

CandyCellers

By

Benin Trotter

WGA #1967439

Benin Trotter
40 Sloganeer Trl.
Palm Coast, FL. 32164
(386) 290-9089
bentrotter@live.com

EXT. WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - EVENING

Douglas firs dominate a moist daisy-chain of faint illumination encircling barbed fences and rain-streaked barracks.

SUPER: SALEM, OREGON - SUMMER 1978.

Visitation is over and, under the watchful gaze of prison guards, scant relatives shuffle to their cars and pull away.

INT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - VISITATION ROOM - DAY

The room is near empty. A DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION GUARD filters out a few stragglers and props the door for--

TAN (50) a squat Vietnamese matron who yes-nods to everything even when she doesn't understand English and her son, KHANH (12), who school kids call Bruce Lee's little brother, more from his strut than from his being Chinese.

Tan's the surrogate mom and Khanh's the best friend both nervously waiting for the little black kid sitting on the bench:

P'NUT (7) a little round head with pinchable cheeks finds his second grader optimism slipping away as visitation time ends. He dangles his feet on the metal strip of bench. Tan clutches her purse and looks toward the exit.

TAN

(To Khanh in Vietnamese;
subtitle)

Tell him it's time to go.

KHANH

P'nut. We gotta go.

A door opens from behind the thick glass divider a woman appears. P'nut jumps off the bench and runs to a stool and phone opposite.

It's not his mother, but a FEMALE GUARD (BRENDA).

P'nut tamps down his eagerness and lifts the phone.

P'NUT

Where's ma momma? She sposed-to get
out today.

BRENDA (30) has big hair and a bigger smile. Believes like a good Christian "if you can't find anything good to say..."

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA

You must be P'nut. I'm Brenda.

(beat)

Well. Harrie got a little excited. She thought we were taking a little longer than she liked. She'll be out tonight if you wanna come back.

P'NUT

Nah. They ready to go.

P'nut points to Tan and Khanh.

BRENDA

Can someone bring you later? How bout yo daddy?

P'NUT

He'd beat me if he knew where I was. My daddy hates Bietnamese people. They make him crazy.

(beat)

You ma momma's best friend?

BRENDA

Tryin' to be. Harrie doesn't let many in.

P'NUT

Give ma momma her this.

P'nut digs in his pocket and pulls out a porcelain QUAN AM STATUE and uprights it on the counter.

INT. GUARD STATION CHECKPOINT - NIGHT.

HARRIET HOBSON (HARRIE) (28) Black woman with short nappy twists, oscillates like a boxer, always ready for a beat-down, her weight shifting from foot to foot. BACK GUARD stands behind her breath-close. BIZZZ! The DOOR CLAPS OPEN.

LOG DESK

Harrie steps to the counter. Brenda lifts a heavy plastic bag from the keep.

BRENDA

Gonna check it?

Harrie hoists the bag and shoulders it. Brenda shoots a card across the desk.

INSERT - CARD

"BRENDA'S PARALEGAL SERVICE".

Has phone number. Self typed.

BACK TO SCENE

Harrie flips the card in her hand.

HARRIE

You a lawyer now?

BRENDA

Paralegal. Card's a going away present.

BACK GUARD SNORTS. Always got his hand on his crotch. You can bet he whacks off to his female prisoner fantasies and for sure his fat ass ain't never missed a meal.

BRENDA

Got another present. From yo boy.

Brenda fishes the Quan Am statue from her pocket and gives it to Harrie. Harrie palms the miniature in her hand. The Back Guard is losing his patience. He flourishes his arm into a half-bow--an adios. Harrie squeezes passed his fat ass and out the door.

EXT. CORRECTION FACILITY - NIGHT

Out front, A primered WHITE FORD VAN IDLES, it's faint letters "L.O.G.I.C" (Lord Our God in Christ) near rubbed away.

The FACILITY GATE HISSES and Harrie strolls out.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

PASSA (60s), he's decked out--unflappable from Vaseline curls to spit-shined shoes. Clean. Must nap in his suit. He'll be sharp on Consummation Day.

SISTA SHAY

Can she walk any slower?

That's Sista Shay (68). Built like a church pew. Married to Jesus. Passa's right hand--if you don't count Brotha Luke. She wears a perennial ankle-length flower dress. Also, she's a front pew moaner. Long dress + front pew moaning = Holy.

(CONTINUED)

Sista Shay's checking her watch for the thousandth time. She's poppin' LifeSavers and poppin' them hard.

PASSA

You got chittlin's burnin' or somethin'? Be still or you gonna choke on that candy.

Sista Shay settles back in her seat as Harrie approaches her side of the van. Sista Shay rolls down the window.

SISTA SHAY

Get in the back!

Harrie slides the side door. The hold is jammed with boxes.

PASSA

Mind you don't sit on the candy.

Harrie shoves her bag in. Maneuvers herself in and slams the door. Harrie BANGS the CARGO CAGE that separates cab and driver.

HARRIE

Sorry. Tryin' to get comftable.

Passa shakes his head, CRANKS the ignition and the van jerks forward. Sista Shay rolls her eyes and goes to town pucker-sucking LifeSavers.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - NIGHT (I-5)

The VAN CLAMBERS onto a desolate ribbon of I-5.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Harrie peers through the mesh divider. Pokes a finger through.

HARRIE

Feels like jail. We takin' I-5?

VAN RATTLES on. Lights streak by in silence. As the van takes a curve, a box of candy tips over, skittering candy bars across the metal floor.

HARRIE

Want me to get that? Huh?

Might as well be talking to the backs of their nappy heads. Harrie handfuls bars of chocolate.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE

"World's Finest"? That's some nasty
shit!

Passa Linda Blair's his head around. Shit is unwelcome in a
church van!

HARRIE

"Stuff". Nasty "stuff".

Harrie stuffs the box with bars and folds the lid down.
Harrie crawls close to the cop cage.

HARRIE

Where we goin'?

PASSA

Church.

HARRIE

Church?

PASSA

Yeah. Church. That's where you
gonna sleep.

HARRIE

I ain't sleepin' in no church.

PASSA

We tried to find somebody to take
you in but no church folks want you
in they house.

HARRIE

I don't care. Take me to ma house
on Grand. Don't take me to no damn
church.

Sista Shay gulps.

SISTA SHAY

Grand?! You must be outta yo--

PASSA

Sista!

Shay turns away. Pouting. She grouses at the pane.

PASSA

Harrie, now you know you can't go
to Grand. You know that. Besides,
Big Dee throwed yo stuff out.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE

Threwed out? He caint...how y'all gonna let him throw my stuff out?!

PASSA

We had nuthin' to do with it. Dee got a court order to do't.

Harrie slumps back. Passa the Diffuser. Seminary smooth passa.

HARRIE

You Big Dee's uncle. Can't you talk to him?

(beat)

Where's P'nut? I wanna see P'nut.

PASSA

P'nut? You got that hearing 'fore you see him.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Van pulls in to an empty parking lot.

INT. VESTIBULE - NIGHT

A night-light faintly illuminates the church's forecourt: The vestibule leads up to the nursery or down to the basement.

Passa leads a sack-burdened Harrie and Sista Shay to the landing at the foot of the nursery stairs.

PASSA

Sista go down in the basement to the main panel and flip on the lights.

Sista Shay descends the basement stairs.

PASSA

Whatchu smilin' at?

HARRIE

Nuthin'.

She's got a shit-eatin' grin.

(CONTINUED)

PASSA

What?

HARRIE

This is where you use ta squeeze my
titties. Remember?

Passa turns and starts up the stairs. Stops.

PASSA

God's wiped away ma
sins-n-niquities long time ago.

He continues upstairs as heavenly incandescence illuminates
the chamber.

INT. NURSERY - NIGHT

Rows of wooden cages line the back wall: beds for little
children. Barrel slide bolts on each cage. Keep kids from
escaping. Opposite is a large window overlooking the
sanctuary. Nursery ceiling corners boast speakers blaring
God's word.

Passa's closing the cage doors, checking the locks and
twist-tightening the bars. Harrie goes to the large window.

HARRIE'S POV

Below BROTHA LUKE (60s) in hip-high rubber boots scoots
between the pews toward the BAPTISMAL POOL. Behind the
chancel the pool gurgles. Behind that a mural of John the
Baptist baptizing Jesus grace the pool's back wall.

Brotha Luke slouches into draining Bethesda. Slouches like a
fur-less Big Al, Disney's Country Bear minus the slouch hat.

BACK TO SCENE

PASSA

You'll stay here.

HARRIE

Where the kids gonna sleep?

Passa walks to the far corner of the nursery. Opens a small
door.

(CONTINUED)

PASSA
Not here. Here. Attic.

ATTIC

Harrie ducks in through the small door. Place hasn't been dusted since Jesus was a corporal. Single bulb dangles from the ceiling. Wafer thin mattress on the floor. Harrie's nose crinkles. Reeks of used condoms.

Passa reaches past Harrie and yanks the bulb chain. Let there be light.

Sista Shay clomps up behind Harrie. Shay's winded from climbing stairs.

SISTA SHAY
Passa?

Shay says "Passa" like she says "Jesus": soft and syrupy. It's Shay's "I approve voice" and she approves of Harrie in the attic. Passa backs out of the closet-size room.

NURSERY

PASSA
We comin', Sista. Weeza comin'.
(to Harrie)
Switch off the light and come downstairs.

Passa puts his hand on his chest like Fred Sanford of Sanford and Sons as he and Sista Shay wobble stair-ward.

INT. PASSA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Passa's office is full of demoded mahogany furniture arranged right from the pages of Montgomery Ward. Harrie sits on a plastic-covered couch opposite Passa's desk. A large vase of long-stemmed roses dominate the desk. And stems and roses don't hide the fact that Passa has the face of a pimp.

Sista Shay stands just inside the door.

PASSA
Luke done yet?

(CONTINUED)

SISTA SHAY

Almose.

PASSA

Now...Harrie...we ain't gonna have
what we had last time.

Harrie gives the what face.

HARRIE

No suh.

PASSA

Anything. Any-thing. You out. You
hear me, ma'am?

Ending with "ma'am"--means "I am serious".

HARRIE

Yessuh. I mean no-suh.

PASSA

Good.

Passa thrusts back. Opens a drawer. Shoves a piece of paper
across the desk.

PASSA

Sign this.

Harrie Skims. Signs. Pokes it back across the desk. The door
opens and Brotha Luke's big head pops in.

BROTHA LUKE

I'm done, Pas--

Passa raises a "wait till I'm finished" hand. Brotha Luke
sidles up next to Sista Shay.

Passa produces a second sheet.

PASSA

Here's yo chores. Get 'em done
early. Always clean the van first
so we can load the candy.

HARRIE

Clean the van?

PASSA

First. You'll shower at the "Y".

Motions to Harrie's cut-offs.

(CONTINUED)

PASSA

Not gonna wear those in the Lord's house. Shay's got womens clothes in thrift store basement that'll fit.

Harrie peels her thighs from the plastic couch. Time to go.

PASSA

I'm not done.

She re-peels herself onto the couch.

PASSA

Here's a map. Here's a Tri-Met schedule and a bus pass for August. Here's da Classifieds.

Passa slow-folds the newspaper like it contains the Nixon tapes or something. He slides it across the table.

Harrie snatches it up and mashes it into her purse. Rises from the couch a second time.

SISTA SHAY

(clears throat)

Huh-hmmmm.

PASSA

(to Harrie)

Where you goin'?

HARRIE

Thought we was thru.

PASSA

Nope. We ain't thru.

Sista Shay grips Harrie by the arm and spins her. Brotha Luke takes the other arm. Right hand left hand.

HARRIE

Where we goin'? Ma stuffs still in the van.

SANCTUARY

Main congregation room. Sista Shay and Brother Luke drag Harrie into an empty congregation room, to the front row, and forces her to her knees.

(CONTINUED)

SISTA SHAY
Close yo eyes and say "Jesus".

Harrie closes her eyes.

HARRIE
Jesus.

SISTA SHAY
Say Jezus! Say Jezus! Jeezus!

HARRIE
Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

SISTA SHAY
Faster. Jezus-Jezus-Jezus! Oh
Halleluyah! Say the name...Jezus!

HARRIE
JesusJesusJesusJesus...

SISTA SHAY
C'mon. Geegeeegee--Alleluia!
C'mon...Praise Him...

HARRIE
Geegeeegeegeegee...

Unknown tongues echo throughout the sanctuary.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Harrie's head pillows her black plastic bag as she dozes on the thin mattress.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

She fumbles for the bulb chain in the dark. She yanks. The LIGHT BUZZES and FLICKERS to life.

She picks up her ALARM CLOCK and shakes it. RATTLES. TICKS. A few more TICKS. Stops.

Harrie rolls over. She pats around with her hand. Here it is. Clothes. She dons a hand-me-down dress, socks, etc....

EXT. STREET - BUS STOP - DAY

Harrie's on the street, a fashion eye sore.

A dirty, orange and silver TRI-MET bus rumbles to her stop but it's building speed not slowing down.

Harrie panic-flaps the bus.

It passes.

Harrie runs, short-cutting through several backyards.

EXT. BLIND OLD BLACK MAN'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

A dirty, black, yelping MOP chases her, nipping at her heels.

HARRIE

Get! Get! Get back!

Harrie spins. Stutter-steps and kick-fakes. The little beast cowers but soon resumes pursuit.

A BLIND OLD BLACK MAN sits on his back porch perch.

BLIND OLD BLACK MAN

Malcum! Get yo ass back over here!

Blind Old Black Man rises. Slaps his thigh.

BLIND OLD BLACK MAN

Malcum! Come here! I tole you you only bite white peeples!

Malcum stops. Resumes good measured yelping but fails pursuit.

HARRIE

Hey, you old fuck, I'm white!

Blind Old Black Man eases into his porch chair. Frowns.

BLIND OLD BLACK MAN

Huh? Well...you sound Black!

EXT. STREET - SECOND BUS STOP - DAY

Harrie clears Blind Old Black Man's back yard. Gulps air.

