

**MORE THAN A FRIEND**

By

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EXT. MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Late fall. Shots of New York City skyline. Images of evening rush hour: Brooklyn Bridge, Wall Street, World Trade Center, Penn. Station, Grand Central Terminal, parking lots, congested streets, Queensborro bridge. People hurry to get home after a long day's work. Traffic sounds blare in the background.

EXT. LONG ISLAND SUBURB - NIGHT

Long Island suburb, a rundown group of townhouses. The lights are on in all of the houses except for one.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - NIGHT

Weary COMMUTERS hurry to catch crowded trains.

INT. JOANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A CLOCK ALARM goes off. JOANNE DIMAGGIO'S hand turns off the alarm. The hand gropes for the BEDSIDE LIGHT. Found, the light is turned on to reveal the figure of a shapely young woman in an oversized football jersey. She is lying on her stomach with her face buried in a pillow. Joanne, drowsy from sleep, picks the clock up and brings it close to her so that she can read it.

JOANNE

Ah shit!

She slams the clock down and gets up from the bed.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Nerves on edge, PEOPLE stand on a crowded platform, waiting for the subway. A packed train pulls into the station. No one gets off; one or two commuters try to crowd their way onto the train but are pushed back by the train's passengers.

INT. JOANNE'S APARTMENT-LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A TELEVISION blares with an exercise video. On the television screen, an attractive female aerobic instructor demonstrates an abs exercise in front of a group of women.

WOMAN AEROBIC INSTRUCTOR

Exhale on the way up, inhale on the way down. Great! Remember half the battle for beautiful abs is diet...

With her back to the camera, Joanne lies on the floor, doing crunches with the video.

WOMAN AEROBIC INSTRUCTOR O.S.

You've got to do those crunches.

JOANNE

That's not all you got to do.

Joanne pauses and reaches over for a hit on her cigarette and drink of Diet Coke.

EXT. QUEENSBORRO BRIDGE - NIGHT

The traffic leaving Manhattan is at a standstill on the Queensborro Bridge. Car horns blast as tempers flare.

INT. JOANNE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Joanne's hand reaches in and turns on the tub faucet. She holds out her hand and tests the water to see if the temperature is okay.

We see Joanne's shapely legs. The jersey goes over her head and onto the floor.

Back to the camera, Joanne climbs into the tub and slowly sits down into the water. Taking the sponge, she gently squeezes water onto her neck, letting it trickle slowly down her firm breasts.

EXT. QUEENSBORRO BRIDGE - NIGHT

Steam bellows out of a stalled car. BLARING car horns behind him, a frustrated motorist gets out and pulls up the car's hood. He touches the radiator and jumps back quickly. Taking a handkerchief from his pocket, he opens the radiator. Steam and hot liquid shoot up to the sky.

INT. JOANNE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Standing in front of her VANITY MIRROR, Joanne carefully applies her makeup.

INT. JOANNE'S APARTMENT-LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sitting back to the camera, wrapped in a towel, Joanne paints her nails with bright red polish while watching the Queensborro Bridge scene on her TELEVISION. No sound from the Television, music plays in the background.

INT. JOANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SMALL CRUCIFIX standing on top of her BUREAU. Joanne pulls open one of the DRAWERS. After scavenging through a selection of her scanty bras and panties, Joanne makes her selection.

With her back to the camera, Joanne steps into a black garter belt and pulls it up her legs.

She rolls a dark nylon up her white leg and fastens it to her garter belt.

Joanne puts on her bra and fastens it in front.

CLOSET DOOR swings open, Joanne rummages through her clothes. A TUBE DRESS, still covered in a dry cleaning bag, is selected and held up to her body at the mirror.

Ripping the plastic off, she steps into the tube dress and pulls it up her body. Joanne reaches into the closet and pulls out a pair of vinyl boots. She puts on the boots and zips them up.

