never came home.

MAMA BROWN

Sherman Willie J Brown you better watch your mouth! What are you talking about?!

SHERMAN

It's a metaphor mama, a metaphor. I have to talk motivated, walk motivated and then I can find my glow!

MAMA BROWN

Sherman are you doing drugs?

SHERMAN

No! It's called doing life! There's a million jobs out there mama and I just got a new one with Rick James! I'm going on tour with Rick James!

MAMA BROWN

The devil is a liar!

SHERMAN

No mama, the devil is telling the truth. He asked me to be his gopher.

MAMA BROWN

Now I know you're doing drugs. Sherman you're going to college!

SHERMAN

Na uh mama I'm going to L.A.

MAMA BROWN

L.A.?! Oh father of mercy, help me Jesus.

SHERMAN

Best part is it pays triple what I was making at the Jay Victoria.

MAMA BROWN

Triple?

SHERMAN

As in money, money, money like the O'Jays.

MAMA BROWN

The O'Jays? Ohhh that handsome football player! I like him but I don't know about this Sherman, you got college.

SHERMAN

I'm going to be able to help you and daddy even more now. Trust me mama, trust me and besides it's just for the summer.

MAMA BROWN

.... Okay, I trust you'll make mama proud. How about you cook dinner tonight to celebrate?

SHERMAN

I'll make your favorite, my special meatloaf surprise.

MAMA BROWN

A raise and meatloaf?! I'm going to tell your daddy the news!

Mama Brown exits.

SHERMAN

(Singing)

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE
 I SEE MY FUTURE AND IT LOOKS BRIGHT
 FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE
 I FEEL LIKE I'LL FINALLY SLEEP GOOD TONIGHT
 CAUSE TOMORROW LOOKS HOPEFUL
 IT SEEMS SO PROMISING
 GOD IT'S LIKE YOU HEARD MY PRAYERS
 NOW YOU'RE FINALLY BLESSING ME
 I KNOW IT WON'T BE EASY BUT I KNOW THAT IT FEELS RIGHT
 TONIGHT I'M JUST YOUR AVERAGE GUY
 BUT TOMORROW WILL CHANGE MY LIFE

I'M GOING TO L.A., L.A.
 THE CITY FULL OF ANGELS
 L.A., L.A.
 WHERE DREAMS ARE BIG AND TRUE
 I'M GOING TO L.A., L.A.
 PALMS TREES AND FULL OF BEACHES
 L.A., L.A.,
 WHERE I'LL FINALLY FIND ME
 I'VE ALWAYS BEEN THE ONE TO HOPE
 BUT NOW IT'S TIME TO LIVE
 LIVE MY DREAMS, LIVE FOR ME, LIKE I SEE ON TV

I'M GOING TO L.A.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 5

NO. 3 - I'M GOING TO L.A. - END

*As the lights rise Rick, wearing a spoon necklace
 around his neck, is in the studio snorting cocaine
 with Tom and Levi.*

TOM MCDERMOTT

What's this Rick? Sits a little different.

LEVI RUFFIN

What the hell do you care?

RICK JAMES

Right because at this point we done smoked everything under
 God's green Earth. It gets you high, it gets you hard and you
 ain't pay for shit which means

EVERYONE

It gets you happy.

The men laugh and continue smoking as Kelly enters with a plate of food.

KELLY MISENER

What you in here doing baby?

RICK JAMES

Working. What you eating on?

KELLY MISENER

Something Sherman made.

RICK JAMES

Who?

KELLY MISENER

The kid. He knows his way around the kitchen. Hold my plate and let me join.

RICK JAMES

Be careful. Shit is strong enough to fuel a jet.

Kelly hands Rick the plate and hits the cocaine as they both taste.

RICK JAMES/KELLY MISENER (CONT'D)

Damn, it is good.

KELLY MISENER (CONT'D)

What you working on?

LEVI RUFFIN

We recorded a little something but it just doesn't stick yet.

TOM MCDERMOTT

Rick's got writers block.

LEVI RUFFIN

The energy is still lingering in here from some guy named Prince that recorded last night.

KELLY MISENER

Prince?! Ooo yes!... Ooo I wanna be your lover.

LEVI RUFFIN

You know him?

KELLY MISENER

I've heard some of his stuff.

RICK JAMES

Yeah.. He left a tape here.. He's not bad but he doesn't have good juju if you ask me. The whole vibe in here is throwed off now but this right here is my muse.

Rick takes another hit.

KELLY MISENER

I should be your muse baby, I'm your wife.

RICK JAMES

Don't you start with that shit again. We're trying to work.

KELLY MISENER

I know and I just want to help. Let me help you be creative. Remember what I did to inspire You and I?

TOM MCDERMOTT

You and I was some funky shit.

RICK JAMES

How the hell am I gonna forget? That tasty white cat helped me to number one on the Billboard R&B charts.

LEVI RUFFIN

Number thirteen on the Billboard 100.

TOM MCDERMOTT

And number three on the disco chart.

KELLY MISENER

So let your muse, amuse you and see what you create next.

RICK JAMES

Well shut the hell up and scream then.

KELLY MISENER

I always do the screaming, tonight I'm making you scream.

Rick lets out a scream as Kelly playfully smacks him.

KELLY MISENER (CONT'D)

Yes daddy! I want to be your wife, your muse, and your freak.

RICK JAMES

I don't want just a freak, I want a super freak.

KELLY MISENER

You want me to be kinky?

RICK JAMES

The kind of girl you read about in new wave magazines.

KELLY MISENER

The kind you can't take home to mama.

EVERYONE

Yeah, that girl's a super freak.

Kelly and Rick began freakishly making out with each other as Sherman enters the studio.

SHERMAN

Uh... excuse me Mr. James.

Kelly and Rick continue making out unconcerned with Sherman.

TOM MCDERMOTT

Come back later. Can't you see Rick and his old lady's busy.

Kelly and Rick continue.

SHERMAN

I'm sorry but it's important.

LEVI RUFFIN

Ain't nothing more important than getting cheeks.

SHERMAN

Uh.... there's someone here to see you.

LEVI RUFFIN

Who the hell is it and what do they want?

SHERMAN

He said his name is Steven Tyler.

Rick pushes Kelly off of him.

RICK JAMES

Stevie's here?! Send him in.

TOM MCDERMOTT

Holy shit, Steven Tyler?

RICK JAMES

Rehab friend of mine. Great guy.

Sherman exits.

KELLY MISENER

We were in the middle of something James.

RICK JAMES

We'll finish later on sweetheart, Stevie's here. I want him to hear some new music.

KELLY MISENER

It's always about the music! I really need you to care about me as much as you do your work.

RICK JAMES

You already know nothing comes before my music, my mama, and my Mary Jane.

KELLY MISENER

Kiss my ass James!

RICK JAMES

No you kiss my ass hoe!

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine first.

RICK JAMES

You kiss mine first.

Sherman enters followed by STEVEN TYLER, a 30 year old white male with long hair who is a fellow musician, friend, and often partyer with Rick.

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine.

STEVEN TYLER

Did I come at a bad time?

RICK JAMES

Kiss mine.

SHERMAN

Oh no, I think this is normal.

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine.

RICK JAMES

Kiss mine.

SHERMAN

Mr. Tyler is here.

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine.

RICK JAMES

Stevie!!

STEVEN TYLER

Ricky!!!

Steven Tyler and Rick James embrace.

TOM MCDERMOTT

It's a pleasure to meet you Mr. Tyler.

RICK JAMES

It's about damn time you came by. Check it, I got something I want to you to hear.

STEVEN TYLER

Hey man, anything for you.

KELLY MISENER

Are you serious right now?!

RICK JAMES

Honey I promise I'll take good care of you later tonight.

KELLY MISENER

I'm getting tired of your shit James, real tired of it.

Kelly storms out.

RICK JAMES

(To Sherman)

Go check on her kid, make sure she's okay.

SHERMAN

Yes sir.. oh.. and my name is Sherman.

RICK JAMES

Yeah kid. Hurry up.

Sherman exits, following Kelly.

STEVEN TYLER

Trouble in paradise?

RICK JAMES

Is that what they call marriage these days?

STEVEN TYLER

Cyrinda stays up my ass too.

STEVEN TYLER/RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Women.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Check it, I want you to hear some new shit I been working on.

STEVEN TYLER

Hell yeah brother play it.

Levi runs over to a speaker and turns it on.

RICK JAMES

I'm thinking about putting this on the next album but you let me know what you think.

STEVEN TYLER

I like that bass real funky.

LEVI RUFFIN

I knew you would.

TOM MCDERMOTT

Listen for the off-the-beat tom-tom drums in this song Mr. Tyler.

STEVEN TYLER

That shit is nasty.

LEVI RUFFIN

The white boy said nasty.

RICK JAMES

I think we have another hit ladies and gentleman.

STEVEN TYLER

Hell yeah. It's the color man, the color. I love how you color it.

LEVI RUFFIN

What you know about color Mr. Tyler?

RICK JAMES

As far as I'm concerned, Stevie ain't nothing but a black soul singer.

STEVEN TYLER

This is the fucking bomb! Shit makes me want to dance.

Steven starts to dance real soulfully.

RICK JAMES

I bet you won't dance like this at one of them Aerosmith concerts.

STEVEN TYLER

It's the music man, it makes my feet have their own mind.

Steven Tyler begins dancing somewhat like James Brown.

LEVI RUFFIN

Is that the James Brown? Don't hurt em like that!

Steven Tyler continues dancing while Rick is on the floor in laughter.

STEVEN TYLER

It's the music. You're a genius Ricky, a freakin' genius. People are still talking about that shit you use to do with Neil Young.

RICK JAMES

You know Neil and I lived together once. We did some wild stuff back then. It got a little dicey. I remember singing one song for about a day and a half.

RICK JAMES/STEVEN TYLER (CONT'D)

Crazy ass drugs.

STEVEN TYLER (CONT'D)

And speaking of.. I brought you something special.

Steven Tyler pulls out a bowie knife.

TOM MCDERMOTT

Say man we don't want no trouble here.

STEVEN TYLER

Relax brother. I come in peace. Watch this.

Steven Tyler pulls out a bag of cocaine. He pours some of the blow on to the bowie knife and then begins to powder his nose.

RICK JAMES

Oooooo weeeee. Bowie and blow.

Steven Tyler hands Rick the bowie knife and drugs. Rick begins to powder his nose.

TOM MCDERMOTT

You white boys from Boston are mad different. Pass it to me.

Tom takes a hit.

STEVEN TYLER

This song is amazing Ricky, absolutely amazing. You're going to be a star man a big ass star.

Steven Tyler takes another hit.

LEVI RUFFIN

James Brown star or Elton John star?

STEVEN TYLER

Naw man! Paul McCartney, Elvis Presley Star with some Stevie Wonder dust thrown in.

RICK JAMES

You really think I got something here?

Levi takes a hit.

STEVEN TYLER

Ricky you're writing and producing the music, playing on half the tracks and not to mention singing leads and background. You're a star man, a damn star.

RICK JAMES

I ain't no damn star, I'm Rick James.

The men laugh as Sherman enters.

SHERMAN

Excuse me Mr. James, your ride is here.

RICK JAMES

You got somewhere to be Stevie? I have 2 Canadian blondes, some ganja, a Rolls Royce, and a very long drive waiting for me outside.

STEVEN TYLER

What about your wife?

RICK JAMES

What about yours?!

STEVEN TYLER

Do you think there's room for Alice?

RICK JAMES

Shit yeah, let's go! Levi, Tom come on.

Steven, Levi, Tom, and Rick head for the exit.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Hey kid.. On the table I have a very important tape that needs to be sent off. The address is next to it. Get it out today, no questions asked.

Sherman looks over and notices two tapes.

SHERMAN

But there's -

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

No questions asked.

They exit.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

Two..... Well I guess the both of you are getting sent off.

Sherman grabs the tapes and exits as the lights fade and the music ends.

SCENE 6

As the lights rise, DIANA ROSS, a 35 year old singer, sits in her living room with Berry Gordy, Marvin Gaye, and NICK ASHFORD and VALERIE SIMPSON, a young singer and songwriter couple also signed to Motown.

BERRY GORDY

Where is he at dammit?

MARVIN GAYE

I don't know BG. His assistant said he should've been here hours ago.

BERRY GORDY

See Marvin, this is exactly why I don't care to fool around with him. These new cats don't value time like we used to in the early days. All they care about is getting high.

MARVIN GAYE

(Obviously a little high)

Yeah something wrong with em.

DIANA ROSS

I don't mind waiting a little longer.

BERRY GORDY

Look here Black, you're my big star, you don't have to wait on anybody. Besides you're just like me, you work harder than anybody else. That's why I fell in love with you. He needs to respect that.

DIANA ROSS

I know he's late but he's really good at what he does and I want another hit record. It's been three years since Love Hangover went to number one.

BERRY GORDY

That's why I invited Nick and Valerie here too. They've written some of your biggest hits right? So let's recreate the magic. I want you to hear this. Ashford, play the song for her. It's good, I think it should go on the next record. We need a huge rebound from The Wiz and I think this is it.

Nick Ashford gets up and plays the song.

NO. 4 - WOMAN IN CHARGE - START

VALERIE SIMPSON

Nick and I were thinking that when people think of Diana Ross they think of the boss, the leading lady..

VALERIE SIMPSON/NICK ASHFORD (CONT'D)

The woman in charge.

NICK ASHFORD (CONT'D)

So we wrote that.

MARVIN GAYE

I heard it Diana it's good, real good. I know you're gonna like it.

DIANA ROSS

Okay, I'll listen to it but I haven't agreed to anything yet.
This is still Rick's project to produce.

BERRY GORDY

Go on Valerie, sing it.

VALERIE SIMPSON

(Singing)

HAD IT ALL FIGURED OUT THOUGHT I HAD A PLAN
ALL OF THE ANSWERS AND PROBLEMS SOLVED ON MY HAND
BUT THAT MAN HURT ME BAD LEFT ME ALL DOWN AND SAD
SAID HE LOVED ME BUT PLAYED ME A FOOL

BUT CUPID CAME ALONG AND SANG A BRAND NEW SONG
GAVE ME A CONFIDENCE I NEVER HAD
SO WHEN TRUE LOVE FINDS ME THIS TIME I'LL BE READY
BUT BY MY RULES HIS HEART WILL PLAY

Berry Gordy dances around while Valerie Simpson sings.

NICK ASHFORD/VALERIE
SIMPSON (CONT'D)

(Singing)

I HAVE TO HAVE MY WAY
I HAVE TO MISBEHAVE
I HAVE TO SHOW YOU WHOSE
REALLY IN CHARGE
BECAUSE MY LOVES TOO GREAT
MY HEART YOU EARN NOT BREAK
NEXT GO AROUND THE WOMAN'S IN
CHARGE

DIANA ROSS

I like that. Makes you wanna
dance.

BERRY GORDY

I knew you would. They'll be
playing it in all of the
clubs.

