

ERIC

"The Way We Worked"

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INT. OFFICE - DAY

ERIC NELSON, 18, black, sits in front of his student advisor, COLIN, white, who sits at his desk.

COLIN

I told you this would catch up to you!

ERIC

Come on, Colin, you're my advisor! Isn't there another course I can sign up for?

COLIN

Why, so you can fail that one, too, and blame it on your sports agent job?

ERIC

I'll do better, I promise. But I can't let my mom find out I'm failing a class.

COLIN

Your mom's opinions should have no effect on you. You're not in high school anymore.

ERIC

Tell that to her wallet. And her daddy's big-ass belt!

COLIN

Mr. Nelson...

ERIC

For real, that sucka stretches from here to Waukegan! And it stings five minutes after you feel it!

COLIN

You made your bed, Mr. Nelson. Now pee in it.

ERIC

Look, Colin, the semester's not even half-over yet. There has to be something out there.

COLIN

(sighs)

Okay, there is one. It's a swim class.

ERIC

Swim class? I'm 5'3" and black! I have no business being around a swimming pool!

COLIN

And you have no business being at this school, if you aren't willing to go the extra mile!

Eric SIGHS.

INT. ERIC'S CAR - LATER

ERIC

Speaking of going the extra mile, what am I doing driving all the way up to Madison?

He pulls up to a crowd of people standing in front of his brother, BILLY, 20's, with his student advisor, Padma. Eric gets out of the car and approaches his mother, RHONDA NELSON-JAMES, and his stepfather, MATT JAMES, both 40's, black.

MATT

'Bout time, son! They're about to cut the ribbon.

ERIC

I know. I was talking with my student advisor.

RHONDA

Everything all right?

ERIC

Yeah! You didn't hear nothin' did you?

RHONDA

Uh, no.

ERIC

Sorry. Just a little tired from the drive.

BILLY

I want to thank you, once again, for your support, and especially my right-hand woman, my advisor Padma here.

Padma waves and smiles.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I may be new to this school thing. Well, just call me, "New Jack Billy"! And with that, I present to you...

A curtain unveils from the top of the building and reveals the name of the school.

BILLY (CONT'D)
... "Tha Charter"!

The crowd APPLAUDS.

ERIC
Hmm. That's clever.

Billy grabs a pair of scissors and cuts the red tape placed around the entrance. The crowd APPLAUDS some more.

BILLY
Come on in, everybody!

He, Padma, and other people enter.

RHONDA
Let's check out the inside. I need to give it the "Professor's Seal of Approval"!

Rhonda swiftly follows the crowd. Eric and Matt head toward the building.

ERIC
Look at that. At least Billy's advisor is helping him.

MATT
Yeah, I saw her. She's kinda cute. I hope that's all she's doing.

ERIC
Right.

MATT
Then again, lots of romances happen in the workplace. That's how your mother and I met.

ERIC
Oh yeah.

MATT
Did I ever tell you the story of how we met?

ERIC
Matt, we should probably catch up with Mom and...

Matt grabs Eric's arm, and they both stop walking.

MATT

I just got out the Navy, and I was looking for a job. I came across this supermarket. It's no longer in business, so you'll just have to take my word for it.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY - OFFICE - FLASHBACK

Matt sits, facing QUINCY, the store manager, at his desk. Matt's hair is short, and he wears his Navy "dress blues" uniform.

QUINCY

Well, Mr. James, your resume looks fantastic! And once again, thank you for your service!

MATT

Not a problem, sir!

QUINCY

Oh, call me Quincy.

MATT

Well, Quincy, I believe you'll find a great employee in me! The Navy taught me to come to work early and not leave until the work is done!

QUINCY

I see! I should've hired you yesterday!

MATT

Roger that!

QUINCY

Welcome to the team!

They shake hands. They stand in front of a window that faces the rest of the store. A gentleman from the other side looks at the window and fixes his hair.

MATT

What's he doing?

QUINCY

(sighs)

Security window. They can't see us, but we can see them.

