**Wendell Tucker**

It's 6:30am. I roll over and look into the sleeping face of an angel. She’s so beautiful. All I want to do is embrace her, kiss her lips, and make love to her. I close my eyes. Breathe deeply. Get out of bed. "See ya later." It's 7:30 am. I am at the emergency room fighting back tears.

**Nurse**

Name?

**Wendell Tucker**

Wendell Tucker...

**Nurse**

I'm sorry, I can't hear you. Please talk a little louder.

**Wendell Tucker**

My name is, Wendell Tucker.

**Nurse**

Thank you, Wendell. Age?

**Wendell Tucker**

30

**Nurse**

What brings you in today?

**Wendell Tucker**

I... (breathes) I was referred by the suicide hotline.

**Nurse**

Oh...

**Wendell Tucker**

Understanding and empathy is in the older white lady's eyes. Disappointment and scorn in the sista's. Normally, I would bemoan the relationships between black men and women, but I can't right now. I'm too hurt to even care at this point. I'm here now and I need help. The next thing I know, I’m in triage. They are checking my vitals, and I'm feeling so dead inside that I half expect them to not be able to finds heartbeat.

**Nurse**

How long have you felt this way?

**Wendell Tucker**

About 6-7 years.

**Nurse**

Are there thoughts of hurting yourself?

**Wendell Tucker**

...yes.

**Nurse**

Suicide?

**Wendell Tucker**

Yes.

**Nurse**

Have you ever attempted suicide or tried to hurt yourself?

**Wendell Tucker** (nods head)

**Nurse** (looks up from paper)

Wendell?

**Wendell Tucker**

...twice

**Nurse**

When was the last time?

**Wendell Tucker**

April.

**Nurse**

What did you do Wendell Tucker? I need you to talk to me, I want to help you.

**Wendell Tucker**

Migraine pills... I took about half a bottle and drank a fifth of Cuervo.

**Nurse**

Oh my god. (sits for a moment) what happened?

**Wendell Tucker**

Got sick.

**Nurse**

What about the first time?

**Wendell Tucker**

Rat poison and vodka.

**Nurse**

Jesus... What happened then?

**Wendell Tucker**

Same thing. Woke up. Sick and pissed.

**Nurse**

Talk to me. Why are you feeling this way?

**Wendell Tucker**

I spill my guts. I tell every single thing I'm feeling for the first time ever. For the first time, I admit to someone else and myself that I have let life, love and the people around me, break me. Here in front of a complete stranger, I say all the things I could never say in front of my closest friends. Eyes red, chest burning, head banging, soul weary and absolutely heart broken. But for the first time, in a very long time, I don't feel weak.

**Nurse**

Mr. Tucker... Wendell, we are going to help you.

**Wendell Tucker**

I don't have insurance.

**Nurse**

That isn't an issue. We are going to take care of you.

**Wendell Tucker**

Ok. Blackout Noon - psych ward

**Wendell Tucker**

It's 1:30. I've been stripped, interviewed, fed and poked a few times. I'm in an off white room, lying in a twin bed next to the window. The heavily medicated white guy in the bed by the door awakens.

**Guy**

Hey bro, do you know how long they are gonna keep us?

**Wendell Tucker**

I don't know man. I guess until we're a little better. Guy But how long usually?

**Wendell Tucker**

I don't know fam; this is my first time too.

**Guy**

Oh... So what you in for?

**Wendell Tucker** (to audience

I laugh. He doesn't. He's dead ass serious.

**Wendell Tucker** (to guy)

I'm not winning the race right now.

**Guy**

Yeah. Me neither... Question. Are we in Chicago right now?

