

ERIC

"You Better Not Cry"

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INT. SHOPPING MALL - CENTER COURT - DAY

Groups of kids, with their parents, stand in line in front of a stage decorated with Christmas lights and a large chair. A MALL EMPLOYEE speaks on the microphone.

MALL EMPLOYEE

Kids, I hope you're ready, and I hope you've been good!

The kids CHEER.

MALL EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

Now, the only thing is that we couldn't afford to get a Santa Claus this year.

He turns to his right and speaks to someone off stage.

MALL EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

What?

(to the crowd)

I mean, "We couldn't afford to get the Santa Claus this year." But we have the next best thing! Coming all the way from the north...side of Milwaukee, here's Krismas Klauz!

The mall employee exits the stage. The crowd gives scattered applause. KRISMAS KLAUZ, a black man donning a white, dingy Santa hat, a dirty, grey beard, and a wrinkled, red, track suit, gets on the mic and holds up some index cards.

KRISMAS KLAUZ

(reading from a card,  
slurring his speech)

"Merry Christmas, ho!"

(turning over the card)

"...ho, ho!" Who's the first kid?

The kids and their parents look around.

KRISMAS KLAUZ (CONT'D)

Come on, I don't bite. That's saved for the mothers. Heh, heh, heh!

Krismas Klauz sits in his chair while the line forms. A little girl and her MOTHER approach him.

MOTHER

It's good that you're doing this for the kids this year.

KRISMAS KLAUZ

Well, we had to cancel last year for obvious reasons.

MOTHER

Yeah. Restraining order.

KRISMAS KLAUZ

That's one of the reasons.

The mall employee sternly whispers in his ear.

KRISMAS KLAUZ (CONT'D)

Oh, right. Speaking of that, ma'am, your kid has to stand a few feet away from me. You're okay, though. Heh, heh, heh!

ERIC NELSON, 14, POLLY MCNAIR, 10, and her brother, PABLO MCNAIR, 7, look at them from the side.

ERIC

(to Polly and Pablo)

Ugh. You guys aren't thinking of sitting on his lap, are you?

POLLY

No way.

PABLO

She's probably saving that for Mrs. Klauz.

POLLY

(hits Pablo in the arm)

Shut up!

The three walk throughout the mall.

POLLY (CONT'D)

Besides, we already got our mom something for Christmas.

PABLO

(reaching in his bag)

Yeah, look at this!

Polly stops Pablo by holding his hand back.

POLLY

No, it's a surprise!

ERIC

Well, I'm sure I won't be surprised.

Eric takes the bag from Pablo and pulls out an expensive watch.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Where did ya'll get the money for this?

POLLY

Lemonade stand.

PABLO

Paper route.

POLLY

Selling papers at the lemonade stand.

ERIC

You guys stole this!

PABLO

But it's from the heart!

ERIC

I ain't gonna be an accomplice! We gotta go back to the jewelry store! Maybe they'll go easy on ya'll and give you two months in juvie.

Polly and Pablo sigh. The three kids turn around and walk in the other direction.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

The three kids approach the CASHIER at the counter.

ERIC

Sir, this watch must have fell into my friend's shopping bag. Here you go.

Eric hands the watch to the cashier. GRETCH JACKSON, 20's, a rough, thuggish woman, barges in, holding a gun.

GRETCH

And I'll take that off your hands! This is a stickup!

The kids hold up their hands. The cashier slowly presses the emergency button underneath the register, then puts his hands up.

ERIC

Aw, come on, Gretch. Again?

POLLY

You don't need to hold us up.

PABLO

Yeah, do like us! We don't kill! We only steal!

Eric signals to the kids to be quiet.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - SAME

SHANA JONES, 16, BERNIECE WILLIAMS, and CONNIE MCDOWELL, both 14, walk through the mall with bags in their hands.

SHANA

Wow, look at all of the Christmas decorations! Thanks, girls, for going shopping with me!

BERNIECE

Well, you have the car.

Connie nudges Berniece.

CONNIE

(to Shana)

She said, "You have the card?" Meaning, did you remember to get a Christmas card for Eric?