NICK ASHFORD/VALERIE
SIMPSON/MARVIN GAYE

(Singing)

I HAVE TO HAVE MY WAY
I HAVE TO MISBEHAVE
I HAVE TO SHOW YOU WHOSE
REALLY IN CHARGE
BECAUSE MY LOVES TOO GREAT
MY HEART YOU EARN NOT BREAK
NEXT GO AROUND THE WOMAN'S IN
CHARGE

BERRY GORDY (CONT'D)

Give Diana the notepad, let her try the next verse.

Valerie Simpson hands Diana Ross the notepad.

DIANA ROSS

(Singing)

TOO MANY TIMES I TRIED TO FIND MY MR. RIGHT
ONLY LEFT CRYING WHEN HE WAS DONE WITH ME

GOODBYE TO MISERY, GOODBYE TO SWEET MISS THING
GOT A NEW WALK AND IT LOOKS GOOD ON ME

BUT CUPID CAME ALONG AND SANG A BRAND NEW SONG
GAVE ME A CONFIDENCE I NEVER HAD
SO WHEN TRUE LOVE FINDS ME THIS TIME I'LL BE READY
BUT BY MY RULES HIS HEART WILL PLAY

DIANA ROSS/VALERIE SIMPSON (CONT'D)

(Singing)

I HAVE TO HAVE MY WAY
I HAVE TO MISBEHAVE
I HAVE TO SHOW YOU WHOSE REALLY IN CHARGE
BECAUSE MY LOVES TOO GREAT
MY HEART YOU EARN NOT BREAK
NEXT GO AROUND THE WOMAN'S IN CHARGE

DIANA ROSS (CONT'D)

(Singing)

I HAVE TO HAVE MY WAY
I HAVE TO MISBEHAVE
I HAVE TO SHOW YOU WHOSE REALLY IN CHARGE
BECAUSE MY LO-

A drunk and high Rick James burst into the room.

RICK JAMES

What the hell is going on in here?

NO. 4 - WOMAN IN CHARGE - STOP

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Don't everyone speak at once.

BERRY GORDY

You're late Rick.

RICK JAMES

What the hell are Donny and Marie Osmond doing here?

NICK ASHFORD

It's Ashford and Simpson.

RICK JAMES

It's Hen and Peck, that's what it is. Woman couldn't even take your last name.

BERRY GORDY

You were supposed to be here hours ago Rick. Time is money.

RICK JAMES

(Mocking Berry)

Time is money. You know damn well I make you plenty of money.

MARVIN GAYE

Calm down Rick. Diana was just listening to some music Nick and Val wrote up for her. Berry thinks it'd be a good idea for you to produce half the album and they produce the other.

RICK JAMES

That sounds like half the money.

BERRY GORDY

Well theoretically I guess you'd be correct.

RICK JAMES

Well theoretically I'd like to say hell nah.

MARVIN GAYE

Rick wait, just hear him out.

RICK JAMES

Hell no man. I'm not producing no half a album for half pay.

DIANA ROSS

I'd really like to work with you Rick but the Chairman thinks Ashford and Simpson have a hit on their hands too.

RICK JAMES

Ain't shit on their hands but.. but, but I'm Rick James bitch and they ain't which means you'll have shit on your face when it flops.

NICK ASHFORD

Flops? Our last record went number 1 on the R&B charts.

VALERIE SIMPSON

And is certified Gold.

NICK ASHFORD

Not to mention I'm Every Woman is still getting spins.

VALERIE SIMPSON

Along with Ain't No Mountain and Reach out and Touch which we pinned.

RICK JAMES

Bragging just makes you look stupid. Plus, why settle for gold when I can go platinum? Double platinum.

MARVIN GAYE

One producer to another... They're good as hell Rick.

RICK JAMES

I may not have their clout but I'm good as hell! My shit is better than there's. I write better than them, I sing better, play better, and damn sure look better. Diana it's either a whole Rick James produced record or I walk.

MARVIN GAYE

Motown is like family man. Don't do no shit like this and tear up the family.

RICK JAMES

I'm hot right now. Now is my time. Everything I've done up to this point is just a warm up. This is where it all begins and either you're with me or you're not Diana.

DIANA ROSS

It's just that the chairman wants...

RICK JAMES

Man fuck him...

Diana Ross is silent.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

... I forgot.. You already did. You're gonna regret this shit here, mark my words.

MARVIN GAYE

Rick don't go.

RICK JAMES

Funk that I'm out.

DIANA ROSS

Rick wait..

Rick James storms out exiting.

BERRY GORDY

Let him go Black, we have work to do. Okay Valerie I want you to go back to the bridge and sing it on the up beat. And what if we changed Woman in Charge to the Boss?

NICK ASHFORD

The boss?.. I like that.

BERRY GORDY

Let's get to work.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 7

NO. 5 - CAGED BIRD SINGS - START

As the lights rise Teena Marie is in the studio singing.

TEENA MARIE

(Singing)

LITTLE BIRDY STAY, LITTLE BIRDY GO
LITTLE BIRDY LOCKED UP WITH NO PLACE TO GO
LONGING TO BE FREE TO FLOAT DOWNSTREAM
TILL THE CURRENT ENDS AND FINALLY GONE LIKE THE WIND

LITTLE BIRDY SAD, LITTLE BIRDY MAD
LITTLE BIRDY WITH CLIPPED WINGS AND NO FEET TO STAND
JUST LOOKING OUT, BEHIND THE BARS
READY TO OPEN UP AND SING FROM THE HEART

CAGED BIRD SING ON A GRAVE OF DREAMS
HOPING, WAITING, FOR HIS TIME TO BE FREE
HIS SHADOW SHOUTS ON NIGHTMARE SCREAM
BUT THE CAGED BIRD, THE CAGED BIRD JUST HAS TO SING

*Rick James, who is fuming from his encounter at
Diana's house enters with Sherman.*

RICK JAMES

You wouldn't believe the way she just stood there and looked
at me kid. If she wants Captain and Tenille to produce her
elevator ass music then the hell with them.

TEENA MARIE

(Singing)

LITTLE BIRDY LOOKS, LITTLE BIRDY SEES
LITTLE BIRDY WISHING JUST TO BE FREE
TO FLY IN THE WIND AND TO EAT THE FAT WORMS
TO JUST BE TREATED LIKE THE OTHER BIRDS

LITTLE BIRDY SCARED, LITTLE BIRDY FEARS
LITTLE BIRDY LONGING FOR THINGS UNCLEAR
YET THIS BIRDY SINGS AND SINGS IT LOUD
WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO HEAR AND LET HIM OUT

RICK JAMES

Who is she?

SHERMAN

According to the sign in sheet her name is Teena. She's also
signed to Motown. I think she's almost done.

RICK JAMES

I ain't seen no white girl at Motown. Gordy's got his head so
far up that damn Supreme's ass he's not using real talent.

TEENA MARIE

(Singing)

CAGED BIRD SING ON A GRAVE OF DREAMS
HOPING, WAITING, FOR HIS TIME TO BE FREE
HIS SHADOW SHOUTS ON NIGHTMARE SCREAM
BUT THE CAGED BIRD, THE CAGED BIRD JUST HAS TO SING

CAGED BIRD SING ON A GRAVE OF DREAMS
 HOPING, WAITING, FOR HIS TIME TO BE FREE
 HIS SHADOW SHOUTS ON NIGHTMARE SCREAM
 THAT CAGED BIRD, THAT CAGED BIRD, THAT CAGED BIRD IS ME

NO. 5 - CAGED BIRD SINGS - END

RICK JAMES

Shut the door, take a shit, and let it all out. Damn that was amazing.

TEENA MARIE

You really think so?

RICK JAMES

Hell yeah... I'm Rick James.

Sherman is on the phone, looking sad and frustrated.

TEENA MARIE

Of course I know who you are. I'm Mary Christine but I'm going by Teena Tryson.

RICK JAMES

You are mad soulful and have a voice big enough to scare off a sista. I'm not lying you can sing for a white girl.

TEENA MARIE

I can sing period and besides I'm actually Puerto Rican with a little Portuguese, some Italian, Irish, and I guess we're all a little Native American.

RICK JAMES

Nah I'm just nigga.

TEENA MARIE

You're funny.

RICK JAMES

And you are talented, not to mention beautiful.

TEENA MARIE

Oh you're just flattering me.

RICK JAMES

Maybe I am but there's no denying that voice. It's wild and peaceful all at the same time. You got too much soul, too much funk to be Teena Tryson.

TEENA MARIE

I think it fits and plus I've been getting a little attention with it.

RICK JAMES

(Flirtatious)

But I can tell you need a LOT... of attention. Look I was Ricky James Matthews till Stevie Wonder told me to shorten my name. If he can see what's best for me, I can see what's best for you. You need a name people can't forget. I'm calling you... Teena Marie. Hell yeah, Teena Marie. Shit sounds good doesn't it?

TEENA MARIE

I like it. Teena Marie.

RICK JAMES

Your voice takes me to strange places. I feel like I've known you before.

TEENA MARIE

Like some reincarnation shit?

RICK JAMES

Hell yeah and you must've been a big booty black woman. Had to be. I mean your poetry is black, your soul is black, your music is black.

TEENA MARIE

I like to say I'm black artist with white skin. At the end of the day you have to sing what's in your own soul but all I've been doing is recording unreleased material with different producers. Mr. Gordy's got me doing pop, shit ain't got me nowhere yet.

Sherman is repeatedly calling a number unsuccessfully on the phone.

RICK JAMES

That's cause Gordy doesn't know shit. I know good shit when I hear good shit and you're good shit. I was just about to produce an album with Diana Ross but right now the world needs to hear Teena Marie.

TEENA MARIE

Please tell me you're not playing with me. I know your work. You're amazing! You're really gonna produce for me and give me Diana Ross' songs?

RICK JAMES

Hell yeah. You look better than her, you for damn sure sound better than her, and most importantly you're not sleeping with the Chairman so you can make your own decisions.

TEENA MARIE

I can't believe it! I know my shit's getting released with you working on it. Thank you Rick, thank you.

RICK JAMES

Anything for you. You're a fine sexy little lady. You like your candy very sweet. You're a classy little dame, with sophisticated game and you know all of the best restaurants to eat.

TEENA MARIE

Baby, you too are a mellow fellow and you're as rare as vintage wine. I'll take you any place, fit into your time and space. That's why I chose to make you mine.

Teena Marie leans in and kisses Rick on the lips.

TEENA MARIE (CONT'D)

I gotta watch you Rick. I don't want to be just a sucker for your love.

SHERMAN

UGGGHHHHH!!!!!!

RICK JAMES

Hey kid, what's the matter with you?

SHERMAN

My name is Sherman!... and it's nothing.

RICK JAMES

Well then cheer the hell up. I just discovered MY big star.

TEENA MARIE

Teena MARIE, a big star. I love how that sounds. I gotta go home and call all my girls and tell them. I'd love if we could get started on some music right away. I can be here first thing in the morning.

RICK JAMES

I'll be here.

TEENA MARIE

Thank you Rick.

Teena Marie grabs her stuff and leaves.

RICK JAMES

That was some premium cat ready to play and you funk in up the place. What's the matter?

SHERMAN

I can't get a hold of my folks back home in Chappelle. Last time I talked to my mom she said my dad was getting worse.

RICK JAMES

Shit sucks. Want some blow? It'll loosen you up.

SHERMAN

I don't do drugs.

Rick pulls out a bag of cocaine.

RICK JAMES

You probably shouldn't but I'm a rebel,.. a renegade. It helps me think.. create... become Rick James. The more drugs, the more sex, the more funk, the more my fame grows.

Rick hits a line.

SHERMAN

So this isn't who you really are?

RICK JAMES

We're all on a never ending journey daily getting closer to the person we really want to be.

SHERMAN

I don't think I've started mine yet.

RICK JAMES

Journey's begin even before we do. See when I was young, moms took me on a numbers run with her where I saw Etta James performing. The music did something for me that nothing else in life could do. I knew right then what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. When you find that, you don't let go.

SHERMAN

If only life was that easy.

RICK JAMES

Easy?! I've had a hard life, hard as hell.

SHERMAN

Looks pretty easy to me.

RICK JAMES

Shit still is hard. I was like you, angry at the world.

SHERMAN

I'm not angry.

RICK JAMES

Looks pretty angry to me.

Rick hits the cocaine.

SHERMAN

Very funny...

RICK JAMES

I had a lot to be angry about. My father would beat my mother on a daily basis then my mother would like take it and in turn beat on me. I was an abused child. I was mad about all those things, very bitter and very angry. Maybe Mom saw it and thought by putting me in Catholic school the nuns could cure me. For a while I walked the straight and narrow and even became an altar boy. That didn't last long. The streets were calling and so were the older girls.

Rick takes another hit.

SHERMAN

No girls are calling me.

RICK JAMES

Are you trying to tell me you're still a virgin?

SHERMAN

Of course, well besides my hand.

RICK JAMES

That shit don't count. You mean to tell me you're 26 years old and never dived face first into any cat? I lost my innocence when I was 9 or 10 years old to a 14-year-old girl. I guess my kinky nature was there early.

SHERMAN

I'm not 26, I'm 18.

RICK JAMES

By the time I was 18 I had fled the country, dodged the draft, cost my Canadian group Mynah Birds a chance at Motown stardom, and was getting locked up by the FBI.

SHERMAN

At 18 years old?

RICK JAMES

I told you it was a hard life. I didn't even finish high school but my brother Roy went to college and another sister went on to become a CPA. You going to college?

SHERMAN

That's the plan but it's not really what I want to do.

RICK JAMES

So then why the hell are you doing it?

SHERMAN

Cause it's what my folks want me to do. THEY want me to go to college, THEY want me to have this certain life.

Rick hits the cocaine again.

RICK JAMES

My mama didn't want me to come to LA when I did but I knew I had to leave and keep following my dreams. Yeah I fucked up plenty of times before that but I knew deep down if I could get where I knew I was called she'd be so proud.

SHERMAN

That's a lot of pressure and I don't want to let them down.

RICK JAMES

Don't you know simply being a genuine version of you is the best way not to let anybody down.

SHERMAN

I don't even know who I am or what I want in life.

RICK JAMES

That's because you're still finding your glow. You know.. the shit that comes from within. Everyone has one. Some more special and brighter than the others. Everyone's glow does different things.

SHERMAN

Well mines must be dimmed cause I can't find it.

RICK JAMES

What did I tell you when I first met you? You got to walk, talk, and act motivated then your glow will follow.. I know how to fix this, get up, let me see you walk.

Sherman gets up and begins to walk.

SHERMAN

Like this?

RICK JAMES

Okay.... it's different... Watch this.

Rick gets up and starts to strut.

Sherman tries to imitate him but fails.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Don't try to be like me... Just... try to be like me...

SHERMAN

I think I got it.

Sherman tries to imitate him but fails again causing Rick to laugh.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

It's not funny... I never fit in.

RICK JAMES

Dammit kid.. Do I have to put it in song for you to understand what the hell I be telling you? Didn't I say fitting in isn't important, busting out's what is.

