



"BOOTYLICIOUS"

It is June 19, 2001, and Las Vegas Boulevard, better known as "the Strip," is packed with people. As the sun sets on another steaming hot day, the hordes of tourists, gawkers, and gamblers begin their night crawl—searching for jackpots and marveling at the man-made spectacles found at the entrances to the many casinos. There's an erupting volcano, a replica of the Brooklyn Bridge, and even a pirate ship that sinks underwater with its real-life crew standing on the deck. But on this evening, there's another spectacle in Las Vegas. Tonight, this gambling town serves as the perfect venue for a flashy, star-studded party thrown by a man who has just received a grand payoff from a very modest bet.

Street teams, the guerrilla marketers usually found in big cities, are out in force, stapling colorful posters on utility poles and walls, announcing the impending release of upcoming albums by the soul artists Usher and Babyface. Outside the Paris Las Vegas Hilton, where a replica of the Eiffel Tower rises 50 stories into the arid Nevada sky, hundreds of well-coiffed and meticulously dressed black people are arriving in limos and taxicabs, filling the entrance to the vast casino floor.