SHANA

Oh yeah, I knew I forgot something! There's a card shop right next to that jewelry store!

INT. JEWELRY STORE - SAME

ERIC

Aw, man, I don't wanna die! Not during the holiday! There's so much I wanna do with my life!

GRETCH

(calling out)

Hey, shut up over there!

ERIC

Please don't kill me! My daddy has a couple of ex-wives and kids!

GRETCH  
 (runs over to Eric)  
 I said, shut it!

SFX: She BONKS him with the butt of her gun.

Eric falls to the floor.

POLLY  
 Eric!

GRETCH  
 Man, I gotta get outta here! I'm late for  
 my next robbery! Forget this!

EXT. JEWELRY STORE - SAME

Shana, Berniece, and Connie walk past the window.

SHANA  
 Hey, that's Eric on the floor!

INT. JEWELRY STORE - SAME

Polly and Pablo tend to Eric. Gretch runs to the door.  
 Shana busts open the door, slamming Gretch to the wall.  
 Gretch's gun flies into the air.

SHANA  
 (running to Eric)  
 Oh, Babycakes, what's wrong?

PABLO  
 Hit the deck!

Everyone falls to the floor except Polly, who runs up and  
 grabs the gun out of thin air. Gretch falls from being  
 crushed by the door. Polly aims the gun at Gretch.

POLLY  
 Get down and lay down!  
 (looking at the gun)  
 Wow, what a rush!

OFFICER YVETTE TOWNSEND runs into the store.

OFFICER TOWNSEND  
 Alright, everyone, freeze!

CASHIER  
 (pointing to Gretch)  
 The woman you want is right there!

Eric begins to come to.

POLLY

Yeah, I was just keeping her in place  
before you came!

PABLO

But not before Shana knocked her down!

ERIC

Wait, what?

CONNIE

(running in)

Yeah, Shana stopped Gretch from getting  
away!

SHANA

Oh, come on, it was nothing.

OFFICER TOWNSEND

Are you kidding? Gretch is a hardened  
felon! You basically saved Christmas!

Berniece walks in. Eric lays back down.

BERNIECE

Excuse me?

SHANA

Yeah, excuse her, I mean, "me"?

PABLO

You should be proud of yourself, Shana.  
You're a hero!

SHANA

Hero?

Shana faints and lands on Eric.

SHANA (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Ahhh, there's no place I'd rather be.

OFFICER TOWNSEND

(to Polly)

And as for you, little girl, way to hold  
a gun. There may be a place for you with  
the force in the future.

POLLY

Huh? Oh yeah, right, that's exactly what I was thinking, use a gun in the force, yeah. Heh, heh!

She gives the gun to Townsend.

SFX: Townsend's phone RINGS.

OFFICER TOWNSEND

Hello?

(pause)

No, I'm not doin' anything.

(pause)

What? Hold on, wait there!

She hangs up the phone.

OFFICER TOWNSEND (CONT'D)

Uh, kids, I gotta run! Gretch, you arrest yourself!

GRETCH

(dusting herself off)

Fine!

Townsend runs out of the store. Gretch then runs out of the store in the other direction.

BERNIECE

There goes Milwaukee's finest, kids.

PABLO

You crazy. I'm Milwaukee's finest!

Pablo smiles, dusts himself off, and fixes his collar.

POLLY

Oh, shut up.

Polly pushes him to the ground where Eric and Shana lay. She walks away.

INT. NELSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

MATT JAMES, 40's, decorates the Christmas tree. His wife, RHONDA NELSON-JAMES, 40's, enters and gives him a letter.

RHONDA

Mail's for you, babe.

Matt opens it and gives it back to her.

MATT

It's just junk.

RHONDA

What, another pre-approval letter?

MATT

I wish.

RHONDA

(reading the letter)

A pre-rejection letter?!

MATT

Just in time for Christmas!

Officer Townsend enters the house with her bawling grandson, MICHAEL, in a stroller.

OFFICER TOWNSEND

Happy holidays!

SFX: Michael BAWLS throughout.

Also throughout, the three adults yell their conversations to each other.