NO. 6 - JUST LIKE YOU - START

SHERMAN

What does that even mean?

RICK JAMES

(Singing)

ONE THING I LEARNED GROWING UP
IS THAT ONE OF ME'S MORE THAN ENOUGH
THE WORLD COULDN'T TAKE IT IF I WAS TWO
I TRIED FITTING IN BUT THAT SHIT WAS FOR KIDS
WOKE UP AND REALIZED BUSTIN OUT IS WHAT TO DO

I'M BUSTIN OUT I'M COMIN BIG
I'M BUSTIN OUT THAT'S HOW I LIVE
I'M HAPPY NOW LIVING MY TRUTH
BUSTIN OUT, BUSTIN OUT, BUSTIN BUSTIN BUSTIN OUT
DON'T BE LIKE ME BE JUST LIKE YOU

SHERMAN

I feel like maybe you're not listening to what I'm saying.

RICK JAMES

I know damn well you aren't listening to what I'm saying.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

(Singing)

THE MAN YOU SEE TODAY
WASN'T ALWAYS THIS FINE AND GREAT
HAD TO TAKE THE WORLD IN MY HANDS AND SLAP EM
GOT THEM NIGGAS RIGHT AND GAVE THEM BACK THEIR SIGHT
WOKE UP AND REALIZED BUSTIN OUT IS WHAT TO DO

I'M BUSTIN OUT I'M COMIN BIG
I'M BUSTIN OUT THAT'S HOW I LIVE
I'M HAPPY NOW LIVING MY TRUTH
BUSTIN OUT, BUSTIN OUT, BUSTIN BUSTIN BUSTIN OUT
DON'T BE LIKE ME BE JUST LIKE YOU

SHERMAN

I think I get it.

RICK JAMES

Now we're getting somewhere. Now show me that motivated walk.

Sherman begins to walk motivated.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Let me hear that motivated talk.

SHERMAN

I'm motivated!!

RICK JAMES

And let me see you act motivated.

Sherman does a wild and crazy dance.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

I don't know what the fuck that was but I like it.

RICK JAMES/SHERMAN (CONT'D)

(Singing)

I'M BUSTIN OUT I'M COMIN BIG
I'M BUSTIN OUT THAT'S HOW I LIVE
I'M HAPPY NOW LIVING MY TRUTH
BUSTIN OUT, BUSTIN OUT, BUSTIN BUSTIN BUSTIN OUT
DON'T BE LIKE ME BE JUST LIKE YOU

Sherman keeps dancing wildly while Rick just watches.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

(Singing)
BUSTIN OUT, BUSTIN OUT,
BUSTIN BUSTIN BUSTIN OUT

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Hey kid, that's enough. You
got it. That's enough.

NO. 6 - JUST LIKE YOU - END

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Chill the hell out!.. I'm not high enough for all this.
Damn... Here, I been meaning to give this to you.

Rick pulls out a wad of money and hands it to Sherman.

SHERMAN

What's this for?

RICK JAMES

Your pay dipshit. If you're working for free let me know and
I'll take my money back.

SHERMAN

Thank you Mr. James.

Rick pulls his bag of cocaine back out.

RICK JAMES

Now I'm not gonna tell you how to spend it but I will say if
you want the next couple of days off to go home and see your
family, I'll give it to you.

SHERMAN

Yeah that'd be great. You know, just to put my eyes on them and know they're okay. Maybe even cook for them. I really love doing that.

RICK JAMES

Trust me I get it. Still to this day, going home and putting my eyes on and wrapping my arms around Betty Gladden makes everything okay... Here kid hit this..

Rick hands Sherman a line of cocaine but he refuses.

SHERMAN

I don't want that.

RICK JAMES

You got the walk... kind of. You got the talk and now this will help you act motivated. I promise, it's just what you need. You trust me don't you?

SHERMAN

(Hesitant)

Not really.

RICK JAMES

Well then start!

Sherman takes the coke and stares at it.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

The shit can't take itself. Put it to your nose and snort.

Sherman slowly lifts it to his nose.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

There you go. You're almost there. I promise you it's gonna make you feel better.

Sherman snorts the cocaine and lets out a huge exhale.

SHERMAN

Did I do it right?

RICK JAMES

Yeah, yeah... Do it again.

Sherman hits another line.

SHERMAN

I still feel the same.

RICK JAMES

Don't worry you'll feel good soon enough, you'll feel good soon enough.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 8

NO. 7 - OH SISTER - START

As the lights partially rise Mama Brown, Daisy, and Prayer Warriors, dressed in their church clothes, are circled up praying.

PRAYER WARRIORS

(Singing)

OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU

OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

To the God who created the Heavens and the Earth.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

To the God of Daniel in the Lion's den.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

To the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3 (CONT'D)

(Singing)

OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

To the God who kept Jonah safe in the whale.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3 (CONT'D)

(Singing)

OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

To the God who calmed the storms on the sea of Galilee.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3 (CONT'D)

(Singing)

OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

To the God who fed thousands with 5 loaves and 2 fishes.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3 (CONT'D)

(Singing)

OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

To the God who changed water in to wine and I'm especially thankful that.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3 (CONT'D)

(Singing)

OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

To the God who is a way maker.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3 (CONT'D)
 (Singing)
 OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR
 YOU

PRAYER WARRIOR #2
 To the God who is a miracle
 worker.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3 (CONT'D)
 (Singing)
 OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR
 YOU

PRAYER WARRIOR #1
 To the God who has all
 healing power.

PRAYER WARRIORS
 (Singing)
 FOR GOD TO HEAL AND GOD TO MOVE
 WE STAND IN AGREEMENT AS WE ALWAYS DO

PRAYER WARRIOR #1
 (Singing))
 OH MY SISTER

PRAYER WARRIOR #2
 (Singing)
 OH SWEET SISTER

PRAYER WARRIOR #3
 (Singing)
 OH DEAR SISTER

PRAYER WARRIORS
 (Singing)
 WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU

NO. 7 - OH SISTER - END

The lights come to a full rise.

MAMA BROWN
 (Tearfully)
 Thank you Warriors, thank you so much for praying for me.
 These last couple of days have been so hard with my husband
 getting weaker and weaker.

DAISY
 Have you told Sherman yet?

MAMA BROWN
 I can't build myself to tell him.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1
 Well I pray your strength in the Lord right now Sister.
 Weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2
 Sometimes the late afternoon for me cause I sleep in.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

Same here but I can only sleep until Another World comes on.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Sisters!!.. Sister Brown if you need absolutely anything please let us know. We're here for you.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

We're praying for you.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

We're only one phone call away.

The telephone rings.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2 (CONT'D)

Well I meant once we left.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Sisters!!

MAMA BROWN

Excuse me warriors, I'll be right back and Daisy do you mind checking in on my husband please?

DAISY

Oh yes ma'am.

Mama Brown and Daisy exit.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

Sister, I know we're supposed to be working and praying and all but do you think we can sneak in a little time for lunch?

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

I didn't want be to the first one to say something but damn I'm hungry.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Sisters!! Once we get back to the church I think we should have a meeting on Prayer Warrior etiquettes and maybe a review of how a Warrior acts and speaks.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

(Underneath breath)

And maybe we can get some nametags, I'm tired of you calling me sister.

Mama Brown enters.

MAMA BROWN

That was Sherman, he's back in town. I'm not ready to talk to him. I don't want to stress him before he leaves for school in a few weeks.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Be strong in the Lord sister.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

Be bold in His spirit sister.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Speak what is the truth.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

Speak from your heart.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

Just tell him or I will.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Sister!!!

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

I meant that in the most Christianity way.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Remind him Sister Brown, Jesus said we could cast all of our cares on him because he cares for us! There is nothing we are going through that we cannot cast on the Lord.

Sherman, dressed with a little bit more swag than normal and a Rick James like wig, carrying a suitcase enters.

SHERMAN

I'm so happy to see you Mama! I've been calling you and daddy.

Daisy enters.

MAMA BROWN

I know baby, I'm sorry. But Sherman You look.. like... like..

DAISY

A pimp.

PRAYER WARRIORS

Just like one!

MAMA BROWN

That's not exactly how I would've put it but yeah baby you look different.

SHERMAN

Rick bought it for me. Said if you wanna be a part of this band, you have to wear braids.

DAISY

You're a part of the band?

SHERMAN

Oh hell no.

PRAYER WARRIORS

Hell no?!!!

SHERMAN

Opps sorry warriors. But I'm a part of the family. Rick says I'm an honorary Buffalonian. Most of the band is from there.

MAMA BROWN

Sherman we're you're family. What's gotten into you?

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

He needs to pray.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

He needs to repent.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

He needs to be sent off to the military.

SHERMAN

I don't have time for the military and neither did Rick. That's why he fled to Canada to avoid the draft. I'd probably do the same.

MAMA BROWN

You're going to college!

SHERMAN

I was thinking about that cause Rick said he didn't..

MAMA BROWN

I don't care what he said, you're my baby and you're going to college.

SHERMAN

But mama..

MAMA BROWN

But nothing!

SHERMAN

Rick says..

MAMA BROWN

Sherman Willie J Brown, enough with what this Jamie Ricardo has to say. What about what the Lord says?!

PRAYER WARRIORS

Yes!!

MAMA BROWN

It was the Lord that told me you're going to go to college and studying to become a pediatrician, or a scientist, maybe even a lawyer Sherman. You always wanted to be a lawyer. Something that's respectful and pays good. Not no groundhog.

SHERMAN

It's a gopher. Mama we should really talk.

MAMA BROWN

Before you do that.. I have something to tell you... Your daddy's cancer has progressed. The doctors don't think there's much left they can do.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

But God!

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

Trust God!

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

Only God!

MAMA BROWN

Your Daddy hasn't given up and I know he's going to light up once he see's your face but don't go in there talking none of this Rick says mess.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

None of it.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

Not a word.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

Didlee idlee squat.

MAMA BROWN

Through all of this, daddy has fought so hard because he said he may have missed your high school graduation but he won't miss seeing you off to college for nothing. Okay, your turn.

Sherman stands in silence before pulling out the money handing it to Mama Brown.

SHERMAN

This is for you and daddy.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

What in the Luke 6:38?!

Prayer Warrior #2 sees the amount of money and passes out as the other Prayer Warriors attend to her.

DAISY

Sherman where did you get that?

SHERMAN

From Rick.... well work.

DAISY

You're making that much money at a summer job?

SHERMAN

Yes... and no... Rick heard about daddy's condition and wanted to give a little extra to help out. He even said he's praying for daddy.

MAMA BROWN

I don't want all this money Sherman.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2/PRAYER WARRIOR #3

We'll take it!

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Sisters!

DAISY

Maybe you can save some of it up for college.

MAMA BROWN

Yeah college sounds good. Save this Sherman, I can't take all this.

SHERMAN

Mama please just take it.

MAMA BROWN

I can't.. I just can't.

SHERMAN

Just know everything I do is for you and daddy. I'm going in the room to tell him I love him and head back to the airport.

MAMA BROWN

Sherman wait. I don't want you to go back. I think you need to stay here and focus. You're not the same anymore. You got fancy boots on and braids. You have braids Sherman.

DAISY

With beads!

MAMA BROWN

Yes Sherman with beads. This isn't you baby.

SHERMAN

This IS me mama! This is ME! I may not have it all figured out but I'm looking for the answers and you're either gonna have to accept it or risk losing more than just daddy.

NO. 8 - OH SISTER # 2- START

MAMA BROWN

Sherman!

Sherman exits as Mama Brown falls to the floor crying.

MAMA BROWN (CONT'D)
Sherman!! Sherman!!!!

PRAYER WARRIORS
(Singing)
OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU
OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU
FOR GOD TO HEAL AND GOD TO MOVE
WE STAND IN AGREEMENT AS WE ALWAYS DO

PRAYER WARRIOR #1
(Singing)
OH MY SISTER

PRAYER WARRIOR #2
(Singing)
OH SWEET SISTER

PRAYER WARRIOR #3
(Singing)
OH DEAR SISTER

PRAYER WARRIORS
(Singing)
WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU

MAMA BROWN
Sherman!!!

NO. 8 - OH SISTER # 2 - END

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 9

As the lights half rise, Kelly, dressed in a kinky outfit, enters running across the room with PRETTY LADY, a young and beautiful girl also dressed kinky. They're being chased by Rick also half dressed. It appears as if they're all engaged in intercourse.

KELLY MISENER

Grab the pipe James. Let's take one more hit then go back into the bedroom.

RICK JAMES

I got one better. Let's do a speedball off this Pretty Lady.

Kelly goes and grabs the drugs.

PRETTY LADY

What's a speedball?

KELLY MISENER

A little cocaine.. A little heroin.. A whole lot of fun.

Rick takes a hit of both the heroin and coke.

PRETTY LADY

I don't know about that. That seems a little advanced for me. I probably should be heading home now. It's been a couple of days I know my roommate's probably worried about me.

KELLY MISENER

You can't leave yet, we still gotta talk about the record label James is gonna start. Pass it to me baby, I want some.

Kelly takes a hit while Rick begins rolling a blunt.

PRETTY LADY

Aren't you pregnant? I don't think that's good for the baby.

KELLY MISENER

Mind your fucking business.

RICK JAMES

Kelly, pull this pretty lady's hair back, spit in her mouth, and then kiss her so I can get him up.

PRETTY LADY

You want her to do what?!

KELLY MISENER

I'll be gentle with you. He just wants to watch. He likes to orchestrate shit. Come here and open your mouth.

Rick lights the blunt and begins smoking.

PRETTY LADY

I don't want to... I really want to just go home now.

KELLY MISENER

Just shut up and enjoy it.

Pretty Lady screams as Kelly moves toward her.

PRETTY LADY

I said no!!!

Pretty Lady kicks Kelly in the stomach. Kelly lets out a loud scream and begins crying.

RICK JAMES

What the fuck is wrong with you?

Rick charges at Pretty Lady. He brutally punches her repeatedly causing her to bleed as she lets out gut wrenching screams until he finally stops.

It's silent.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Beat.

PRETTY LADY

I really want to go now.

RICK JAMES

I said I was sorry. I got some more rock if you want it.

KELLY MISENER

Let her go home James.

RICK JAMES

You shut the hell up too!

KELLY MISENER

Or what, you gonna hit me too?! Kiss my ass James.

RICK JAMES

No you kiss my ass hoe!

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine first.

RICK JAMES

You kiss mine first.

KELLY MISENER

Kiss mine.

LEROI (O.S.)

You in here Rick?

RICK JAMES

Dammit shut the hell up Kelly

The lights rise to a full as Leroi enters.

LEROI

Everything okay in here?

RICK JAMES

Yeah everything's fine. Do me a favor and help this pretty lady find her shit and get out of here.

LEROI

Come with me.

Leroi walks over to Pretty Lady, helps her up, and they both exit as silence falls upon the room.

RICK JAMES

You okay hun? Want me to call a doctor? You need a doctor.

KELLY MISENER

I can't do this anymore James. I can't keep living like this.

RICK JAMES

I know baby, I know. I'm done with the drugs. I promise I am. I love you Kelly, I'm sorry.