The man picks his teeth with his fingers. Matt and Quincy look away.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Anyway, you're gonna love working here.
But there is one person you should be
leery of.

INT. SUPERMARKET - MOMENTS LATER

Matt and Quincy walk down an aisle.

QUINCY

Her!

Quincy points to Rhonda working behind the counter in a bakery. She has pencils in her hair, and she chews and POPS her gum.

RHONDA

Stupid Junior. Stupid men! I hate 'em
all!

MATT

Wow! She's beautiful!

QUINCY

What?? Oh, I forgot, you just got back
into town. Well, if you were able to
fight the enemies overseas, you can deal
with Rhonda! You start work tomorrow.

Quincy exits. Matt stares at Rhonda.

RHONDA

(to Matt, calling out)
What the hell you lookin' at?

Matt approaches her.

MATT

My new co-worker, ma'am.

RHONDA

You mean, "lead".

MATT

Whatever you say...

He looks at Rhonda's name tag.

MATT (CONT'D)

...Rhonda.

RHONDA
 "Ma'am" is fine.

MATT
 Fair enough. I'll make sure to follow
 your lead.

SUPER: "TWO DAYS LATER"

Rhonda and a crew of employees stand at attention and
 face Matt, who wears an apron and his Navy cap.

MATT (CONT'D)
 Alright, attention to mustard!
 (pause)
 Get it? "Mustard"?

He holds up a jar of mustard. Rhonda CHUCKLES. He reads
 off the last names of each employee. They each reply with
 their name. Quincy arrives.

QUINCY
 What do we have here?

Matt pivots to him.

MATT
 Just getting the crew ready, sir.

RHONDA
 (to Quincy)
 Mr. James can lead the crew so much
 better than I can, sir!

QUINCY
 Well, I see that your naval experience is
 helping turn this store around.

MATT
 Affirmative!

He does a hand salute, then pivots to the crew.

MATT (CONT'D)
 Crew, fall out!

The crew breaks. Matt and Rhonda walk together.

RHONDA
 Mr. James, I'm so glad that you've helped
 me get on the right track.

MATT
 Thanks, Nelson.

RHONDA

Oh, with all due respect, don't call me "Nelson". That was the name of my jerk of an ex-husband. Call me, "Underwood", or like they say around here, "Underpants".

MATT

I would've said, "Underwear", but okay. And you don't have to worry about that jerk anymore. I've been known to make women forget about most men!

RHONDA

Oh really?

Quincy reenters with a mug.

QUINCY

"Underpants", I told you about trying to push this "Not Chocolate" onto our customers!

MATT

"Not Chocolate"?

RHONDA

Yeah, the only good thing my ex-husband left us! It's like hot chocolate, but it's not chocolate!

MATT

But what is it?

RHONDA

It's...delicious?

QUINCY

It's not even that!

RHONDA

Well, it has a decent aftertaste!

QUINCY

I'm not gonna keep taking this insubordination from you, Rhonda!

MATT

Uh, Quincy, I signed off on it. I told her she could serve it as samples without even asking what it was. As a result, I'm firing myself. And that's an order!

QUINCY

Are you sure? The store won't be the same without you!

MATT

I have to take one for the team. That's what soldiers do.

QUINCY

But you were in the Navy.

MATT

Whatever. Thank you for the opportunity. See you around.

RHONDA

Wait! Take me with you, Matt! I wanna know what love is! I know you can show me!

Matt grabs her hand, and they walk away. Eric and Billy approach them.

BILLY

Mom, we're here to pick you up. Who's this?

RHONDA

Boys, meet my new boyfriend, Matt James.

ERIC

I hope he can top our dad. He set the bar pretty high. Until he left us.

BILLY

He truly made us hate men.

ERIC

If we weren't men, I'd hate them, too!

MATT

Don't worry, Nelsons. We're gonna have a nice life together!

Matt hugs all of them.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

ERIC

Okay, Matt...

MATT

What? That's what really happened!

