

SAMPLE: THE BALANCE

Written by

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM/BLEDSOE'S HOUSE/PARKVILLE - NIGHT

College girl KELLY and DR. VINCENT BLEDSOE, sixties, lie naked under the covers. They each have a hand on either side of Bledsoe's phone. On screen, Kelly is splayed, nude.

BLEDSOE

You ready?

KELLY nods. DR. BLEDSOE taps "play". KELLY'S impassioned MOANS (filtered, thru phone) fill the room. His doctoral degree in Social Work from Fawburne State University is framed on the wall. Above the degree is The Lord's Prayer in calligraphy. On the same wall lives a smiling collection of his family and wedding photos. The BRIDE is not KELLY.

KELLY (O.S.)

(filtered, thru phone)
S-slow down.

BLEDSOE (O.S.)

(filtered, thru phone)
Slow down, what?

KELLY (O.S.)

(filtered, thru phone)
Professor!

DR. BLEDSOE chuckles heartily, elbowing KELLY.

BLEDSOE

Trying to quit on me already?

Discomfort peeks through her polite chuckle. Simultaneously, KELLY'S AUDIO in the sex tape grows strained.

KELLY (O.S.)

(filtered, thru phone)
Wait. Seriously.

BLEDSOE (O.S.)

(filtered, thru phone)
Come on, baby. You know I looked out for you.

KELLY (O.S.)

(filtered, thru phone)
Just chill out--!

Uncomfortable, DR. BLEDSOE pauses the video.

BLEDSOE
All that hollering.

KELLY
I told you stop being so rough-

BLEDSOE
I gotta cut that audio.

KELLY
Are we done?

DR. BLEDSOE trains faux-kind eyes on her request.

BLEDSOE
When do you graduate again?

KELLY sets her jaw, already knowing where this is going.

KELLY
May.

BLEDSOE
Because of what? Your stellar grades?

KELLY
No.

He waits...

KELLY (CONT'D)
Professor.

He smiles wide.

BLEDSOE
That's right. I looked out for you.
Now. What were you asking, baby?

KELLY
Nothing, Professor.

He presses record on the phone and kisses down her neck, impervious to her disgust.

INT. BEDROOM/BLEDSOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lights are out. DR. BLEDSOE snores. KELLY'S wide awake. She tiptoes out of bed, careful not to wake him. She pads over to his side dresser and carefully extends the drawer.

She pushes aside prescriptions and sauce packets, before giving up and closing it.

She checks each drawer in the dresser. He occasionally stirs, but falls back asleep.

She opens his closet door. Tucked behind clothes and suitcases, KELLY discovers a small electronic safe. She makes an attempt at the code- but the BEEP it makes riles DR. BLEDSOE, nearly waking him. She mouths "Fuck."

HALLWAY

KELLY pads downstairs, turns a corner, and descends again.

EXT. BACK DOOR/BLEDSOE'S HOUSE/PARKVILLE - NIGHT

KELLY steps outside and shuts the door gently behind her. Before her are Rihanna-redhead MACY VALENTINE, 19, high-energy CAIRO NGUYEN, 18, female, and stoic LULA NASH, 20. They wear black hoodies.

CAIRO

Where's your phone?

KELLY

He put it in a fucking safe.

LULA, MACY and CAIRO are flabbergasted.

KELLY (CONT'D)

His phone too. I mean, he does have a PhD, but he's literally 20 fucking steps ahead.

KELLY tries to laugh it off, but grows emotional.

MACY

We're not letting him hold you or your degree hostage. I promise.

The upstairs light turns on.

KELLY

I gotta go.

KELLY slips back inside. The ladies pull their hoods up and return to their car.

CAIRO

Which one of you is telling the chief his plan was trash?

MACY

I tried.

CAIRO

I presented the alternative of
kicking Bledsoe's nasty ass.

LULA

After tonight, the chief might take
you up on that.

TITLE SCREEN: THE BALANCE

INT. LOBBY/ADMISSIONS - DAY

There's a small desk by the office door; two larger
workstations nest against the back wall. MACY mans the
smaller desk. Trendy, friendly, but reserved EZEKIEL "EZE"
GLASS (27) stands before her.

EZE

No.

MACY

Chief-

EZE

Physical retaliation is a last
resort. Especially when the
allegations lack hard evidence-

MACY

(if looks could kill)
Allegations?

EZE

Don't- you know that's not what I
meant. If you'd gotten the phones
as instructed, we wouldn't be
having this conversation.

MACY broods. DR. BLEDSOE walks in. They stare for a beat.

BLEDSOE

Macy, you're exceptionally vibrant
this morning.

MACY

(jaw tight)
Coffee!

BLEDSOE

Whenever I'm missing that beautiful smile, I'll make sure to find you a cup somewhere.

MACY forces a grin and chuckle. DR. BLEDSOE fawns over her, then shifts a cutting glance toward EZE.

BLEDSOE (CONT'D)

Ezekiel-

EZE

Eze. Sir.

BLEDSOE

This is a university. Leave your street name on the block.

EZE flares, but stays cool.

BLEDSOE (CONT'D)

I need to see you in my office.

He continues on. EZE and MACY are concerned.

INT. BLEDSOE'S OFFICE/ADMISSIONS - DAY

BLEDSOE and EZE enter. DR. BLEDSOE sits behind his desk.

BLEDSOE

Have a seat.

EZE

I'm pretty busy, so...

DR. BLEDSOE and EZE exchange fake smiles.

BLEDSOE

I'll be quick then. I just wanted to express a minor concern.

EZE

About?

BLEDSOE

Your noticeable... "favoritism" amongst students.

EZE

There are twelve thousand students here at Dawson, sir. A few stand out.

BLEDSOE

And end up working the desk right across from you. First, Adrienne. Then, Lula. Now it's Macy. And, correct me if I'm wrong- your rapport with these ladies predates the Admissions Office?

EZE

I've been a mentor for a long time, sir.

BLEDSOE

Mentor.

EZE

Mentor. We're big on that at Dawson State. Mentorship.

BLEDSOE

You need to pay attention when someone is trying to look out for you, Mr. Mentor. I didn't peg you for the naive type.

EZE gives nothing. DR. BLEDSOE drops a bit of the edge.

BLEDSOE (CONT'D)

Hey, brother. It's not me. Okay? I get it. Trust me. These girls cleave to anything even remotely resembling a father.

INT. LOBBY/ADMISSIONS OFFICE/BUT - DAY

EZE breezes by Macy's desk, furious. As he passes he says...

EZE

Call a meeting.

And he's out the door.