KELLY MISENER

Sorry won't do it this time. It's like you always say.. nothing comes before your music, your mama, and your Mary Jane. I love you, I really do but this time I'm gone for good.

Rick is silent as Kelly grabs her belongings and exits as Rick continues smoking his blunt.

RICK JAMES

Damn right my music, mama, and Mary Jane come first. They never leave, never leave!!.. Daddy left, baby mama left, bandmate left hell I knew you were gonna leave. You ain't no different. Matter fact I was ready for you to go!

Rick grabs the heroin and begins to in take.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Stupid bitch was making it hard for me to create anyways.

Rick grabs his guitar, paper and pen. He begins playing different tunes.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

(Singing)

Woman left me high and dry I feel...

(Speaking)

No

(Singing)

Kelly, Kelly, Kelly I need you back so badly

(Speaking)

Hell no.

(Singing)

Now my love is gone, now my love is gone

(Speaking)

Funk this shit!!

Rick stands up and searches the room until he finds his gun. He loads the gun and begins pacing and crying. He puts the gun to his head.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

(Crying)

I'm sorry Kelly..., I'm sorry Ty,.. I'm sorry Seville,.. I'm sorry Mama,.. I'm sorry God.. I'm sorry.

Leroi enters with urgency.

LEROI

Rick they're coming?

RICK JAMES

Who?

LEROI

The police.

RICK JAMES

Fuck man. Get me out of here.

LEROI

Mama said to turn yourself in Rick. She wants you to know she loves you, that she's rooting for you and knows you're gonna make it. She told me to tell you she believes in you more than anything in this world. You just gotta get pass this.

RICK JAMES

Get me out of here Roy. I'm not going back to jail.

POLICE, dressed in their police uniform enter.

POLICE #1

James Johnson Jr. you're under arrest.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 10

NO. 9 - QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES - START

As the lights rise, REPORTERS, all dressed differently and holding their microphones are standing together making lots of commotion.

REPORTERS

(Singing)

QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES

REPORTER #1

Pop singer Rick James is being accused of all kinds of terrible things and authorities are taking it serious.

Kelly enters.

REPORTER #3

Mrs. James, Mrs. James can we have a word with you.

KELLY MISENER

Mrs. James is an old bag that lives in Buffalo. My name is Kelly Misener, NOT Mrs. James.

REPORTER #6

Are you still on drugs?

REPORTER #1

Is it true that you're pregnant?

REPORTER #2

Was Rick involved in your loan scam charges?

REPORTER #3

Are the rumors that you're filing for divorce true?

REPORTER #4

Was it the cheating or his drug problem?

REPORTERS

How's Rick?!

KELLY MISENER

Rick James is an asshole and he can kiss my ass.

Kelly exits as Leroi enters.

REPORTERS

(Singing)

QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES

WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES

REPORTER #4

Mr. Johnson, we hear that due to all the scandals surrounding your brother he's hired you to manage him and take over his affairs is this true?

LEROI

I don't know what scandals you're talking about but yes my brother has hired me to manage him.

REPORTER #2

Leroi, can you tell us why haven't we seen or heard from your brother since this scandal dropped?

LEROI

If Rick had to respond every time the media had his name in something he wouldn't have time to make the music you love.

REPORTER #1

Is your brother currently in police custody?

LEROI

No.

REPORTER #3

Is he out on bail?

LEROI

Yes.

REPORTER #3

Is it true that police found heroine and cocaine at the time of his arrest?

LEROI

No comment.

REPORTER #6

We're told he's millions of dollars in debt. Will you be able to help him both publicly and financially recover?

LEROI

My brother hired me not because we're related but because I'm his closest confidant, a proven and successful lawyer, and because nobody knows Rick James better than me.

Leroi exits as Berry Gordy, Diana Ross, and Marvin Gaye enters.

REPORTERS

(Singing)

QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES

REPORTER #3

Excuse me Miss Ross.

REPORTER #2

Berry Gordy, Berry Gordy!!

REPORTER #4

Marvin do you care to
comment?!

REPORTER #5

Please may we have a word
with you?

BERRY GORDY

Make it quick.

REPORTER #4

Marvin, you too have publicly dealt with suicide and
 depression. Do you think what we're seeing Rick go through is
 similar to that?

MARVIN GAYE

I can't speak on Rick but I will say that the effects of a
 failed marriage are real. Sometimes the problems can feel too
 big but it's important to have people around you who care.

REPORTER #3

Miss Ross you played Billie Holiday in Lady Sings the Blues.
 Do you see any correlation between larger than life singers
 and addiction like Mr. James for example?

DIANA ROSS

I don't think Billie Holiday was an addict I think she was a
 phenomenal singer and an extraordinary woman who had an
 illness.

REPORTER #6

Mr. Gordy, Rick is still signed to Motown sub-label Gordy
 Records correct? Is it true he poured cocaine onto an execs
 desk. Then snorted it and jumped on top of the desk.

REPORTER #5

Then took out his private, and shoved his junk into that same
 execs face. All while screaming at him?

BERRY GORDY

I'm not choosing to respond to hearsay and rumors but what I
 do want to say is Motown and Gordy Records is now heavily
 focused on the success of Lionel Richie.

REPORTER #2
One more question Mr. Gaye.

REPORTER #1
Please elaborate Mr. Gordy.

REPORTER #1
Diana.. Diana..

REPORTER #5
Please answer our questions.

Berry, Diana, and Marvin exits as Pretty Lady enters.

REPORTERS

(Singing)

QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES

REPORTER #1

Excuse me ma'am, is it true that you filed charges against Rick James for an undisclosed reason?

PRETTY LADY

I've been advised by my counsel not to speak on this.

REPORTER #4

We're told that your roommate is your attorney. Is this true?

PRETTY LADY

No comment.

REPORTER #5

Sources say you demanded \$2,000 and a shopping spree in Beverly Hills from Mr. James and only filed charges after he refused. Care to comment.

PRETTY LADY

I said I can't speak on it, sorry.

Pretty Lady exits as Levi, Tom, Jojo, and Denise enter.

REPORTERS

(Singing)

QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES

REPORTER #3

Aren't you the band?

LEVI RUFFIN

Yeah we are. I'm Levi Ruffin.

TOM MCDERMOTT

Tom McDermott.

JOJO

Hi, I'm Jojo.

DENISE

And I'm Denise.

REPORTER #3

In the midst of all that Mr. James is going through right now, you all were seen partying it up in Studio 54. Is this the image you want to portray to the public?

JOJO

We were just out having a good time.

TOM MCDERMOTT

Some of us more than others.

LEVI RUFFIN

Tom's just mad because I play synthesizer and sing pretty good so this white model bitch wanted to suck my

DENISE

LEVI!!!!

LEVI RUFFIN

I'm just saying if you can sing you get ass but if you can sing AND play you get more ass.

TOM MCDERMOTT

He's not lying. Studio 54 is a wild place. Everything you can ever imagine goes on in there.

JOJO

Especially the 3rd floor. It's women on men, men on men, women on women. People doing each other in the eye, ear, all kinds of freaky shit.

REPORTER #2

And you all participated?

LEVI RUFFIN

Hell yeah. You think I'ma just sit there and watch?

REPORTER #4

What about Mr. James? Did he participate as well?

LEVI RUFFIN

I can't tell you what Rick did but I can tell you I'm going back!

REPORTER #6

Can any of you answer? What was Mr. James doing in Studio 54?

DENISE

Sorry we gotta go.

Levi, Tom, Jojo, and Denise exit as Teena Marie enters.

REPORTERS

(Singing)

QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES

REPORTER #1

Teena... Teena...

TEENA MARIE

Only one question.

REPORTER #1

Is it true that you and Rick James are romantically involved?

TEENA MARIE

Rick is truly the greatest person I know. He's so bright now that all he has to do is shine his light, shine it on anyone and he creates a star. Look what he did for me and not just me, for so many others. Any woman would be lucky to have him.

REPORTER #4

So are you that lucky woman?

TEENA MARIE

Wouldn't you want to know.

Teena Marie exits as TV HOST, a white man who is a late night host, wearing his suit and tie enters.

REPORTERS

(Singing)

QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES

QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES
 WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES

TV HOST

He's the talk of the town, the name everyone's mentioning. Ladies and gentlemen please give it up for tonight's special guest Rick James.

Rick James along with his entourage including Sherman, Leroi, and the Stone City Band enter.

TV HOST (CONT'D)

Thank you so much for being here. There's a million questions people want me to ask you but I want to focus on the good.

RICK JAMES

Ain't it all good when it comes to Rick James?

TV HOST

You must not read the tabloids but I want to know.. Who named you the King of Funk?

RICK JAMES

Pay homage where homage is due. George Clinton is now and will forever be the King of Funk. The man's as funky as Satan himself. I'm the King of Punk-Funk and it's funkin different. Just ask the funklers out there in TV land.

TV HOST

Who are funklers? Funklers is how you say it right?

RICK JAMES

Funklers are people who dig the funk; Little funklers, Big funklers, Old funklers, Young funklers, Foxy funklers, Mother funklers, Papa funklers.

TV HOST

They're everywhere. Well I'm sure the funklers are excited because you recently announced your next tour and it has some exciting opening acts.

RICK JAMES

Yeah, in addition to the Stone City Band people are going to get to hear an amazing talent by the name of Teena Marie.

TV HOST

I've heard her before and boy is she good. Another new artist that you have opening up for you some people say just might be the next Rick James or better.

RICK JAMES

Nobody is better than Rick James.

TV HOST

Well this new fella sure is trying to give you a run for your money. People should be excited to know that Prince is opening up for you.

RICK JAMES

Who the fuck is Prince?!

TV HOST

Prince Rogers Nelson, the singer.

RICK JAMES

Who the fuck is Prince?!

TV HOST

Cut! We can't use this language on national TV. I thought you said you we're gonna talk to him.

RICK JAMES

Who the fuck is Prince?!

LEROI

Your opening act. The booking manager said you sent in his tape with yours and that you wanted him to open up the show.

RICK JAMES

Who the fuck is Prince?!

LEROI

You tell me... You sent in the tape!

RICK JAMES

I didn't do..... SHERMAN!! YOU'RE FIRED!!!!

SHERMAN

Fired?

REPORTERS

(Singing)

QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES

WE GOT QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES!

RICK JAMES

And I got a question for you? WHO THE FUCK is Prince?!

NO. 9 - QUESTIONS FOR RICK JAMES - END

BLACK OUT.

ACT 2

SCENE 1

As the lights rise, the Stone City Band dressed for their performance are on stage.

Rick James, also dressed in his outfit is with Leroi.

RICK JAMES

Who the fuck is Prince?!

LEVI RUFFIN

Hit it!

NO. 10 - TAKE ME HIGHER - START

LEROI

Cool out Rick, he's been doing a pretty good job out there. He is a little weird though.

RICK JAMES

He's stealing my thunder Roy. Every night he's damn near been a broke ass version of me.

LEROI

They say imitation is the best form of flattery.

RICK JAMES

The next time he does it I'm going on stage right in the middle of his set and kicking his high heel wearing ass.

LEROI

Just relax. The audience may love him but they came here to see you.

LEVI RUFFIN

Ladies and Gentlemen stand on your feet for the soulstress sounds of Lady T herself, Ms. Teena Marie.

Rick and Leroi exit as Teena Marie, dressed in her performance dress, enters.

TEENA MARIE

(Singing)

I GOT A FEELIN GOT A HOPE I GOT A NEED I GOT A GOAL
TO GET UP HIGHER

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

TAKE ME HIGHER

TEENA MARIE

(Singing)

I GOT A ITCH I GOT A WISH CAN'T EVEN SLEEP TILL I HAVE IT
TO GET UP HIGHER

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

TAKE ME HIGHER

TEENA MARIE

(Singing)

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT YOU CAN'T STAY JUST WHERE YOU ARE
THE MORE YOU GET THE MORE YOU WANT UNTIL YOU HAVE IT ALL
OPEN UP YOUR EYES AND LET YOUR MIND BE SET OUT FREE
IF GOING HIGHERS BAD FOR ME I DON'T WANT GOOD THINGS

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

TAKE ME HIGHER, TAKE ME HIGHER
REALLY WANNA GO, REALLY WANNA GO HIGHER WITH YOU
TAKE ME HIGHER, TAKE ME HIGHER
REALLY WANNA GO, REALLY WANNA GO HIGHER WITH YOU

*PRINCE, a young 21 year old singer, wearing his
performance outfit, enters with his manager BOB
CAVALLO, an Italian man whose no non-sense attitude
has help make Prince a success.*

BOB CAVALLO

You get out there and put on one hell of a show okay? You've
been on fire lately just keep it up.

PRINCE

I heard Rick thinks I'm stealing his show though Bob. I'm
funk, I'm R&B, I'm rock, I'm soul, I'm PRINCE. I'm not trying
to be him. If anything he wants to be me.

BOB CAVALLO

Che schifo! Who cares what Rick thinks? You want to be in
movies, you want to be a freakin icon huh? That starts here.

LEVI RUFFIN

He's the hottest new artist to take the stage. Remember this
name and fall in love with his voice... Give it up for
Prince!!!!!!

BOB CAVALLO

Get out there and kill them.

*Teena Marie and Bob Cavallo exit as Prince moves front
and center.*

PRINCE

You look beautiful out there Shreveport! Let me see you put your funk signs in the air. Come on! Come on!

Rick James and Leroy enter watching Prince from the side of the stage.

RICK JAMES

That's my shit Roy; thieving muthafucka.

LEROI

I bet you his manager Bob Cavallo put him up to it.

PRINCE

Can I take you higher?.. I said can I take you higher?

RICK JAMES

He wants to take them higher. O I got some something for him. Want to steal my show? Try doing it with no mic.

LEROI

Rick don't do anything crazy.

Rick James and Leroi exit.

PRINCE

(Singing)

I KNOW THE VOICE, I HEAR THE SOUND, I FEEL THE SCREAMS
THEIR BIG AND LOUD TO GET UP HIGHER

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

TAKE ME HIGHER

PRINCE

(Singing)

I CAN'T CONTROL I CAN'T SAY NO I LOVE THE FEELING OF YOUR
LOVE TO GET UP HIGHER

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

TAKE ME HIGHER

PRINCE

(Singing)

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT YOU CAN'T STAY JUST WHERE YOU ARE
THE MORE YOU GET THE MORE YOU WANT UNTIL YOU HAVE IT ALL
OPEN UP YOUR EYES AND LET YOUR MIND BE SET OUT FREE
IF GOING HIGHERS BAD FOR ME I DON'T WANT GOOD THINGS

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

TAKE ME HIGHER, TAKE ME HIGHER
REALLY WANNA GO, REALLY WANNA GO HIGHER WITH YOU

TAKE ME HIGHER, TAKE ME HIGHER
 REALLY WANNA GO, REALLY WANNA GO HIGHER WITH YOU

Rick James enters.

PRINCE

Let me hear you say wooo!