INT. JOANNE'S APARTMENT-LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Music blaring in the background, Joanne walks into the living room and picks up the television's REMOTE CONTROL. She switches the various stations until she finds a weather report. Joanne unmutes television and hears a MAN giving the weather forecast. After watching it for a while, Joanne turns off the television and walks over to the hall closet.

Pulling on a LEVI JACKET with fringe, she reaches in the closet and takes out an umbrella.

She walks over to a pantry cabinet and transfers handfuls of CONDOMS and a PACKAGE OF SUGAR-FREE GUM into her purse.

Picking up her keys from the counter, she turns off the music and the living room lights and opens the front door, shutting and locking the door as she leaves.

EXT. JOANNE'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Joanne walks to her beat-up, rusty Honda Civic, parked in her driveway. She unlocks the car door and climbs into the driver seat.

INT. JOANNE'S CAR - NIGHT

As the STATUE of the VIRGIN MARY on the dashboard watches her, Joanne tries to start the engine but is not successful.

JOANNE

Ah...shit!

After several attempts, the engine finally turns over.

EXT. JOANNE'S CAR - NIGHT

Sound of GRINDING gears. HEADLIGHTS come on. Her car backs out of the driveway and drives away.

EXT. QUEENSBORRO BRIDGE - NIGHT

The traffic in both lanes is heavy but still moves.

INT. JOANNE'S CAR - NIGHT

As she drives her car across the Queensborro bridge, Joanne takes a cigarette out of her mouth and exhales the smoke.

EXT. QUEENSBORRO BRIDGE - NIGHT

With MANHATTAN'S SKYLINE lit up in the foreground, Joanne's car crosses the Queensborro bridge as it approaches the city.

EXT. LOWER MURRAY HILL AREA - NIGHT

Joanne's car turns the corner of a tree-lined residential street as she searches for a parking space. Ahead of her, a car leaves and Joanne quickly pulls into the space. After cutting her ignition, she opens her door and climbs out, locking the door behind her.

A car approaches from behind, blasting its horn and flashing its bright lights on her. Joanne's face is finally seen -- an attractive but hard looking woman in her late 30s/early 40s. The car moves around her, she takes the last drag from her cigarette as she watches the passing car with contempt and throws the butt on the ground and squashes it with her foot. She walks down the dark sidewalk toward the lights of Lexington Avenue, ready for another night's work.

EXT. LEXINGTON AVENUE - NIGHT

As she approaches Lexington and 33rd Streets, Joanne sees DOLORES MORALES, a 30s Hispanic prostitute bending down at a parked car and talking to a potential john.

DOLORES

Who in the fuck do you think I am  
anyway? Ms. Santa Claus?

(beat)

Yeah...well think again!

As the negotiations break down, an agitated Dolores walks off. The car pulls away. She sees Joanne.

DOLORES

(continuing)

I don't believe men at times.

JOANNE

What's the problem?

Joanne and Dolores walk down the sidewalk.

DOLORES

They think that if they're cute and  
smile, I'll give it to them for  
free...

(beat)

...as if I'm doing this for my own  
entertainment.

A mid-size Ford car pulls over to the side and the passenger window comes down.

Joanne and Dolores stop and watch the car.

JOANNE

Do you want him?

DOLORES

(to Joanne)

No. I've already had dinner. He's  
yours.

Joanne walks over to the car and looks in.

A balding and pudgy white MAN in his late forties leans over to passenger side of the car and looks at her. Nervous and apprehensive, he tries to be cool.

BALDING MAN

Good evening.

JOANNE

Do you think it's going to rain?

BALDING MAN

I...uh...don't know. As long as I come, I really don't care what it does outside.

Joanne leans down to talk to him.

JOANNE

Like the rain, huh?

Balding Man blushes, looks Joanne over and smiles.

BALDING MAN

Yeah.

JOANNE

What do you want?

Balding man opens the passenger car door.

BALDING MAN

Could you get in...please and we can talk about it?

Joanne closes the door with her knee.

JOANNE

No. I need a forecast first.