**Wendell Tucker**

Yeah fam. We're in Chicago. We laid there in our respective twin beds, lost in our thoughts. Honestly, I can't even say I was lost in my thoughts. For the first time in as long as I can remember, I was completely lost in my feelings. Anger, frustration, distraught, hurt, confusion, shame... so much shame. I'm supposed to be smarter than this. Stronger than this. How weak must I be to be here? I need to just get up, man up, go get my shit and go. Go where? Back home to her? I'd rather fucking die. The hurt turns to hate. The hurt always turns to hate. But this time it’s not myself I hate. It's everyone. Everyone that ever hurt me and then guilt tripped me into acting like I wasn't hurt. Everyone that betrayed me. That put me out into the streets. That wouldn't give me a chance when all I wanted, all I needed was a fucking chance. Everyone who said fuck you, fuck what's right, I'm out for mine... but don't you act this way, because it’s wrong when YOU do it. I hate her for fucking around with that bitch nigga behind my back and spreading lies about me after I defended her for years. I hate them for seeing it, calling themselves my friends and saying absofuckinglutely nothing to me. I hate him for being my fucking mentor and telling me that he can't wait to see me fail. I hate this fucking city, for spending thousands a weekend on bullshit clubs, alcohol and coon ass shows, but refusing to support my company because we are "local". I hate my people for not loving me like I love them. I hate God for abandoning me, after I have remained faithful. I prayed, I believed, I stepped out on faith. I loved you. I loved you God and you left me. I hate you. I hate life. I hate this fucked up, shallow, hypocritical, evil, cold miserable fucking world.

**WENDELL TUCKER**

And ass the hate overtakes me, and I eye the sharpened pencil on the desk next to me... reach out to grab it. I am jolted from the enraged trance by a knock at the door. Before I can wipe the tears from my eyes, in walks 3 Doctors.

**Doctor**

Wendell, can we talk for a moment?

**WENDELL TUCKER**

I nod, get up and follow them out of the room.

**DOCTOR**

Been a rough stretch huh? Why don't you tell me why you're here?

**WENDELL TUCKER**

The Suic-

**DOCTOR**

I mean why you're really here.

**WENDELL TUCKER**

... I don't know where else to go.

**DOCTOR**

What are you hoping to get here?

**WENDELL TUCKER**

I don't know. Help?

**DOCTOR**

Help doing what exactly?

**WENDELL TUCKER** (TO AUDIENCE)

I open my mouth to answer, and then stop. I sit there for a few moments. Throughout this entire ordeal, I've known that I've needed help, but I have no idea what exactly I need help with. I think a lot of times, that's the issue when dealing with a person with depression. Before you can even begin to contemplate how to help them, you have to know what to help with and many times, we don't even know. We know what's causing us stress. We know that we don't want to feel this way anymore... but what is the goal? What's the end game? As I'm going through this in my head, it comes to me. It's crazy, because I think I saw the **Doctor** acknowledge that I found my answer a moment before I did.

**DOCTOR**

Wendell Tucker?

**WENDELL TUCKER**

I want to be happy. I need help figuring out how to be happy.

**DOCTOR**

We want to help you, but you are going to have to be committed. This isn't a short term thing. It's not going to be solved today, but you do have to make a promise to yourself. Don't give up. You can beat this, but only if you fight it. We are going to go with a regimen of therapy and medication. More therapy than medication, because the solution isn't in the pills. It's going to be in your commitment to your own mental wellness.

**WENDELL TUCKER**

We talked for a while and then I went back to my room. I was a resident of the Stone Institute of Psychiatry for a little under a week, diagnosed with Major Depression. While there I only called my 2 most trusted friends and one not so trusted friend that everyone else knew, just in case my treatment plan failed. I didn't tell anyone when I went in. Only a few people knew when I got out. No one in my family knew. I could deal with any scorn from friends, but my family expects me to have it together. How do I look them in the eye, and tell them that on multiple occasions I considered and even attempted to end my life? As a Black man, I am expected to be strong, and no matter how much life weighs on me, never collapse. Well not collapse in the manner of seeking help. Cause its perfectly ok for the men in our community to be depressed and drink themselves to death, or go out and be so on edge that they are killing each other in the streets over a glance, or smoke so much weed to cope that it renders them a functional zombie. That's fine. For some reason there is no shame in that. But to say, I'm human, my life isn’t going so well and I need help maintaining, that's an abomination. I told one person who claimed to love me about it, and hours later, I see her on twitter making comments on how unstable I am and how do I expect anyone to respect me as a man when I have to go to a therapist? I never even responded or told anyone about it. But I saw it, and that was one of the most hurtful things I have ever read in my life. But this is what happens in our community.

END SCENE