STONE CITY BAND

Wooo!

PRINCE

Now put your funk signs in the air and -

Rick unplugs Prince's mic and then exits as Bob enters with Leroi.

BOB CAVALLO

What happened out there?!

LEROI

I don't know Bob, malfunction maybe.

BOB CAVALLO

Che palle! Malfunction my ass.

Bob walks on stage and grabs Prince as they both exit.

LEVI RUFFIN

Now it's time for the man you all been waiting for! He is the undisputed King of Punk-Funk, the innovator, the originator, the founder of it all, the one and only Rick James!!!

Rick enters.

LEROI

Show them who they really came to see tonight.

Leroi exits.

RICK JAMES

You look beautiful out there Shreveport! Let me see you put your funk signs in the air. Come on! Come on! Can I take you higher? I said can I take you higher? Somebody bring me my ganja.

JOJO

I got it baby.

Jojo brings Rick his weed and lights it up for him.

RICK JAMES

Isn't she beautiful?.. Let me introduce to you the Stone City Band.

The leader of the band is one of Buffalo's finest, that's Levi Ruffin..... On guitar we got the baddest white boy you ever met it's Tom Mcdermott.... You got Kenny, Lance, Danny, and Alexander Monday. Funk it up fellas.

Rick jams to the band.

JOJO

Don't forget us baby!

RICK JAMES

You know I can't forget you.. Now for the ladies. Introducing the ever beautiful, super talented, and awfully kinky Jojo and Denise.

JOJO AND DENISE

Hey Rick!

RICK JAMES

Hey ladies.. Can I ask you something Port city, I said can I ask you something Port City? Can I take you higher? I said can I take you higher?!

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

(Singing)

I WANT IT NOW, I WANT IT BAD, IT'S LIKE A NEED I NEVER HAD TO GET UP HIGHER

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

TAKE ME HIGHER

RICK JAMES

(Singing)

I TRIED TO QUIT AND WALK AWAY YOU PULLED ME BACK AND THEN YOU SAID TO GET UP HIGHER

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

TAKE ME HIGHER

RICK JAMES

(Singing)

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT YOU CAN'T STAY JUST WHERE YOU ARE THE MORE YOU GET THE MORE YOU WANT UNTIL YOU HAVE IT ALL OPEN UP YOUR EYES AND LET YOUR MIND BE SET OUT FREE IF GOING HIGHERS BAD FOR ME I DON'T WANT GOOD THINGS

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

TAKE ME HIGHER, TAKE ME HIGHER
REALLY WANNA GO, REALLY WANNA GO HIGHER WITH YOU
TAKE ME HIGHER, TAKE ME HIGHER
REALLY WANNA GO, REALLY WANNA GO HIGHER WITH YOU

Prince and Bob enter watching Rick from the side.

BOB CAVALLO

He looks pitiful out there performing after you. You are the star. Everyone will be talking about Prince and forgetting all about Rick James after while, mark my words.

PRINCE

Whose that girl in the background?

BOB CAVALLO

I think her names Denise. Got a nice voice on her. Been with Rick for a while. Come on let's go.

Bob and Prince exit.

Leroi enters with Berry Gordy.

BERRY GORDY

We're back on the map! We're back on the map! He did it! He brought Motown back baby! That was hot Rick, hot!

RICK JAMES

I don't know BG. It was almost like we had the exact same show. The audience didn't give it to me like they usually do.

BERRY GORDY

What are you talking about they loved you. I got big plans for you Rick, huge!... You just gotta stay out of trouble.

Bob and Prince enter.

BOB CAVALLO

Hey man that's the second time Rick has pulled the plug during Prince's set.

PRINCE

Do it again and I'll kick your ass.

RICK JAMES

Well shit let's go, you pint size piranha?!

Leroi and Bob intervene a fighting Rick and Prince.

BERRY GORDY

Remember what I said Rick. I can't have you acting like you're still in the ghetto. It's bad for Motown. Now you two got a few more shows left together can't you get along?

BOB CAVALLO

He's right, let's just finish the tour and move on. If I were you Rick, I'd be very nice to Prince he's going to be a big star one day and who knows.. we might let you open up for us.

RICK JAMES

Man, who the fuck is Prince?!

NO. 10 - TAKE ME HIGHER - END

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 2

Sherman enters carrying his luggage.

SHERMAN

I didn't know you were going to be here.

Daisy runs over and hugs Sherman.

DAISY

Sherman!!... It's so good to see you. I've been coming to sit with your dad while Mama Brown runs errands. I missed you, how long are you home?

SHERMAN

A lot longer than expected. I got fired...

SHERMAN/DAISY (CONT'D)

Again.

DAISY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry to hear that, I know you loved that job. Have you got your acceptance letter into school yet? My other friend who applied around the same time got hers.

SHERMAN

No, not yet.

DAISY

Don't worry, I'm sure it's coming. I guess this is all a part of the plan for you.

SHERMAN

Plans are meant to be broken.

DAISY

Plans are meant to followed Sherman. What are you talking about?

SHERMAN

I'm just tired of following plans. Are you still a virgin?

DAISY

Sherman!

SHERMAN

No seriously, are you?

DAISY

I'm not answering that.

SHERMAN

Have you ever smoked weed?

DAISY

Heavens no.

SHERMAN

Snorted a line of cocaine?

DAISY

Absolutely not!

SHERMAN

Well I have and it made me feel great!! But don't worry I'm never doing it again.

DAISY

Sherman who are you?!

SHERMAN

I don't know yet but that's okay because for the first time I feel like I can be free to find out. Like I don't have to follow the plan.

Mama Brown, carrying grocery bags, enters.

MAMA BROWN

Sherman?!..... Your ears must of been ringing, I was just at the grocery store telling Mr. Young about you going off to college. His son is gonna be the first in the family to go just like you.

SHERMAN

Hey mama.

MAMA BROWN

What are you doing here sweetheart, I didn't know you were visiting home.

SHERMAN

Well it's not quite a visit... I got fired.

MAMA BROWN

Fired?... For what? Who cares, it doesn't even matter. Must've been the Lord hearing my cries and answering my prayers. I didn't like you working that job anyways.

SHERMAN

But I did. I really, really did.

MAMA BROWN

There's a million jobs out there and if the SOB goes to get the milk at the hoodlum, you'll find another one. Isn't that what ya Jamie Ricky said?

SHERMAN

It's Rick James mama and I wouldn't expect you to get it.

MAMA BROWN

I've been watching the news Sherman, I read JET magazine. I know what's been going on and I don't like it. We didn't raise you like that. But the Lord told me this was just a phase and like the prodigal son you'd be coming home.

SHERMAN

This isn't exactly where I want to be.

MAMA BROWN

I know baby, you're excited about college and to be honest your father and I are too! We are so proud of you son.

DAISY

Maybe you should tell her Sherman.

MAMA BROWN

Tell me what? What is it? I know, are you joining a sports team? Or one of those fraternities? Ooooo, did you get a scholarship?!... I am so excited. Okay I'm listening, tell me Sherman I can't wait to hear the good news.

Beat.

SHERMAN

I haven't got accepted into college yet.

DAISY

Not yet!... No worries though, my friend applied the same time as Sherman and just got her acceptance so his should be coming any day.

It's silent.

SHERMAN

Say something mama..

It's still silent.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

You and daddy have been so excited ever since the moment you found out I was looking at schools that I couldn't tell you.

MAMA BROWN

Of course we're excited we worked hard to accomplish this.

SHERMAN

That's it! That's why I didn't tell you. Everything I do in life is OUR accomplishment.

MAMA BROWN

Well it's your accomplishment but it's ours too. You didn't do it on your own.

SHERMAN

So then when I fail does that mean it's OUR failures?

MAMA BROWN

As long as God is on your side you can't fail. Plus you got me, ya daddy, and even Daisy here to help you too.

SHERMAN

That's what I'm talking about. That pressure, that weight. That's too much for one person to carry.

MAMA BROWN

And I'm telling you we'll help you carry the weight.

SHERMAN

BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO!

Beat.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

I don't want to spend my whole life living for you and daddy. I can't keep going around not doing what makes me happy, what makes me free all because I'm trying to please you.

MAMA BROWN

Sherman don't you want to go to college? Don't you want to have a better life than what I have?! Is it wrong for me to want more for you, more for us?

SHERMAN

It's not wrong but let me figure out what my more is.

MAMA BROWN

Your daddy and I sacrificed everything so you could go to college and as soon as that letter gets here you're packing your bags and leaving. No if and's or but's about it.

SHERMAN

I can't do that.

MAMA BROWN

You can and you will.

SHERMAN

Please just listen mama, I can't go.

MAMA BROWN

You're just scared baby but God hasn't given you the spirit of fear but that of power, love, and a sound mind.

SHERMAN

It's not about being scared mama.

MAMA BROWN

Are you anxious? Trust in the Lord with all your heart lean not on your own understanding. He'll direct your paths.

SHERMAN

I'm not anxious.

MAMA BROWN

Daisy's friend applied the same time as you and she got one, right? Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. It's going to come, tell him Daisy.

DAISY

You can get still get the letter Sherman.

MAMA BROWN

This is His plan child. I prayed and he showed me His plan for you.

SHERMAN

Just stop it mama, please just stop it.

MAMA BROWN

We just have to wait a little longer, it's okay. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. Just repent for lying to me Sherman. I forgive you, it's okay.

SHERMAN

Enough with the damn scriptures!!

MAMA BROWN

Sherman!!

SHERMAN

I can't go because I never applied! There's no letter coming!

Beat.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

I never applied for college mama... Please just hear me out. I was thinking that maybe instead I could -

MAMA BROWN

Ain't shit for me to hear but the sound of the door closing
after you leave. Get out of my house!

DAISY

Mama Brown.

MAMA BROWN

I said get out of my house!!

NO. 11 - WHAT WILL I DO NOW? #2 - START

SHERMAN

Mama please listen!

MAMA BROWN

Get out!!!

*Mama Brown runs off crying as Daisy chases her as the
lights fade.*

SHERMAN

(Singing)

MAMA I AM SORRY IT SEEMS I LET YOU DOWN
ALL I EVER WANTED WAS TO MAKE YOU PROUD
BUT AT THIS VERY MOMENT WHAT I NEED MORE'S TO FIND ME
HOW I WISH YOU'D HEAR THAT AND BE OPEN TO MY DREAMS

WHAT WILL I DO NOW? HOW WILL I FACE TOMORROW?
WHAT WILL I DO NOW? JUST TO KEEP MY HEAD ABOVE WATERS
I WON'T GIVE UP, I CAN'T CAN'T GIVE IN, ALL I KNOW IS THAT
I MUST WIN EVEN IF IT BREAKS ME AT LEAST I DIDN'T DIE
SO TOMORROW'S ANOTHER TRY
WHAT WILL I DO NOW? HOW WILL I FACE TOMORROW?
WHAT WILL I DO NOW? JUST TO KEEP MY HEAD ABOVE WATERS
I WON'T GIVE UP, I CAN'T CAN'T GIVE IN, ALL I KNOW IS THAT
I MUST WIN EVEN IF IT BREAKS ME AT LEAST I DIDN'T DIE
SO TOMORROW'S ANOTHER TRY

WHAT WILL I DO NOW?

BLACK OUT.

NO. 11 - WHAT WILL I DO NOW? #2 - END

SCENE 3

As the lights rise PARTY GOERS including Stone City Band, Teena Marie, Diana Ross, Berry Gordy, Marvin Gaye, Nick Ashford, Valerie Simpson, DJ Rezzie, Steven Tyler, Bob Cavallo, and Prince are all celebrating Rick's birthday. They're having a good time, dancing, drinking and doing drugs.

MARVIN GAYE

Okay.. okay I promise you this one is better.. Listen.. Why did the policeman - no, no wait.. How did the police - shit that's not it..

JOJO

Just give it up Marvin.

MARVIN GAYE

No I got it, I got it. What did the policeman say to his belly button?

STONE CITY BAND

What'd he say?

MARVIN GAYE

You're under a vest!

Marvin falls out laughing while the others are unamused.

TEENA MARIE

Rick is truly something special and what we have is something special. You know we're in love right? We're just keeping it private just like you two. So it doesn't mess up our work relationship.

BERRY GORDY

Me and Black aren't... You know what never mind. I'm going to get some punch.

Berry Gordy walks off.

TEENA MARIE

How do you do it Diana? Dating such a strong and powerful man like the Chairman and still stay strong yourself? I admire that shit.

DIANA ROSS

Me and Berry aren't dating.

TEENA MARIE

He's just tapping that ass and not staying home? I didn't take you for that type. Well what me and Rick have is love. We're gonna get married.

Levi walks by and overhears the conversation.

LEVI RUFFIN

Rick ain't ever getting married again. Ever!

TEENA MARIE

Mind ya damn business Levi!.. Rick tells his boys that but he tells me something different.

DIANA ROSS

Berry and I's relationship is strictly business.

TEENA MARIE

So you ain't get divorced from that rich white man because Mr. Gordy was your baby daddy?

DIANA ROSS

Well now it is. Excuse me, I think I need some punch too.

TEENA MARIE

Be careful, one of those will have you on your little supreme ass.

DIANA ROSS

Then in that case I might need two.

Diana and Teena walk off as Prince and Bob come in and see Denise passing.

PRINCE

There goes that background singer again. She's the most beautiful woman I've ever seen.

BOB CAVALLO

Basta, basta! Why are we standing over here then, let's go talk to her.

Bob pushes Prince towards Denise.

BOB CAVALLO (CONT'D)

I'm Bob Cavallo and this is my client Prince, Prince meet Denise. You two have fun.

Bob walks away.

DENISE

Hi... I'm Denise.

PRINCE

I'm Prince.

DENISE

Of course you are. You sound amazing every night.

PRINCE

On the nights you can actually hear me.

DENISE

Well on the parts we HEAR you sound amazing.

PRINCE

And you look amazing every night. You're the most beautiful woman I've ever seen. I'm sure you already know that though

DENISE

I've been told it a few hundred times but whose counting?

They laugh.

PRINCE

You remind me of someone.

DENISE

Who? And please don't tell me an ex-girlfriend?

PRINCE

Nah, someone far better. Way more important..... Me. You remind me of me.

Leroi and Rick, who sees Prince and Denise, enter.

DENISE

That's not a bad comparison.

RICK JAMES

Roy, what the hell is Denise doing over there with Prince? Either she's with me and the Mary Jane girls or I'm putting her ass on the next bus back to Canada.

LEROI

Chill out Rick, you're only acting like that cause it's Prince. Looks like she's just having fun.

RICK JAMES

He's already stealing my set, next he's gonna steal my girls?

LEROI

You're just being paranoid. Enjoy your birthday.

Leroi and Rick walk off.

PRINCE

When I was a kid I tried to tell my parents to call me Skipper but it wouldn't stick. Named Prince Rogers after my daddy's stage name. You need a stage name Denise.

DENISE

I'm open to suggestions.