ERIC
It's just that I don't remember saying
any of those things.

MATT
(rapidly)
You were just a kid.
(to Rhonda, approaching)
Honey, what's up?

RHONDA
What are you guys doing?

ERIC
Matt was telling me about how you two
met.

RHONDA
Oh, he did, did he?

MATT
Mmm hmm.

RHONDA
Hey, Eric, let me give you a ride back
home.

There is a cloud of dust where Eric stood.

ERIC (O.C.)
No, I drove here, remember?

Eric and his car rapidly ZOOMS away. Rhonda looks at Matt
with a side-eye.

MATT
(smiles)
Heyyyy...sugar!

He CHUCKLES nervously.

INT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Eric and JACOB JACKSON, 20, white, both wearing swimming
trunks, walk on the deck with other male students who
also wear trunks.

ERIC
Where am I supposed to go, anyway?

JACOB
Down by the "kiddie pool", where you
belong.

ERIC

Are there only dudes in this class?

JACOB

No, here comes the girls now. Don't lose your breath holding your gut in.

ERIC

Hey, I just got done eating lunch!

JACOB

(laughs)

Yeah, for four years, you just got done eating lunch!

(pause)

Hey, who's that coming over here?

Jacob's sister-in-law, ELEANOR DUMBECK, 19, white, sashays over to them. She wears a form-fitting swimsuit that highlights her curves, bosoms, and behind.

ERIC AND JACOB

Eleanor??

ELEANOR

Hey, Eric, you're in this class, too?

ERIC

Uh, yeah! Might as well learn how to swim while I'm at school, right?

ELEANOR

Well, follow me. Beginners go over to the 3-foot pool.

Eleanor sashays away.

ERIC

(to Jacob)

Where the hell did she get a body from?

JACOB

I need to go to our family functions more often!

The instructor, COACH CARSON, speaks.

COACH CARSON

Okay, since we have a couple of new guys here, let's get in the pool and see what you can do.

The class gets in the water. Eric stays behind.

COACH CARSON (CONT'D)

But no...

A glob of water SPLASHES on him.

COACH CARSON (CONT'D)

...diving.

ELEANOR

AARRGH! AARRGH!

Carson jumps in and swims to Eleanor.

COACH CARSON

Dumbeck, I'm here! What's wrong?

ELEANOR

I got water in my eye!

COACH CARSON

(dryly)

Yeah, swimming pools tend to do that.
Sorry.

ELEANOR

It's cool. Hmmph!

She gets out of the pool and walks up to Eric.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

What're you looking at?

ERIC

Nothing. Just thanks for bringing me back
down to earth!

COACH CARSON

Nelson, what're you waiting for? Get in!

ERIC

I'm coming, I'm coming!

He sticks a toe in.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Is it supposed to be this cold?

Jacob swims by and nudges Eric into the water.

JACOB

(slyly)

My bad.

Eric SPLASHES heavily in the water, then stops.

ERIC

It's alright, Eric, take it easy.

He begins to sink, then SPLASHES again. He PANTS heavily. Eleanor approaches him.

ELEANOR

Need help, Eric?

ERIC

You stay right there, Eleanor!

He moves away from her.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

My swimming trunks are small enough as it is!

He waves his arms frenetically and SPLASHES again.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Forget this!

He jumps out of the pool and PANTS.

COACH CARSON

Problem, Nelson?

ERIC

If I wanted to die at 18, I would hang out in my neighborhood after dark! Peace out!

He adjusts his trunks and walks away.

INT. TIMMY'S PLACE - DAY

Eric and Billy sit at a booth and eat. Rhonda approaches them.

RHONDA

Hey, boys. I know you're wondering what really happened when me and Matt met.

BILLY

Uh...

RHONDA

Well, Matt may have embellished a little bit.

ERIC

I know. Matt, working?

RHONDA

That part was true, but let me straighten out the facts.

BILLY

Actually, Mom, we're...

Rhonda sits down with them.