Tri-Met turns the corner.

Now Harrie waves like she's on a deserted island. Clownin'. Bus grunts, wheezes and decompresses. It's door flaps open.

INT. BUS - DAY

Harrie drags up the steps like she's a shipwreck survivor.

HARRIE

Thank ya, Jesus!

Harrie plops down, frees a pack of cigarettes from her purse. BUS DRIVER eyes her in the mirror.

BUS DRIVER

You know you caint smoke on da bus!

HARRIE

Aint! Just checkin' how many cigs I had.

EXT. STREET - SECOND BUS STOP - DAY

Bus rumbles from the stop. Nearby, Brotha Luke sits in a tinted Olds Delta 88 and trails Tri-Met bus.

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Harrie takes a few short puffs of her cigarette before crushing it. And enters an...

INT. DOCTORS OFFICE - DAY

Office full of bitches looking better than on disco night. Harrie smooths her hand-me-down dress. Tugs at the wrinkles. She squeezes into a seat next to two ESSENCE WANNABES.

Essence Wannabes look Harrie up and down.

Wannabe's faces wrinkle into smirks. Fuck this. Harrie presses out and bolts.

OUTSIDE

PORTLANDERS hustle along the sidewalk sniffing potential rain. Harrie huddles upstream against the human mass. Harrie stops at an insurance office window.

INSERT - WINDOW SIGN

Sheldon's Insurance. "HELP WANTED".

BACK TO SCENE

Harrie swings the Sheldon Insurance door open.

EXT. SHELDON'S INSURANCE OFFICE - ACROSS THE STREET - DAY

A Delta 88 sedan stops across from Sheldon's Insurance.

INT. SHELDON'S INSURANCE OFFICE - DAY

Harrie fills out an application. She squirms, because...

INSERT - APPLICATION FORM

"HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF A FELONY"

Checks "NO".

EXT. SHELDON'S INSURANCE OFFICE - DAY

Delta 88 eases from it's parking space and parks near a phone booth. Brotha Luke climbs out of the car and steps into the phone booth.

PHONE BOOTH

Brother Luke flips through the YELLOW PAGE "S" section till he finds "Sheldon's Insurance". Luke plops in a dime.

INT. OLDS DELTA 88 - MINUTES LATER

Brotha Luke watches the insurance office.

EXT. SHELDON'S INSURANCE OFFICE - DAY

MR. SHELDON, tugs Harrie out the office by the arm. Squabbling must've started inside because it's spilling onto the sidewalk. Sheldon has the help wanted sign in his hand.

MR. SHELDON
Never mind who called! You lied on your application!

HARRIE
I didn't lie! Prove it! Prove I lied!

MR. SHELDON
I don't need to prove anything to you! You lied! That's all I know! Anyway, the position is filled!

HARRIE
Listen. Listen. I'm a hard worker. Give me a fuckin' chance!

MR. SHELDON
Come on let's go or I'm callin' the cops! Off the property!

Harrie shakes loose.

HARRIE
You don't own the sidewalk!

Mr. Sheldon turns and goes inside. He appears at the window with a phone receiver to his ear. Harrie rushes off.

EXT. BUS BOOTH - DAY

Harrie cools-down as she rests at the bus stop. She unfolds the newspaper. Scans. She exams the map on the booth wall. She pulls out her bus schedule. Runs her finger along a route.

Harrie gallops across the street to the opposite bus stop.

INT. RESTAURANT - COFFEE SHOP (LLOYD'S CENTER)- DAY

Harrie stirs the blackness of her coffee as she reads down the restaurant application.

INSERT - APPLICATION

"Have you ever been convicted of a felony?"

Checks "Yes".

"If 'Yes' then 'Why' "

BACK TO SCENE

Harrie presses her stubby pencil to the page.

INT. PASSA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Passa sits behind his desk busying himself with paperwork. Harrie pops her head in.

PASSA
How'd it go?

HARRIE
Gotta job!

This is news. Passa looks up.

PASSA
Wonderful. Where at?

HARRIE
Union Avenue. Restaurant by Lloyd
Center. You know Bob's?

PASSA
Bob's? Think I know it. Burgers?

HARRIE
Yeah. No. I Don't know. Found it by
accident--

Brotha Luke shoots in the door like he's a fireman. Then Luke sees Harrie, the air sucks outta the room. Surprise. When the air comes back, Passa twists toward Brotha Luke.

PASSA
What? What?

Brother Luke motions that doesn't want to talk with Harrie there.

(CONTINUED)

PASSA

I see you didn't do what I asked.

Brotha Luke shakes like a whippin's coming. If he had a tail it'd be tucked between his legs.

BROTHER LUKE

I...I...got something for Miss Harrie.

Brother Luke hands Harrie Brenda's crumpled business card.

HARRIE

Been lookin' all over for Brenda's card! Where the hell you find it?

Both men look like Jesus just appeared on a cloud.

Harrie slaps her hand to her mouth.

Passa stretches back in his chair. When Passa leans forward Brotha Luke occasions to tip out.

HARRIE

Passa. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

(beat)

Passa, can I use yo phone? It's important.

Passa pushes the phone forward. Harrie lifts the receiver... dials. Hangs up. Picks up. Redials. Repeats.

PASSA

Dial nine first.

HARRIE

Passa. Didn't mean to cuss in yo presence. In the Lord's house.

(beat)

Them are nice flowers in that vase.

(into phone)

Hello? Hey, Brenda. Harrie. Yeah, girl...just found yo card...

Passa lifts the vase and places it on the sill.

PASSA'S POV

Brotha Luke busies himself hurling candy boxes from the new white church van to his Delta 88. He avoids Passa's gaze.

BACK TO SCENE

DIAL TONE. Passa hangs up the receiver and places the phone back on his desk. Harrie has disappeared without notice.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY

Brotha Luke shoves the last box into the backseat. Won't fit. Stuffs it into the front passenger seat. He saunters around and slams the trunk shut. Goes to the van and slips a key under the floor mat.

Harrie leans against the van. By the way Brotha Luke jumps...the Ba-Jesus's been scared out of him.

BROTHA LUKE
How long you been standin' there?

HARRIE
Can you give me a lift?

BROTHER LUKE
Lift?

HARRIE
Just to Killingsworth.

BROTHA LUKE
Killingsworth?

HARRIE
Yeah.

Brotha Luke strolls over to the 88. Harrie walks over to the passenger side. Brother Luke reaches over and locks the door.

BROTHA LUKE
Nuh-uhn. Ain't got 'nuff room.

HARRIE
Can't you move some of these boxes?

BROTHA LUKE
Don't you got a bus pass?

Brotha Luke adjusts his seat belt, starts the motor and drives off.

EXT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Harrie KNOCKS then walks to the edge of the porch. DOOR CREAKS.

HARRIE

Brenda here?

It's TED'S eyes peeking through the crack. We can't see the rest of him but if we could we'd see his flex-ready Dad Bod. He has a radar for a Brenda-stray. Harrie looks like a Brenda stray. But Ted's not the confrontational type--most of the time he says nothing at the time--a strong and silent type: He bitches when they leave.

TED

Brenda! For you!

INT. BRENDA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ted voices his displeasure by staging a stand-in next to the kitchen. Brenda dumps coffee grounds into a trash can. Harrie sits at a alcove table. Harrie glances at Ted.

HARRIE

(to Brenda)

He ok?

Brenda hands Harrie a steaming cup. A saucer to go under.

BRENDA

Sugar?

Harrie shakes her head.

BRENDA

Where you stayin'?

HARRIE

Lord Our God in Christ's.

BRENDA

The church?! Did you finda job?

HARRIE

Uh-huh.

BRENDA

Patterson'll like that.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE
Patterson?

BRENDA
Judge at the hearing.

Harrie puts down her cup.

HARRIE
We gonna get P'nut, right?

BRENDA
I'm doin' a lot a-readin' up on
custody. We gotta pretty good
chance.

HARRIE
Did I show you P'nut's picture?
Mexico. He was so tiny then.

Harrie snaps open a coin purse, pulls out a stained square.

BRENDA
Yeah. Cute. Look at you! Cute too!

Harrie slides her hand over half the picture.

HARRIE
Really? I'm prego. Big as a house!

BRENDA
You petite! Look at me! All curves!
(beat)
We may need a man attorney.
Patterson's kinda old school.

Ted's inside the kitchen doorway with reinforcements: their
daughter SIERRA, four-ish, a Ted miniature with curls and
marshmallow shyness.

Ted clears his throat.

BRENDA
Gettin' late, pumkin?

The marshmallow politely nods. She's on Daddy's side.

INT./EXT. BRENDA'S PORCH - NIGHT

Harrie back steps out the door.

BRENDA

It's only a hearing. We got plenty
of time.

(whispers)

And if we need a attorney...we'll
get a attorney.

Brenda closes the door. Inside Ted's voice rises. Brenda
shushes.

Porch light extinguishes.

INT. CHURCH ATTIC - DAY

Choking dust settles into the uneasy quiet. The attic is
freezing. Harrie's awake but she's still her cot. She
reaches up and jerks the chain. Nothing. Power outage.

Harrie shoots up. Grabs a handful of clothes. Fumbles. Wraps
a robe about and her and bolts down stairs.

VESTIBULE

Harrie props the church entrance door, morning light washes
over the mounted grandfather clock and across the offertory
table. Harrie makes out time.

Harrie rummages brochures and tithing envelopes from the
table. Too dim to read. Grabs a stack of flyers and
brochures and steps to the door light. One flyer says YMCA.

INSERT - FLYER

Harrie reads the "YMCA" hours.

BACK TO SCENE

Harrie hustles into the sanctuary.

SANCTUARY

She rushes down the center aisle past the altar to Passa's office. RAPS.

HARRIE

Passa!

Nothing. Harrie returns to the front pew plops down

HARRIE

What you gonna do, Harrie? You need
this job.

Light filters through variegated stain-glassed tableaus.

HARRIE

Lord, why you goin' do this to me?

HARRIE POV

Sparkling water reflections dance like a silver net on the mural John baptizing Jesus. Above the holy pair, a dove descends on a radiated halo above Jesus's outstretched arms.

BACK TO SCENE

Harrie jumps up and runs to the baptismal pool.

INT. BAPTISMAL POOL - DAY

Harrie grabs a towel and dons a rubber cap before stepping down the cool, clean fiberglass pool. She grabs the rail and disrobes, takes the wedge of soap from the robe pocket and submerges her nakedness into the chilling water.

She foams a nice lather, until--a miracle happens--a light from heaven appears from the ceiling lamps.

VOICE (O.S.)

Power's on! Tell the pastor, that
the power is back on!

The voice comes from outside the church.

Harrie swaddles her clothes and tips out of the pool.

SANCTUARY

Harrie snatches up her clothes from the pew and scampers down the aisle and drips out the sanctuary...

...just ahead of Passa and GROUNDSMEN coming in by another way.

Only Passa notices suds on the carpet. And a track of spongy footprints!

INT. BOB'S RESTAURANT/KITCHEN - DAY

Busy. Morning feels like forever. COIFFED ZOMBIES balance trays and trance along to DISH CLANGING, WHITE NOISE AND DISCO JAMS.

SWEATY BOSS DIRTY APRON weaves Harrie through the greasy spoon maze into a dark kitchen corner.

SWEATY BOSS DIRTY APRON
I try to be fair to all you girls,
see? Some girls don't feel that
way, see?

HARRIE (V.O.)
Here we go. I swear I'll drop this
muthafucka if he lay a hand on me.

SWEATY BOSS DIRTY APRON
I pick the best girls, see? Cream
of the crop, see?

HARRIE (V.O.)
Bet you do. But, I ain't gone suck
yo dick to keep this damn job.

Sweaty Boss Dirty Apron tugs a folded piece of paper out of his dirty apron. It's not favors he wants.

It's her employment application.

HARRIE
But, I told the truth.

SWEATY BOSS DIRTY APRON
Sorry. Someone called corporate.

Harrie peels off her apron.

EXT. CHURCH/BACK STAIRS - DAY

Harrie hunches like she's been kicked.

Passa walks up the stairs.

PASSA

Thought you was at work.

Harrie peers up. Holds up a check.

PASSA

What it's been? A week?

Harrie nods. Passa sits beside her. He takes the check.

PASSA

Thirty eight and eighty three cents?

HARRIE

Ah prayed, Passa. To God. To Jesus. All of 'em and nobody answers me.

PASSA

You gotta git rid of the blight, Harrie. God know when you pretends and when you fo' real.

(beat)

Yo license still suspended?

Harrie nods.

PASSA

How close is the trial...I mean the hearing?

HARRIE

Tomorrow. Can you be there?

PASSA

If you want.

She rests her head on his shoulder. His arm comes around her...the comforter.

INT. MULTNOMAH COUNTY COURTHOUSE/THIRD FLOOR ROOM - DAY

Harrie and Brenda sit quietly at a small table with Passa seated behind them. JUDGE PATTERSON was there before they arrived. It's judgment day. It's his house and he's god in a black robe. Non-descript BAILIFF blurs the fore bench area.

(CONTINUED)

BIG DEE's on the other side: nineteen at Tet, twenty-nine now, Camo jacket that says 'Nam without saying 'Nam and dark shades covering a fuck-with-me-if-you-want non-expression. Dee's got this PUPPY SCARED ATTORNEY next to him who'll bark when he tells him to bark.

Patterson scours Brenda's petition.

JUDGE PATTERSON
What the hell is this?

Rhetorical. Don't answer.

JUDGE PATTERSON
Where do you live?

Harrie turns around. Turns back.

JUDGE PATTERSON
You! I can only be talking to one person! Where do you live!

HARRIE
The church.

The fuse is lit.

JUDGE PATTERSON
Church?!

HARRIE
Yessuh. For right now.

Three too many words pass yessuh. Patterson is warming up. Bailiff knowingly grins.

JUDGE PATTERSON
Yo kids'll be early for Sunday School, I guess?