How about Princess? PRINCE

Uh no. DENISE

Prince Jr? PRINCE

Is that best you got? DENISE

Fire? PRINCE

Really? DENISE

Vagina? PRINCE

Nice try. DENISE

Vanity? PRINCE

Denise thinks for a minute.

Vanity.... I mean I am the finest woman in the world. DENISE

Which means you need to be on the arm of the finest man in the world. PRINCE

Rick James? DENISE

That joker wishes. PRINCE

Vanity and Prince.... I like it. DENISE

That's Prince and Vanity. PRINCE

Prince and Denise grab hands and walk off.

Everyone gather around. It's time for the SOUUULLLLL TRAIN. LEVI RUFFIN
Put on some music Jojo.

Jojo turns on some music as everyone gets in a soul train line. One by one, each person makes their way down the soul train line, showing off their best moves and having fun.

As the last person finishes, Berry Gordy, carrying a birthday cake, walks front in center with Diana Ross and Marvin Gaye. Rick James moves forward.

BERRY GORDY

Now Rick, I just want you to know that I think you're a damn genius man and clearly so do all the people in this room. Even though we've had our ups and down I pray for continued success in your career but most importantly to you keeping the funk alive and never letting the glow die! Happy birthday

EVERYONE

(Singing)

Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday Rick James, happy birthday to you.

Rick blows out the candles.

LEVI RUFFIN

Everyone grab a glass I want to give a toast.

Everyone grabs a glass.

LEVI RUFFIN (CONT'D)

To the first to ever do it, the baddest to ever choose it, and the greatest to ever prove it.

EVERYONE

Cheers.

Everyone takes their shot except for Prince.

RICK JAMES

Hey jack ass why didn't you drink?

PRINCE

I'm not really a drinker. Maybe some red wine but not this.

RICK JAMES

So my shit ain't good enough for you? I said cheers.

Rick, holding a bottle of cognac, grabs Prince by the back of his hair and pours the cognac down his throat.

Prince spits it out and dramatically huffs away as Rick walks the other direction laughing.

BOB CAVALLO

Mettere paglia al fuoco.

Bob chases after Prince as RAYCE NEWMAN, a young white man whose a drug dealer to the rich and famous, enters carrying a backpack.

JOJO

Rayce is here!

NICK ASHFORD/VALERIE SIMPSON

Which means we are out.

Everyone begins to crowd around Tom as Nick and Valerie exit.

RAYCE NEWMAN

I got the goods. Some planet 11 type shit.

JOJO

Give me the ecstasy.

TOM MCDERMOTT

I like those poppers.

RAYCE NEWMAN

Got it and got it.

DIANA ROSS

Whose that man?

TEENA MARIE

That's Rayce Newman. He's the Hollywood connection. He's the drug supplier to all the celebs.

STEVEN TYLER

What about the Quaaludes? Did you bring the Quaaludes?

RAYCE NEWMAN

Rock & Rollers favorite shit, of course I got it.

MARVIN GAYE

I just need to reup on my coke man.

RAYCE NEWMAN

Don't I always take care of you Marvin?

Rick approaches Rayce.

RAYCE NEWMAN (CONT'D)

And for the birthday boy I brought something special. They call it magic mushroom. Hollywood shit.

RICK JAMES

Give it to me baby.

Rick takes a mushroom.

RAYCE NEWMAN

Not so fast man it's a psychedelia. That's some wild shit.

As the lights lower, people are doing drugs, partying, and drinking as Rick begins to feel different and drifts around the room.

LEVI RUFFIN

Say Rick... I know it's your birthday man but me and the other guys were wondering when you we're gonna finally pay us?

RICK JAMES

Don't I take good care of you? Who you think bought all this shit you smoking? Plus, I just took yall shopping, \$80,000 spent.

LEVI RUFFIN

Preciate it man but we got families, we got bills at home.

RICK JAMES

Man get that shit out of here. You should've thought of that in the damn Mall of America.

Levi and the band members leave as Rick continues drifting around the room until he bumps into Diana.

DIANA ROSS

Rick you might need to slow down.

RICK JAMES

Have you always been a square or just since you've been fucking the boss?

BERRY GORDY

Hey man, you can't talk to her like that. She's Diana Ross.

RICK JAMES

I don't give a fart's ass if she's Betsy Ross.

Offended, Diana Ross and Berry Gordy exit as Rick continues to drift around the room until he approaches Prince.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Hey Prince... I just wanted to say sorry to you for earlier..

PRINCE

Really?

RICK JAMES

Yeah I mean it.. I'm sorry you're such a little bitch.

PRINCE

I'll show you a bitch.

BOB CAVALLO

He's not worth it. Let's go. Vaffanculo!

Rick laughs as Prince, Bob, and Denise exit.

RICK JAMES

Denise... Denise... Where you going? I love you woman.

TEENA MARIE

You love her? Rick you said you loved me? You said we we're gonna get married in January.

RICK JAMES

Nooo. I said we we're gonna get Mary Jane.. maybe I was high.

TEENA MARIE

I knew I should've never slept with you.

Teena Marie storms out as Rick hits a line of coke.

He starts feeling dizzy and becomes paranoid as the lights continue to lower.

RICK JAMES

What's that?..... What's that sound?... Is that you God? God I can't hear you... I need someone to pray for me.. Somebody pray for me!

Everyone else is doing drugs, making out, and dancing.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Why won't anyone pray for me?.. You all are the devil. The devil!! Everybody go home!! Everybody get out of here! I know what you're trying to do to me. Go home!! Go home!!

Scared, everyone rapidly exits as Rick lights a pipe.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

I know what you're trying to do to me. I know what you're trying to do. I won't let it happen. I won't let it happen.

Rick passes out.

LEROI

Rick!!!

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 4

NO. 12 - TIME FOR A CHANGE - START

In a silhouette, Nick and Valerie are performing.

VALERIE SIMPSON

(Singing)

SAM COOKE TOLD ME THAT A CHANGE WAS GONNA COME
BETTER DAYS WERE NEARING THERE BE NO RAIN ONLY SUN

NICK ASHFORD

(Singing)

BUT I GUESS THE PART I DIDN'T KNOW
OR MAYBE COULDN'T HEAR THAT THE CHANGE I WAS LOOKING FOR
WAS INSIDE OF ME

*As the lights rise, DJ REZZIE, an Indiana radio host
is live on the air.*

DJ REZZIE

And we're back to Rezzie in the Morning, America's #1 morning
show. I'm your host Rezzie.

VALERIE SIMPSON

(Singing)

SOMETIMES LIFE WILL KNOCK YOU TO YOUR KNEES
HAVING YOU BEGGIN AND LOOKIN FOR A PLEA

NICK ASHFORD

(Singing)

YOU GOTTA KNOW WHEN YOU ARE DOWN IN THE ROUGH
THE BOTTOM SITTING ONLY PLACE FROM HERE IS UP

VALERIE SIMPSON

(Singing)

LOOK TO THE HILLS AND SCREAM MY HELP IS ON THE WAY
STAND UP TALL LOOK YOUR PROBLEMS IN THE FACE

NICK ASHFORD/VALERIE SIMPSON (CONT'D)

(Singing)

TIME FOR A CHANGE, A CHANGE TO FIX YOUR LIFE
THIS IS YOUR MOMENT TO GET IT RIGHT
DON'T WAIT FOR TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW
IT'S TIME TO GET UP AND OUT YO FUNK

DJ REZZIE

That was the first couple of Motown, Ashford and Simpson.
Everything they touch is gold. Now before we go to the next
artist it's time for Rezzie Help Me Out. Whose the first
caller on the line?

*Levi, trying to hide his voice and identity, enters on
the phone.*

LEVI RUFFIN

Check it. My boss is famous, you've heard of him. Well my son goes to school with this girl that claims to be Rick's, I mean my boss' daughter. Says she has a little brother too. Do I tell my boss or mind my business? Rezzie help me out!

DJ REZZIE

Is this a friend also or just a boss?

LEVI RUFFIN

You can say a pretty good friend, I've known him longer than not.

DJ REZZIE

Two things I've learned from working with a friend. First, you have to take them as they are, where they are, how they are and second is you have to have open communication. Tell your friend what you know and leave it with him.

LEVI RUFFIN

That's some good shit Rezzie.

Stone City Band enters next to Levi.

TOM MCDERMOTT

Ask Rezzie if we should ask Rick to finally pay us?

JOJO

You weren't supposed to say his name.

TOM MCDERMOTT

There's a million Rick's in the world. Rezzie doesn't know it's Rick James.

JOJO

Oh my God. Hang up!

DJ REZZIE

Thanks caller. Don't go anywhere we're listening to Diana Ross next.

Ashford and Simpson and Stone City Band exit as Diana Ross enters off to the side in a silhouette.

DIANA ROSS

(Singing)

NOT EVERY DAY IS FILLED WITH RAINBOWS HIGH
SOME DAYS YOU SIT AND CRY LIKE RAIN FROM THE SKY
BUT IN THOSE MOMEMNTS TAKE SOME TIME YO HEAR YOURSELF
LISTEN TO THE VOICE WITHIN YOU THAT IS SEEKING FOR HELP

TIME FOR A CHANGE, A CHANGE TO FIX YOUR LIFE
THIS IS YOUR MOMENT TO GET IT RIGHT

DON'T WAIT FOR TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW
IT'S TIME TO GET UP AND OUT YO FUNK

DJ REZZIE

Ooh Diana, Diana, Diana! I liked you better with The Supremes but hey that's just me. Next caller.

Daisy enters on the phone.

DAISY

Oh my God am I on? This is so cool. I just want to say that I'm a big fan of yours and that I listen to you every morning.

DJ REZZIE

Well thank you very much. Now talk to me mama!

DAISY

Okay my friend Sherm-... I mean Hermando, yeah Hermando that sounds good. He's going through a really hard time. He lost his job, he didn't get into college, and his mom kicked him out the house. I want to be there to support him but I really don't know what to say. Rezzie help me out.

DJ REZZIE

Tough times don't last but tough people do. Tell your friend Hermando to be strong and keep pushing through. Also, do you have an extra bed? Maybe a place to stay would be nice. Thanks for calling. Next up is the sucker for love, the Ivory Queen Lady Tee, Teena Marie.

Daisy and Diana Ross exit as Teena Marie enters off to the side in a silhouette.

TEENA MARIE

(Singing)

YOU'RE RUNNING FROM SOMETHING YOU SHOULD BE RUNNING TO
THAT VERY THING YOU'RE SCARED OF IS THE THING THAT'S
SCARED OF YOU
DON'T LET GO OF THE POWER THAT YOU HAVE INSIDE
CLOSE YOUR EYES AND MAKE A WISH FOR NEW BEGINNINGS AND
TIMES

TIME FOR A CHANGE, A CHANGE TO FIX YOUR LIFE
THIS IS YOUR MOMENT TO GET IT RIGHT
DON'T WAIT FOR TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW
IT'S TIME TO GET UP AND OUT YO FUNK

DJ REZZIE

I just love that voice. I had no clue she was white. Okay, next caller, you're on with Rezzie. Talk to me.

Leroi enters on the phone.

LEROI

Hey good morning. I don't usually do this but I'm kind of desperate. You see I recently lost my wife and that's been hard as hell on me.

DJ REZZIE

I'm sorry to hear that.

LEROI

But it's my older brother that I'm calling about. Rezzie he's out of control. It's heavy drug use, reckless behavior, and bad financial decisions. I'm doing everything I can but I don't know if I can save him? I can't lose my brother too. Rezzie, help me out.

DJ REZZIE

Anything is possible when you have the right people supporting you.

LEROI

But that's the thing, I don't think I have it in me to keep supporting him.

DJ REZZIE

You misunderstood me. Anything is possible when YOU have the right people supporting YOU. In order to be there for others, you can't leave yourself behind. You won't be able to be the help you want to be for your brother if you don't get the help you need for yourself. Thanks for calling caller, coming up now is the Prince of Motown, Marvin Gaye.

Leroi and Teena Marie exit as Marvin Gaye enters off to the side in a silhouette.

MARVIN GAYE

(Singing)

THAT SPARKLE IN YOUR EYE DOESN'T SHINE LIKE IT USE TO
THE HAPPINESSS YOU ONCE HAD HAS SEEM TO LEAVE YOU
IS THERE SOMETHING I CAN DO FOR YOU MY FRIEND
I KNOW THAT LIFE IS HARD I'M HERE TO HELP YOU STAND

TIME FOR A CHANGE, A CHANGE TO FIX YOUR LIFE
THIS IS YOUR MOMENT TO GET IT RIGHT
DON'T WAIT FOR TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW
IT'S TIME TO GET UP AND OUT YO FUNK

DJ REZZIE

Callers, were in for a special treat. Mr. Marvin Gaye himself is on the line. Marvin you there?

MARVIN GAYE

Hey there Rezzie. I just want to say hello to my friend, Rick, who's hosting my wife, Janis, this weekend in Buffalo at his home. I want to wish them both the best—now and in the future.

Marvin exits.

DJ REZZIE

Whoa... Well I didn't expect that. I don't know what's going on but whoever you are Rick you better send Marvin's wife home before he says let's get it on. Next caller, talk to me.

Mama Brown, looking like a sadder and weaker version of herself, enters on the phone.

MAMA BROWN

Hello Dizzie.

DJ REZZIE

It's Rezzie but talk to me.

MAMA BROWN

Yes, I need some advice. My baby Sherman was working for this singing dancing fool of a man. I'm sure you heard of him. Jamie Ricardo or something like that. Well that man has got my baby acting crazy. He's wearing braids, boots, and tight pants that accentuate his booty. But most importantly, he's not going to college. I don't know what to do with him. Is this the part where I say Jessie help me out?

DJ REZZIE

It's Rezzie, but let me guess.. You kicked him out your house didn't you?

MAMA BROWN

Open up my eyes and shut em at the same time. You're pretty good at this. I'm so disappointed and mad that he could let me and his daddy down like this. Especially given our circumstance, you just never know how long your parents are with you.

DJ REZZIE

There's two things every parent should give their child. One is their roots and the other is their wings. If you put good roots in him he'll fly in the right direction, even if it's not the way you think he should go. Thanks for calling and keep listening to Rezzie in the Morning. With another runaway smash album, I think it might be safe to say in the kingdom of Motown, there's a newly crowned prince in Rick James who produced this next song from an all-star line-up of singers. Don't go anywhere!

The lights rise fully as Mama Brown exits while Nick, Valerie, Diana, Teena Marie, and Marvin enter.

EVERYONE

(Singing)

TIME FOR A CHANGE, A CHANGE TO FIX YOUR LIFE
THIS IS YOUR MOMENT TO GET IT RIGHT
DON'T WAIT FOR TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW
IT'S TIME TO GET UP AND OUT YO FUNK

TIME FOR A CHANGE, A CHANGE TO FIX YOUR LIFE
THIS IS YOUR MOMENT TO GET IT RIGHT
DON'T WAIT FOR TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW
IT'S TIME TO GET UP AND OUT YO FUNK

They continue singing as they exit.

SCENE 5

COUNSELOR, a soft spoken, kind drug and alcohol rehab coach enters with REHAB FRIENDS, a group of people attending a rehab class.