RHONDA

'Vette, what's the deal?

OFFICER TOWNSEND

This is Michael! Gloria brought him here to visit! I bet she wants me and her to work on our relationship!

MATT

Speaking of working on relationships, either make him stop or get out!

OFFICER TOWNSEND

Aw, come on, Matt, he's just a baby! You have to know how to treat him!

RHONDA

Do you know?!

OFFICER TOWNSEND

No! Why do you think I'm here?!

MATT

Hold on, everybody!

Matt picks Michael up. He immediately stops crying. The adults talk regularly.

OFFICER TOWNSEND

What the..?

MATT

Surprised? I got a lot of sisters. I took care of babies before.

RHONDA

I fall in love with you more and more.

MATT

Yvette, why don't you take a break?

OFFICER TOWNSEND

No, Matt, I couldn't do that to you. He's my responsibility.

MATT

(turns his back while rocking Michael)

It's okay, I don't...

Townsend and Rhonda zoom away, leaving flying papers in the air and a cloud of dust.

SFX: The front door SLAMS!

MATT (CONT'D)

(turns back around)

...mind doing it!

Matt puts Michael back in his stroller.

MATT (CONT'D)

Well, Michael, let's show the ladies how to make you content.

SFX: Michael BAWLS.

MATT (CONT'D)

Well played, sir.

Matt begins to pick Michael back up.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Eric strolls down the hallway and greets others.

ERIC

Hey, what up, ya'll? Great day to be alive.

(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)  
 (shouting to a kid off-  
 screen)  
 Hey, Dante, likin' that outfit!

A GIRL walks up to Berniece and Connie who are nearby.

GIRL  
 What's up with him?

CONNIE  
 Eric? He has a new lease on life.

BERNIECE  
 Yeah, he cheated death, so I guess he's  
 gonna go back to hounding me again.

Eric walks up to JACOB JACKSON, 16, the school bully.

ERIC  
 (opening up his wallet)  
 What up, Jacob? Here's my lunch money.  
 Matter fact, take a couple extra for  
 yourself!

He extends the money to Jacob.

JACOB  
 Uh, no way. This is too odd for me!

Jacob runs away. Eric puts the money back.

ERIC  
 That's alright. I really should be giving  
 the money, and a whole lot more, to the  
 girl who saved my life. And here she  
 comes!

Shana approaches him.

SHANA  
 Hey, Babycakes, what's up?

ERIC  
 Nothin' at all.  
 (announcing)  
 Hey, guys, show some respect for Shana!  
 She saved my life, ya'll!

BERNIECE  
 (slyly to Shana)  
 Oh, is that right?

SHANA  
 It really was nothing, Eric.

ERIC

The hell it wasn't! I was in the store,  
not knowing what I had in...uh, store.  
Gretch comes up, attacks me, and you come  
in and knock her down! I owe you my life!

BERNIECE

Oh, brother.

ERIC

How about you and me go to Timmy's after  
school?

SHANA, BERNIECE, AND  
CONNIE

What??

ERIC

Sure, my treat!

BERNIECE

(to Shana, sotto voce)

Don't you have anything to say to him?

SHANA

(giggles, then replies, sotto  
voce)

Quiet, it's my first date with him.

(to Eric, regular voice)

Okay!

ERIC

Great, I'll meet you by the lockers.

Shana leaves. Berniece and Connie head in the other  
direction.

BERNIECE

That's ridiculous!

CONNIE

Don't worry, Berniece. Timmy's Place  
isn't much of a date. Or a restaurant,  
for that matter.

BERNIECE

What? No, I'm talking about how Shana is  
acting like she saved his life.

CONNIE

Yeah, that's why you're upset.

BERNIECE

What's that supposed to mean?

CONNIE

Nothing.

Jacob comes back to Eric and pulls him by his collar.

JACOB

On second thought, I'll take that money!

Eric gives it to him. Jacob lets go of his collar.

JACOB (CONT'D)

That's for trying to steal my joy!

Jacob walks away.

ERIC

(following Shana)

Uh, Shana, you're gonna have to treat!