Suddenly, there is a reflection of a large male figure on the Man's car, standing next to Joanne. Fear comes over the face of the Balding Man. Joanne looks over to see who it is and recognizes the person. With his arms folded, CARL, an out-of-shape police patrol officer in his late 30s, looks down at Joanne. Joanne straightens up and looks indignantly at the officer.

JOANNE

(continuing)

Hi hon. Can we help you?

CARL

So what's going on around here?

Afraid that he's going to be arrested, the Balding Man nervously tries to explain.

BALDING MAN

Nothing....officer. I...I...

JOANNE

He just pulled over to ask me about the weather.

Carl glances at Joanne skeptically.

CARL

I bet.

(to Balding Man)

You better move on.

Balding man quickly puts his car into gear.

BALDING MAN

Yes, Officer. Right away.

As the Balding Man drives away expeditiously, we see the BUMPER STICKER, **TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES ARE THE ONLY VALUES**, on the man's car. Shaking her head in disbelief, Joanne watches the car drive away. The police officer turns to her.

CARL

Watch yourself, Joanne.

As Joanne starts to walk away, he grabs her arm.

CARL

(continuing)

Do you understand me?

Joanne pulls away.

CARL

(continuing)

Joanne?!

JOANNE

Yeah, got it dear.

Carl takes his hand off of her arm.

CARL

I'm just doing my job.

Disgusted, Joanne turns and walks away.

                  JOANNE  
Yeah? Well so am I. Merry  
Christmas, Carl.

Joanne walks over to the corner where Dolores is standing and watching them.

                  JOANNE  
                  (continuing)  
What do you expect from a man with a  
small dick?

Dolores and Joanne look at each other and start to laugh.  
Carl motions for them to move on.

                  CARL  
Come on...keep moving.

Catching small glances back at him, Joanne and Dolores start walking down the sidewalk.

                  DOLORES  
You know...you create your own  
problems.

                  JOANNE  
I do? How?

                  DOLORES  
Like...if you would make a  
contribution to the police fund--

                  JOANNE  
Contribution?! I don't think so.

                  DOLORES  
He would leave you alone.

It starts to rain hard. Opening up her UMBRELLA quickly,  
Joanne looks at the sky in disgust.

                  JOANNE  
This is turning out to be a great  
evening.

Under Joanne's umbrella, Joanne and Dolores run for cover at  
a CORNER GREENGROCER.

INT. GREENGROCER - NIGHT

Shaking the rain off her umbrella, Joanne makes her way through the small corner grocery store. Dolores follows her. It is already crowded with half a dozen other prostitutes keeping dry and warm. CINDY, a black woman with peroxide blond hair, is one of them. The KOREAN OWNER stands behind the check-out counter and watches his customers with a skeptical eye. Opening the refrigerator, Joanne looks around at the soft drinks and selects a Diet Coke.

JOANNE

I'm getting really tired of all of this shit. I'm making less now than I did 20 years ago.

DOLORES

Tell me about it.

On her way back to the counter, Joanne stops and considers a candy bar. She makes her choice and takes her merchandise to the check-out. Dolores does her shopping as she follows Joanne.

JOANNE

It's bad enough when 50 percent is taken out for protection by the "family," but then you have federal, state, and local income taxes, health insurance, and transportation. I have barely enough to make the rent. And then I'm supposed to contribute to a "police fund?"

(beat)

There's no money left for me and my good looks.

As she stands in line, Joanne sees a reflection of herself and combs her hair with her fingers.

JOANNE

(continuing)

What's left of them.

Joanne turns to Dolores.

JOANNE

(continuing)

If I can't make it on what I make,  
how does a woman supporting a family  
do it?

DOLORES

You give up a lot.

JOANNE

There's got to be a better way.

The Korean Store Owner rings the cost of Joanne's  
merchandise, bags it, and turns to Joanne.

KOREAN STORE OWNER

Two dollars and twenty-five cents.

Joanne looks at the CASH REGISTER and then at the Store Owner  
in disbelief.

