

**MY LIFE IN 3 EASY PAYMENTS**

PILOT  
"ONE NIGHT WITH YOU"

Teleplay By  
Breeze Vincinz  
and  
Darryl Wharton-Rigby

Story By  
Dale Guy Madison

Based on the Stage Play  
*"My Life In 3 Easy Payments"*  
By Dale Guy Madison  
and

Memoir by Dale Guy Madison  
DREAMBOY: My Life as a QVC Host & Other Greatest Hits

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OVER BLACK:

HEAR **"I'M GONNA LET MY HEART DO THE WALKING"** by THE SUPREMES.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

Growing up, music was everything to me.

FADE IN:

INT. MADISON FAMILY HOME - GARAGE - DAY - 1976

MUSIC CONTINUES. SUPER: BALTIMORE, 1976

COLORFUL DISCO LIGHTS ILLUMINATE a fantastic makeshift *Soul Train* set accented with a brightly painted red cement floor.

NARRATOR DALE

Tennessee Williams said, "In memory, everything seems to happen to music."

An old television on a rolling chrome metal cart, stands beside a large rack of vinyl albums. A wardrobe rack is filled with various garments.

NARRATOR DALE (CONT'D)

And my life was the Black Gay Wonder Years with a Motown soundtrack.

A 45 record of *The Supremes* song spins on a turntable. Several 45s and records are scattered on the table.

YOUNG DALE, 16, brown-skinned, full of energy, a dreamer with a large curly afro, dances. Dale grooves with TWO BOYS--

YOUNG ANDRE COMBO, a.k.a. "BOO", 16, light-skinned, close shaved hair - body of a ballet star - dances *The Hustle* in his bare feet. He lives and loves life without apology.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

Andre, a.k.a. "Boo" because his skin was pale like Casper the Friendly Ghost. A dancer with a body like Baryshnikov and the savior-fare of violinist Itzhak Perlman, he loved to dance and play the violin in his bare feet.

YOUNG KEITH DRIVER, 16, tall, skinny, dark-skinned, with thick coarse hair, unapologetically Black Panther "Black."

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)  
 Keith, super smart with Dick  
 Gregory wit - funny, and very  
 political. His quick tongue could  
 cut you and teach you the irony of  
 racism at the same time.

Young Keith joins Young Boo. They are in sync with their  
 dance steps. Young Dale, the obvious leader, flows to the  
 front, with exaggerated attention-grabbing moves.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)  
 We loved girl groups. I didn't care  
 what group it was - long as I had  
 the lead. Like in *Funny Girl*,

Young Dale dances in synch with Young Boo and Young Keith.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)  
 (sings)  
 "I'm the greatest star. I am by  
 far, but nobody knows it."

As Dale positions himself in the center because *this is his  
 story*. SONG FADES.

EXT. MUSIC DIMENSION RECORD SHOP - DAY - 1976

"**LOVE HANGOVER**" by **DIANA ROSS** BLASTS through speakers. A  
 bustling outdoor mall in full mid-70s splendor. Young Dale  
 followed by Young Boo prances down the aisle like he owns it.

INT. MUSIC DIMENSIONS RECORD SHOP - CONTINUOUS - DAY - 1976

MUSIC CONTINUES. Young Keith, bored, leans on the register,  
 helping a CUSTOMER.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)  
 Keith was assistant manager at the  
 record store. We got the best five  
 finger friend discount on all the  
 latest hits.

Dale picks up a store magic marker and lip syncs to the Ross  
 song. Amused - Young Keith CHUCKLES and FLIPS A SWITCH--

*Voila!* A disco ball turns the store into a mini nightclub.  
**The magic begins.** Young Dale transforms into Diana Ross.  
 Young Boo kicks off his flip flops and go-go dances.

Customers APPLAUD their performance. Young Keith discretely  
 hands his friends copies of the Ross album. MUSIC FADES.

INT. MADISON FAMILY HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1976

Young Dale's hands guide denim material through a sewing machine as he completes a patchwork denim jacket.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

My grandma gave me a sewing machine, and I taught myself to sew. GURL... *You could not tell me I wasn't the Black Halston or Yves Saint Laurent all rolled into one.*

Young Dale's older brother YOUNG RICKY, 17, coke-bottle lens plastic glasses, reads a Superman comic book. He sits in a lotus position on his bed next to the window. Young Ricky's half of the room-- a geek mix of comic book/superhero posters and astronomy photos.

Young Dale's half-- a fanboy homage of photos and posters of *Diana Ross*, *The Supremes*, and other girl groups.

The PLINKING of small stones TAP the window and alert Ricky.

YOUNG RICKY

Your friends are here.

Young Dale rushes to the window and scopes out Young Boo and Young Keith in the yard. He YELLS -

YOUNG DALE

If ya'll break my momma's window -  
She gonna kick my ass!

Young Dale holds up the jacket for final inspection while Young Ricky peers over his comic book, checks his watch.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

God knows I loved my brother Ricky with all my heart. We were both gay, but totally different. He was a loner geek. I had my friends.