INT. NELSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Officer Townsend walks out of the house with Michael in the stroller. Matt and Rhonda stand by the door.

OFFICER TOWNSEND

Thanks again, Matt.

MATT

No problem.

RHONDA

Let us know if you need anything else,  
'Vette.

SFX: Michael begins to BAWL.

OFFICER TOWNSEND

Actually, he's starting to...

SFX: Matt SLAMS the door on Townsend.

MATT

Whew! What a day!

RHONDA

I'm glad you enjoyed Michael.

MATT

Yeah, I had so much fun, too. Talking  
baby talk to him, rocking him,  
everything.

RHONDA

Aww.

MATT

In fact, baby, let's have a baby!

RHONDA

Uh, what?

MATT

Let's make a baby, you and me!

RHONDA

Uh, what?

MATT

I know this idea just came up, but I'm good with babies, and you're already good with your kids.

RHONDA

That's exactly it! I'm good with my kids! I don't think we need any more!

MATT

But honey, this would be our chance to have one of our own!

RHONDA

Oooh, I need to sit down.

Rhonda sits.

MATT

Not too long, though. You'll have plenty of time for that while you're pregnant!

Rhonda stares at Matt.

MATT (CONT'D)

Why don't I let you simmer with this for a minute? I'm goin' out for a bit.

He kisses her on the cheek, claps his hands in excitement, and runs out of the house.

RHONDA

Am I ready for another child?

SFX: Her cell phone RINGS.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

Hello?

Her oldest son, BILLY NELSON, 19, is on the other line.

BILLY (O.S.)

Hi, Mommy. Can I borrow \$1000? Rent was supposed to be due last month. I don't know why the landlord waited until now to say something!

SFX: Rhonda CLICKS the button to hang up.

INT. DUMBECK MANSION - DAY

SFX: Doorbell CHIMES.

JOHN DUMBECK, Shana's Caucasian father, opens the front door. Eric stands there.

ERIC

Hey, Mr. Dumbeck. Is your daughter here? She has done the coolest thing!

JOHN

Who, Eleanor?

ELEANOR DUMBECK, Shana's Caucasian sister, waddles to the front.

ELEANOR

Hey, if it's a gift, I won't turn it down. Whoaa!

SFX: Eleanor PLOPS face-down to the floor.

JOHN

(running up to her)  
Aw, did you tie your shoelaces together again?

ELEANOR

Uh, no?

ERIC

No, not her, your other daughter. The black-ish one.

JOHN

(calling out)  
Shana!

ELEANOR

(calling out and yells in John's ear)  
Shana!

John sighs and walks away. Shana walks to the door.

SHANA  
Babycakes! What's going on?

ERIC  
Just another beautiful day!

Behind him is a snowstorm. A polar bear walks by the house.

SFX: Wind HOWLING. Polar bear GROWLING.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Listen, I wanna invite you to our house  
for Christmas dinner. Your whole family  
can come.

SHANA  
Oh, I think we'll be busy.

ERIC  
Come on, Shana. It's the least I can do  
for you saving my life!

Eric walks away. Shana closes the door and begins to walk past Eleanor who gets up.

SHANA  
(sotto voce)  
Oooh, I didn't save your life! It was  
just dumb luck!

ELEANOR  
But what about me?

SHANA  
Oh, you're just dumb.

Shana walks away.

ELEANOR  
(waddling after her)  
Hey, as long as you're not leaving me  
out! Whoaa!

SFX: Eleanor PLOPS down on the floor again.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)  
Oh, why don't they make shoes without  
laces?

INT. OFFICER TOWNSEND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Officer Townsend calls her daughter, GLORIA, on the phone. Michael is in his crib and bawls throughout.

GLORIA (O.S.)  
Hello?

OFFICER TOWNSEND  
Gloria? This is your live voice?

GLORIA (O.S.)  
Yeah!

OFFICER TOWNSEND  
Oh, good, I thought you were gonna do that joke again and tell me to leave a message! Look, I've been trying to call you all weekend about Michael, and he...

GLORIA (O.S.)  
Ha, ha, gotcha again! Leave a message after the beep!

