

Baby Steps

Treatment

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Based on a True Story

## **OVERVIEW:**

*Baby Steps* is a gripping coming-of-age drama based on a true story, chronicling the emotional and turbulent relationship between Journee Mitchell and Terrell Adams, two high school seniors whose love is tested by unexpected life challenges. Set in 1987 Wilmington, North Carolina, the film delves into themes of young love, ambition, responsibility, and the sacrifices that shape our futures.

Terrell is a model student and star athlete, striving to secure a full-ride football scholarship that will ensure a better life. Journee, a vibrant and independent cheerleader, discovers she is pregnant, sending shockwaves through their relationship. As Terrell struggles with the overwhelming pressure of his future and Journee grapples with the realities of motherhood, their connection deteriorates, leading to conflict, heartbreak, and irreversible choices.

Blending romance and drama with raw emotional depth, *Baby Steps* offers a poignant look at the fragility of young love and the resilience needed to move forward in the face of adversity.

## **CHARACTER PROFILES:**

**JOURNEE MITCHELL (17):** A strong-willed and intelligent young woman with a promising future, Journee is forced to confront adulthood far sooner than expected. Her pregnancy becomes a defining moment, challenging her independence and testing her emotional strength as she navigates the difficult road ahead. She is outgoing with brown, golden skin and thick, curly hair. Despite her circumstances, she maintains a remarkable ability to hope and find strength in any situation.

**TERRELL ADAMS (17):** Disciplined and ambitious, Terrell sees football as his only way out. A model student with outstanding grades and leadership in extracurricular activities, he's driven to graduate at the top of his class. The news of Journee's pregnancy shakes his world, triggering anger, fear, and an internal battle between his dreams and his responsibilities. His inability to cope with the weight of it all leads him down a destructive path that contradicts everything he's worked for.

**KATHERINE MITCHELL (47):** Journee's hardworking and no-nonsense mother. A dedicated nurse for over twenty years, she balances her demanding career with maintaining a home for her family. Though sometimes impatient and short-tempered, she wants the best for her daughter. Her tough love approach creates tension as Journee seeks understanding and support,

but ultimately reveals a deep maternal bond when it matters most.

DAMIEN MITCHELL (55): Journee's father, a recovering alcoholic who works night shifts at a warehouse. He is largely absent from her life, spending most of his time either working or playing golf. His detachment further isolates Journee during her pregnancy, leaving her to rely on her mother and friends for support.

TOYA NEWALL (17): Journee's loyal and outspoken best friend since elementary school. She provides comic relief but also serves as Journee's emotional anchor, supporting her through the highs and lows of teenage pregnancy. Unlike her ambitious friends, Toya prefers socializing and working after school, offering a grounded perspective that helps Journee navigate her new reality.

JOEL "K.O." ADAMS JR.: Terrell's older brother who has been in and out of incarceration since age 14. His release from prison marks a turning point in Terrell's life, pulling him away from his promising future and into criminal activity. K.O. represents the path Terrell has always fought to avoid but ultimately succumbs to his moment of crisis.

#### **SETTING:**

The film takes place in 1987 Wilmington, North Carolina, a middle-class suburban community where expectations and appearances matter. The period setting enhances themes of limited options for young people and minorities facing adult challenges without modern support systems or information access.

Key locations include Walter Grant Sr. High School, where social hierarchies play out; Dom's Diner, the local hangout spot where teenagers gather after school; and the Mitchell household, which reflects the family's working-class struggles and aspirations.

#### **PLOT OUTLINE:**

##### **ACT I**

The film opens with parallel morning routines-Terrell's disciplined 6AM workout regimen contrasting with Journee's last-minute rush to get ready for school. Terrell picks Journee up at her bus stop each morning, a secret arrangement to avoid her parents' suspicion.

At school, we witness their relationship dynamic: Terrell

studious and focused on his future, Journee more carefree and social. Their friends represent different aspects of teenage life-Toya provides comic relief with her disinterest in athletics and academics, while Terrell's teammates reinforce the pressure he faces to succeed.

Their evenings at Dom's Diner establish the rhythm of their relationship-sharing milkshakes and fries, surrounded by friends, and ending with nightly phone calls where Terrell shares his dreams and anxieties about the future.

The turning point comes when Journee experiences sudden nausea during cheer practice. A visit to the school nurse confirms her pregnancy, sending her world into chaos. After an emotional day processing the news alone, she finally gathers the courage to tell Terrell during their nightly call.

## **ACT II**

Terrell's reaction is explosive-shock gives way to anger and denial as he hangs up on Journee. The next morning, he doesn't show up to drive her to school, marking the beginning of his withdrawal from her life.

As weeks pass, Terrell completely distances himself, ignoring Journee at school and avoiding his responsibility for the pregnancy. A montage shows their diverging paths-Journee attending prenatal appointment and adapting to her changing body, while Terrell maintains his facade as the perfect student-athlete.

Meanwhile, Journee finds unexpected support from her mother Katherine, who initially reacts with disappointment, but eventually stands by her daughter. We witness a baby shower where Journee is surrounded by family and friends, notable missing Terrell.

The midpoint shifts focus to Terrell's deterioration. His brother K.O.'s release from prison introduces a dangerous element to his life. Desperate to escape his reality, Terrell begins missing football practice and participating in K.O.'s criminal activities. News reports of local burglaries hint at their involvement.

## **ACT III**

The climax occurs at Dom's Diner, now visibly pregnant, Journee excuses herself to use the restroom. While she's gone, Terrell, K.O., and their crew enter to rob the establishment. Journee emerges from the restroom to find

Terrell holding a gun, his eyes unrecognizable with rage and fear. In a moment of horrifying confrontation, Terrell threatens Journee and their unborn child, revealing how he's completely lost himself. When police sirens approach, panic ensues. The young men surrender, and Terrell is taken away in handcuffs, tears streaming down his face as he realizes the magnitude of his actions.

Six weeks later, Journee goes into labor. In the hospital room, she expresses fear and doubt about her readiness for motherhood. Katherine provides rare maternal tenderness, encouraging her to take "baby steps". After the delivery, Journee holds her daughter, naming her Veronica after her birth mother.

The final shot captures Journee's face as she gazes at her newborn-exhausted but determined, scared yet hopeful. Without dialogue, we understand that despite everything, she has found purpose and strength in her role as a mother.

-THE END-

**THEMES :**

1. The contrast between idealized teenage romance and the harsh realities of adult responsibilities.
2. The different ways people respond to crisis-growth versus escapism.
3. The cyclical nature of family patterns and the struggle to break destructive cycles.
4. The societal pressure placed on young Black men to succeed against limited options.
5. The strength found in maternal bonds and female friendship during crisis.