YOUNG RICKY

Momma gonna be back home soon -

YOUNG DALE

(runs out of the room)  
Momma's always late on Wednesdays.

YOUNG RICKY

(under his breath)  
Ummm... Today is Thursday.

As Young Ricky turns the page.

INT. MADISON FAMILY HOME - GARAGE - NIGHT - 1976

Garage door opens. Young Keith and Young Boo greet Dale with arms stacked of costumes of blue denim patches - all colorful designs. They unload the ensembles to wardrobe racks.

PRE LAP: "**DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING TO**" by **DIANA ROSS**

INT. MADISON FAMILY HOME - GARAGE - LATER SAME NIGHT - 1976

Young Dale, Young Keith and Young Boo, fully dressed in the blue denim patchwork gowns, admire themselves in the mirror.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

Oprah said the first time The  
Supremes were on Ed Sullivan,  
"Colored people on TV!" That moment  
I knew I wanted the spotlight.

Scissors cut loose threads. Young Dale fusses over costume adjustments. Young Boo and Young Keith are in disco wigs.

Young Dale picks up his glittery wig, looks into a mirror. He places it on his head with the reverence of a crown.

Young Dale raises his arms - blocks Keith and Boo's reflection in the mirror. Young Boo hip bumps Young Keith, knocking him into Young Dale, whose wig falls over his eyes. He grabs his head-- *too late* - the sacred wig hits the floor.

Young Dale adjusts his wig, taking his rightful place in the center as the lead singer.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

We were just being ourselves. Play  
fighting over who would be *Diana*  
*Ross*... of course, I always won.

They pick up toy glitter microphones and lip synch the music.

EXT. MADISON FAMILY HOME - NIGHT - 1976

MUSIC CONTINUES. TIME LAPSE from the Madison home to a view of the Baltimore skyline lit with majestic colors.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

In my era, most gay men were  
alone... afraid of coming out. I  
was never alone or isolated or  
ashamed of who I was.

As WE DESCEND and TRANSITION to--

EXT. ROW HOUSE APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT - 1991

MUSIC CONTINUES. A red brick row-house nestled in a tree-lined neighborhood.

SUPER: BALTIMORE, 1991

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

I had a chosen family that lifted me up. This allowed me to be free to live in my own truth.

MUSIC FADES. As pedestrians and vehicles go about daily life.

INT. DALE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - 1991

*"RED HOT" by MARY WILSON PLAYS on a red vinyl LP on a high-end stereo system.* SEXUAL GRUNTS and MOANS over the music.

The studio apartment - all red - with one lone red light bulb - candles reveal a fantasy of a sexual playground - Sex toys scattered on the floor lead to Dale's carnal playmate:

MELVIN, 35, an African-American "bear," meaning in gay culture, a hairier man who projects rugged masculinity.

Dale, now 31, stands as Melvin uses his teeth to sensually unsheathe Dale's red lace thong. He sucks on Melvin's toes, triggering a sexual seizure. His hand reaches into a tub of condoms by the bed. Melvin grabs a tube of lube, lubricates his backside and drops to his knees. Sex is on!

Melvin SQUEALS in a HIGH-PITCHED VOICE. Dale GRUNTS in full control through a loud, hard, breathless climax. Dale pulls out and collapses next to Melvin exhausted - a job well done. MUSIC FADES.

INT. DALE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER - 1991

Dale ties the belt on a leopard robe. He sits on the edge of the bed next to a half dressed Melvin, who turns to give him a kiss. Dale raises a cautionary finger.

DALE

What's the rule?

MELVIN

Fucking. No kissing.

DALE

That's my big bear.

Dale touches his face gently. Melvin reaches into his pocket and puts on a wedding ring.

DALE (CONT'D)  
 You don't have to take it off for me.

MELVIN  
 I take it off for me.

Melvin looks at the female costumes and wigs on display.

MELVIN (CONT'D)  
 When are you going to invite me to see you perform, Miss FreeDa Slave?

DALE  
 Lypps is a public club. You and your wife are welcome anytime.

Disappointed, Melvin leaves. Dale exhales, pours, and downs a slug of tequila. Joyfully, he picks up a comb and teases one of the many wigs.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY - 1991

Dale, in African garb, reads to a class of THIRD GRADERS. A large BACKDROP BANNER reads - DALE: THE AFRICAN GRIOT

DALE  
 ...Anansi pulled himself to the riverbank. Goodness, he said. That wasn't so smart. That is why Anansi and all spiders have eight legs.

The teacher, Melvin, smiles broadly and applauds.

MELVIN  
 Let's thank Mr. Dale for his amazing African stories.

The third graders CLAP enthusiastically. Dale bows politely.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LATER SAME DAY - 1991

Dale places the rolled up banner in his car trunk. Melvin carries the poles.

MELVIN  
 Thank you again for doing this.