Townsend grunts in frustration, hangs up the phone, and slams it onto the couch.

OFFICER TOWNSEND  
I don't know what to do, Michael!

She picks him up.

OFFICER TOWNSEND (CONT'D)  
I would sing to you, but then you would really start crying.

SFX: THUMPING from the ceiling.

OFFICER TOWNSEND (CONT'D)  
(calling out)  
I know, Mr. Allen! I'm trying to get him to stop!  
(sotto voce)  
Oh, "Silent Night" my butt.

EXT. OUTDOORS - DR. SYD'S OFFICE - DAY

Berniece approaches OLIVER the duck at his desk. Oliver, who speaks telepathically, wears reading glasses and types on a typewriter.

BERNIECE  
Is Dr. Syd in?

OLIVER  
(pointing)  
Right this way.

BERNIECE  
Thanks.

Berniece walks to a hammock and jumps in. DR. SYD the mole sits on a stoop next to her with his notepad.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)  
Hey, Doc. It's a little snowy out here.  
Wouldn't it be better if you moved your  
office indoors during the winter?

Dr. Syd angrily looks at her.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)  
Sorry, silly question. Look, I think my  
friend is being taken advantage of. This  
girl acts like she saved his life, and  
she won't even tell him the truth!

SFX: Dr. Syd SCRIBBLES.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)  
I don't like him like that, mind you! I  
just don't wanna see him get hurt.

SFX: More SCRIBBLING.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)  
If he's my friend, I should let him know  
the truth, right? Okay, then, I'll tell  
him the next time I see him. Doc, you're  
a big help again! Thanks!

She gets up and exits.

SFX: Dr. Syd WHISTLES with his fingers to Oliver.

Dr. Syd jumps in the hammock. Oliver sits on the stoop  
with a notepad.

OLIVER  
So, the last time we spoke, you feel  
you're running out of patience dealing  
with your patients.

Dr. Syd holds his hand over his forehead.

SFX: Oliver SCRIBBLES.

OLIVER (CONT'D)  
Hey, do I get paid extra for this?

Dr. Syd pauses, then stretches his arms and yawns.

OLIVER (CONT'D)  
Oh, now you're cured!

Dr. Syd gets out of the hammock. Oliver throws down his notepad and exits.

INT. NELSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Matt sits at the dining room table and works on his laptop.

SFX: The doorbell CHIMES.

Rhonda arrives at the front door and opens it, where Officer Townsend and Michael, in his stroller and crying throughout, stand.

OFFICER TOWNSEND  
(yelling)  
Hey, soror, thank you both for taking care of Michael the other day!

RHONDA  
(yelling)  
No problem! Is he okay?

OFFICER TOWNSEND  
No, I think he needs his binky! Is it behind the door there?

RHONDA  
I'll see!

Rhonda looks behind the front door.

SFX: A car door SLAMS, and the engine starts, off-screen.

OFFICER TOWNSEND (O.S.)  
(speeding away)  
Sorry, soror! I'll be back!

Rhonda looks at Michael in his stroller.

RHONDA  
Wha...??

MATT  
 (looking at his laptop  
 screen)  
 Well, Rhonda, now you know what it feels  
 like! Rhonda?

SFX: A door SLAMS!

Matt turns around to see Rhonda gone and a crying Michael  
 still there.

MATT (CONT'D)  
 Aww, son of a...

INT. NELSON HOUSE - MATT AND RHONDA'S BEDROOM - LATER  
 THAT EVENING

Rhonda lays in bed with her earbuds on.

RHONDA  
 (talking in her sleep)  
 No, Idris, Denzel. Don't fight over me.  
 Ya'll can both have me.

Matt lifts an earbud from Rhonda's ear.

MATT  
 Hey, traitor!

RHONDA  
 (waking up)  
 What?

MATT  
 Michael won't stop crying! I tried  
 everything! Changed his diaper, tried to  
 feed him!

INT. NELSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rhonda picks up Michael, still crying, and a blanket. She  
 swaddles him in the blanket, and he stops.

MATT  
 What did you do?