JOANNE

You got to be kidding. That's almost  
double what you pay anywhere else.

Like a bull dog, the Korean Store Owner leans over the  
counter.

KOREAN STORE OWNER

Prices have gone up.

Joanne turns to Cindy.

JOANNE

Talk about being screwed.

CINDY

You're telling me.

KOREAN STORE OWNER

You don't like, you don't buy. Get  
out. Don't need like you.

The Store Owner starts to take away the goods and Joanne  
reaches over and prevents him from doing so.

JOANNE

Hey...hey. I'll buy them. Relax.

Joanne throws down the money on the counter, grabs her merchandise, and walks out.

JOANNE

(continuing)

Fuck him if he can't take a joke.

CINDY

Honey...times may be tough....but they're not that tough!

EXT. LEXINGTON AVENUE - NIGHT

Later that evening. It continues to rain and the cold winter wind BLOWS down the canyons of Manhattan. Standing on the curb, huddled under her BROKEN UMBRELLA, Joanna smokes a cigarette and watches approaching cars for possible tricks. Without warning, a gust of wind blows Joanne's umbrella inside out.

JOANNE

Ah...shit.

An expensive, RED SPORT CAR slows down and stops at the curb. She looks at it for a moment and walks over to it. The car's PASSENGER DOOR opens up and Joanne looks in.

INT. TODD'S CAR - NIGHT

Inside of the expensive car sits TODD, a very attractive young man in his early to mid-30s. His cool WASPish looks advertise good breeding and education. Radiating charm and self confidence, he smiles at her, turns the car stereo down, and motions her to get in.

TODD

Why don't you get in and dry off for a while?

JOANNE

That's what they all say.

Joanne hesitates to get in.

TODD

Do you want to get in or don't you?

JOANNE

I don't know. Make me an offer I can't refuse.

Todd flashes another charming smile. Joanne glances back with a knowing smile.

JOANNE  
(continuing)  
That's going to cost you.

Hesitant, Joanne looks at Todd and then looks behind her at her wet and dismal chances.

TODD  
I won't hurt you.  
(beat)  
You have my word. Promise.

Joanne surrenders and climbs into the car, closing the door behind her. Todd flashes a sexy smile and puts the car into gear as if he has already made his conquest.

EXT. LEXINGTON AVENUE - NIGHT

Todd's car ZOOMS down a wet and dark Lexington Avenue.

INT. TODD'S CAR - NIGHT

The volume of the SENSUOUS MUSIC is turned up again and the WINDSHIELD WIPERS set a rhythmic beat. Joanne awkwardly looks around the car and catches Todd staring at her. Drenched by the rain, she is self-conscious about her appearance.

She spots a mirror on the WINDSHIELD VISOR and pulls it down to look at herself. We see Joanne's reflection in the MIRROR, with her make-up smeared and hair stringy. Joanne winces as she sees her reflection.

JOANNE  
I'm a sight for poor eyes.

TODD  
I don't think so.

Skeptically, Joanne smiles at him and laughs to herself.

JOANNE  
You don't?

TODD  
I think you're very attractive.

Joanne laughs at his comment as if she's heard it before.

TODD

(continuing)

I wouldn't have stopped if I didn't think so.

JOANNE

You wouldn't have, huh?

Turning to watch the streets and traffic around him, Todd shakes his head and laughs to himself.

Admiring his good looks, Joanne studies him for a moment, focusing on his GOLD I.D. BRACELET and then looks out the window.

Todd turns and looks at Joanne intently.

Joanne raises her eyebrows and laughs in disbelief. She turns to look at him skeptically.

JOANNE

(continuing)

God! Are you for real?

Todd turns to her with a sincere look.

TODD

Yes.

Knowing better, Joanne says nothing. Todd smiles and then turns to watch the traffic around him.

JOANNE

So where are we going?

Todd turns the steering wheel and parks the car.

TODD

Here.

Joanne turns and looks out her window.

EXT. EAST RIVER'S RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Todd's car is parked at a small mini-park along the East River, with views of the Williamsburg Bridge in the background.