HARRIE
And for prayer meetings and revivals.

Big Dee scoffs.

Patterson eyes Harrie then slow-turns to face Big Dee.

JUDGE PATTERSON
(to Big Dee's puppy)
Have your client remove his sunglasses...this ain't a juke joint, disco or race track.

The puppy shivers. It's a Patterson not today look. Big Dee removes his shades.

Patterson turns back to fight the first smartypants.

JUDGE PATTERSON
Employment? Do you have a job?

BRENDA
Sir, she's working at...

JUDGE PATTERSON
Are you employed!

Patterson leans forward like he's gonna bite.

JUDGE PATTERSON
Quit twisting your hair like a
pickaninny! Do you or don't you!

HARRIE
I--had...

PASSA
Your honor, if I may?

JUDGE PATTERSON
Who are you!

PASSA
Miss Hobson's pastor, your honor.

Good, an acolyte.

JUDGE PATTERSON
Speak, reverend.

PASSA
Miss Hobson works at the church.
She's drives the church van and
helps kids stay off the streets by
candy-selling. It's temporary but
it pays her room and board.

Patterson leans back like King Solomon weighing a decision.

JUDGE PATTERSON
Stand, Miss Hobson.

He lifts the papers, leans forward and lets them drop to the floor. He picks up the gavel and screw-tightens the head.

JUDGE PATTERSON

A six year old could've prepared a better petition. Not enough. Not enough. Restraining order upheld.

He GAVEL's an exclamation point to the proceedings.

JUDGE PATTERSON

What's the custody docket?

PUPPY SCARED ATTORNEY

Two weeks, your honor.

JUDGE PATTERSON

Two weeks. Mrs. Hobson try a real attorney next time.

BAILIFF

All rise!

Everyone pops to attention! Patterson exits.

INT. BIG DEE'S HOUSE - DAY

This is what victory looks like, Big Dee swaggering in the front door.

Parks his shades on his elk head mount above the closet door. Victory struts into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Big Dee's Little Africa: Begira tufted faux tiger rug flanked by a large porcelain Indian elephant stool (which probably should be a plant-holder outdoors, but you can't tell Dee nothin').

Big Dee plops down on the couch. Nevermind the description of the couch, all he cares about is the Beretta pistol underneath the couch at arm's length!.

BIG DEE

P'nut! Peenutt!!!

TINEY stands in the doorway. He's Dee's other son, thirteen, footballer, nose tackle, but coach parks him off the line of scrimmage, or as big as his watermelon head is, Tiney'll be off-sides every fucking time.

(CONTINUED)

BIG DEE
I called P'nut!

Tiney doesn't like being yelled at. Tiney's always quiet when somethings wrong. He's big but he's sorry.

BIG DEE
P'nut with those Gooks, again? That hooch-girl?

Tiney shrugs.

BIG DEE
I'm holdin' you responsible, hear me?

Tiney responds to Big Dee by not responding. By being invisible.

Big Dee jumps up from the couch. It's a did-you-hear-me-jumps. Tiney crumples.

That's all Dee wants to see: cowering.

Tiney leans on the door jamb, making way for the passing king, Big Dee.

Outside we hear the ENGINE ROAR and the SQUEAL of Big Dee's TIRES. Tiney lets the Doppler waves recede through him before he relaxes a muscle.

EXT. OPEN FLEA MARKET - DAY

TAN parts the marketers and doddlers, flechetting her way through the busy market place like a terrier hunting rats. P'nut struggles to tag-along. Tan noses up on...

EASTER LILIES

She grabs a bunch of Easter lilies by the throats, yanks them out of a bucket, and vigorously shakes them.

Tan's sidekick (P'nut) nods approvingly.

INT. TAN'S DATSUN - DAY

P'nut cradles the Easter lilies to Tan's Datsun. Khanh and DAI horse around in the back seat.

DAI, Khanh's thirteen year old sister, is taking advantage her summer growth spurt by whooping Khanh's ass.

Tan gets in and slaps both their heads before starting the car.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY

Today feels like summer just caught up to Portland.

Harrie watches Brotha Luke heave boxes from the 88 Olds into the primered L.O.G.I.C. van.

HARRIE

Must sell a lot of candy.

Brotha Luke opens the boxes and counts. Got his method. Down to a science. An abacus of World's Finest chocolate bars, chocolate-covered turtles, Reeses, M&Ms, everything.

Six or seven afro'd KNUCKLEHEADS, bell-bottomed dropouts, abandoned by their parents on Passa's church doorstep. It'll be a candy selling rest of the summer for knuckleheads.

Passa strolls past the victims. His shoes a boot camp polish. His nails manicured.

Passa jangles some keys above Harrie's head.

Harrie snatches the keys and horses around like she's driving. Brotha Luke quits abacus-ing.

She clowns by turning the wheel and falling out of the seat. Knuckleheads are all over themselves laughing.

BROTHA LUKE

You outta yo mind? Give me dose keys! You ain't drivin'!

HARRIE

I'm Brotha Luke! Watch! Whoa! Whoa!

More laughter.

BROTHA LUKE

Get outta the driver's seat!

PASSA

No. Let her--

BROTHA LUKE

Drive? Passa?

(CONTINUED)

PASSA

Yeah. See what she can do. Trust.

Brotha Luke shrugs and gets into the passenger seat. He unfolds a map. Felt-mark ribbons of yellow, blue and red high light the map's seller zones. Luke points to the map.

BROTHA LUKE

(to Harrie)

You stay in the yella and you fine.
You go past the yella and you in
the other fellas zone...

HARRIE

Uh-huh.

BROTHA LUKE

Uh-huh? Uh-huh? Drivers complain
when somebody sells in they zone.

Brotha Luke tears a scribbled sheet of paper from his pad.

HARRIE

Who dis?

BROTHA LUKE

Addresses where you drop these kids
off when you done.

PASSA

Drop them off before dark.

HARRIE

Brotha Luke gotta come with, Passa?

Country bear thinkin' of chaperoning.

PASSA

He don't have to.

HARRIE

Good. C'mon, knuckleheads!

Knuckleheads pile in the back and sidle up to their candy boxes.

HARRIE

Who ridin' shotgun?

KNUCKLEHEADS

Nobody. We good.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE

Uh-huh. Bet yo mommas tole you I
was a pariah, hunh?

Knuckleheads are silent. Whatever pariah
means...Knuckleheads' mommas warned them not to associate
with Harrie...so, yes, Harrie's a pariah.

INT. VAN - MOVING - DAY

Splotches of rain. Steam bubbles up from the mottled strip
of highway. SMART KNUCKLEHEAD is paying attention to street
signs and landmarks.

SMART KNUCKLEHEAD

This ain't the way. Gresham's that
way.

HARRIE

Short cut to Overlook. Down
Ainsworth. Greeley Avenue.

Wails erupt. Knuckleheads know their streets. They know that
nobody buys candy on Greeley Avenue.

SMART KNUCKLEHEAD

Ain't nobuddy buyin' there!

HARRIE

Where they buyin', smart butt?

KNUCKLEHEAD #2

Eliot.

HARRIE

Eliot? That's Skidmore. Too far--

KNUCKLEHEADS

C'mon!

Harrie slams to a halt. Knuckleheads skid forward.

HARRIE

This best not get out, or else I'm
kickin' all yo little asses. Y'all
niggas better sell like crazy!

KNUCKLEHEADS

Yeah! Yay! We will!

EXT. STREET - SHERWIN WILLIAMS PARKING LOT - DAY

There are two sides to this neighborhood--the rich in stately houses behind plump deciduous trees--and the other side: rows of hen coops.

INT. VAN - DAY

Harrie parks across from the Sherwin Williams paint shop.

HARRIE

Get out.

Not a Knucklehead stirs.

HARRIE

Out.

Finally, Knucklehead #1 slides the door open and tows his candy box out. Other Knuckleheads follow suit till the last one files out.

HARRIE

Last one close the door!

Not one Knucklehead closes the door.

OUTSIDE VAN

Harrie slams the door shut. She stops...

PARKING LOT

There's a boy (P'NUT) lying in the parking lot.

INT. VAN - DAY

Harrie jumps in the van--fires the ignition. Looks like...

EXT. SHERWIN WILLIAMS PARKING LOT - DAY

Harry rolls through the lot...but, there's no one.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Knuckleheads crowd Passa as he counts candy boxes, bars, etc. and cashes-out each seller. Sista Shay forces the Knuckleheads to form a post-pay queue.

PASSA

Do better tomorrow. Don't eat yo profits and make mo money.

KNUCKLEHEADS

Yessuh.

They'll eat their profits.

Harrie's turn. Passa peels bills from his wad. Hands it to Harrie.

PASSA

Oh. Wait.

Snatches the bills back and hands Harrie a check.

PASSA

Checks are a record. Need records for court, right?

HARRIE

Eight dollars? Jesus!

PASSA

Hearings in two weeks. You wanna find another job?

Harrie climbs into the van.

PASSA

Where you goin'?

HARRIE

Gettin' the rest of the boxes outta the van.

PASSA

Let the Brotha Luke take care of that.

Harrie climbs out. Passa scrunches-up his nose. Passa turns to Sista Shay. They look at Harrie.

HARRIE

Wha?

(CONTINUED)

SISTA SHAY
You need to shower.

INT. YMCA - DAY

Harrie showers behind the plastic curtain.

INT. VAN - DAY

Harrie stakes-out across from Sherwin Williams.

EXT. SHERWIN WILLIAMS PARKING LOT - DAY

Khanh and two VIETNAMESE TUFFS punish a wrinkled soccer ball across the lot but no P'nut.

Harrie drives off.

INT. VIETNAMESE GROCERY STORE - DAY

VIETNAMESE CLERK drops seven dollars and coins on the counter.

HARRIE
This ain't eight dollars.

VIETNAMESE CLERK
Check cashing service fee.

Harrie shakes her head and scoops up her divvies.

EXT. FRED MEYER SUPERSTORE - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

Primered L.O.G.I.C van takes up two parking spaces.

INT. FRED MEYER SUPERSTORE - DAY

Harrie strolls down the aisles. Finds and pulls Dark and Lovely hair relaxer from the shelf.

INT./EXT. FRED MEYER SUPERSTORE - DAY

Droplets patter on the news paper Harrie holds over her head as she runs to the van.

INT. VAN - MOVING - DAY

Harrie passes P'nut. He's walking in the opposite direction. Harrie goes around the block. waits. P'nut trudges up. Harrie rolls down the window.

HARRIE
Wanna ride lil boy?

P'NUT
No ma'am.

He skips along. Harrie fires up the van and pursues. Comes alongside him again.

HARRIE
You soaked, boy! Get in here!

P'nut stops. Harrie slams on the brakes. Her Fred Meyer bags cascades to the floor. HORNS BLARE from backed-up TRAFFIC. Harrie pushes the passenger door open.

P'nut eyes the mounting traffic behind the van. Climbs in.

HARRIE
You, don't have enough sense to
come in outta the rain, do you?

Harrie checks traffic and pulls away from the curb.

HARRIE
See all that stuff on the floor?
Pick it up.

P'nut picks up the hot comb and gel and stuffs them in the bag but scrutinizes the Dark and Lovely jar.

P'NUT
What's this?

He puts it in front of her face.

HARRIE
Relaxer.

P'NUT
What's it do?

HARRIE
Look at the picture.

P'nut turns it. Harrie runs her hand along the back of her head and neck.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE

See all this? Gets rid of naps.

P'nut tugs a strand of his hair.

P'NUT

My naps?

HARRIE

Girl naps. Not boy naps. Boys don't need it.

P'NUT

Uh-hunh.

HARRIE

Unh-uhn. Boys that use relaxer are kinda...

Harrie banks her hand back and forth. "Funny".

P'NUT

Nuh-hunh. Khan and Fann-o got straight hair and they aint...

Imitates "funny" gesture.

HARRIE

Who's Khanh?

P'NUT

My Bietnameez best friend.

HARRIE

Vietnamese. And that's different cuz Vietnamese ain't Black folks.

P'NUT

I'm Black, right?

HARRIE

Uh-huh.

P'NUT

And I put my arm side Khanh's arm and his arm was oranger than mines.

HARRIE

He's yellow not orange. Nobodies orange.

(CONTINUED)

P'NUT

Yes there is... Khanh's orange,
oranger than me.

HARRIE

Where you live so I can drop you
off.

P'NUT

Near Irvington Park. On Grand.

HARRIE

And you all the way out here?

P'NUT

I took Tri-Met.

HARRIE

Tri-Met? You too little to ride
Tri-Met by yoself.

P'NUT

Nuh-unh. Kids do it all the time.

HARRIE

Kids get killed, too.

Silence.

P'NUT

I'm goin' to pick strawberries on
Sophie's Island. With Khanh.

Sauvie's Island is pronounced Sophie.

HARRIE

I picked when I was little. But, we
took a school bus not Tri-Met.

P'NUT

Gotta be nine to ride the school
bus.

HARRIE

I can drop you off as far as
Irvington. But that's it.

P'NUT

I don't wanna go to Irvington.

Silence weaves into the rattling van.

(CONTINUED)

P'NUT
Can you straighten my naps?

HARRIE
Now?

P'NUT
Yeah.

HARRIE
In this dirty van?

P'NUT
Yeah.

HARRIE
Boys don't...It's gonna burn.

P'NUT
I don't care.

She looks at his scalp. Won't take much.

EXT. UNION 76 GAS STATION - DAY

Van pulls around to the restroom.

INT. WOMEN'S RESTROOM - LATER

P'nut admires his partially straightened locks in the halo of mirror. Thin burn streaks chalk-line his temples.

INT. VAN - DAY

P'nut bounces into the passenger's seat. Harrie climbs in the drivers.

HARRIE
Home?

P'NUT
Sophie's Island.

HARRIE
Nuh-uhn. Home.

P'NUT
How bout the paint store?

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE
Sherwin Williams?

P'NUT
Yeah. The bus'll drop Khanh and Dai
off after strawberry pickin'.