DALE  
 It was my pleasure. Just make sure the check clears. I know the city is going through budget cuts.

MELVIN

Already talked with the principal.  
Where should I put these?

DALE

Just slide them in across the  
seats.

MELVIN

I like it better when you do the  
sliding.

DALE

Maybe later, big boy.

Dale gets into the car and drives off.

PRE LAP: **"ALL THE MAN THAT I NEED" by WHITNEY HOUSTON**

INT. DALE'S CAR - DAY - 1991

Dale drives through the city as songs PLAYS on the radio.

His pager BEEPS. He looks at it and SEES 777-9311 and 911.  
Dale looks it curious. MUSIC OUT.

I/E. PHONE BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Dale holds the pager and talks on the phone.

BOO

(from phone; urgent)  
Dale. Glad I got you -

As traffic moves around Dale -

EXT. FSN STUDIO - DAY

A large box studio building. A MARQUEE SIGN READS:

FSN: FASHION AND STYLE NETWORK

DALE (O.C.)

What's going on?

As a SUIT rides by in a golf cart

INT. FSN STUDIO - CONTINUOUS - 1991

Upscale active studio of a shopping network. Boo stands in a  
corner of the sound stage on a phone.

INTERCUT BETWEEN DALE AND BOO AS NEEDED.



BOO  
Dale. Listen--

DALE  
I'm listening.

BOO  
I just got the inside scoop. They are looking for a new host here at FSN. I put your name on the list. You can thank me later, bitch.

DALE  
Excuse me?

BOO  
Be here tomorrow - nine thirty a.m. sharp. In fact, be here...

Boo signals to someone with a hand wave--

I/E. PHONE BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Dale is all smiles.

DALE  
Fifteen minutes early. Because early is on time and on time is..  
(wonders)  
What do I need to wear?

BOO  
Think Bayard Rustin, dark suit and tie, not Sylvester, silver and sequins!

Dale hangs up the phone. As he SQUEALS and dances in the phone booth.

EXT. FSN STUDIO - DAY - 1991

Dale parks his car. He steps out of the vehicle wearing a *Willi Wear* suit carrying a leather satchel.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)  
Didn't take a Maxine Powell artist development course at Motown, but I did have a few John Casablancas modeling classes under my belt.

Dale approaches the FSN building and catches his reflection in the mirrored tiles of the building.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)  
I knew I was ready to cross over.

As he flows into--

INT. FSN - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER - 1991

Dale follows Boo down a busy hall.

DALE  
Boo, I don't know how you pulled  
this off, but -

BOO  
Thank me later with a cocktail at  
Lypps when you book it.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)  
Boo gave up on his dreams of music  
and dance in college to major in  
television production.

Boo stops outside of a door.

BOO  
People don't give a shit what you  
sell, they watch, and buy because  
they connect with the hosts. So  
show them your personality.

DALE  
I get it. *"Sparkle Neely Sparkle."*

Dale does a model full turn and snaps back to attention.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)  
Music's loss became my gain in that  
moment. I wondered if he ever  
regretted his choice?

BOO  
Wait in here until they call your  
name. And remember, the *Queen's*  
*English*, none of that B-more slang!

Boo leaves as Dale opens the door to the interview room. When  
he looks inside, he observes fifteen other AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
MEN dressed similarly to him. Panicked, Dale closes the door.

A STAFF PERSON passes him.

DALE  
Excuse me, where's the bathroom?

STAFF PERSON

Down the hall and to the left.

Dale goes towards--

INT. FSN - MEN'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - 1991

Dale enters. He goes to a sink and hyperventilates.

DALE

You can do this. You got this.

Dale composes himself and is jolted by a TOILET FLUSH.

Out of a stall appears, INGRAM YATES, white male, 25, dressed in a bespoke suit with matching tie and pocket handkerchief. Ingram touches his nose-- a big cocaine SNIFF.

INGRAM

Here for the audition?

Dale studies Ingram, who sizes him up from top to bottom.

INGRAM (CONT'D)

Don't waste your time. It's an affirmative action thing. When sales drop, the host will be let go. Trust me-- spare yourself the heartache.

DALE

So you believe they aren't committed to African American audiences?

INGRAM

They wanna be able to say, we gave *you people* a chance.

Dale slowly burns-- Ingram checks his make-up in the mirror.

INGRAM (CONT'D)

Good luck.

DALE

You missed something.

Ingram wipes his nose, sneers at Dale, and exits. Uncertainty washes over Dale's face as he gazes at his reflection.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

When the Supremes first auditioned for Motown, Berry Gordy turned them down and said, "Come back after you graduate from high school."

Determination washes over his face. He removes his jacket, tie, and unbuttons his shirt.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

They came back every day after school, running errands, becoming indispensable. No was not an option in their dreams.

As Dale stands tall, ready and motivated.

INT. FSN - AUDITION STUDIO - LATER - 1991

Dale stands confidently in front of the CASTING DIRECTOR and JACOB IKEZAWA, 43, serious, all business in a double breasted suit, like he stepped out of GQ magazine.