RHONDA

Now, we did meet at the store, but it went down like this.

ERIC

Is this where Matt looks bad, and you look good?

RHONDA

Now, now, Eric, I always look good. Now listen.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY - OFFICE - FLASHBACK

Rhonda sits, facing Quincy, who sits at his desk.

QUINCY

So, Ms. Underwood, you'll have a new guy under your wing. He just got out the Navy, so he should be a model worker.

RHONDA

Okay, sounds good.

QUINCY

Now, I want you to teach him everything you know about baking, cooking, and such. I know he'll be in good hands!

RHONDA

Well, I do have to finish basting that turkey for you and your wife, but I can swing it.

QUINCY

I expect nothing less from the Employee of the Decade!

The future owner of Timmy's Place, TIMMY ROBERTS, white, looks into the security window and fixes his hair.

Quincy quickly opens the door and stares at him. Timmy rapidly WHISTLES and walks away.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Hey, Ms. Underwood, here comes Matt now!

Rhonda steps out of the office. Enter Matt, who wears a dingy shirt, walks with slightly bad posture, and looks disheveled and unshaven.

MATT

(with a stutter)

Uh, hi, guys. Matthew James here.

RHONDA

Well, aren't you the cutest thing!

MATT

Aww, shucks, ma'am!

QUINCY

Okay, you two. Let's get to work!

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY - LATER

Matt and Rhonda, wearing aprons over their uniforms, stand behind the counter.

RHONDA

Okay, Matt, now go help out that customer over there.

MATT

But, um, Ms. Underwood, I don't know. It's my first day. Shouldn't I study a bit first?

RHONDA

I thought you were in the Navy!

MATT

Yeah, but I was just a pencil-pusher.

RHONDA

Now, look, James, you take that customer's order, and that's an order!

Matt stands upright, at attention.

MATT

Ma'am, yes, ma'am!

RHONDA

At ease.

Matt resumes slouching.

MATT

(giggles)

That's such a turn-on! Gosh!

He approaches the customer and carries a tray of drinks.

MATT (CONT'D)

(stutters)

Hello, ma'am. Care for a...

He tips the tray over, and the drinks spill on the lady's dress. She SCREAMS and stomps away.

MATT (CONT'D)

Oh dear. I'm so sorry!

Quincy marches over to Matt and Rhonda.

QUINCY

That's it! Matt, this ain't gonna work out!

MATT

But sir, I can change!

QUINCY

Well, can you change this?

He holds up a coffee mug.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

This "Not Chocolate" drink was made wrong!

RHONDA

Oh, no, Quincy. See, you're supposed to boil it first, then freeze it, and boil it again!

QUINCY

Oh. That's right. Still, I can't have too many of these mishaps. Best of luck to you, Mr. James.

Quincy exits.

MATT

Aw, gee. What am I gonna do now?

RHONDA

Matthew, I see a lot of potential in you.
Lemme upgrade you!

MATT

For real?

RHONDA

As real as my "Not Chocolate" drink. Come on.

Matt and Rhonda exit the area and run into Eric and Billy.

BILLY

Mom, we're here to pick you up. Who's this?

RHONDA

Boys, this is Matt, Say hi, Matt.

Matt has a finger near his mouth, looking nervous.

MATT

Hi there.

ERIC

He looks a little mousy, Mom.

RHONDA

Hey, now! We all have our quirks! He'll fit in right with us!

Matt stands upright.

MATT

That's right!

(stutters)

And I think we're gonna have a nice life together!

(to Rhonda)

If it's okay with you.

They hug.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

BILLY

C'mon, Mom, you really expect us to believe that you and...

He and Eric look at the empty seat, where Rhonda was.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Mom?

ERIC

Hmmph. Her story was so lame that she left.

Jacob approaches the booth.

ERIC (CONT'D)

And speaking of leaving...

Eric prepares to get up.

JACOB

Yo, "Carlton Banks", haven't seen you in swim class lately!

Eric sits back down.