RHONDA  
 Swaddled him. Now he's gonna fall asleep.  
 Babies are very unpredictable.

Eric comes downstairs.

ERIC

What's all the noise?

MATT

Nothing now. Your mother quieted the baby.

Berniece enters the front door.

BERNIECE

Eric, I gotta tell you something!

She looks around.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)

You guys aren't having dinner!

MATT

Thanks for that news flash.

BERNIECE

(to Eric)

But I thought you guys were having Shana's family over for dinner.

ERIC

Nah. We're from two different worlds. They have a lot of servants, we only have one...

BERNIECE

Oh, well, that's good.

ERIC

Yeah. We're gonna throw a party!

BERNIECE

What?

(sotto voce)

Ooh, that Shana. I'll show her!

ERIC

Berniece, did you say something?

BERNIECE

Oh, sorry, I thought I was alone.

ERIC

But you're in our house, we're having a conversation...

BERNIECE

Never mind, alright?

RHONDA

Matt, I'm gonna take this baby back to Yvette's.

MATT

Fine. I guess I have a lot to learn about parenting.

ERIC

You ain't that bad to me.

MATT

But I wanted a baby of our own.  
(to Rhonda)  
You and me.

RHONDA

Well, there's always grandchildren.  
(to Eric)  
Which better be a long, long time from now.

BERNIECE

(to Eric)  
That's right!

The others turn to Berniece.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)

Uh, I was just agreeing with Mrs. Nelson-James, that's all. Heh, heh.

INT. DUMBECK MANSION - SHANA AND ELEANOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Shana and Eleanor are asleep in their beds. A ladder PLOPS against the window from the outside. Berniece climbs up, opens the window and starts to call out.

BERNIECE

(in a spooky voice)  
Tell him the truth. Tell him the truth.  
Tell him the truth.

SHANA

(getting out of bed)  
Okay, I will.

She sleepwalks down the hall to the bedroom where her butler, JENTILLE, sleeps. Jentille is in bed.

SHANA (CONT'D)  
 (opening the door)  
 Jentille, that chicken you made  
 yesterday? It was a little dry. I told  
 you it was perfect. Sorry.

JENTILLE  
 Uh, okay, it's not like I was losing  
 sleep over it!

Shana leaves.

JENTILLE (CONT'D)  
 (wiping his forehead)  
 Whew!

He fluffs his pillows, lays down, and closes his eyes.  
 Shana returns to her bed and falls back asleep.

BERNIECE  
 Tell Eric the truth! Tell Eric the truth.

ELEANOR  
 (swiftly rises out of her  
 sleep)  
 Alright! Eric, forget my sister! She  
 don't have to know!

BERNIECE  
 (regular voice)  
 What?

ELEANOR  
 (quickly)  
 What?

BERNIECE  
 (spooky voice)  
 Go back to sleep. Go back to sleep.

Eleanor lays back down and falls asleep.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)  
 (to herself, regular voice)  
 I'll just try this again tomorrow.

She tries to climb back down, but the ladder falls  
 backward.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)  
 AAUGH!

SFX: Berniece and the ladder PLOP into the trash cans off-  
 screen.

BERNIECE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Stupid Shana!

INT. OFFICER TOWNSEND'S APARTMENT - DAY

Officer Townsend stretches out on her couch.

OFFICER TOWNSEND  
Ahh, no babies, just peace and quiet!

Gloria enters the apartment.

OFFICER TOWNSEND (CONT'D)  
(getting up)  
Fool, where the hell you been?!

GLORIA  
I spent the weekend with this fine, young man! Ron Tyson! He goes to school up in Madison!

OFFICER TOWNSEND  
I haven't heard from you in days! Didn't you wanna check up on your son?

GLORIA  
Oh, I knew he was in good hands.

OFFICER TOWNSEND  
I thought you wanted to spend time with me. You were just using me for a babysitter!

GLORIA  
Well, we're together now.

OFFICER TOWNSEND  
You know what I mean. How could you just leave him like that? What kind of mother are you?

GLORIA  
Let's just say I learned from the best!

OFFICER TOWNSEND  
Look, I apologized for that a million times.