In front of Dale on a table are a pair of ladies' shoes, a silk blouse, and a make-up color pencil kit.

CASTING DIRECTOR

Okay, Dale. Thank you for coming in today. Choose one product on the table, explain its features and benefits.

DALE

Is this my mark?

CASTING DIRECTOR

(points)

Yes, right there on the floor.

Jacob watches, intense, silent. Dale steps on the taped "T."

CASTING DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Slate your name for the camera and begin when you're ready.

Dale closes his eyes, focuses, and inhales. He opens his eyes. He sees behind the Casting Director.

DALE

*Hi, My name is Dale Guy Madison. I stand 5'11" and I live in downtown Baltimore.*

Dale takes a breath. This is his time-- his moment. He smiles a beautiful smile. There is a twinkle in his eyes. Then--

DALE (CONT'D)

Welcome back to the Fashion and Style Network. I am your host, Dale Madison.

Dale selects the silk blouse, but places it down.

DALE (CONT'D)

I would like to discuss one of the latest fashion trends of the 90s. You would have to be living under a rock to have not heard about "Hammer Pants."

Dale does a M.C. Hammer "U-Can't-Touch-This" dance move. He shows the parachute pants he wears.

DALE (CONT'D)

Popularized by the Hip Hop artist, MC Hammer, these beautiful drop seat pants I designed are in fact called djembe pants. They are worn by African djembe drummers.

The Casting Director nods to Jacob.

DALE (CONT'D)

The design allows the drums to rest comfortably between your legs. These cotton pants are breathable and easy to wear. The pleats allow the garment to lay flat when standing, but also space as you sit, walk, or dance.

(stretches the elastic waistband across himself)

My favorite feature is the elastic waist. It is so forgiving on those days when you might be a pound or two past your weight goals.

The amused Casting Director and Jacob CHUCKLE in agreement. Boo stands behind Ingram, grinning as he seethes.

DALE (CONT'D)

Normally thirty dollars and ninety-nine cents, but today only, I can sell them to you for **three easy payments** of ten dollars and thirty-three cents.

(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)

Order yours now, using the number  
at the bottom of the screen.  
Operators are standing by.

Confident, Dale glances at the Casting Director, who nods approvingly and WHISPERS to Jacob.

DALE (CONT'D)

I can still do the silk blouse.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

And that is how you slay an  
audition.

Dale beams. Boo claps silently and gestures, "I'll call you."

INT. MADISON FAMILY HOME - GARAGE - NIGHT - 1976

Young Boo and Young Keith put on paisley print dresses. A scene from the movie "**Valley of the Dolls**" plays on the TV.

ANNE WELLS (O.S.)

(from TV)

Neely, you know it's bad to take  
liquor with those pills

NEELY O'HARA (O.S.)

(from TV)

They work faster. I have to get up  
at five o'clock in the morning and  
sparkle, Neely, sparkle!

Young Dale, hunched over the sewing machine, imitates Susan Hayward without losing focus on his garment.

YOUNG DALE

(broad, drag queen-ish)

They drummed you out of Hollywood,  
so you come crawling back to  
Broadway. But Broadway doesn't go  
for booze and dope. Now, get out of  
my way, I've got a man waiting for  
me!

In drag, they each perform their favorite line from the Valley of the Dolls movie. They use cigarettes for big dramatic hand gestures and exaggerated hip and arm movements.

YOUNG BOO

That's a switch from the fags  
you're usually stuck with.

YOUNG KEITH

At least I never had to marry one.

YOUNG DALE

I had to climb Mount Everest to reach the Valley of the Dolls.

Dale pulls out the dress from the machine. Keith hands Boo and Dale wigs from the boxes. They gracefully put them on.

YOUNG DALE (CONT'D)

Yes, the light brown one. Good girl.

YOUNG BOO

You always get the biggest wig.

YOUNG DALE

Oh boo, Boo. It's hard enough trying to show up those big bohemian feet of yours. Just let me have *my* wig.

Dale adjusts Boo's wig. Keith's is perfectly placed.

YOUNG KEITH

Tell you what, I'll get you a platinum blonde next time, Boo.

YOUNG DALE

*Chile*, put him in a blonde wig-- he'll fade into the background.

Young Boo does a difficult dance step, proving his large feet can handle the choreography. The guys strain to catch up.

Stepping forward, Young Dale extends his arms up and uses the winged sleeves of his gown to block their faces.

YOUNG BOO

Dale, really?

YOUNG DALE

I can't help it. I was meant to be here.

All the guys break up in LAUGHTER, when -

MISS LOVE (O.S.)

You were meant to be where?

MISS LOVE, 38, a thick, proud church woman storms in.

Young Dale turns - Miss Love SMACKS Dale in the face. He falls backwards onto his ass. His wig flies off.

All three are shocked and shook. Miss Love is firmly planted in front of them with deep anger and disgust on her face.