HARRIE
So it was you I saw layin' in the
parking lot.

P'NUT
Uh-huh.

HARRIE
Can't do that. You get run over.

P'NUT
You know how that paint sign goes
'round?

HARRIE
Yeah.

P'NUT
I count how many times the shadow
passes over me before the school
bus comes.

HARRIE
What if a car comes?

P'NUT
People don't paint that much in the
summer.

HARRIE
Yes they do!

P'NUT
Nuh-uhn. I don't see 'um.

Harrie shakes her head and turns the wheel.

EXT. SHERWIN WILLIAMS PARKING LOT - DAY

Harrie pulls the van into the parking lot. P'nut jumps out.

HARRIE
Hey! You welcome. What's yo name?

(CONTINUED)

P'NUT
You know my name.

Harrie rolls down the passenger window. Smiling.

HARRIE
You know who I am?

P'NUT
Of course.

HARRIE
Who, then?

P'NUT
Ma crazy mama that's who!

Crazy mama? That's a brick in the face.

P'NUT
Daddy said you ain't 'sposed to be
near me. And if you come...I should
call the cops.
(Beat)
That's why we gotta move.

HARRIE
Move?

P'NUT
To Arkansaw.

HARRIE
Arkansaw?

P'NUT
Gonna see all my friends before I
go! See Khanh. See Sophie's Island-

HARRIE
Why yo daddy didn't tell me? P'nut?

P'nut shrugs. Rain trickles down his face.

HARRIE
You'd better get outta the rain or
your hair will shrivel up.

P'nut pulls his coat over his head. Runs under the awning.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY

Harrie pulls the van into the parking lot. Passa paces under an umbrella held by Brotha Luke. He's wet all over--all but his expression--it's not wet.

PASSA
Candy sellers are waiting.

HARRIE
Why didn't you tell me Dee's takin'
P'nut to Arkansaw!

PASSA
We'll discuss that later!

Hands her a soggy map.

PASSA
Parents're were callin' and callin'
wondering when their boys'll be
picked up.

The map is tearing at the creases. Colors streaking.

INSET - MAP

Black felt-tip ink splotches spread like fuzzy caterpillars menacing the outlines of Gresham city limits.

BACK TO SCENE

HARRIE
Gresham?

PASSA
Gresham and Troutdale! Go!

EXT./INT. EVERYBODY'S GRANDMA'S HOUSE - EVENING (GRESHAM)

EVERYBODY'S GRANDMA clutches the handle behind screen mesh door. BARELY CAN HEAR KNUCKLEHEAD recites seller's spiel.

EVERYBODY'S GRANDMA
Wha?

Barely Can Hear Knucklehead starts afresh.

(CONTINUED)

BARELY CAN HEAR KNUCKLEHEAD
(near whisper)
We are trying to raise money for
our...

EVERYBODY'S GRANDMA
Heard that part. I don't eat candy.

HARRIE
Ma'am may I use your phone?

Everybody's Grandma balks.

HARRIE
It's an emergency.

EVERYBODY'S GRANDMA
Not an emergency that needs my
phone.

HARRIE
One my kids is missing. Please.

Everybody's Grandma disappears. After some scuttlebutt,
reappears with phone.

EVERYBODY'S GRANDMA
Only stretches this far.

HARRIE
Thank you.

Everybody's Grandma unlatches the screen door. Everybody's
Grandma ushers Barely Can Hear Knucklehead into the parlor.
Harrie dials from the foyer.

HARRIE
Brenda, please. Hello? Hello?

Open line dead air.

BRENDA (V.O.)
Hello?

HARRIE
He's takin' the kids! Big Dee!

Barely Can Hear Knucklehead emerges hefting his candy box.
His face says "no sale". Everybody's Grandma deposits a
quarter in Harrie's palm.

EVERYBODY'S GRANDMA
I don't eat chocolate.

EXT. SHERWIN WILLIAMS PARKING LOT - DAY

Pasty fog smears across the wet face of the Sherwin Williams storefront.

A dozen or more Vietnamese kids horseplay in the lot and near the curb.

Finally, the school bus clears the dense patches and lumbers to a stop.

None pays attention to the white church van across the lane.

INT. VAN - DAY

Harrie cranes seeing if P'nut's there.

P'nut yanks the driver's door open. Harrie claws for the steering wheel.

P'NUT
Suprise!

HARRIE
Boy, I'mma beat you you ever do
that again!

P'NUT
Knew you'd come!

P'nut hops in.

Harrie shifts gears and tails the bus as it burrows through the fog.

EXT. ROAD - DAY (SAUVIE'S ISLAND)

A thin layer of fog peels away from from the highway revealing a yellow bus and white van mounting the Sauvie Island Bridge, across the Multnomah Channel and onto the island proper. Past KRUGGER'S FARM and VIRGINIA LAKE. Rows of green beans sprout, crowding infinite corn and wheat stalks. Intermittent gusts wring spray from twisted, corselet clouds.

INT. VAN - DAY

P'nut rolls the window up then down then up...

P'NUT
Momma, do guys wear makeup?

HARRIE
Quit playin' with the window.

P'NUT
Do guys--

HARRIE
No.

P'NUT
Do you wear eyeliner?

HARRIE
Why are we talkin' about this?

P'NUT
Dai wears makeup.

HARRIE
Die? who's he?

P'NUT
Dai's a she not a he. She puts
eyeliner on--

HARRIE
She Vietnamese? How old is this
girl?

P'NUT
Twelve almost thirteen.

HARRIE
Only punks wear eyeliner. Punks and
sissies.

Drill it.

HARRIE
You know what a punk is? Look at
me! You know what a punk is?
(beat)
They's punks in yo school, right?

(CONTINUED)

P'NUT

Yeah! I know what punks is!
Punks're somebody people want to
beat up!

P'nut thrusts his arm out the window. He's not a punk though
kids want to beat him up sometimes.

P'NUT

Daddy gonna kill you when he finds
out you brought me here?

HARRIE

Get your arm in the window fo' it
gets knocked off.

He's hard-headed. Ain't gonna listen.

P'NUT

He said he gonna kill me for
hangin' out with gooks.

HARRIE

They're not gooks. Put your arm in!
Gonna count to three. One...two...

P'nut yanks his arm in.

EXT. SAUVIE'S ISLAND - STRAWBERRY FIELDS - DAY

School bus halts near vast strawberry fields. Harrie hauls
up behind the bus. Trucks harvesters unload plats to
harvesters who dart to and from berry rows.

INT. VAN - DAY

P'nut pops out the van and barrels down a strawberry row.
Harrie remains in the van.

FIELD

Half dozen Vietnamese families form down the patch rows.
They're picking fast. Dust rises as P'nut plops down near
Khahn. P'nut feasts on plump strawberries only tossing a few
in the crate.

VAN

STRAWBERRY BOSS passes by Harrie.

HARRIE

Hey! How much you pay?

Strawberry Boss walks up to the van. Leans in the window.

STRAWBERRY BOSS

Free if you pick. You can make a little money pickin' for me.

HARRIE

Is is hard?

STRAWBERRY BOSS

You ain't never picked strawberries?

HARRIE

Nuh-uhn. Beans. Cotton.

STRAWBERRY BOSS

Easy. Not like cotton. Falls right in your hand. Gotta be quick. Quick like dem boat people down there.

HARRIE

How much?

STRAWBERRY BOSS

One eighty five per crate. Sometimes two fifteen per.

HARRIE

I'll take two fifteen.

Strawberry boss laughs.

EXT. STRAWBERRY PATCH - DAY

Harrie's picking and sweating. Trying to keep pace with the Vietnamese who're edging down the aisles. P'nut's next to her for now. He's tossing berries and twirling. He stands.

HARRIE

Where you goin'?

P'nut points to Khanh down field.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE

Nuh-uhn. They got enough help. Help me.

He squats. Eyes a fat strawberry.

P'NUT

"I have you now, Skywalker!"

He rips the red strawberry flesh and stuffs his mouth.

EXT. SAUVIE'S ISLAND GAS STATION - DAY

Harrie pulls the van to the pump. STEVENS (50s) advances to prevent self-pumping.

STEVENS

How much, sweetheart?

Stevens is the type that calls ladies girls and girls sweetheart. He's quit cussing since his conversion.

HARRIE

Five dollas.

Pump clicks. Numbers flip.

P'nut jumps out and runs about the hardscrabble patches yard. P'nut tries the doors of a CLACKING REFRIGERATOR TRUCK.

HARRIE

How big is this island?

STEVENS

Big, sweetheart.

HARRIE

People get lost out here?

STEVENS

Sometimes. Out in the corn mazes. Strawberry patches. Some drown.

P'nut pries a door.

HARRIE

Can you cross to Vancouver?

STEVENS

Not less you can fly. Ferry hasn't run since fifty eight.

Stevens squeezes, shakes, and hangs the nozzle. Harrie flits out four bills and some change. Hands it to Stevens.

REFRIGERATED RIG

P'nut unlatches the rig door. White mist belches out. P'nut lifts a leg...

HARRIE (O.S.)
Boy! Come from over there!

P'nut climbs up. Cold billows wash over him.

P'NUT
It's cold!

HARRIE (O.S.)
One...two...!

VAN

P'nut runs up to the van window.

P'NUT
Momma. Gotta to tell you a secret.

HARRIE
Wha?

He clamps his hands on her cheeks.

HARRIE
Fuck!

P'NUT
It's cold!

Stevens laughs.

STEVENS
Our ice cream freezer went caput.
So we're usin' the rig as a
freezer. Hey, I got a secret...

Stevens loves games, too. But no one ever picks him for their team.

Stevens reaches into his pocket. Slides out a CHICO STICK..

(CONTINUED)

STEVENS
Candy, son?

 P'NUT
No, thank you.

 HARRIE
He don't want no candy. We sell
candy. See?

P'nut opens the side door. P'nut climbs in the hold and slides a box to Stevens who lifts a bar of chocolate.

 STEVENS
Squishy.

 HARRIE
Oh, shit! They're melting!

 STEVENS
No problemo. Follow me.

Stevens lifts the box and heads to the refrigerated trailer.

INT. PASSA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Passa's frozen at the window. Harrie's hammies are sticking like fly to flypaper on the plastic-covered couch.

Brotha Luke knocks. Enters. He's been checking the van.

 PASSA
Check the tank?

 BROTHA LUKE
Three quarters.

 PASSA
Odometer?

 BROTHA LUKE
Um...

 PASSA
Don't guess.

Brotha Luke hustles out. He's been doin' this for the last 10 to 15. Checking one thing at a time.

 PASSA
Can't hide nuthin' from God.

Sounds like Patterson's courtroom.

(CONTINUED)

PASSA
Am I right?

HARRIE
Uh-huh.

PASSA
Uh-huh? Uh-huh? He's so high. Can't
get over Him. So low. Can't get
under--

TAPPING comes from DOOR. Sermon waits. Renewed TAPPING.
Brotha Luke finally enters. He had the good sense to carry a
notepad this time. Hands Passa the notepad. Passa's eyes
move across the scribble.

PASSA
How far you say you went?

HARRIE
Few miles.

Passa's subtle. Can't tell Passa was ever ex-con till you
see how his eyes move quick to your face. Prison-yard quick.
Without compassion. He's gotcha when he starts quotin'
scriptures.

PASSA
"All liars have their part in the
Lake of Fire". You don't want no
part o' that, do ya?

HARRIE
Nahsuh.

PASSA
This ain't no "few miles".

He wants to hear a new story.

HARRIE
I drove around looking for places
to sell candy. Help cover more
territories...

PASSA
Let me worry bout what territories
need covering.

HARRIE
Yessuh.

(CONTINUED)

PASSA

You wanna get yo chillren back,
right?

HARRIE

P'nut. Yessuh.

PASSA

Now I know this candy job ain't
much. But, it's a start. And I'm on
the phone everywhere trying to get
you somethin' a little better.
Believe that?

Passa mode shift: the poor me.

PASSA

Now, I got Vacation Bible School
startin'. Ministries set up. All
over by Grace a God. Halleluyah!

Halleluyah is Passa's signal it's comin'.

PASSA

I wanna lift yo heavy burduns. Now,
I'll fight you for you. But you
gotta help me out. Can you do that,
Miss Harriett?

HARRIE

I'll try.

PASSA

That's all I ask. Try. And you'll
receive blessins you caint
conceive. Blessins you caint
contain. If you truthful.

This is the cue. Peel off the couch. Get on your knees and
serve the Lord.

HARRIE

Forgive me, Passa.

PASSA

For...?

HARRIE

Lookin' for more candy routes.

Passa's knees shakes. He's restraining his spirit.

(CONTINUED)

PASSA

For yo punishment, you gonna work
around the church. Crawl over here.

Harrie crawls over to Passa's desk.

PASSA

Fine?

The serpent was more subtle...

HARRIE

Yeah. That's fine.

AROUND CHURCH - MONTAGE

Harrie prunes roses. Places long stems in Passa's office.

Mows.

Lugs folding chairs from a storage closet.

Unstacks cots.

She unfolds a table and covers it with butcher paper.

She paints "VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 1978" in large black
letters across the butcher paper.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - CANTEEN - DAY

Harrie dusts shelves topped with jars of polish sausages and
pickled pigs feet. She unpacks foot-long licorice and stacks
alongside other booty.

Passa's canteen is part goods store and raid storage to
counter nuclear fallout or Armageddon.

Harrie tries to align the jars.

Behind the jars, a small metal lock box is prevents
alignment.

Sista Shay's head pops through the top half of the dutch
door. She's bouncing on her tip toes trying to free the
bottom half latch. Her bosom is bouncing on the ledge.

SISTA SHAY

Make sure you put the oldest stuff
up front so it can be sold first.

(CONTINUED)

She must've been spying outside the canteen. She can hear a rat pissin' on cotton. She smells like an old cat lady. She finds her way into the canteen.

SISTA SHAY
Gotta show you everything?

Her bulk presses Harrie to the wall. Sista Shay turns the jar labels facing forward.