Shortly after, Rick and Steven Tyler enter.

RICK JAMES

Man turn that shit off.

NO. 12 - TIME FOR A CHANGE - END

STEVEN TYLER

It's a nice song. Catchy little tune.

RICK JAMES

It's dumb as hell just like this stupid ass meeting.

STEVEN TYLER

I enjoy it so much better when you're here with me Ricky.

RICK JAMES

You're the only reason they get me to show up.

COUNSELOR

Everyone grab a seat and let's begin today's session. Let's go over our essentials for recovering from addiction.

RICK JAMES

I don't have an addiction, I have a creative process.

Rick James and Steven Tyler laugh.

COUNSELOR

Let's be serious gentlemen.

STEVEN TYLER

We are being serious.

COUNSELOR

Let's start today's session with positive reinforcement. Who'd like to go first?

STEVEN TYLER

I will. I want to talk about Ricky here.

COUNSELOR

Wonderful Mr. Tyler, go ahead.

STEVEN TYLER

He just has a glow to him, something special that I can't let go of. They counted him out in New York, Hollywood, Toronto and even Miami but he kept coming back. It's the glow man, it's the glow.

COUNSELOR

That was touching Mr. Tyler, thank you for sharing. Mr. James, your friend mentioned a glow that I think the world knows you have. Do you think cocaine maybe darkens that glow?

RICK JAMES

Me?! Cocaine. Cocaine is a helluva drug. I don't use cocaine.

Rick and Steven laugh again.

COUNSELOR

Gentlemen please. Accountability is a part of your healing process. Your brother, Leroi Johnson is your manager correct?

RICK JAMES

If you already knew that why the hell would you ask me?

COUNSELOR

Yes or no Mr. James?

RICK JAMES

Yeah man.

COUNSELOR

A part of accountability Mr. James is understanding the things we've done to other people. For example, when you visited Columbia and you smuggled drugs for your own personal use in your brothers luggage without telling him.

RICK JAMES

WHO SAID THAT HUH?! I SHARED THAT SHIT WITH EVERYONE!

COUNSELOR

Calm down Mr. James. The point is not sharing it's the risk that your addiction put your brother at.

RICK JAMES

He was okay.

COUNSELOR

How much would you say you've spent on drugs?

RICK JAMES

I don't know.. 3 maybe 400 thousand. Drugs are expensive.

STEVEN TYLER

Especially the good shit man.

Rick and Steven laugh.

COUNSELOR

Please you two. Now on to you Mr. Tyler.

STEVEN TYLER

I'm ready, what you got on me this week? More about my affairs, how I'm verbally abusive to people, what is it?

COUNSELOR

This group isn't meant to attack anyone but to help you acknowledge.

STEVEN TYLER

Acknowledge these balls.

COUNSELOR

Mr. Tyler!

Rick and Steven crack up laughing.

STEVEN TYLER

(To Rick James)

Let me speed this shit up so we can get outta here and blow.

RICK JAMES

Hell yeah.

STEVEN TYLER

Just being funny.. Okay listen, I acknowledge that in order to be a clean and recovered I must first have a plan for recovery. Second I must follow the plan every day. Third hang out with Ricky here every day!

COUNSELOR

Mr. Tyler please.

STEVEN TYLER

He's my support system, my accountability partner.

COUNSELOR

No wonder you two keep ending up back here. Please continue.

STEVEN TYLER

Damn I always get stuck at number 4. Help me out here Ricky.

RICK JAMES

You're sprouting that BS out on your own.

COUNSELOR

Mr. James.

STEVEN TYLER

I think number 4 is learn relapse prevention skills, then improve self care and finally develop healthy activities.

COUNSELOR

Very good Mr. Tyler!

RICK JAMES

That's what I'm talking about Stevie!! You're sober now man, you're clean, you did it.

STEVEN TYLER

Celebration!!

Steven Tyler jumps on Rick James' back.

COUNSELOR

Mr. Tyler!

Rick give him a piggy back ride.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

Mr. James!!

Rick and Steven continue throughout the room.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

Please stop it, you two!

They finally stop.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

This isn't a place for playground games. This is a matter of life and death. Now tell me something positive you did Mr. James towards your recovery journey.

RICK JAMES

I'm making funky ass music.

COUNSELOR

Yes you are and we celebrate you for that. Is there something maybe a little bit more personal you care to share? I heard you recently reunited with your daughter and found out you have a son.

RICK JAMES

I don't want to talk about that shit you hear me?

COUNSELOR

Understandable. Well we're hear to listen whenever you're ready but I do want to say that's why your sobriety is important. You're addiction doesn't just affect you but your loved ones as well.

STEVEN TYLER

Kids?

RICK JAMES

I said I don't want to talk about it.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 6

NO. 13 - OH SISTER #3 - START

As the lights partially rise Prayer Warriors, dressed in all black, are circled up praying.

PRAYER WARRIORS

(Singing)

OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU
OH SISTER, WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU
FOR GOD TO HEAL AND GOD TO MOVE
WE STAND IN AGREEMENT AS WE ALWAYS DO
OH MY SISTER, OH SWEET SISTER, OH DEAR SISTER
WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU

Sherman and Daisy enter, both wearing all black and mourning.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

No matter how we try, you can't really prepare for when a parent transitions.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Just keep your head up God's child, your mother is in a better place now.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

Be strong in the Lord Sherman.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

Be bold in His spirit Sherman.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Be of encouragement to your father Sherman and know that they that wait on the Lord, He shall renew their strength.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

They'll mount up like eagles and soar.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

They will run and not be weary.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

They will walk and not faint.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Remember that and know your mother was proud of you.

SHERMAN

No she wasn't! She wanted me to go to college, and to become something of myself. She was so mad with me. She hated me!

DAISY

Don't say that, that's just grief talking.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

Let him get it out. The only cure to grief is to grieve.

SHERMAN

Why didn't I just do what she wanted?! It wouldn't have been so bad. Why didn't I just listen to her?

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

Listening doesn't always mean doing.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

It's funny how the word listen contains the same letters as silent.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

It's in the silence that we truly hear the loudest voice of all.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

The voice of someone who loves us.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

The voice of self.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

The voice of the creator. Sometimes you can't hear what it is you should be doing because everything and everyone around you is too loud.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

Just be silent Sherman.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

Be still and know that He is God.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

And then you'll hear the desires of YOUR heart and the path you should go on to take them.

SHERMAN

I just loss my mama and the best damn advice you can tell me is to be quiet and listen?!

DAISY

Sherman, calm down! They're just trying to encourage you.

SHERMAN

I don't need encouragement, I need my mama.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

She's physically gone but spiritually with you.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

She's an angel that wants to speak you just have to listen.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

You have to pray.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

You have to fight.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

You have to live!.. You can't sit here and die with her God's child. You can't even kill yourself trying to live out her dreams for you. Honor thy God, honor thy mother, and honor thyself by listening and following the path set just for you.

SHERMAN

Man this is some bullshit. You're all a joke. I'm outta here.

DAISY

Sherman!.... Sherman wait!.. Sherman!!

Sherman bolts for the exit as Daisy begins to chase after him.

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

Let him go sister for it was already written.

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

It's His purpose for him.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

It took someone dying for him to start to living.

DAISY

(Crying)

But I'm worried about him.

PRAYER WARRIOR #1

(Singing)

OH MY SISTER

PRAYER WARRIOR #2

(Singing)

OH SWEET SISTER

PRAYER WARRIOR #3

(Singing)

OH DEAR SISTER

PRAYER WARRIORS

(Singing)

WE'RE PRAYING FOR YOU.

BLACK OUT.

NO. 13 - OH SISTER #3 - END

SCENE 7

Leroi and Rick enter.

LEROI

Tonight's performance was hot man but this tension with you and Prince has got to simmer down it's leaking over to the bands now.

RICK JAMES

Stone City is a bunch of friendly down-home brothas loved by everyone. His band is a bunch of snobs who never bothered to acknowledge my guys. Now they want to kick his bands ass.

LEROI

We gotta work this out like gentlemen. I'm going to set up a meeting okay?

RICK JAMES

Fine, whatever. How did mom enjoy the set and why in the hell would she come to Chappelle, Indiana of all places?

LEROI

She said she wanted to see you, Teena, and everyone so I got her here. You know how she loves autographs and collectibles.

Prince, being chased by GROUPIES, a group of women who are fans, enters with Bob.

RICK JAMES

I hope she didn't want one from that jack ass.

Prince is signing autographs and talking with them.

LEROI

She said something about when she asked him, he turned his back and walked away.

RICK JAMES

He did what?!

LEROI

Calm down Rick, I told her I was gonna take care of it.

RICK JAMES

Hell no. That's all I needed to hear Roy I'm kicking his ass. Come here you dry haired Jimmy Hendrix wanna be.

Rick begins to chase after Prince.

PRINCE

What the hell is wrong with you?!

RICK JAMES

You dissed my mama and now I'm about to kick yo ass.

Rick continues to chase after Prince, while Leroi chases after Rick, and Bob chases after Leroi.

PRINCE

Somebody stop him.

LEROI

Rick calm down!!

RICK JAMES

I'm kicking his ass for mama Roy, this ones for mama!

Rick finally catches Prince and gets ready to fight him when Bob pulls out a gun and shoots it straight in the air.

BOB CAVALLO

I can't let you do that to him.

RICK JAMES

Sucka I'm from Buffalo you think I'm scared of a white boy with a gun?!

BOB CAVALLO

I'm not gonna shoot anybody, I just needed to get your attention. What the hell is going on?

RICK JAMES

This little turd dissed my mama.

PRINCE

That's a lie.

RICK JAMES

You calling my mama a liar? Roy he's calling mama liar.

LEROI

She came up to you to get an autograph and you turned your back on her.

RICK JAMES

You don't disrespect my mama and think I'm not kicking yo ass.

PRINCE

I never met your mom and if I did how would I know it was her?

RICK JAMES

Man save that bullshit for somebody else, you knew that was my mama.

PRINCE

I didn't I really didn't. What you and I got is between us, I would never disrespect your mother.

BOB CAVALLO

You hear that he would never disrespect your mother.

PRINCE

If I did I'm sorry okay?.... I'm sorry. I really mean it. Where's your mom at Leroy I'll even apologize to her. I really mean it, I'm sorry.

BOB CAVALLO

Does your mom like t-shirts with her autographs? We got some t-shirts.

LEROI

She would love that.

BOB CAVALLO

Let's go get his mom a t-shirt, we'll be right back.

Bob, Prince, and the groupies exit.

LEROI

You good man?

RICK JAMES

No... I really wanted kick his ass.

LEROI

I'm sure. Let me go tell mom she's getting her autograph, I'll be back.

Leroi exits as the lights fade.

SCENE 8

Rick, still pissed, pulls out a blunt and begins to smoke.

NO. 14 - MAMA'S LOVE - START

RICK JAMES

(Singing)

NOTHING IN THE WORLD I'VE EVER SEEN OR EVER DONE
THAT COMPARES TO HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN RIGHT HERE FOR ME
GIVEN ME EVERYTHING I WANT AND NEED
YOU'RE THE REASON THAT I AM AND WHAT I'LL BE

Sherman, upset and emotional, enters.

SHERMAN

(Singing)

NOT A SECOND OR A MINUTE THAT I CAN STAY MAD AT YOU
EVEN WHEN YOU'RE WRONG I KNOW IT'S FROM LOVE AND TRUTH
MY INSPIRATION, MY MOTIVATION, MY PURPOSE TO BE ME
YOU SAID YOU ALWAYS LOVED ME AND NOW I DO BELIEVE

RICK JAMES/SHERMAN (CONT'D)

(Singing)

I'LL DO ANYTHING TO MAKE YOU PROUD
I PROMISE NOT TO LET YOU DOWN

LOVING ME ISN'T EASY BUT IT'S WHAT YOU DO
 THE GOOD THE BAD THE UGLY TIMES
 YOU ALWAYS STUCK RIGHT BY MY SIDE
 SO MAMA THATS WHY I LOVE YOU TOO

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

(Singing)

HAVEN'T ALWAYS BEEN PERFECT AND SURELY MADE MISTAKES
 WANTED TO BE EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED
 SINCE YOU FIRST LOOKED AT MY BABY FACE
 I KNOW I LET YOU DOWN BUT YET YOU STILL CARED

SHERMAN

(Singing)

WHEN I THOUGHT I KNEW WHAT I WANTED
 YOU TAUGHT ME TO THINK BIGGER AND TO DREAM
 YOU TAUGHT ME THAT MORE WAS REACHABLE AND THAT IN ME YOU
 ALWAYS BELIEVED

RICK JAMES/SHERMAN (CONT'D)

(Singing)

I'LL DO ANYTHING TO MAKE YOU PROUD
 I PROMISE NOT TO LET YOU DOWN
 LOVING ME ISN'T EASY BUT IT'S WHAT YOU DO
 THE GOOD THE BAD THE UGLY TIMES
 YOU ALWAYS STUCK RIGHT BY MY SIDE
 SO MAMA THATS WHY I LOVE YOU TOO

NO. 14 - MAMA'S LOVE - END

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

There you are.

RICK JAMES

What the hell you doing in Chappelle, Indiana kid? I fired yo
 ass a few cities back.

SHERMAN

My name is Sherman... And I live here duh.

RICK JAMES

Right here? Outside... Well shit you needed that job more
 than I thought.

SHERMAN

I don't need your job... I need a hit.

RICK JAMES

You need a hit?! The last time I let you party you were
 buggin out.

SHERMAN

I said I need a hit!!

RICK JAMES

Quit yelling that shit out loud. Somebody might hear you.

SHERMAN

Are you gonna give it to me or not?

RICK JAMES

What's the matter with you, you acting stranger than normal?

SHERMAN

My mama died.

RICK JAMES

Oh shit! You need more than a hit. I thought it was your dad that was sick?

Rick hands Sherman the blunt.

SHERMAN

He is... Mama had a blocked artery that caused a stroke and she died. My mama is dead.

Sherman smokes but is choking and begins to cry.

RICK JAMES

Well... umm... uhh..... I think that.... She probably....

Rick is unsure what to do as Sherman's cry gets bigger.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Dammit give me that back!!

Rick grabs the blunt back from Sherman and hits it as Sherman continues crying.

RICK JAMES (CONT'D)

Look kid, I'm not good at this. I don't know what to say.

SHERMAN

You don't have to say anything just pass the joint.

RICK JAMES

Doesn't feel right today. Especially with all this talk of parents and kids.

SHERMAN

I just wish I had more time with her.

RICK JAMES

I just wish I didn't waste so much time without them. Sorry kid... Lots happened since you been gone. My little girl Ty and baby boy Rick Jr. are back in my life.

SHERMAN

You're somebody's dad? I'm not shocked but I'm shocked. I never even heard you mention them. Parents are supposed to be there for their kids, take care of them.

RICK JAMES

I guess nobody's perfect. I know they think I chose the music over them.