YOUNG BOO  
(scared to death)  
Miss Love.

YOUNG DALE  
Momma--

MISS LOVE  
Don't momma me! Are those my  
curtains?

Young Dale scrambles close to Keith and Boo, who frantically take off the wigs, and grab their jeans and T-shirts.

YOUNG DALE  
You threw the curtains out.

MISS LOVE  
They should've stayed in the  
garbage. Keith. Andre. Go home.  
Now!

KEITH  
Yes, Miss Love.

BOO  
Yes, ma'am.

They grab their things and rush out of the garage door.

MISS LOVE  
Clean this mess up. And, put them  
curtains back into the trash, where  
they belong.

Miss Love stomps out of the garage. Dale picks up his creations and sits down next to the sewing machine, defeated.

INT. MADISON FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1976

Miss Love crochets a quilt on the sofa. The television is on. Dale enters. He carries something behind his back. He timidly sits on the opposite side of the couch.

YOUNG DALE  
Making something for grandma?

MISS LOVE  
(detached)  
You know how she always gets cold  
at night.

YOUNG DALE  
She can have *my* quilt.



MISS LOVE

That quilt is for you. There are plenty more quilts in these hands.

Dale holds up an elaborate two-piece jacket dress.

YOUNG DALE

I made this for you to wear to church.

Miss Love holds out her hand. Dale presents the garment to her. She slowly stands, examining it in front of her body.

MISS LOVE

Dale. I know who you are. Your father wouldn't tolerate this for one minute.

Miss Love gently places the dress on a nearby chair. She turns to face Dale, quiet, emotionless -

YOUNG DALE

Daddy couldn't tolerate being a father.

Miss Love gives Dale a stern stare. He silently looks away.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

My dad was the inspiration for "PAPA WAS A ROLLING STONE." He loved making babies, just didn't take any time to raise 'em.

MISS LOVE

I knew you both were different when you were younger. Your father would buy y'all sports equipment - you were in my shoe boxes and your brother was reading comic books.

YOUNG DALE

I get it Momma.

MISS LOVE

I'm trying to raise two boys who ain't like other boys. You know what they say go on in this house?

Miss Love points to the dress on the sofa.

MISS LOVE (CONT'D)

And, you want me to wear *that* to church? Like it's the Academy Awards--

Miss Love returns to her quilt. Dale, sullen, leaves the room. Miss Love continues crocheting, never looking up.

INT. DALE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1991

Dale wears a leopard print kimono robe, making wardrobe choices. A pile of suits and ties are laid across the bed.

DALE

What the fuck am I going to wear?

Boo enters from the kitchen area with two drinks.

BOO

Bitch, calm the fuck down.

(hands Dale glass)

Drink this.

DALE

(takes the glass and sips)

Keith-- What did you put in this?

Keith, now with dreadlocks, enters with an extra large glass.

KEITH

Something to make your ass relax.

DALE

Damn. I can't go in on my first day with a hangover.

KEITH

Ain't that much liquor. I would not do you like that. I am a professional you know.

DALE

I gotta look better than that, white boy.

BOO

Ingram? Don't let his pasty ass get under your skin.

DALE

That motherfucker tried to sabotage my audition. What am I *suppos'd* to do?

BOO

*Be. A. Diva.* Yours ain't the only reputation on the line here. I vouched for you, and I will not let you fuck up my 401k.

Keith holds up a suit while Boo holds up a tie.

BOO (CONT'D) KEITH  
I like this. That tie and this suit -

DALE  
And what shirt?

Boo holds up a paisley shirt, takes it off the hanger, playfully puts it on, and models it.

BOO  
Hello everyone, I'm Dale Madison  
and welcome to the Fashion and  
Style Network -

KEITH  
Look at this JC Penney tie.  
(mocking the tie)  
If they weren't paying me, you'd  
never see me wearing it. But I will  
sell you this polyester piece of  
shit.

Keith ties the tie around his head.

BOO  
For the low, low price of -

KEITH  
A dollar ninety-nine.

DALE  
(laughs)  
I hate both of you.  
(sighs; sits on the bed)  
You two are living your dreams. You  
both went to college.

Frustrated, Dale snatches the tie and looks at his friends.

KEITH  
It's still not too late for you. So  
you got sidetracked a bit. FSN is a  
great opportunity. But do you  
really know what makes you happy?

DALE  
You followed your dreams-- an MBA.  
Now you're running the number one  
club in B-more. I-Wanna-Be-Famous.

KEITH

Storytelling, movie extra work,  
posing nude for artists, drag shows  
at my club. Now, home shopping? You  
think that's gonna make you famous?

Boo faces the mirror. Keith stands beside him. They grab Dale  
and place him in the middle, getting into Supremes formation.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, the star of  
the show, Miss Ross as always, in  
the middle.

**"FOREVER CAME TODAY"** by **THE SUPREMES** starts. Dale lip synchs  
the Diana Ross' lead. Boo and Keith fall into the background.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

*Diana Ross* once said, "If I have  
someone who believes in me, I can  
move mountains."