SISTA SHAY
Nobody can see 'em if their
backwards. That's enough for today.

Harrie steps outside the door. She hears SCRAPING, a CLICK and coins CLATTERING into the metal box.

Soon Sista Shay joins her and locks the canteen door. Sista Shay drops the key in her apron.

INT. BASEMENT KITCHEN - DAY

Steam rises from a three compartment sink. Sista Shay jerks the nozzle like it's her dead husband's penis. She's washing. Harrie's drying.

SISTA SHAY
Dry.

HARRIE
Yesmum. Sista Shay?

SISTA SHAY
Wha?

HARRIE
Gotta bobby pin?

Gotta a lot to do before Bible School starts. Sista Shay fishes around. Pulls one from her bun.

HARRIE
Thank you.

SISTA SHAY
Uh-hunh.

Sista Shay wipes and leaves the kitchen. Harrie listens as Shay clumps up the back stairs.

CANTEEN

Harrie crimps the bobby pin and threads it into lock. Turns.
It doesn't budge.

Footsteps. Harrie runs back to the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Passa stands at the kitchen hatch. He's got wool blankets
under his arm.

PASSA

Where do I put these?

Helpful Passa. VBS is a money maker. Harrie points to cots.

PASSA

Looks good. Be ready for Sunday?

HARRIE

Yessuh.

PASSA

You ready?

HARRIE

Yessuh.

PASSA

Close yo eyes. Open yo hand.

Drops van keys in her hand.

PASSA

Trust.

EXT. SHERWIN WILLIAMS PARKING LOT - DAY

Sunless windows distort a white van slipping through the
parking lot.

INT. VAN - DAY

Harrie's van is Knucklehead full.

SMART KNUCKLEHEAD

Hey! What we stoppin' here fo?

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE
Shuddup! Sit yo ass down!

KNUCKLEHEADS
Wooooo! She told you!

Harrie pulls off as a...

PARKING LOT

A mustard-colored Datsun pulls in. Stops. DATSUN BEEPS.
Flashes.

P'nut rushes out of the Sherwin Williams and jumps into the
car.

Datsun speeds off.

INT. VAN - DAY - (LATER)

Harrie pulls along the curb. Knuckleheads mill at the
corner. They slide the van door open and file in.

KNUCKLEHEAD #1
No sale.

KNUCKLEHEAD #2
No sale.

KNUCKLEHEAD #3
No sale.

All told six Knuckleheads get in. No sale.

Harrie cranks the engine. Rolls down the window and sticks
her head out.

HARRIE
None of you fuckers eat candy?!

EXT. STREET - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

White van goes through the neighborhood toppling trash cans
and crashing mailboxes.

EXT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - DAY

Harrie paces under porchlight. We notice Ted's eyes peering from behind the blinds. Harrie polite-raps the door again. Harrie puts her face to the picture window. Her eyes meet Ted's. She sticks Brenda's card to the window. At length, Ted opens the door.

HARRIE
Brenda home?

Ted's face registers nothing. He steps back and partially closes the door.

TED (O.S)
Brenda!

Door cracks open. Brenda has a muumuu and terry robe on.

BRENDA
Harriet?

HARRIE
(Whispers)
I need a favor.

BRENDA
A favor? What kinda favor.

HARRIE
Your car.

Brenda crosses the threshold and pulls the door behind her. She walks Harrie to edge of the stairs.

BRENDA
My car? You can't borrow my car!
You don't have a license.

HARRIE
Somebodies got P'nut!

BRENDA
Are you a hundred percent sure?

HARRIE
I was driving off when I saw a lil
boy jump into a car. I drove around
but the car was gone.

Brenda looks at her. Silence.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA

Big Dee?

HARRIE

Don't think it was Dee.

BRENDA

Call the police.

HARRIE

Police won't do nuthin'. Anyway,
you know Dee has custody.

(beat)

I think P'nut's in Little Vietnam.

The drapes part. Ted glares through the window. Sierra is stationed by his side.

HARRIE

Could you at least drive me there?

Ted TAPS on the PANE. Brenda turns. Ted points to his invisible watch.

TED

(mouths)

Sierra's nap time!

BRENDA

(mouths)

In a minute!

Ted drops the blinds. Jerks shut the drapes.

BRENDA

(to Harrie)

Excuse me.

Brenda steps inside.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Can't you see I'm talkin'!

Brenda returns. She steps Harrie down the porch tread.

BRENDA

(whispers)

I want to help but--

HARRIE

It'll only be a few minutes!

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA
I would if I could.

HARRIE
What if we lose in court, Brenda,
huh? What if somethin' happens to
him before court?
(beat)
What would you do if it were
Sierra? Huh? What if you somethin'
happened where you never saw her
again? In lockup you promised if--

BRENDA
I know what I said. But...

Harrie steps off the porch. Starts for the sidewalk.

BRENDA
Wait.

Brenda disappears inside. Returns clutching car keys.

EXT. SHERWIN WILLIAMS PARKING LOT - DAY

From the yellow bus Vietnamese berry pickers spill across
the walk into the lot.

Nearby HUMS a PLYMOUTH FURY with tinted windows.

INT. FURY - DAY

Big Dee adjusts his sunglasses. Tiney's beside him
cork-screwing a baseball bat as he waits for the action.

A few no-name niggas crowd the back seat. Wannabe BANGERS.
Yeah, they got records. They'll scam before the cops come.
Their itchin' to get gooks outta the hood.

BIG DEE
(to Tiney)
You know what to do. Ask him where
P'nut is.

Tiney nods. He'll not prove a coward today.

OUTSIDE

Emptied, the school bus pulls to the traffic signal.

CROSSWALK

Vietnamese families along with Khahn and his CHUMMIES wait for the light to change.

INT./EXT. FURY - DAY

Tiney and the Bangers jump out the car and head to the crosswalk. Bangers got bats, too.

CROSSWALK

Tiney struts up to Khanh.

TINEY
You know me?

Khanh nods.

TINEY
Where's P'nut?

Khanh and his Chummies look at each other.

TINEY
Don't fuckin' look at them! I asked
you a question!

BANGER #1 strolls through the crowd like he's the new sheriff. BANGER #2 shoves Khanh in the back.

BANGER #1
Answer fuckin' Chinaman!

KHANH
I ain't no fuckin' Chinaman!

CHUMMIE #1
(Vietnamese; subtitle)
Forget them, man!

BANGER #2
(mocking)
DO DANG DING DONG! Speak fuckin'
English!

Tiney steps in front of Khanh. Eye to eye. Time to dance.

(CONTINUED)

Tiney looks him up and down. Shoves him.

TINEY

C'mon. Pull a Bruce Lee on my ass!
See what happens!

OLD VIETNAMESE MAN takes Khanh by the arm.

TINEY

Yeah. Grandpa save you. C'mon,
niggas let's go. Fuck these
chickenshits!

OLD VIETNAMESE MAN

(Vietnamese; subtitle)

Who are they?

KHANH

(Vietnamese; subtitle)

Black boys from high school.
Dropouts.

OLD VIETNAMESE MAN

(Vietnamese; subtitle)

Niggas always talk shit?

TINEY

What did he say?

KHANH

Nuthin'.

BANGER #1

I heard "nigger", Tine.

Tiney grabs Old Vietnamese Man.

TINEY

Old man, I'll put my foot up yo
ass!

KHANH

He didn't say nuthin'.

BANGER #1

So I'm lyin'!

KHANH

You a liar!

The SWOOSH of Banger #2's BAT catches Khanh between the
shoulder blades.

Vietnamese crowd crushes in while VIETNAMESE TUFFS gather pallet shards to wield them like sticks. Bats and sticks are flying--WHOOOP! WHOOOP! WHOOOP!

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Bus driver, JESUS (35), dispatch calls him a uniformed pitbull cause he never uses his inside voice. Portland has nearly planed away his Chicano bark.

JESUS
You kids sit down!

All he can see is the backs and butts of BUS KIDS.

BUS KIDS
Fight! A fight!

Jesus adjusts his mirror. Sure enough a fight.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS/STREET - DAY

Jesus springs the door and is policing the street.

JESUS
Hey! You kids break it off!

TINEY
Go drive yo bus, fuckin' wetback!

JESUS
Fuck you you fuckin' pendejo!

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Jesus rushes back to the bus. Yanks down a black bag.

JESUS
Maricon!

He pulls a PISTOL. Releases the clip and let the clip fall into the bag. Don't want to hurt just scare.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS/STREET - DAY

Harrie cruises past in Brenda's Aspen. Kids are are hanging out of windows. And there's a lunatic waving a gun. Harrie shifts to park and ducks in her seat.

(CONTINUED)

Bats and sticks hit the ground and everybody sprints in all directions. Tiney and Bangers jump into Big Dee's car. As Dee passes, he finger-points an imaginary gun at Jesus.

JESUS

Dats right! Run! Run! Fuckin'...

Harrie peeks up as Khanh and others zig by the Aspen.

HARRIE

(to Khanh)

P'nut! Have you seen P'nut!

Khanh darts into an alley. Harrie shifts to drive. jerks the car in gear and turns down the alley.

HARRIE

Get in!

Khanh stops. He's bleeding. Harrie leans over and opens the back door. Khanh hesitates then throws himself on the seat.

INT. ASPEN - DAY

He's not bleeding bad, but blood drips onto the backseat.

HARRIE

Where you live? You understand English?

Nods.

HARRIE

Which way to your house?

Khanh sits up, leans over the seat. Thumbs "back there". Harrie spins the steering wheel and the car's headed the other way. They ride a few blocks in the opposite direction.

KHANH

Here!

HARRIE

Here?

EXT. KHANH'S HOUSE/BACK YARD - DAY

The Aspen stops at the back yard of a bleached Cape Cod house popular in the Northeast Portland of the Twenties. It has a jaw of chain link fence girdling it.

INT. ASPEN - DAY

Harrie turns toward Khanh.

HARRIE

P'nut--?

Khanh kicks open the back door...

EXT. KHANH'S HOUSE/BACK YARD - DAY

...bolts over the fence and disappears into the house. Harrie processes his ruse too late to react. Jumps out and runs to the fence.

HARRIE

Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

EXT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - DAY

Brenda hunches on the stoop. Behind her in the window the tableau Sierra stands. In a moment, the candy apple Aspen screeches to the curb.

Brenda stands. She shoos Sierra from the window with a back hand wave. Sierra vanishes from behind the window.

BRENDA

Keys! Give me the keys!

Harrie hands the keys through the open window.

BRENDA

Get out! Get out of my car!

Brenda storms around the hood. She forces the door and snatches Harrie out.

BRENDA

Look at my car! Scratches! You said a few minutes! A few minutes!

Brenda's mouth drops.

BRENDA

What the hell is that!

Brenda near rips off the back door. Wipes her fingers across the upholstery.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA
Jesus, Harriet! Is this blood?
Jesus! JESUS--

HARRIE
I'm sorry but...I had...ma...ma...

BRENDA
What, Harrie? You had what!

HARRIE
Ma...period.

Incredible.

BRENDA
That's fuckin' incredible! Excuse
my French. Really? Sex on my
backseat? That's really effed-up!

HARRIE
P'nut...I wanted to--

Brenda shoots her hand up.

BRENDA
Ted said I didn't owe you anything,
Harrie! He said you shudda got yo
own attorney. Whoring yoself ain't
gonna get P'nut back!

Brenda retreats up the stairs.

HARRIE
Bren...Bren...I can clean--

The DOOR SLAM drowns Harrie's plea.

EXT. SHERWIN WILLIAMS PARKING LOT - DAY

Harrie lies on the asphalt.

HARRIE - POV

An upturned paint can labeled "SWP" drips gobs of red paint
on a blue globe. Paint can sign spins. It reads Cover the
Earth!

BACK TO SCENE

She closes her eyes as the spinning GLOBE DRIPPING PAINT SIGN passes a faint shadow over her body.

Shadow of Datsun pulls alongside Harrie.

P'nut's head pops out.

P'NUT
Tryin' to kill yoself?

Harrie smiles. Not a bad idea.

P'NUT
Ride?

Harrie pushes herself up from the concrete.

EXT. ROADSIDE FRUIT STAND - DAY

As Harrie and P'nut wait in the car, Tan and a fruit vendor fire away at each other in Vietnamese. Not necessary to know what they're saying--It's Vietnamese and it's over the pricing.

INT. DATSUN - DAY

P'nut climbs into the back seat. He happily bounces till he gets Harrie's attention. He places his head on her shoulder.

EXT. KHANH'S HOUSE/PORCH - DAY

Up the front porch a brown bag with legs huffs up the stairs. It's P'nut (who Tan hurries along by patting his butt) who sets the teeming paper sack on the porch. P'nut leans into the buzzer. Tan pats his hand. Stop.

They enter the house. Harrie remains in the car. Tan re-opens the front door.

TAN
C'min! C'min!

INT. KHANH'S HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room doubles as a Pooja where an jolly Buddha (more Quan Am than Buddha) on an altar table before cut flowers and bansais. The portrait of Khanh's deceased father has the expression of seeing a child birth: proud and overwhelmed.

Kneeling girl is Dai.

P'nut kneels behind Dai, Khanh behind Tan.

TAN
(Vietnamese; subtitle to
Khanh)
P'nut's mother staying for dinner?

Khanh goes from kneeling to standing. Steps to Harrie.

KHANH
Mom wants to know if you're stayin'
for dinner?

HARRIE
No. Gotta get back to the church.

TAN
(Vietnamese; subtitle)
Does she need a ride?

KHANH
Need a ride?

HARRIE
I can take Tri-Met.

KHANH
(Vietnamese; subtitle)
She'll take the bus. You drive
crazy.

Tan shakes her head. P'nut stands beside Khanh.

P'NUT
Look, momma. Khanh and me...

Holds his and Khanh's arms up.

P'NUT
Told you he was oranger than me!

(CONTINUED)

DAI

Shhh!

A Buddhist chant rises, fervent as witchcraft. Harrie tips out like an outstayed guest.