ERIC

That's because I dropped it. I don't need it anymore. I'm taking an online class in its place.

JACOB

(laughs)

Yeah, that'll solve your issue!

ERIC

What are you talking about?

JACOB

We all saw you strugglin' in the kiddie pool, man! But hey, do you!

Jacob exits.

BILLY

Is that true, Eric?

ERIC

Man, forget what he said! I took an online class, so I can have more time to help Marty. He has to train for the game coming up.

BILLY

But isn't this their bye week?

ERIC

Never too early to train.

BILLY

Eric...

ERIC

Just lay off, okay? I can swim! I'll prove it!

Eric looks downward.

SCREEN RIPPLES.

SFX: Dreamy music PLAYS IN REVERSE.

Billy interrupts the ripple and the music.

BILLY

Eric, what are you looking down at?

ERIC

Can't you flash forward to the future this way?

BILLY

No, stupid!

ERIC

Dang.

INT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Eric slowly approaches the water.

ERIC

Okay, ain't nothin' to it. I'm ready.
(pause)
Hold that thought.

MOMENTS LATER

SFX: TOILET FLUSH!

Eric exits the men's room and approaches the pool.

ERIC

Okay, now I'm ready.

COACH CARSON

Did you wash your hands?

MOMENTS LATER

Eric exits the men's room and approaches the pool.

ERIC

Now I'm ready.

He slowly steps one foot in the water.

ERIC (CONT'D)

The water feels fine.

Jacob swims past Eric and SPLASHES him. Eric falls in the pool.

JACOB

(slyly)

Man, I gotta be more careful!

Eric splashes in the water and struggles.

ERIC

Dang you, Jacob! Help! Hel--

His feet dangles in the water. His right foot hits the floor of the pool. He slowly stops fidgeting.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Is that the floor?

He plants both feet on the floor and stands up in the pool. He looks down and sees that the water goes up to his waist.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Hey! I'm taller than the water!

JACOB

Barely!

Eric lies on top of the water and does some strokes. He then swims forward and back, doing various strokes.

ERIC

Hey, ya'll, I'm swimming!

COACH CARSON

Very good, Mr. Nelson!

ERIC

Yeah! I'm gonna pass this class!

COACH CARSON

No you won't. The registrar's closed.

ERIC

Say what?

COACH CARSON

Yeah, you can stay, but you won't get any credit for this course.

Jacob walks past Carson.

JACOB

(cackles)

If only you would've stayed in class!

Eric GROANS and sinks in the water. Eleanor, still wearing her form-fitting swimsuit, approaches Jacob.

ELEANOR

Oh no! Should we help Eric?

Jacob looks at Eleanor, then quickly turns away.

JACOB

No. And can you give me some space?

Eleanor sticks her chest out and stands closer to him.

ELEANOR

What's wrong, brother-in-law, hmm?

JACOB

(hesitates)

Get away from me! Stop!

Jacob DIVES in the water.

ELEANOR

(snickers)

Eat your heart out, Miss Sheboygan!

She struts away like a model. She slips on the deck, quickly fixes her composure, and continues strutting.

INT. NELSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eric and Billy sit on the couch.

BILLY

So now what? You gonna mess around and flunk out!

ERIC

No I won't! And even if I do, I'm the agent for Marty O'Dell! I ain't worried!

Matt enters the front door.

MATT

Hey, guys.

ERIC

(to Matt, yells)

Everything's fine!

MATT

Huh?

ERIC

I said, hi. Everything's fine.

MATT

Are you sure? You've been acting weird.

ERIC

Like I said, everything's fine. We have no reason to lie in this family.

(slyly)

Ay, Matt?

MATT

What's that supposed to mean?

Rhonda barges in.

RHONDA

He's talking you telling that story about how we met!

MATT

Okay, it was a long time ago. Maybe I got one or two things wrong.

RHONDA

You got the whole damn story wrong!

MATT

Well, what about you, acting like you came to save me? I'm a Navy veteran!