For a moment, ***WE SEE Young Dale, Young Boo, and Young Keith,  
in dresses, lip synch together.***

As we return to adult Dale, Boo, and Keith embracing one  
another-- Forever friends. MUSIC FADES.

EXT. FSN STUDIO - DAY - 1991

Dale's car pulls up into a parking space with his name--

DALE MADISON.

Dale exits the car. He rocks a pastel, relaxed fit, Calvin  
Klein suit. He admires the sign before he enters--

INT. FSN STUDIO - HALLWAY - SAME DAY - 1991

Boo escorts Dale down the busy hallway.

BOO

First, you have to meet Jacob  
Ikezawa. He's the big boss here.

DALE

Is he the Chinese man that was in  
the audition?

BOO

He's Japanese. You must kiss his  
ring to keep your job.

DALE  
I have to kiss his ring?

Ingram approaches.

BOO  
Ingram. You're in early.

INGRAM  
I came in to meet our newest member  
of the family. Dale? Right?

DALE  
Yes. Ingram?

INGRAM  
The one and only. Congratulations.  
Your audition was - very urban.  
You'll connect with a new  
demographic.

DALE  
I plan to do my best.

INGRAM  
I'm sure you will. Good luck  
kissing the ring.

Ingram exits down the hall. Dale turns towards Boo.

DALE  
What's with all this ring kissing?  
I feel like I am meeting the Pope.

BOO  
Figurative fool! Trust. Gonna be  
easier than that time when you  
tried to get that job as a roadie  
for The Jacksons' Victory Tour.

DALE  
(cuts Boo a snide look)  
You really gonna bring that up now?

They reach Jacob's office. A PLAQUE READS - JACOB IKEZAWA,  
PRESIDENT/GENERAL MANAGER. Boo KNOCKS gently.

JACOB (O.S.)  
Come in.

Boo pats Dale on the back as he nudges him towards the  
doorway.

INT. FSN STUDIOS - JACOB'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - DAY - 1991

A very sterile, chic office. Jacob scribbles on a pad and turns his full attention with a big smile, as Dale enters.

JACOB

Dale Madison. Dale Guy Madison.

DALE

(nervous)

Yes, Mr. Ikezawa

JACOB

Enough formalities, call me Jacob. I was very impressed with your audition. You not only designed what you wore, but made it your audition object. I like that initiative--

(sing-song)

Genius! Welcome to the FSN family.

Jacob rises and bear hugs Dale, totally catching him off guard. Dale uncomfortably CLEARS HIS THROAT.

DALE

Thank you-- Jacob--

JACOB

We're going to do great things together at FSN. Now, for starters, I want for you to go to Debi in make-up and hair. Tell her I said to give you *the works*.

DALE

The works, thank you... Jacob.

JACOB

I'm going to schedule you after Ingram Yates. You'll capitalize off his audience lead-in.

(excited)

I am also thinking of partnering you with Valerie Milton. The West Coast is going to love you two as a morning team.

Jacob leads Dale towards the door.

INT. FSN/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The door closes behind Dale as he exits. He stands for a moment, confused. He inhales and finds his resolve.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)  
 Honey, for the life of me, I  
 couldn't figure out if he hired me  
 for my talent, or if he just wanted  
 to fuck me.

As Dale marches down the hall, he puts on a brave smile.

INT. FSN STUDIOS - GLAMOUR ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY - 1991

DEBI COLOUR, 30s, African-American, stylish, with joyfulness  
 that could warm Satan's heart, rubs a gel on Dale's face.

DALE  
 I think I'm going to like it here.

DEBI  
 Now, baby, you just relax and we'll  
 have you camera ready for tonight.  
 If Jacob said the works, we're  
 going to give you the works.

Debi reaches into a container and places a cucumber over each  
 of Dale's eyes. She looks at a rack of CDs on the counter.

DEBI (CONT'D)  
 What kind of music do you like?

DALE  
 Do you have anything by The  
 Supremes?

DEBI  
 Mmm... a Motown man. A man after my  
 own heart. How could I not?

The door erupts open in a flurry of drama-- VALERIE MILTON,  
 36, redhead ball of fire, piping mad. Debi pulls out a CD.

DEBI (CONT'D)  
 Valerie. How you doing, baby?

VALERIE  
 Don't give me that "baby" BS. Is  
 that him?

DEBI  
 Who?

VALERIE  
 The one that Jacob asked you to  
 give "the works."

Dale squints, squeezing the cucumbers around his eyes.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Jacob only issues "the works," when he's going to replace someone, right? Who's on the chopping block? Is it me?

DEBI

Calm down, Val. Your numbers are steady. Dale here is a sweetie. He's doin' his first over-night.

VALERIE

I started on over-nights!

Valerie, clearly on edge, exits in a HUFF. Dale drops one cucumber from fear. Debi puts the CD into the player.