EXT. TRI-MET BUS STOP - EVENING

Battered, plastic shelter overhangs a comfortless bench. Smattering rain pools at Harrie's feet.

Tri-Met rolls up. Harrie steps onto the first step. Reaches in her pocket. No bus pass. Harrie steps off.

DRIVER

You gettin' on?

HARRIE

No, I can't find...

DRIVER

Not you. Him.

Harrie turns. P'nut's standing there. Driver jerks the door handle and door seals. Bus snorts and brushes off.

HARRIE

Thought you was stayin'.

P'NUT

I am.

Beat.

HARRIE

Better hurry. Gonna rain again.

P'NUT

Already rainin'.

HARRIE

I mean harder.

P'NUT

I know what you mean.

P'nut looks after the bus chugging wakes of gray.

P'NUT

Ain't you got no money?

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE

Left my bus pass at church.

P'nut reaches into his pocket. Pulls out a few crumpled bills and some change. Holds it out.

HARRIE

I can walk. Ain't far.

Stuffs the money back into his pocket.

HARRIE

P'nut. You know I'll do anything for you.

She takes his hand. They sit on the wet bench.

P'NUT

We won't lose if you pray to Quan Am. Just whisper to her. I did.

HARRIE

You'd better get back.

Harrie stands. A magnet seems to hold P'nut to the bench.

P'NUT

Quan Am said I'm not goin' to Arkansaw.

HARRIE

Arkansaw ain't so bad.

P'NUT

Better than Portland?

HARRIE

Better than a thousand Portlands.

Harrie scout honors with her hand.

P'NUT

Tiney says Arkansaw is "countrified". Daddy'll have us candy sellin' till we find other knuckleheads to do it!

HARRIE

Wanna stay with me?

(beat)

What?

(CONTINUED)

P'NUT

Daddy says you're a fuck-up. You goin' fool around and wind up back in the pin.

Harrie sits back on the bench.

HARRIE

Well the court's gonna say who's more or less of a fuck-up: me or yo big shot daddy, Darius! Right?

He nods. Harrie love-jabs his arm.

HARRIE

Maybe...we could hang out together before you go to Arkansaw?

P'NUT

Hang-out where?

HARRIE

Sophie's Island. Strawberry fields.

P'NUT

I tole you, Jesus...

HARRIE

Jesus? Jesus caint stop us! Right?

Harrie puts P'nut in a headlock.

P'NUT

Stop! You play too much!

HARRIE

Say you'll sneak on the bus?

Squeezes.

P'NUT

Sneak? When? When?!

HARRIE

Tomorrow!

He nods. She releases him. He's got a porcupine-fro.

P'NUT

Tomorrow? Why tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE
It's a suprise.

P'NUT
You ain't got no suprises.

HARRIE
Keep thinkin' that. Don't matter.
You can't get to Sophie's.

P'NUT
Bet I can.

HARRIE
How much?

Pulls out the money.

HARRIE
Deal.

They don't hug. P'nut's too big for that. Sealed with a soul handshake.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY

Close in on a row of gold-foiled World's Finest chocolate bars as Brotha Luke closes a box lid and lifts the box into the new church van.

His busyness allow Harrie to sneak by him and up the back stairs.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

Harrie stuffs her plastic bag with clothes.

BACK STAIRCASE

Harrie props plastic back in the door and descends to the back stairs to the basement.

CANTEEN

Harrie fashions two bobby pins together. Twists the makeshift key in the keyhole. The LOCK CLICKS.

Harrie creaks the Dutch door open and eases inside.

(CONTINUED)

She plunges her arm into the the dark space between and behind the pickle jars until she feels the sharp corner of metal cash box. She slides her hand across the top and grasps the handle.

Harrie bobby pins the latch, pops the lid, pockets the cash and leaves the checks.

And she's out re-locking the door and retracing her steps.

BACK STAIRCASE

Brotha Luke's shadow looms at the top of the stairs. He's gripping Harrie's bag while doing his best Adam-12 impression.

BROTHA LUKE

This yours?

HARRIE

Yeah. Dirty laundry.

BROTHA LUKE

Somebody could trip on it.

HARRIE

You think you can drive me to the laundramat on Union.

He weighs the bag by hefting it up and down.

BROTHA LUKE

Gotta candy run.

HARRIE

Thought you did that later?

Is she keeping tabs?

BROTHA LUKE

Whatchew mean?

HARRIE

Mean you could take me and be back in no time.

He tosses her the bag, turns and mounts the stairs to the sanctuary.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY

Brotha Luke's Delta 88 idles between the new minted white L.O.G.I.C van and the primered old van.

Harrie swings open the primered door and feels under the floor mat. No key.

She runs to the driver side of the new van. No key under that mat either.

But there the key is...in the ignition switch of the new van.

Harrie moves the candy box occupying the driver's seat into the the passenger's seat, jumps in and turns the ignition.

The new VAN PURRS.

EXT. SAUVIE'S ISLAND GAS STATION - DAY

Minted van screeches alongside a pump. YOUNG ATTENDANT strolls from behind the counter.

HARRIE

Fill it up.

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Can you back it up...pump won't reach that far.

Harrie puts it in gear. Grinds it. Van jolts back a pace.

HARRIE

Where's the other guy?

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Mister Stevens?

HARRIE

Yeah. Stevens.

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Back later. Tomorrow maybe.

HARRIE

He told me if I needed...I could use his refrigerator.

Young Attendant frowns.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Didn't say a word to me 'bout no refrigerator.

HARRIE

For ma candy in the back of ma van.
It'll melt while I pick berries.

He cradles the nozzle, cups his eyes and peers through the van window.

HARRIE

See? Anyway, Mister Stevens said if ever I was over here early pickin' I could use that...

Harrie points to the rig.

YOUNG ATTENDANT

The trailer?

HARRIE

Yeah.

He scratches his head.

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Sure he didn't say inside fridge?

HARRIE

Outside. He said for five dollars I keep as many boxes in there as I want.

Harrie dips in her pocket and flashes the cash wad. Unpeels and dangles a fiver.

Attendant juts the nozzle in. PUMP numbers FLIPPETY-FLIP as he contemplates. At three dollars and twenty eight cents the FLIPPING stops.

YOUNG ATTENDANT

I'll get your change.

He takes the five and disappears into the station. Long pause. Must be counting with his fingers.

He reappears and drops the change in Harrie's hand.

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Let me fire the rig up.

He meanders to the rig, climbs in and a moment later it rumbles to life. He climbs out the rig and comes to the van.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE

How early do the school buses come?

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Six or seven in the morning.

HARRIE

The ones with the Boat People?

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Boat People? That's all they got!

HARRIE

Mind if I park here for a few hours?

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Guess so.

HARRIE

Thanks.

YOUNG ATTENDANT

Gonna need help takin' those boxes to the rig?

HARRIE

Sure.

He rolls the van sliding door open.

INT. VAN - EVENING

Chip wrappers, soda cans and half eaten sandwich litter the floor and dashboard. Harrie curls in the driver's seat.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Tractor trailer's humming fills the wee hours.

Harrie sits in the dark emptying potato chip crumbs into her mouth. Out of food and the station is closed.

She reaches into the candy box passenger side. Lifts out a chocolate bar with white wrapping and gold leaf.

HARRIE

"I got the golden ticket"

She peels-off the wrapper and licks the sweetness.

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. SMALL MEXICAN VILLAGE - DAY

Harrie's tripping. It's Mexico. She's pregnant and Big Dee has her by the arm yanking her down a dusty street.

Faceless men wearing sombreros recline against adobe walls.

The ground bakes their bare feet.

At the end of the street, Big Dee flings open the door of an old warehouse full of chickens.

A man in a white coat seals chickens in metal trash cans.

A blade slices through the narrow slit in the trash can and lops the chickens' heads off. When he releases them, headless chickens run helter-skelter out of the warehouse and into the street.

Harrie scoops up a headless chicken and slams her hand to the squirting neck...

She wraps her skirt over the chicken. It's the size of a fetus. But the blood still flows. She's running.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

There's a crash! The new van is twisted around a tree.

Harrie slumps over the wheel. A HISS spits from the ENGINE.

Stevens and Young Attendant open the van door.

Harrie's bleeding. A lot of little cuts.

YOUNG ATTENDANT
(to Stevens)
See? Told ya.

Stevens peruses. Shakes Harrie.

HARRIE
Big Dee! No Darius! No!

Stevens motions to Young Attendant. Leaves. Young Attendant returns with a glass of water.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Harrie squints away the darkness.

HARRIE'S POV

Judgment Day is come. Passa, Brotha Luke, Sista Shay perch over Harrie. Stevens and Young Attendant are in the background.

BACK TO SCENE.

STEVENS

Van toe-up pretty good.

Passa says nothing.

STEVENS

Yours was the only number I could find in the van.

Passa nods.

PASSA

(to Brother Luke)

How many candy boxes left?

BROTHA LUKE

Five. Six. Melted, though. And the one in the front seat.

Young Attendant steps forward.

YOUNG ATTENDANT

We stored a bunch on the rig.

HARRIE

Sorry, Passa.

Passa tightens his lips into a thin sword.

STEVENS

You want the police? Ambulance?

PASSA

No need.

STEVENS

Tsk. Tsk. Van looked new. Who's she?

(CONTINUED)

PASSA

She's my nephew's ex. Get her up.
Put her in the car.

Passa's eyes burn like when he preaches a "fiery damnation" sermon.

Harrie closes her eyes.

INT. PASSA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Bright red roses blare before Harrie's eyes.

Standing is difficult and not helped by the fly strip couch.

Passa enters with more roses. Wet, long-stemmed, thorny.
Passa stretches gardening gloves over his fingers. He wraps a thick cloth around the stem bases.

He braids the stems together.

PASSA

(to Brother Luke)
You call Doc Gordon, yet?

Brother Luke nods. Better hurry.

PASSA

Thy laws are are more precious than
gold, than much pure gold...

Harrie struggles to sitting.

PASSA

they are sweeter than honey, than
honey from the honeycomb.

Passa brushes RED PETALS into a waste paper basket.

PASSA

Remember when you sang in the youth
choir? Had the prettiest voice.
Sang you little heart out.

Harrie tries standing. It's like stripping a band-aid off a scab.

PASSA

Yo heart was pure then. Only a pure
heart could sing like a bird.

Cue the chorus:

(CONTINUED)

INT. ATTIC - DAY

SISTA SHAY (O.S.)
Get up. Cover yoself. Take this
dress.

An arm with a dress thrusts through the open door. A fucking
minute please!

HARRIE
Just a minute!

SISTA SHAY (O.S.)
Passa want you down there 'fore
service. Dress in the bathroom.

INT. NURSERY - DAY

Harrie emerges and takes the dress.

INT. SANCTUARY - DAY

Dull, strained light filters through stain glass. Sista Shay
leads Harrie through the sanctuary doors and parks her on
the back pew as CHURCH MEMBERS file in. Big Dee shuffles in
among the parishioners.

INT. SANCTUARY - DAY (LATER)

Members cram every pew. White gloved USHERS stand erect,
eyes front like beefeaters.

Sermon's kickin'. Passa's stompin' behind the PULPIT.
Sweatin'. Halleluing!

He struts across the stage. Snatches up I white linen
hankerchief and mops great drops of sweat. He waves the
kerchief in the air "surrendering to the Almighty".

CHURCH FOLKS've seen it a thousand times but they're still
cryin' and snottin'. Passa knows they ain't ripe yet. The
ORGANIST pitches the mood. Raises the ferver. Spirit makes
Passa hop on one leg.

PASSA
Can I get an amen!

CHURCH FOLK
Amen!

Bout to turn it up a notch. Speak in tongues.

(CONTINUED)

PASSA
 (gibberish)
 Hamininahaminahamina...Halleluyah!

CHURCH FOLK
 Halleluyah!

They are primed.

PASSA
 Sinners! You know who you are! Come
 on up here and confess 'fore God!

Whole church knows who he's talking to. Come up Harriett
 Hobson. Wanna make him call you by name?

PASSA
 Sista Harriett...are you ready?

CHURCH FOLK
 Thank you, Jesus!

Harrie stands and wobbles down the center aisle. As she
 passes, eyes stone her. She gathers at the altar and
 about-faces.

PASSA
 Deacon, hand Sista Harriet the mic.

Brotha Luke frees the mic from its stand. Untangles it and
 hands it to Harrie.

PASSA
 Tell the congregation what Satan
 did. Go on...

Fervent faces hunger for another Satan story.

HARRIE
 I...I..took the church van.

PASSA
 Stole! The new one! And?

HARRIE
 I wrecked it...

CHURCH FOLK
 Ohhh!

HARRIE
 And I took the Vacation Bible
 School money!

PASSA
Stole the cashbox from the canteen!

Burden's greater than Harrie can bear. She kneels.

HARRIE
Satan made me eat chocolate...

PASSA
That's right! Lost all our
fund-raising chocolate to Satan!
But, we ain't gonna let Satan take
our blessing away, are we?

CHURCH FOLK
No!

PASSA
We can beat Satan with kindness!
Can we forgive!

CHURCH FOLK
Yes!

It's a hive of electricity. Passa bounds off the stage. A
stunt he pulls to get the audience jumping.

Members shoot up from their seats.

Passa dances by them to...

POSTER

...a ceiling to floor poster. On the poster is a hand drawn
varicolored thermometer. The black felt pen lines demark
donation scales: 10,000. 50,000. 100,000 dollars raised.

Passa runs his hand along the 100,000 line.

PASSA
God's gonna bless us with a van!
Can I get a amen?!

CHURCH FOLK
Amen!

Passa raises his hand to invisible 200,000 line.

PASSA
God gonna replenish our VBS
coffers!

(CONTINUED)

CHURCH FOLK

Amen!

His hands go ceiling-ward. Blessings are raining.

PASSA

Our Loosiana ministries? Our
Arkansaw ministries? Can they
suffer?

CHURCH FOLK

No!