SHERMAN

Mama felt I chose you over her but I would never. I was trying to choose me but I guess that was wrong.

RICK JAMES

Sometimes choosing you can feel like that. I know those kids didn't want me out there on the road. They wanted me there with them.

SHERMAN

She didn't want me traveling city to city, she wanted me to go to college.

RICK JAMES

I remember the last time I looked my precious Ty in the face.

SHERMAN

I can still hear our last conversation playing in my head.

RICK JAMES/SHERMAN (CONT'D)

I know I let her down.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

But you still have time to make it up to her.

RICK JAMES

And so do you sucka.

SHERMAN

She's gone, there's no making up for that.

RICK JAMES

Check it, when I was a young boy growing up in the ghetto. I was hanging out on corners and singin' with my fellas. We were lookin' for the cute chicks and trying to find a bit of fun. We were looking for some trouble or anyone who'll give us some. I was young and crazy in the ghetto. Didn't know what my life would be. I was dumb and lazy. Something had a spell on me.

SHERMAN

Wha'choo talkin' 'bout, Willis?

RICK JAMES

I'm talking about ghetto life.

SHERMAN

What does that have to do with what we're talking about now?

RICK JAMES

Everything! Life isn't perfect kid but we only get one life to live. If I'd just accept that I grew up in the ghetto and that that was all life had for me, I'd still be up in Buffalo walking the streets of Willert Park Projects. As long as there is breath in our body we have the time to go after the life we want. Your mama wanted you to go to college for what?

SHERMAN

To get a good job and be successful.

RICK JAMES

Why?

SHERMAN

Because she and my daddy couldn't do that.

RICK JAMES

I know that but why?

SHERMAN

Because she wanted me not to struggle like they did and have more.

RICK JAMES

But why?

SHERMAN

Because life was hard and they didn't have the opportunities they sacri-

RICK JAMES

(Interrupting)

Dammit kid she wanted you to be happy!!... You sure college was in your future?

SHERMAN

But what made her happy wasn't going to make me.

RICK JAMES

If you fly on a private jet to New York and I take a bus does it matter how we got there?

SHERMAN

I mean I'll get there faster and more comfortable.

RICK JAMES

Exactly! The journey might be different but the destination is the same. As long as you get to your happy your mama will be proud. And take it from me, there's no point in taking the journey you chose and being sad about it the whole time.

SHERMAN

What if I choose the wrong the journey? Or worse, the wrong destination?

RICK JAMES

I believe everything happens under God's plan anyways. If you change course a few times it's only because you took a detour to your destiny. Sometimes you just gotta let your glow lead you kid...

SHERMAN

You're right.. Thank you.

RICK JAMES

How about you pack your bags up and leave with us tonight, we got a show in Huntsville tomorrow and I need a new gopher, last one got fired.

SHERMAN

I think I'm going to pass.

RICK JAMES

Now you know I don't beg but I think you need to come with us, be with the family. Not sit around Chappelle, Indiana and be sad. Come on kid!

SHERMAN

I need to stay and be here for daddy a little while. Besides, a friend once told me if you change course a few times it's only a detour to your destiny.

RICK JAMES

Dammit!.... That's a smart ass friend, probably handsome too. Yeah you oughta listen to him. Well I gotta get going. Stay funky kid.

Rick heads for the exit.

SHERMAN

Mr. James.

Rick stops.

SHERMAN (CONT'D)

Thank you for everything.. The job, your music, the inspiration but mainly the talks... You're wild and crazy but you're genuine.

RICK JAMES

Simply being a genuine version of you is the best way not to let anybody down.

SHERMAN

You ought to try that with your kids... I think they'll appreciate it just as much as me.. Probably more.

RICK JAMES

..... That means a lot coming from you kid.... I mean Sherman. That means a lot coming from you Sherman.

BLACK OUT.

SCENE 9

NO. 15 - FREAKY, FREAKY - START

As the lights rise Stone City Band, dressed in their performance fit, is on stage.

LEVI RUFFIN

Ladies and gentlemen.... TEENA MARIE!!

Teena Marie, dressed in her performance fit, enters.

TEENA MARIE

Do you feel like getting
freaky tonight?.. All my
kinky, freaky people make
some noise... My good friend
Rick James wrote this song.
So you know it's about to get
funky!

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)
GET FREAKY, GET FREAKY
GET FREAKY, GET FREAKY
GET FREAKY, GET FREAKY
GET FREAKY, GET FREAKY

TEENA MARIE (CONT'D)

(Singing)

HE LIKES IT HARD HE LIKES IT ROUGH
HE LIKES TO GIVE IT TO ME TOUGH
HE LIKES ME FREAKY

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

GET FREAKY

TEENA MARIE

(Singing)

HE LIKES ME WILD, HE LIKES ME LOUD
HE LIKE TO PUT IT IN MY MOUTH
HE LIKES MY FREAKY

STONE CITY BAND
 (Singing)
 GET FREAKY

TEENA MARIE
 (Singing)
 THE BORING GIRLS GET NO PLAY
 THAT'S WHAT HE ALWAYS SAYS
 ONE THE BAND WANTS ONE THE FANS LOVE
 WHO HIS EYES ARE SET
 BE HIS WILD DREAM, HIS FANTASY
 THE GIRL HE NEVER HAD
 THAT SUPER FREAK, THAT SEX MACHINE, THE BEST THING IN BED

STONE CITY BAND
 (Singing)
 GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
 BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
 LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
 FUNK IT UP FUNK IT UP

GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
 BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
 LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
 FUNK IT UP FUNK IT UP

Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson are dressed in their award show attire enter with NOMINEES, 3 other women also dressed for an award show.

LEVI RUFFIN
 Put your hands together for Ashford & Simpson!!!

NICK ASHFORD
 Valerie and I are excited to be here to present the nominees for the American Music Award for Favorite Soul/R&B Artist.

VALERIE SIMPSON
 Lady T, Teena Marie,... The Queen of funk Chaka Khan,...

NICK ASHFORD
 Broadway actress and singer Stephanie Mills,... and teen sensation Stacy Lattisaw.

VALERIE SIMPSON
 And the winner is...

NICK ASHFORD/VALERIE SIMPSON (CONT'D)
 Stephanie Mills.

TEENA MARIE
 Well ain't that some shit.

Nick, Valerie, Nominees, and Teena exit as Berry Gordy enters in his tuxedo.

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
FUNK IT UP FUNK IT UP

Daisy and Sherman enter eating snacks.

STONE CITY BAND (CONT'D)

GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
FUNK IT UP FUNK IT UP

LEVI RUFFIN

Your next presenter... Berry Gordy!

BERRY GORDY

Thank you. It's my pleasure to present the award for Best R&B/Soul male artist. The nominees are Rick James,... Stevie Wonder,.. Larry Graham,.. and Smokey Robinson. And the winner is.. Stevie Wonder!

SHERMAN

Seriously?! Stevie Wonder?!

DAISY

It's Stevie Wonder! He's an icon.

SHERMAN

Yeah, I know he is and that's why he's getting the Merit Award but artist of the year?! Rick deserves that. His work ethic is unmatched.

DAISY

You're starting to sound like a groupie.

SHERMAN

I'm just stating facts.

Daisy and Sherman exit as Prince and Denise, dressed for their performance, enter with Bob.

BOB CAVALLO

This is your moment Prince. Get out there and kill em.

LEVI RUFFIN

Ladies and gentlemen get ready for Prince and Vanity!!

DENISE

(Singing)

HE LIKES IT NICE HE LIKES IT SLOW
 HE LIKE IT WHEN I GO DOWN LOW
 HE LIKES ME FREAKY

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

GET FREAKY

PRINCE

(Singing)

HE LIKES THE RAIN HE LIKE THE PAIN
 HE LIKES IT WHEN HIS LIPS YOU KISS
 HE LIKES YOU FREAKY

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

GET FREAKY

PRINCE/DENISE

(Singing)

THE BORING GIRLS GET NO PLAY
 THAT'S WHAT HE ALWAYS SAYS
 ONE THE BAND WANTS ONE THE FANS LOVE
 WHO HIS EYES ARE SET
 BE HIS WILD DREAM, HIS FANTASY
 THE GIRL HE NEVER HAD
 THAT SUPER FREAK, THAT SEX MACHINE, THE BEST THING IN BED

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
 BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
 LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
 FUNK IT UP FUNK IT UP

GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
 BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
 LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
 FUNK IT UP FUNK IT UP

*Marvin Gaye enters dressed in a tuxedo as Bob, Prince
 and Denise exit as Daisy enters.*

LEVI RUFFIN

Put your hands together for Marvin Gay!!

MARVIN GAYE

The nominees for the American Music Award for Favorite
 Soul/R&B Song are.. My man, my brother Rick James. My friend
 and colleague Smokey Robinson.. Motown's own the beautiful
 Diana Ross and Lionel Richie...

And the talented Carl Carlton. And the winner is... Diana Ross and Lionel Richie for Endless Love.

Diana Ross, dressed in a beautiful dress, enters.

DIANA ROSS

Doing Endless Love with Lionel Richie was a big thrill for me. Thank you to everyone who helped make this record and above all thank you to the fans. I love you, I love you.

Diana Ross and Marvin Gaye exit.

DAISY

Sherman!! Sherman get in here you're missing it, you're missing it.

Sherman comes running in behind her.

SHERMAN

What did I miss?

DAISY

Diana Ross just won Favorite R&B song.

SHERMAN

Over Rick? That's crazy. Endless love is a good song but Give It To Me baby is genius.

DAISY

I'm sorry but what Lionel Richie and Diana Ross did is magic.

SHERMAN

Rick wrote that record at 3 in the morning. Diana Ross was probably sleep in her mansion somewhere waiting on someone else to write her next hit track.

DAISY

I will NOT tolerate Diana Ross disrespect around here. You have lost your mind!

Daisy exits.

SHERMAN

You're just mad cause you know what I'm saying is true.

LEVI RUFFIN

It's time to get freaky!!! Stand on your feet and make some noise for RICCCCKKK JAAMMMMEESSSS!!!

Rick James enters ready to perform.

RICK JAMES

Yall ready to have some fun?!... I said are yall ready to have some fun?!... American Music Awards, let's get freaky!!

SHERMAN

Rick is on!! Rick is on!! Come on Daisy.

Daisy enters.

DAISY

Calm down, you've seen him perform plenty of times before.

SHERMAN

But never this song.

RICK JAMES

(Singing)

HE LIKES HER WET, HE LIKES HER WAVES
HE LIKES IT WHEN SHE MISBEHAVES
HE LIKES HER FREAKY

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

GET FREAKY

RICK JAMES

(Singing)

HE LIKES THE TRICK, HE LIKES THE TREAT
HE LIKES IT ONE ON ONE OR THREE
HE LIKES HER FREAKY

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

GET FREAKY

RICK JAMES

(Singing)

THE BORING GIRLS GET NO PLAY
THAT'S WHAT HE ALWAYS SAYS
ONE THE BAND WANTS ONE THE FANS LOVE
WHO HIS EYES ARE SET
BE HIS WILD DREAM, HIS FANTASY
THE GIRL HE NEVER HAD
THAT SUPER FREAK, THAT SEX MACHINE, THE BEST THING IN BED

STONE CITY BAND

(Singing)

GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
FUNK IT UP FUNK IT UP

GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
FUNK IT UP FUNK IT UP

LEVI RUFFIN

Put your hands together for Steven Tyler.

Steven Tyler enters, dressed formal but way less formal than the previous presenters.

SHERMAN

Okay it's time for R&B Album.

DAISY

Aren't you tired of rooting for a loser? There's no way Stevie Wonder is losing.

STEVEN TYLER

Okay man, I've been asked to present the award for Favorite Soul/R&B Album tonight. The nominees are as followed. The Gap Band,... Quincy Jones,... Rick James,... and Stevie Wonder. And the winner is.... Get over here Rickie you won man. Rick James for the album Street Songs.

Rick James accepts his award as Sherman celebrates.

DAISY

Calm down!!

RICK JAMES

Uh I would just like to thank umm.. thank first of all the creator who brought me here and my mother whose sitting over there who I give this award to. And the band, the Stone City Band. To Motown, Berry Gordy, and everyone who made this humanely possibly. Mom I love you and I told you there's a thing such as rock and roll well now there's a thing called FUNK and roll. Thank you people!

Rick James and Steven Tyler exit.

SHERMAN

That's what I'm talking about! That's what I'm talking about!

DAISY

Sherman calm down. It's not like you won.

SHERMAN

But I did Daisy, I did.

DAISY

Did I miss something? Rick James gave you a writing credit?

SHERMAN

He followed his glow and he won!! He won!!

DAISY

What are you talking about Sherman?

SHERMAN

I'm talking about life Daisy! I'm talking about making mama and daddy proud. I'm talking about following my glow.

DAISY

You're going to college now?!

SHERMAN

Hell no! But that's okay because my destination is chosen now and it just up to me take the path.

DAISY

Are we talking about the same person?

SHERMAN

Yes! Because of Rick James I feel free to try new things, to persevere through rejection, and to please others through the power of simply being me. He gave me permission to throw away the plan, trust the journey and follow my glow. I want to cook.. I want to own restaurants.. Maybe even become a celebrity chef! I might not be going to college but I am going to follow my glow! We won!!! We won baby!!

DAISY

Sherman you're gonna have to calm down.

SHERMAN

I can't! I'm so excited I could... I could....

Sherman grabs Daisy and gives her a kiss.

Marvin Gaye, Diana Ross, Steven Tyler, Nick Ashford, Valerie Simpson, Teena Marie, Prince, Denise, and Rick James enter.

RICK JAMES

(Singing)

THE BORING GIRLS GET NO PLAY

TEENA MARIE

(Singing)

THAT'S WHAT HE ALWAYS SAYS

MARVIN GAYE

(Singing)

ONE THE BAND WANTS ONE THE FANS LOVE

DIANA ROSS

(Singing)

WHO HIS EYES ARE SET

NICK ASHFORD/VALERIE SIMPSON

(Singing)

BE HIS WILD DREAM, HIS FANTASY

DENISE
 (Singing)
 THE GIRL HE NEVER HAD

PRINCE
 (Singing)
 THAT SUPER FREAK, THAT SEX MACHINE

RICK JAMES
 THE BEST THING IN BED

EVERYONE
 (Singing)
 GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
 BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
 LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
 FUNK IT UP FUNK IT UP

GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
 BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
 LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
 FUNK IT UP FUNK IT UP

Sherman does a horrible funky dance.

DAISY
 Sherman, what are you doing? Please stop. You do NOT fit in
 doing that.

SHERMAN
 Fitting in isn't important, busting out's what is and I think
 I finally found the confidence I need to bust a big one.

DAISY
 Sherman!!!

EVERYONE
 (Singing)
 GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
 BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
 LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
 FUNK IT UP FUNK IT UP

GET FREAKY, GET KINKY
 BUST IT DOWN AND GET SOME MORE
 LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
 LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
 LET THAT SUPER FREAK UP OUT YA
 FUNK IT UP

NO. 15 - GET FREAKY - END

THE END.