INT. TODD'S CAR - NIGHT

Joanne looks back at Todd and smiles.

JOANNE

Don't tell me you're a romantic?

Todd smiles. Joanne shakes her head in disbelief.

JOANNE

(continuing)

You're too good to be true.

TODD

And I haven't done anything yet.

Won over, Joanne relaxes with her back against the door, meeting Todd's intense gaze. Todd reaches over and gently strokes her face. Joanne lifts her chin slightly as Todd's fingers trail down her neck. He leans across and kisses her, gently at first then with an increasing fervor. Todd wraps his right arm behind Joanne's neck and pulls her toward him hard. He continues to kiss her as his left hand rips at her clothes.

Joanne tries to push Todd away.

Todd ignores her resistance as reaches up between her legs while trying to unzip his fly.

TODD

(continuing)

Mmmmm...

(beat)

...yeah..

(beat)

I want to fuck you all over.

Alarmed, Joanne tries to push him off as hard as she can.

JOANNE

Stop it, goddammit!

Todd begins to hump her.

TODD

What do you think? Huh? That I won't pay for it.

JOANNE

There's a first time for everything.

Relentless, Todd pulls her dress up over her hips for a better penetration. She yanks his head back by his hair.

JOANNE

(continuing)

Did you hear what I said? Stop it!

Todd slaps her hard on the face, causing her nose to bleed. Shocked by his sudden burst of violence, Joanne responds by grabbing his balls and squeezing them as hard as she can. As he rears back, wincing in pain, she fumbles for the lock and opens the door.

EXT. EAST RIVER'S RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Joanne stumbles as she tries to escape. Todd climbs out of the car after her. He grabs her by the hair and yanks her off the ground. Joanne starts to hit him hard in the face. He hits her back.

TODD

Don't.

Todd now looks dangerous. He throws her back against the car, pinning her arms behind her. He holds both of her arms with one hand as he reaches down and pulls her dress up. Frightened, Joanne struggles hard. He hits her again in the head. Her head hits the side of the car with a dull THUD. Tears and blood are running down her face. She tries to reason with him.

JOANNE

Please don't hurt me. Please.

Todd turns Joanne around and pushes her face down onto the hood of the car. Taking one of his arms around her neck, he begins to tightly choke her while he continues pulling her dress up over her hips. He unzips his pants and starts to plow into her. A few thrusts later he is moaning with his own pleasure.

TODD

Yeah.....oh yeah.

Todd pushes harder causing Joanne to wince in pain. As he nears climax, his grip tightens and Joanne screams as his gold I.D. bracelet cuts into her face.

As he reaches orgasm, his screams match hers. As quickly as it started, it ends.

Todd pulls out of Joanne and quickly zips up his pants. She gasps for air. He takes her by her hair and hurls her onto the ground.

Todd walks casually over to where she is laying and picks her up by her dress with one hand. With what energy she has left, she tries to defend herself. He retaliates by slugging her in the face and abdomen several times until she collapses.

Todd stands and watches Joanne as she lies lifeless on the ground. He kicks her hard a couple of times in the side and rolls her over with his foot.

Eyes closed and barely breathing, Joanne appears to be dead. Satisfied, Todd walks back to his car.

Joanne's eyes open slightly. Barely conscious, she watches Todd. From Joanne's perspective, we see him straighten his appearance and climb into his car. As the car drives off, her vision blurs to blackness as Joanne again loses consciousness.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - DAY

Next day. Blurry at first, Joanne sees a hospital room. As Joanne regains her consciousness, her vision clears and she looks around the room.

We see Joanne's badly beaten and swollen face, her body is wrapped with bandages. As she tries to move, she winces as pain shoots through her body.

The attending NURSE, a matronly black woman with a slight Jamaican accent, notices her movement and comes over to check on her.

NURSE

Easy now.

Joanne groans with pain.

JOANNE

What the fuck.....

NURSE

You don't remember, dear?