GLORIA  
Hmmp.

OFFICER TOWNSEND

I know it ain't gonna be easy, but we gotta try to move on. That is, if you really want to.

GLORIA

(sighs)

I guess so.

(looks around)

Where's Michael?

OFFICER TOWNSEND

He kept crying, so I dropped him off.

INT. POLICE STATION - SAME

Gretch sits in her holding cell with her pillow over her head. Michael sits outside of the cell in his stroller, crying throughout.

GRETCH

(sighs)

I wonder if the prison is still overcrowded.

INT. OFFICER TOWNSEND'S APARTMENT - SAME

GLORIA

Do you want me to get him so we can all spend some time together?

OFFICER TOWNSEND

Hell no. We're baby-free! Let's get something to eat!

Gloria nods in agreement. They both exit the apartment.

INT. REC CENTER - NIGHT

Partygoers dance and chatter in the gym, which is covered with Christmas decorations. Music blasts in the background. Berniece, Shana, and Connie talk to each other.

BERNIECE

Look, Shana, if you don't tell Eric the truth, I will!

SHANA

I'm going to! You need to give me a chance!

BERNIECE  
You had days to do it!

CONNIE  
Come on, guys, it's a party! We're  
supposed to be having fun!

Berniece scoffs and walks away. Eric walks onto the stage  
and in front of a microphone.

ERIC  
Can I have your attention, please?

SFX: Music STOPS. Partygoers QUIET DOWN.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
This is very special to me. I'm not even  
supposed to be here tonight.

BERNIECE  
Oh no, more gushing over Shana?

ERIC  
So here's my gift.

Eric walks over to a curtain rope and begins to pull it.

BERNIECE  
Oh, that's it!

She runs to Eric in slow motion.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)  
Nooooooooooooo!

She leaps in the air in slow motion, then quickly PLOPS  
to the ground in front of Eric.

ERIC  
Berniece, what are you doing?

BERNIECE  
(getting up)  
You're making a big mistake! You can't do  
this!

ERIC  
What, you mean this sign?

Eric points to a banner.

INSERT - THE BANNER, WHICH READS:

"Merry Christmas"

BACK TO REC CENTER

ERIC

Oh, I see what you mean.

(to the partygoers)

"Happy Holidays" to Rafi, and "Happy Two-Week Vacation" to Akbar. On second thought, singling ya'll out isn't much better.

BERNIECE

No, I mean about Shana. She's no hero! She's...

Shana runs in slow motion from the other direction.

SHANA

Nooooooooooooo!

She leaps in the air in slow motion, then quickly PLOPS to the ground in front of Eric.

ERIC

You know, you guys really need to work on that.

EXT. REC CENTER - LATER

Eric, Shana, and Berniece all stand together outside.

SHANA

So, yeah, I opened the door and bumped into the robber. Please don't be mad, Eric! I didn't mean to save your life!

ERIC

Well, maybe you didn't intentionally save my life, but you were at the right place at the right time. You're still a hero in my book.

BERNIECE

Hmmm.

SHANA

Well, okay. I didn't want to start off our relationship on a lie.

ERIC

Relationship? We're not dating, and we never will be!

SHANA

Aww, Babycakes, you're still so traumatized that you're saying stuff you don't mean. See ya at school!

Shana ruffles Eric's hair, then leaves. Eric sighs.

BERNIECE

It's cold out here. I'm going back inside.

Berniece heads to the door. Eric stops her.

ERIC

Hey, why were you so concerned, anyway?

BERNIECE

Because I saw the whole thing, and I didn't want to see you get hurt.

ERIC

(smirking)

Really?

BERNIECE

Yeah!

She resumes walking and opens the door.

BERNIECE (CONT'D)

But you don't have to worry about me trippin' like that no more.

ERIC

(following her)

How can I be sure?

SFX: Berniece SLAMS the door shut on Eric. A pile of snow falls from the roof and PLOPS down on Eric.

BERNIECE

(reopening the door)

See?

Berniece closes the door again.

ERIC  
(muffled)  
Oh yeah. I'm wearing her down.

THE END