ALTAR

Passa sprints around the aisles and halts at the altar. He lifts Harrie's arm and strikes her head with his palm.

PASSA

Loose her! In the name of Jeeezus!

Harrie swoons like the wind's been knocked out of her.

She stands and raises her arms.

Church Folks rise. A CRESCENDO of CLAPPING fills the sanctuary as white-gloved ushers pass the collection plate.

Close in on a seated Big Dee writing a check, folding it, and placing it in the passing plate.

Passa escorts the new creature (Harrie) down the main aisle.

Big Dee gets up and tips down the back stairs.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

Harrie sleeps under a wool blanket.

Big Dee hunches in plastic nursery chair nearby. He's tapping the Beretta on his thigh.

Harrie startles.

HARRIE

Who's there?

Silence, then...

(CONTINUED)

BIG DEE
Don't show at court tomorrow.

Big Dee shifts forward, he is the tangible side of gloom.

BIG DEE
C'mon, Passa. Quit hidin'. Harrie
need to be a no show at court,
right?

Passa steps inside the attic door.

PASSA
I ain't hidin'.

BIG DEE
You was...don't lie.

Like watching two cobras: Just one bigger than the other.

BIG DEE
Better tell her not to show...she
may not listen to me and wake up to
find herself dead.

Punctuates statement with a gun pat.

PASSA
(to Harrie)
We...that is the church
members...have unanimously
decided...

Harrie musters enough strength to lean on her elbow.

PASSA
You can no longer stay here.

HARRIE
I wanna see P'nut.

BIG DEE
Don't start yo shit, Harrie!

HARRIE
I wanna see P'nut!

BIG DEE
See? You can't shut yo damn mouth--

HARRIE
Can't shut my mouth?!

HARRIE
P'nut sellin' that shit?

BIG DEE
Everybody's part of the
fund-raiser, baby.

HARRIE
You ain't takin' P'nut to Arkansaw!

BIG DEE
Ma best recruiter? Shee-it!

He tucks the gun in his waste band above his ass crack.

BIG DEE
Harrie, you used be smart. That's
right...used to be!
(beat)
Passa and Luke made sure you
couldn't get a job, right Passa?
And made sure yo ass couldn't talk!

Passa's face is numb, all but his eyes, they look like
they're being squeezed out.

BIG DEE
Passa-n-all his cloak-n-dagger
shit!

Big Dee reaches in his pocket. Draws out his house keys.

BIG DEE
You want P'nut? He'll be in
Arkansaw. And I promise you...after
we get off the ground...you can see
him as much as you want.

He reaches over and places the keys on Harrie's stomach.

BIG DEE
Like I said...you can always come
home...you know...these church folk
don't want you. Tell her, Passa.
(beat)
Cuz a good fuck-up like you
sho-fire moneymaker only once. But,
I'm here for you always.
(beat)
Passa how much you make today?
Couple hundred thousand off these
hamheads?

Passa shrugs. He's just a small vessel doing God's bidding. Big Dee laughs as he leaves.

INT. NURSERY - DAY

Harrie stands at the nursery window, she's got the plastic bag stuffed between her legs.

HARRIE'S POV

Below we recognize several ushers carrying a ladder through the sanctuary center aisle. They prop the ladder against the wall. One climbs and unpeels the thermometer poster down.

BACK TO SCENE

Guard pair of Sista Shay and Brotha Luke stand at the door.

SISTA SHAY

Hu-hmmmm.

Harrie scoops up her plastic bag and heaves it over her shoulder.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Shay and Luke march Harrie down the backstairs into the parking lot. Ushers have set up tables end to end and have laid the thermometer poster on it.

INSERT - POSTER

In black letters along a demarcated black line "300,000"

BACK TO SCENE

God's been good.

The escort ends at the property line. Harrie stands on a mound just off church grounds.

A TOW TRUCK RUMBLES into the lot. It's hauling the mangled van. Place it near the entrance. Constant reminder. Nice touch.

EXT. SHERWIN WILLIAMS PARKING LOT - DAY

Tri-met dumps Harrie at the paint shop. She lugs her bag to the store front, drops it and plunks down.

A few moments later, Dai walks by.

Harrie takes up her bag and tails.

No matter how Dai tries to ditch Harrie, Harrie persists.

EXT. KHANH'S HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

Dai races into the house and slams the door.

Harrie rushes the stairs and beats on the door.

DAI (O.S.)

Go away!

HARRIE

You're P'nut's girlfriend, right!

DAI (O.S.)

Go away!

HARRIE

I'm P'nut's moth--

DAI (O.S.)

I know who you are! Go away!

Harrie throws her bag on the porch and huffs down.

HARRIE

I've been kicked outta the church
and I need to talk to P'nut!

(beat)

And I'm not gonna leave this porch
till I do!

After a while, Dai cracks open the door.

DAI

He's not my boyfriend!

HARRIE

Can you give him a message?

DAI

No.

Harrie fluffs her plastic bag like a pillow. Pats. Nestles.

(CONTINUED)

DAI
What message?

HARRIE
Can you tell him to get on the
Sophie bus tomorrow?

DAI
Why?

HARRIE
Tell him he can stay with me or go
to Arkansaw. Tell him that.

Dai nods. Harrie picks up her bag and steps off the stoop.

DAI
He can't go to Arkansaw. He belongs
here.

HARRIE
I know.

INT. BUS - DAY

Harrie's curls-up up in the rear of the bus, her face
plastered to a window.

BUS DRIVER checks Harrie in his rearview mirror.

He rolls rolls the bus to a stop. The bus is empty. He pulls
the handle and flicks open the door.

BUS DRIVER
Last stop.

Waits.

The driver gets up. He's rollie pollie rumbling and shaking
seats as he heads rearward. Gets to Harrie.

BUS DRIVER
Laaast stah-ahp!

Nothing. Shakes the head rest. She rouses.

HARRIE
Did we pass Williams Avenue?

BUS DRIVER
Few stops ago. I yelled it.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE

Can you go back? I need to go to the Salvation Army.

BUS DRIVER

Ma'am this is the Killingsworth bus. This Killingsworth's last stop. Killingsworth now goin' to the garage.

Harrie wipes away the slobber, gathers her things and steps down the rear door steps and waits for the doors to open.

The Bus Driver walks back to his seat. Adjusts his mirror.

BUS DRIVER

Exit here. Front door.

Opens front door. Harrie lifts her bag and comes forward. The driver yanks the handle and the door shuts.

BUS DRIVER

Sit down.

He starts the bus.

EXT. SALVATION ARMY - NIGHT

Bus Driver deposits Harrie in front of the Salvation Army. Harrie raps on the door. What now? The Bus Driver opens the door.

HARRIE:

Thank you.

He smiles. Shuts the door. Harrie drags her bag along the concrete. The bag snags on a gate post and tears. Harrie ties the plastic strips at the tear, tightening the knot with her mouth.

ENTRANCE

Awash along the mission entrance, huddled human stones await daybreak. As Harrie pass these homeless SHAPES they lift their heads from makeshift pillows.

SHAPE:

Ain't no more beds.

Harrie ignores Shape, steps over human debris and reads the hours on the Salvation Army door.

(CONTINUED)

SHAPE:
They're closed.

Harrie heaves the bag to her shoulder and an avalanche of clothes fly out.

SHAPE:
Yo bag broke.

No frippin' shit. Harrie spreads the plastic remains on the ground. Re-stacks clothes. Knots the bag.

HARRIE'S POV

A shadowy sedan pulls outside the halo of street lamp.

BACK TO SCENE

When the sedan notices that Harrie notices--it screeches away.

HARRIE
Pay phone somewhere?

Shape points.

HARRIE
Gotta dime?

Shape fumbles through his dirty trousers. Finds dime.

SHAPE:
For a blow job?

HARRIE
I ain't about to suck yo dick fo'
no dime! I'll fuck you up!

SHAPE:
Awright! Awright! Here!

Shape pitches Harrie the dime.

INT. SAMBO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

PREGNANT WAITRESS stacks Brenda and Harrie's dirty dishes, adds fresh place mats and twists syrup dispensers atop them.

(CONTINUED)

PREGNANT WAITRESS
What else can I do you for?

She rests the order pad on her baby bump.

BRENDA
Coffee.

HARRIE
Water. How many weeks?

PREGNANT WAITRESS
Twinny-five.

Waitress clears. Leaves.

BRENDA
They'll say you drove the van.

Harrie nods.

BRENDA
(whispers)
Drugs, right?

Nods again.

BRENDA
If you won't go to the police. How
bout we tell Patterson in court
tomorrow? Pull him aside?
Ask for chambers?

HARRIE
That's a good idea.

BRENDA
How much you think they got?

HARRIE
Hundred Fifty two hundred thousand.

BRENDA
(whispers)
Two hundred thousand dollars!

HARRIE
Patterson'll get P'nut, you think?

Brenda hesitates.

BRENDA

Sure. You can stay with me tonight.

(beat)

I know Patterson won't give the boys to some drug dealer and some jack-leg preacher. P'nut and Tiney be better off with they mother.

HARRIE

I...

BRENDA

Wha?

HARRIE

I don't want Tiney. He's from Dee's ex.

BRENDA

What's Dee to Passa.

HARRIE

Nephew.

BRENDA

What'd you think he'd do?

HARRIE

Who Dee?

BRENDA

Yeah.

Harrie stirs the water with her finger.

BRENDA

Kill you?

Hesitant nod. Pregnant Waitress returns.

PREGNANT WAITRESS

Dessert?

BRENDA

No thank you.

HARRIE

No, thanks.

Pregnant Waitress refills. Leaves.

BRENDA

What happened in the desert? Did he beat you...did he kill--

(CONTINUED)

Brenda carves at the edges of the story, but, Harrie raises her hand. Enough. No more questions.

Pregnant Waitress returns. Waits.

BRENDA

Just the check, thank you.

Pregnant Waitress marks the pad and tears off a sheet. Puts it on the table. Harrie lifts the bill. Harrie can't make it out for the tears but she still reaches in her pockets.

BRENDA

I got this.

Brenda tugs the check from Harrie's fingers.

HARRIE

Can't thank you enough for everythin'. Didn't mean to fuck up your life too. It's like I keep payin' for every little fuck-up.

(beat)

I lost one child. Not gonna lose another.

BRENDA

Have faith. I do. Every things for a reason. It'll turn out all right.

Brenda covers Harries hand with her own. Then Brenda dips in her purse and places a few bills over the check.

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - SIERRA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Harrie lies on the floor so she doesn't muss Sierra's bed. Brenda stands in the doorway.

BRENDA

Ted's outta town on business. Sierra's at a slumber party.

(beat)

You can use the bed you know.

Harrie stays put.

BRENDA

Wanna sleep with me?

HARRIE

I'm fine right here.

Brenda walks across the room. Opens adjacent door. Bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA

Shower?

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Harrie follows Brenda into the bathroom. It's immaculate.

BRENDA

I'll get some of Ted's old pajamas.
Can I see you undress?

Harrie nods.

BRENDA

Can I see your scars again?

Harrie slowly turns.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Harrie's head above the steam and spume of hot water filling the tub.

She sinks below the surface. Counts underwater. Pops up.

She steps out of the tub and shakes her fro like a shaggy dog. Grabs a towel.

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - SIERRA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Harrie lies Sierra's bed. Her eyes rove across...

Champagne-bodied butterflies, white winged, migrating across Sierra's ceiling.

Harrie props on one arm taking in the rest of the room--matching chest, nightstand and vanity of cottage blush...

TAP. TAP. TAP.

Brenda KNOCKS. It's one of those "I don't want to disturb" knocks. Pokes her head in.

BRENDA

I see you're using the bed. Good.

Harrie nods.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA
Put your clothes in the laundry if
that's okay?

Nods.

BRENDA
Doin' okay?

HARRIE
Fine.

BRENDA
Once we tell Patterson
tomorrow...things'll change you'll
see.
(beat)
Forgot to tell you...I'm workin'
for an attorney named Frank. He's
really interested in your case.

Harrie lies back. Brenda draws the door closed like tugging
a string.

INT. SALVATION ARMY - DAY

A check-in queue caterpillars it's way to the entry desk
where the needy crowd registers for the day.

Big Dee marches in and pushes past the disheveleds.

Big Dee is forming his own line near the clerk.

CLERK
Sir, you need to get in line like
everybody else.

BIG DEE
I ain't no bum. Just need to see if
somebody's here.

CLERK
Sir, everyone will have to--

Big Dee spins toward the inner door.

CLERK
Hey! Can't go in the sleeping
quarters!

Big Dee forces the doors open. Clerk jumps up.

(CONTINUED)

CLERK
Excuse me! Excuse me!

INT. SLEEPING QUARTERS - DAY

BIG DEE
Harrie! Where you at!

Big Dee shuffles up to a bed where a huddled lump lies...

BIG DEE - POV

BIG DEE (O.S.)
Harrie?

A DIRTY-FACED WOMAN and LITTLE GIRL stare up at him.

BACK TO SCENE

Big Dee throws the blanket down and quests along each bed.

BIG DEE
Harrie!

Clerk trails. Several helpful HOMELESS tag behind the clerk.

CLERK
Sir, I'm calling the police!
Calling right now! Leave now!

Clerk and Homeless crowd Big Dee. He stops. Removes his sunglasses. All little shits. Beat all their asses.

Big Dee pulls a blanket. Looks under. Last check. Then strolls past the Lilliputian militia.

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - SIERRA'S ROOM - DAY

Brenda back politely tapping.

BRENDA
Need anything before I hop in the shower?

Harrie shakes her head.

BRENDA
Court at nine.

Nods.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA

Your clothes are folded on top of
the dryer.

HARRIE

Thank you. Thanks for everything.

Brenda gently retreats. A moment later comes the GUSH of
SHOWER. Harrie bounds out of bed.

HALLWAY

Harrie tips past the bathroom door into...

BRENDA'S BEDROOM

Rummages through the closet and grabs a handful of clothes.

STAIRCASE

Harrie back tracks and flies down the stairs dressing as she
goes.