RHONDA

Oh, God, don't I know it! Any story would be better than hearing that!

MATT

Oh yeah? If I knew you felt that way, then...

RHONDA

Then what? Choose your words carefully!

MATT

Then I wouldn't have messed with you!

RHONDA

Is that so?!

They continue bickering. Eric and Billy exit the house.

BILLY

I guess we'll never know what really happened.

ERIC

(sarcastically)

I'm devastated.

INT. AL UDEID, QATAR - AIR BASE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Matt and Timmy, both wearing their Navy dress uniforms, pack their seabags. The TV PLAYS in the background.

TIMMY

You sure we should be separating, Matt? We gotta go back home to Wisconsin, for God's sake! I'm trying to stay away from my baby mama!

MATT

Timmy, I told you, my dad hooked me up with a job at a store. I wanna see how it goes. Besides, I'm tired of calling you, "Petty Officer", Petty Officer!

TIMMY

At a store? Serving customers? How demeaning! What if we just reenlisted? We could stay here for another couple years.

An ANNOUNCER from the TV speaks. Matt and Timmy turn to it.

ON THE TV

ANNOUNCER

We'll be right back after we pay some bills. Psyche! Here's a mandatory PSA from your friendly network station.

A male SOLDIER jogs outdoors at night. He wears physical training gear with a yellow reflective belt. SINGERS croon in the background.

SINGERS (O.C.)
 Wear your glow belt!/Yeah yeah yeah!/Wear
 your glow belt!/Yeah yeah yeah!

The soldier stops jogging.

SOLDIER
 (to the singers)
 It's not a glow belt!

SINGERS (O.C.)
 Yes it is!/Yes it is!/Yeah yeah yeah!

The soldier frowns and continues jogging.

BACK TO SCENE

TIMMY
 You all packed up?

MATT
 Yep!

TIMMY
 Let's get the hell outta here.

Matt SHUTS OFF the TV. They exit.

INT. SUPERMARKET - OFFICE - DAY

Matt, wearing a store uniform, sits, facing Quincy at his desk.

MATT
 So, as you see, Quincy, I know how to
 work early and not leave until the work
 is done!

QUINCY
 Okay, you don't have to sell me on it!
 I'm doing a favor for your father!

MATT
 Oh. Thank you.

QUINCY
 I just don't wanna hear any more about
 him switching my urine samples back in
 the Navy. Welcome aboard.

Quincy extends his hand.

MATT

Wasn't expecting that backstory right before a handshake, but okay.

Matt shakes his hand.

QUINCY

Let me introduce you to your lead. Here she comes now.

Rhonda enters the office.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Matt James, meet Rhonda Underwood.

Rhonda and Matt stare at each other. Matt shakes her hand.

MATT

Oh, hi. Nice to meet you.

RHONDA

Hi. Same here.

QUINCY

I gotta go. Matt, you're in good hands.

MATT

I hope so.

Matt pauses. Quincy looks at him, then exits.

RHONDA

Saying the quiet part loud. You'll fit in here.

MATT

(chuckles)

That's not what I meant.

RHONDA

So, you just got out the Navy?

MATT

Yeah. I learned a lot, but it's good to be back home. What about you, ma'am? Working here while your husband's working at his job?

RHONDA

(laughs)

That's a new one.

MATT

That wasn't a smooth-enough segue?

RHONDA

If you must know, I'm divorced. We were both at fault. He kept screwing around, and I kept trusting him.

MATT

Sorry to hear that, ma'am.

RHONDA

You're not in the Navy, anymore. You don't have to call me, "ma'am".

They stare at each other.

INT. SUPERMARKET - MOMENTS LATER

Customers walk past the security window of the office. There are MOANS and GROANS coming from the office.

RHONDA (O.C.)

Call me, "Ma'am", again!

MATT (O.C.)

Yes, ma'am!

RHONDA (O.C.)

Say it again!

MATT (O.C.)

Ma'am! Ma'am!

The customers stop and look in the window. Inside, Matt is standing behind Rhonda, who lies on the side of Quincy's desk.