DEBI

Suga, we just one big ole dysfunctional family. The public askin' for faces of color now. The white hosts are a 'lil bit nervous.

Debi hits the CD player. "**UP THE LADDER TO THE ROOF**" by **THE SUPREMES** PLAYS, as Dale relaxes--

INT. FSN STUDIO - SET - LATER - 1991

The revolving circle platform is divided into four parts: A jewelry set, a beauty set, women's, and men's fashion sets.

Waiting to switch cameras, the crew watches Ingram on the monitor. Dale, dressed in an Earl Bannister suit and tie, follows Boo, who is in Stage Manager mode. MUSIC FADES.

BOO

Ingram is in the other studio and he's going to throw it over to you.

DALE

Got it. I'm ready.

They reach the--

MEN'S FASHION SET

Dale stands focused to present the BANNISTER line of suits, shirts, and bow ties. He reviews note cards.

Boo goes to his position.

BOO

Thirty seconds. Counting down. Dale, we're starting on camera one.



Boo points to camera one. Dale plugs in his earpiece, nods to Boo. He straightens out his suit, stares into the camera.

Boo holds up his hand. Four, three, two--

DALE

Greetings, I am Dale Madison and thank you Ingram for that wonderful introduction to the FSN family. I am honored to be here today to debut a new line of men's suits by Baltimore designer, Earle Bannister. These suits make any man look professional - ready to take on the world of corporate America.

Dale, in his element, moves over to the rack of suits. He pulls a suit off the rack and holds it up to the camera.

A MALE MODEL strikes a pose on the stage wearing the suit. Dale shares a flirtatious glance with the Model.

DALE (CONT'D)

Our model wears a custom blend, grey silk, and wool windowpane three piece suit. Throw on wingtips, argyle socks, and you're set for your next board meeting.

Ingram inconspicuously enters the set. Dale spots him out of the corner of his eye. Boo gives Dale a *roll-with-it* signal.

DALE (CONT'D)

Well, look who we have here. If it isn't FSN's own Ingram Yates.

Ingram turns, like a pro, towards the camera into a two shot.

INGRAM

I was just about to go home but saw these fabulous garments and just had to take a look.

DALE

Well, let's see which one of these will look best on you, Ingram.

Dale pulls a blue suit and places it in front of Ingram.

DALE (CONT'D)

Ingram, this brings out the blue in your eyes.

Ingram beams proudly. Dale places his hand on Ingram's back.

DALE (CONT'D)  
 Feel that silk and wool blend.  
 Imagine the slacks against your  
 skin.

Ingram touches the suit and relishes the material.

DALE (CONT'D)  
 You'll be a master of the universe.

Dale pulls the suit away. Ingram has **an obvious hard on**.

DALE (CONT'D)  
 Now, let's see how this chocolate -

The Model snickers. Boo and the crew noticed, which means the world sees it.

Boo signals Dale, who looks down and eyes the boner.

DALE (CONT'D)  
 Oh -

Dale quickly places the suit back in front of Ingram, who tries to hide his embarrassment with a sheepish grin.

DALE (CONT'D)  
 I guess someone really loves this  
 suit.

INGRAM  
 I'll take three.

Dale and Ingram SNICKER. Boo signals an on-air phone call.

DALE  
 And, with that I think we have  
 designer Earle Bannister on the  
 phone. Hello Earle...

Ingram MOUTHS, "*Thank you.*" Dale SIGHS in relief- *WHEW!*

INT. DALE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1991

Smoke rises into the air. Dale inhales a blunt and passes the spliff to Melvin laying naked on the bed with him.

MELVIN  
 If I were into white boys-- Ingram  
 looks like he's packing.

DALE  
 Completely caught me off guard.  
 Total mixed messages.

MELVIN

They love our style, our talent,  
our music, but they hate us as  
black people and don't want us to  
get ahead.

(inhales)

This is some good shit.

DALE

My boy Keith knows a guy... I  
definitely needed this.

MELVIN

I bet you do.

Melvin places the blunt on Dale's lips. He slowly tokes.

DALE

I'm curious--

MELVIN

About?

DALE

When you were coming up, guessing  
your people didn't know--

MELVIN

Hell no. I had a cousin who came  
out-- They held prayer circles to  
get the demons out of him.

DALE

Sounds like everything my momma  
thought of doing with me and my  
brother.

MELVIN

You and your brother?

DALE

Yeah. We both gay and yet somehow  
they were the victims.

MELVIN

I came out as bi to my wife when we  
were dating, so we agreed to have  
an open marriage.

DALE

That's very modern.

MELVIN

She's bi also and... white.

DALE  
 (chokes on smoke)  
 Oh, but you don't do white guys?

MELVIN  
 Naw, not my *flava*.

Dale hands the blunt to Melvin. His phone RINGS. He glances at the caller ID.

DALE  
 (whispers)  
 Speaking of-- it's my mother.

MELVIN  
 Pick it up.

Dale picks up the receiver and sits up on the bed.

