

SMOKE BUDDIES

Written by

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**INT. DENVER AND REMI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

It's chilly outside, so **DENVER**, an androgynous Black woman puts on a hoodie in preparation before she finishes rolling her joint.

Her partner, **REMI**, giving Black Girl Magic, but make it Spiritual, is in the kitchen cooking something plant-based.

**DENVER**  
(joint finished)  
All done. Ready?

**REMI**  
You go, I'll be out after these  
plantains are done.

**EXT. DENVER'S BALCONY - NIGHT**

Denver is met with cool autumn air as plops down on the loveseat outside.

It's too cold for the building knuckleheads to be outside causing a ruckus, so Denver is greeted with peace and quiet.

She sparks her joint and relaxes.

After a few moments, she's joined by a robed Remi.

She sits next to Denver, snuggling up before being passed the joint.

**ACROSS THE POOL**

A **BLACK MAN** steps out onto his balcony, leaving his door cracked.

Inside a Black woman is cleaning up.

**DENVER**  
There's my smoking buddy.

The Black man fiddles with his phone before pulling out a cigarette.

**REMI**  
Where?

**DENVER**  
Right across, one up.

**REMI**  
Ah.

DENVER  
 (laughing)  
 He never misses a session.

REMI  
 Speaking of sessions, have you  
 given any more thought to when you  
 want to try again?

Denver takes a beat.

DENVER  
 I'm still working through what  
 happened or...didn't happen this  
 time.

REMI  
 I understand.

Remi hits the joint one more time, before remembering what's  
 in the oven.

REMI (CONT'D)  
 Mm! The Brussel sprouts.

She hurries inside.

Denver pulls it again, staring at her smoke buddy.

His lady, back in view, moves about in the apartment when  
 SHE'S GRABBED!

Denver sits up, almost choking on the smoke.

*Did she see what she think she saw?*

She begins knocking on the window behind her, trying to get  
 her partner's attention. She panics.

Smoke buddy hasn't moved.

Remi finally comes outside.

REMI (CONT'D)  
 (worried)  
 What's wrong?

DENVER  
 (trying to stay calm)  
 I think I saw someone grab dude's  
 wife.

REMI  
 What do you mean?

DENVER

I was sitting here and--

Smoke buddy gets up, puts out his cigarette, and enters his house. He shuts the door behind him.

DENVER (CONT'D)

HEY!!! Fuck. Okay, I was sitting here and I saw someone grab his wife.

REMI

WHAT? Are you sure?!

DENVER

I'm pretty sure. I mean, I'm a little high, but--

THE MAN SCREAMS!

They exchange glances before Remi pulls out her phone and calls the cops.

MONTAGE:

1. News Reports of "Tonight, a gruesome attack at The Mint Apartments, Downtown."
2. "One pronounced dead at the scene, the other flown to Porter Regional with unknown injuries."
3. "Husband and wife attacked in their apartment. Police have no leads."
4. "Husband in attack at The Mint has made a full recovery."
5. "Police have shifted their investigation to Malik Blackwood."

**INT. DENVER AND REMI'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The television flickers with nonstop coverage. The attack dominates every major news outlet.

Unfortunately, Malik "Smoke Buddy" Blackwood is under investigation.

**ON SCREEN - A LOCAL NEWS BROADCAST**

NEWS REPORTER #1

Good afternoon. We continue to follow the breaking story surrounding the tragic death of Torrance Deja Blackwood. Authorities have confirmed that her husband, Malik Blackwood, is now a prime suspect in the investigation.

CUT TO: Malik Blackwood smiling in a classroom, speaking at a community event, laughing with children.

NEWS REPORTER #1 (CONT'D)

Blackwood, a well-known educator and licensed therapist, was widely respected in his field. However, sources close to the investigation indicate that detectives are now examining aspects of his past that may complicate that public image.

CUT TO: Police tape. Flashing lights. A blurred image of Malik being escorted by officers.

NEWS REPORTER #1 (CONT'D)

While no formal charges have been filed, officials confirm that Malik Blackwood remains under active investigation. Friends, colleagues, and students are struggling to reconcile the man they knew with the allegations now unfolding.

The screen lingers on Malik's face as the broadcast continues.

DENVER

I've got to say something.

REMI

Yeah, you do.

**INT. PORTER POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY**

The precinct is busy. Remi and Denver wait...and wait. They both look uncomfortable. Remi grabs Denver's hand.

DET. WRIGHT

Denver Arnold?

DENVER

That's me.

**INT. DENVER AND REMI'S APARTMENT****SOMETIME LATER**

The couple watches a movie when Remi shows Denver an article on her phone: BLACKWOOD CLEARED OF ALL CHARGES

Denver smiles.

They snuggle back up and enjoy their movie night.

**INT. MALIK'S NEW APARTMENT**

Malik, now in his new apartment, sits at his desk.

The city views are immaculate from his office space.

He's filling out an insurance claim form online when a Black man walks in with two cups of coffee.

He sets one down on Malik's desk.

MALIK  
Thanks, Noah.

**EXT. THE MINT APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT**

SUPER: ONE YEAR EARLIER

The street of The Mint Apartments is quiet.

People are home from work, and kids are done with homework. Everyone winds down in their homes.

A phone lights up in an unmarked van outside.

**INT. UNMARKED VAN - NIGHT**

**INCOMING MESSAGE: She's outside now.**

The recipient responds with: You have the wrong number.

They delete the message and slip their hooded, hidden body out of the van.

The key fob entry required at the front door is accessed with no problem.

The figure knows the building and is now up the stairs on the 3rd floor.

**INT. MALIK AND TORRANCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

**TORRANCE**, a middle-aged Black woman is angry-cleaning and mumbling under her breath.

After she ties the trash up, she clears the counter of past due bills and notices.

Torrance gathers the trash and leaves the house. After cracking the door so she can get back inside, she heads out.

The hooded figure sees this.

Torrance returns and locks the door before moving to the kitchen to finish cleaning up.

**SHE'S GRABBED!**

The figure overpowers and tackles her; Torrance fights for her life!

He begins stabbing Torrance and doesn't stop until she stops moving.

Pulling her body out of view; he hides.

Malik enters and the assailant reveals himself scaring the hell out of Malik, he screams!

Then readies himself.

ASSAILANT  
(quietly)  
Just like we practiced, ready?

Malik nods and the assailant stabs him in the torso three times before slicing his thigh and hand; defensive marks.

It's done with care. They assists Malik to the ground. Remove their mask. **NOAH!**

He wraps the knife in his ski mask fast, removing his outer layer of clothes. He pulls out a bag, drops it all in there.

He trashes the place, steals the cards and cash from Malik's wallet, and puts them in the bag, too.

Careful with every step, he reaches the front door.

Noah draws in a deep breath. He slows his breathing. He stills himself before he steps out. He closes the door behind him.

**END.**