MATT (CONT'D)

Say my name now!

RHONDA

No, keep calling me, "ma'am"!

SFX: Telephone RINGS!

Matt and Rhonda stop. Rhonda answers the phone.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

How can I help you?

QUINCY (O.C.)

Ms. Underwood, remember that the security window is broken. So we can all see you!

RHONDA

Oh yeah.

An EMPLOYEE speaks over the P.A.

EMPLOYEE (O.C.)

And hear you!

Matt and Rhonda SIGH.

INT. SUPERMARKET - OFFICE - LATER

Matt and Rhonda stand in front of Quincy, who is behind his desk.

QUINCY

If ya'll wanna go cavortin' around, do it on your own time! We heard both of you from start to finish!

MATT

I didn't finish!
(to Rhonda)
I didn't!

QUINCY

Both of ya'll punch out!

RHONDA

Please, Quincy, I need this job! I'm a single mother! Which is why I hadn't had any in a year!

MATT

Hold on. Quincy, if you're gonna fire anyone, fire me.
(pause)
I made her do it.

QUINCY

What?

MATT

I forced her on top of me. I mean, under me.

QUINCY

(to Rhonda)
"Whose is it, Matt?"

MATT

Yes! Whose right is it to just say no?
It's her right, as well as any other
woman! We must treat them equally! And
I'm deeply sorry, Ms. Underwood.

QUINCY

Well, in that case, pack up, Mr. James,
and best of luck.

Quincy begins to extend his hand but TREMBLES and pulls
back.

MATT

Yes sir.

QUINCY

But Ms. Underwood, your "Not Chocolate"
has poisoned one of our best customers,
and now, she's suing us. You pack up,
too.

Quincy exits.

RHONDA

(calls out)

But you're not supposed to refrigerate it
too long!

She SIGHS.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

Matt, you saved my job! For a few
minutes. No one's ever done that for me
before!

MATT

Anything for you, ma'am...I mean,
"Rhonda".

RHONDA

Well, I guess I'll see you around town.

MATT

Why?

RHONDA

What you mean?

MATT

Well, now that I don't work for you, can
I take you out?

Rhonda smirks.

RHONDA

Honey, you don't have to work another day
in your life, for all I care!

They both hold hands and exit the office. They walk
through the store. Customers CHEER, LAUGH, and APPLAUD.

MATT

Yeah, yeah, whatever!

Rhonda tries to cover her face with her free hand. They
approach Eric and Billy.

ERIC

What's going on in here?

RHONDA

They're thanking this sailor here for his
service!

MATT

(to Rhonda, whispers)
When are you gonna do that?

RHONDA

(giggles)
Stop!

She nudges Matt.

BILLY

What's his name?

MATT

Matt James.

He gives each boy a fist-bump.

ERIC

Cool, you know the latest handshakes!

MATT

Yeah, right, that's it.

RHONDA

These are my kids, Billy and Eric. They
came to pick me up.

BILLY

They gave you quite a salute. Looks like
you'll be frequenting this store often,
huh, Mr. James?

RHONDA

Uh, I don't know about that, Billy. But you'll be seeing him around me more often!

ERIC

Good, Mom, get back on that horse!

RHONDA

Eric! I mean, yes, you're right.

MATT

(chuckles)

Hey, ya'll, I think we're gonna have a nice...

ERIC

Oooh, who is that?

Eric waltzes over to a tall, biracial girl named SHANA JONES (who is Eleanor's half-sister).

ERIC (CONT'D)

Hey there. My name's Eric T. Nelson.

SHANA

Oh. Are you rich and famous?

ERIC

No.

SHANA

And you're talking to me because...?

ERIC

(calls out)

Huh? What was that, Mom?

Eric walks back to the others, with his head down.

ERIC (CONT'D)

You were saying, Matt?

MATT

We're gonna have a nice life together!

ERIC

(shrugs)

I guess.

The four of them hug each other.

THE END