DALE  
 Hey, Momma.

He pulls the sheet to cover himself--

INT. MADISON FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1991

Miss Love, 50s, mixed grey hair, sits on the same couch in front of the television. She drinks tea.

INTERCUT BETWEEN DALE AND MISS LOVE AS NEEDED.

MISS LOVE  
 I watched you on the television.

DALE  
 You did? How did I do, Momma?

MISS LOVE  
 Excellent. Sista Dorothy from church called. Said if she'd known, white men were hung like that, Lordy! Sista Dorothy would'a broke some Jim Crow laws when she was younger!

As Dale and Miss Love LAUGH together.

INT. DALE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER SAME NIGHT - 1991

Dale walks Melvin to the door.

DALE  
 Kinda wish you'd stay tonight.

MELVIN

I would but, limits, right?  
 (gazes into Dale's eyes)  
 You were wonderful on TV. You're  
 going to do great. Congratulations.

Dale leans in and kisses Melvin, who is surprised.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

What about--?

DALE

Fuck it.

Dale kisses him again, as Melvin kisses him back.

PRE LAP: **"ONE NIGHT WITH YOU" by MARY WILSON**

INT. LYPPS BAR - NEXT NIGHT - 1991

On stage, Dale, in full drag, lip synchs the song. Boo watches attentively from the front row in the crowded club.

Keith sets a glass of bourbon on Boo's table. They share a smile. Keith leaves. Boo looks at the napkin-- It reads:  
*"BILL PAID IN FULL."*

Dale winks as Boo raises his glass as he performs. He scans the audience and notices--

Melvin cuddled up with his wife, LYNN, 32, artsy. Emboldened, Dale goes full performance diva--

EXT. MADISON FAMILY HOME - DRIVEWAY - DAY - 1976

MUSIC CONTINUES. Young Ricky, blue Sunday suit, exits the house. Young Dale follows, dressed in a conservative brown double-breasted suit and tie, with a loud yellow shirt.

YOUNG RICKY

Momma, we're going to be late.

Miss Love steps out with modest elegance, *dressed in the outfit Dale made. WOW, Dale can't take his eyes off her.*

YOUNG DALE

Ma-- Ma-- Mama...

MISS LOVE

Get in the car. Let's go.

Young Ricky gets into the front seat of a Chevy Nova. Miss Love sits behind the wheel, starts the engine, pulls the car into the street. Young Dale looks at Miss Love in the clothes he made her, proudly glowing as the car drives up the street.

INT. LYPPS BAR - NIGHT - 1991

MUSIC CONTINUES. Dale, in full drag diva glory, dramatically emotes the last bars of the song.

NARRATOR DALE (V.O.)

The late great Mary Wilson always said, "Dare to dream." And, I am not only going to dare to dream, but I'm gonna make mines a reality.

As the SONG ENDS, Dale basks in the APPLAUSE.

INT. LYPPS BAR - DRESSING ROOM - LATER SAME NIGHT - 1991

A DRAG PERFORMER exits. Dale, still in makeup, sans wig, stands with Melvin and Lynn. She holds Dale's hand.

LYNN

It's so nice to finally meet. Melvin has told me so much about you.

Dale, caught off guard, shares a look with Melvin.

DALE

I hope not everything.

MELVIN

She knows that you're special to me.

Keith and Boo secretly observe - *Holy Shit!?!*

MELVIN (CONT'D)

We should let Dale get back to changing his clothes.

LYNN

Of course. Loved the show. Maybe we can have you over for dinner.

Melvin gently guides Lynn out of the dressing room.

KEITH

For the life of me, I will never understand white people. Never.

Keith and Boo approach Dale with wide-eyed curiosity.

INT. FSN - INGRAM'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME NIGHT - 1991

Posh. Lines of coke sit in front of Ingram. He reviews the tape of the "erection" moment. As he inhales white powder.

INT. DALE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME NIGHT - 1991

Dale, Keith, and Boo, in bare feet, lounge and drink. Candles and incense fill the air.

DALE

(sips drink)

It's kind of refreshing to be with someone in an open marriage-- not like some of those DL brothers.

KEITH

Dick Gregory said, *"Political promises are much like marriage vows. They are made at the beginning of the relationship between candidate and voter, but are quickly forgotten."*

Dale's phone RINGS. The caller ID reads, 410-234-5789 RICKY MADISON. He picks up the phone.

DALE

Hey Ricky-- What's going-- What?

(listens)

Okay-- Okay-- I'll be there.

Frozen, Dale hangs up, stunned.

BOO

Everything okay?

DALE

My-- My father-- He's been admitted to Sinai. Emergency triple bypass. I guess-- I gotta go--

Dale sits motionless. Keith and Boo move instinctively.

KEITH

I'll drive--

As they quickly sober up and prepare to leave-- Dale turns and hugs his friends-- *We got this.*

FADE TO BLACK.

**Dedicated to the memory of the late Mary Wilson, an original founding member of the Supremes.**