KITCHEN

Harrie rifles through Brenda's purse, KEYS JANGLE as she
pockets them.

She counts out Brenda's cash and thrusts Brenda's checkbook
into her back pocket.

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Harrie unlocks Brenda's car and fires up the engine.

EXT. COURTHOUSE STREET - DAY

We see Brenda's Aspen follow a line into the court house
parking lot. Harrie pulls into a vacating parking spot and
waits.

Soon a sleek white van, with the unmistakable L.O.G.I.C
lettering parks in an unloading zone. Van's emergency
flashers blink.

HARRIE'S POV

Brotha Luke jumps out of the driver's seat to the other side of the van and slides the side door open. Out pops Passa, Sista Shay and Tiney.

BACK TO SCENE

Aspen reverses and pulls alongside the van.

Harrie jumps out. Yanks driver side door open.

HARRIE

Where's P'nut!

BROTHA LUKE

You!

Brotha Luke zips around the van. But Harrie's too quick and to the other side of van.

HARRIE

P'nut!

Passa, Tiney and Sista Shay run back down the courthouse stairs...

But, Harrie's inside the Aspen, jerking it into gear and flooring it.

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Brenda in towel and turban absorbs her image in the vanity mirror. She's leaning close, applying fake lashes.

BRENDA

Be a million deputies there, right?

She dips. Applies another lash. Winks. Still uneven.

BRENDA

Dee be a fool to try anything.

Something catches her eye in the reflection.

HALLWAY

Her clothes on the floor.

BRENDA

Harrie?

SIERRA'S ROOM

Peeks in.

BRENDA

Harrie?

Goes to Sierra's bed. Lumpy. Just pillows! Brenda rushes to Sierra's window. Cranes.

She bolts from Sierra's room.

STAIRCASE

Ted's pajamas are strewn across the rail and floor.

BRENDA

Shit shit shit shit shit!

Brenda takes two stairs at a time.

KITCHEN

Brenda snatches up her purse.

No money.

No keys.

Nada!

EXT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - DAY

Brenda hurtles the porch steps into the garage.

GARAGE

No car.

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - DAY

Brenda picks up the phone.

BRENDA
Police! Portland Police, dammit!

EXT. SHERWIN WILLIAMS PARKING LOT - DAY

Aspen careens into the parking lot.

INT. ASPEN - DAY

Harrie searches the parking lot.

No P'nut.

HARRIE
Where the hell could he be?

Harrie brakes and sits. Taps the steering wheel.

Harrie throws the car in gear and takes off.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALL - THIRD FLOOR - OUTSIDE JUDGE
PATTERSON'S COURTROOM - DAY

Big Dee bounds to the top of the stairs to the third floor
landing.

Big Dee's Attorney stands in front of the seated trio,
prepping Passa, Tiney and Sista Shay.

BIG DEE
Harrie in there?

Big Dee's Attorney wags a toothy grin.

BIG DEE'S ATTORNEY
Got her dead to rights!

BIG DEE
Good...let's go in.

No one moves.

BIG DEE
What?

(CONTINUED)

PASSA
Harrie came already.

Big Dee removes his sunglasses. Has a This-shit-ain't-funny face.

BIG DEE
P'nut?

PASSA
Fair to say--

BIG DEE
Shuddup! Tiney, where da fuck is
P'nut?

Tiney doesn't peep. He's like a guilty dog who slinks though no crime has been discovered...yet.

BIG DEE
Ain't gonna ask you again!

Tiney uses two tactics: silence and slouching. Slouching helps him to ease out of range of...

SMACK! Dee whales him right across the face!

...Tiney got out of range too late. Big Dee hauls back to administer another--

TINEY
Dai! He's with Dai!

BIG DEE
Dai? Gooks, Tiney? I'll fuckin'
kill...

Big Dee bolts down the stairs as an OFFICER comes up. Big Dee non-stops past the officer.

BIG DEE'S ATTORNEY
Hey! Wait!

OFFICER
Is there a problem?

PASSA
No, officer. Everything's fine.

Patterson's courtroom door opens but Passa and the rest stand unsure whether to enter or not.

EXT, COURTHOUSE - DAY

Brotha Luke sits in the van driver seat, he's referencing an open Bible on his lap. Luke's spellbinding an invisible congregation with his Passa-like imitation.

BROTHA LUKE
"And God said...ah..."

Peeks down at his Bible.

BROTHA LUKE
"...and God said...ah...in
Donaronamee six...ah...!"

The van door swings open and Brotha Luke is yanked out of the seat to the pavement.

BROTHA LUKE
Hey!

Big Dee jumps in the driver's seat, FIRES the IGNITION and SCREECHES down the street.

EXT. BIG DEE'S HOUSE - DAY

Van fishtails onto the front lawn before skidding to a stop.

Big Dee runs up the steps into the house.

Moments later he emerges heaving a sleeping bag.

He slides the van door open and lays the bag inside.

INT. VAN - DAY

Big Dee climbs inside. He smooths a mat, unfurls the sleeping bag. He assembles a M16 rifle like he's being timed for a Guinness record.

EXT. SAUVIE'S ISLAND - ROAD - DAY

Harrie shoots up behind the school bus, bringing the Aspen alongside and laying on the horn.

HONK! But, the bus doesn't stop. Harrie floors it back into her lane as oncoming traffic swerves by.

After the cars pass, Harrie's back alongside waving. She recognizes Jesus as the gun wielding driver from earlier.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIE

Hey! Hey! Pull over!

Jesus gives her her horn medicine. HONK!

The Aspen remains alongside. Jesus opens his window.

JESUS

You crazy!

HARRIE

P'nut there?

JESUS

Wha?

HARRIE

P'nut...!

A car comes in the opposite direction, HORN BLARING. Harrie pulls behind the bus.

Vietnamese faces press against the bus windows.

Harrie flashes her lights but the bus speeds along.

INT. ASPEN - DAY

Harrie a jolt lashes her forward. For a moment, she loses control of the wheel.

The white van rams her again.

EXT. SAUVIE'S ISLAND - ROAD - DAY

The van forces her off the road and into a ditch. It parks a few yards off.

INT. ASPEN - DAY

Harrie watches as the van stops and Big Dee gets out. He's lugging a rifle.

Harrie locks the doors. She lies down for cover.

Big Dee tries the door.

BIG DEE

Open it!

(CONTINUED)

He smashes the window with the stock. Glass showers everywhere. He round-robins all the windows, smashing each.

BIG DEE

Get out!

Harrie death-grips the steering wheel.

Big Dee lays his rifle of the Aspen hood and wrenches Harrie's arms from the wheel then drags her through the window. He throws her to the to the ground.

She's bleeding.

BIG DEE

Where's P'nut?

She kicking, screaming, flopping in the dust.

HARRIE

Ain't got him!

Big Dee grabs her by the collar drags her to the Aspen where he retrieves his rifle.

BIG DEE

On the gook bus! Is he?

HARRIE

Fuck you!

Dee wrestles her to the van and shoves her in. He forces her with the rifle pressed to her back. He climbs in behind her.

BIG DEE

Go to the front seat!

She doesn't refuse. Just a glimpse into his eyes. She knows he's become that guy. That guy will beat the shit outta you. She staggers to the front seat and near collapses.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Van gains on the school bus a strap of dust trailing.

INT. BUS - DAY

Jesus watches in side mirror as a reckless van approaches.

The commotion causes kids to open the windows and hang their heads out.

(CONTINUED)

Other excited kids crowd the rear exit door.

JESUS
You kids sit down! Sit down!

Some sit on the seat edges of their seats, others remain standing.

JESUS
I said sit the fuck down!

Excited chatter swells as the van pulls alongside.

JESUS - POV

Close in on Harrie's lacerated face as she rolls down the window, she's yanking the M16 barrel and trying to force it out of the window all the time sustaining blows from Dee's free hand.

The gun SHUDDERS OFF a few ROUNDS. RAT-TAT-TAT!

BACK TO SCENE

JESUS
Mierda!

Jesus jerks the wheel...but loses control...

A PEAL of SCREAMS reverberate as the bus...

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Careens into a ditch and topples over.

INT. BUS - DAY

Jesus is trapped by his belt and struggles to unbuckle.

JESUS - POV

Jesus's fingers writhe to reach his pistol bag.

BOOT-CLICKS come from the PAVEMENT outside.

Jesus gets his fingers around the strap of the bag and...

BACK TO SCENE

Jesus yanks the bag to him. ZIP! He unzips the bag and retrieves the pistol and finally gets the clip loaded when--

RAT-TA-TATTAT-RATTA-TAT-TAT...

EXT. BUS - DAY

...BULLETS PING and WHIZ by.

Vietnamese women and children are climbing out the the bus windows and through the rear exit.

Then there's stray fire!

A body falls back into the bus. Screams. Scattering.

BIG DEE - POV

Vietnamese are climbing out of windows...

MEMORY FLASH - JUNGLE

Jungle swarms with undulating shadows erupting into a hail of gun-flashes like a million fireflies. Dee crouches.

BIG DEE

Gooks hatching like cockroaches!

He raises his rifle. Yeah, it's motherfucking 'Nam!

BACK TO SCENE

Harrie slumps in the passenger seat. Big Dee crouches from behind his driver's side shield and cautiously moves toward the bus. He's gripping the M16 he's wrenched away from Harrie.

Vietnamese spread across the fields.

Dee squeezes off a few rounds at the runners...PAT! PAT-PAT!

A few more Vietnamese drop.

BIG DEE

Sheet! Damn gooks! See how they dropped? Cover me, Harrie, I'ma rescue P'nut!

(CONTINUED)

Big Dee straps the rifle on his back, slots his Beretta and CLICKS the MAGAZINE.

Dee runs, mounts and climbs on the overturned bus. He tromps along the yellow flank seeking a better vantage.

Big Dee crouches and aims across the field, leveling his rifle and firing at Vietnamese scurriers.

INT. BUS - DAY

Jesus turns the side mirror and focuses on Big Dee's crouched image. He aims. Squeezes. Fires off a few rounds. CRACK!

Big Dee's legs buckle. He staggers. Dee regains his footing. Jesus squeezes off another. BLAM!

This shot turns him. Drops him to his knees. BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! Other shots whisper by like punkies. Big Dee smears blood crawling toward Jesus's position.

BIG DEE

C'mon Charlie! Mothafuck, Charlie!

Big Dee throws his arm over the shattered window and fires down on Jesus. Jesus is hit!

JESUS

I ain't no fuckin' Charlie! I'm a
fuckin' Marine, Second
Battalion...Seventh--

Big Dee pokes the barrel down and fires again. Jesus slumps.

Big Dee falls back on his butt and swings the rifle to his chest. He loads the twenty-rounder as blood pools in his lap. He rests watching the Vietnamese runners. He reloads.

Harrie awakes. Opens the door and spills to the ground. She lies for a moment covering her head.

HARRIE - POV

Seems like a ceasefire. P'nut's nowhere.

BACK TO SCENE

Harrie belly-crawls under the van. Big Dee's silhouette is almost immobile.

Harrie scoots under the van and comes out on the driver's side. She eases up. Big Dee is standing. Taking aim. Firing into the strawberry field.

INT. VAN - DAY

Harrie scampers into the van driver's seat and pumps the accelerator. Turns the ignition and the van comes to life.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Harrie drives into a shallow ravine then faces the van toward the opposite direction.

EXT. ROAD/PASSING THE BUS - DAY (SLOW MOTION)

She passes the bus and the glazed stare of beast Dee. He twists his body toward the van and lifts his rifle.

INT. VAN - DAY

Harrie hunches and SLAMS on the ACCELERATOR.

Billows of dust pour out from behind her.

Harrie looks in her rearview mirror. The bus is a dot in the distance and then lost to sight.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Harrie eases the van into a ditch. Waits.

HARRIE - POV

DISTANT SIRENS grow. FLASHING LIGHTS whiz by her window.

BACK TO SCENE

Harrie waits a few moments and nudges up then turns the ignition.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The red spin of a Multnomah County Sheriff's cruiser wash across the abandoned carmel-colored Aspen.

Harrie eases the van forward.

DEPUTY one-arm windmills Harrie to pull over. Then he jabs for her to pull up to his mark.

Harrie remains forty yards away.

Deputy advances. His hand on his holster.

Then the POLICE RADIO HISSES to a ROAR.

What follows is a series of unintelligible high-pitched male SQUEALS. CRACKLES.

RADIO (O.S.)

On the bus! On the bus! Shooter's
on the bus! I repeat the shooter...

Multiple MANGLED VOICES spill out...

RADIO (O.S.)

Shots fired! Shots fired! All units
respond! All units...!

The Deputy holsters his weapons and races to his cruiser.

EXT. VIETNAMESE NEIGHBORHOOD - HONG KONG MARKET - DAY

Sign above the Hong Kong Market are in Chinese script not Vietnamese, but few mind, nor do they mind the Black kid (P'nut) cross-legged obstructing the front door.

P'nut pops up and cups his hand to the window as Dai exits.

P'NUT

Got 'em?

Dai dangles a small bag.

(CONTINUED)

P'NUT
Hair stuff too?

Dai teases. Opens the bag then shuts it tight. Runs.

She's fast. P'nut hustles to keep pace.

P'NUT
Let me see!

Dai wheels around. Dances the bag above his head. He jumps and jumps. When he grabs it, it spills to the ground. He picks up everything--Orajel, Dark and Lovely, Band-aids, eyeliners and razors--examining if there's damage to each.

P'NUT
You gonna do it?

DAI
Never!

She leaps into a head start.

INT. KHANH'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Steam thickens the small space with the unmistakable smell of Bun Thit Nuong (Grilled pork with noodles).

Tan, like a Shiva with six arms, darts through the haze preparing dinner.

LIVING ROOM

Dai and P'nut cross the living room and squeak by the kitchen unnoticed.

BATHROOM

Dai cranks the faucet and water fills the basin. She disappears and reappears with a stool.

DAI
Sit!

He complies.

Dai moistens a small towel and dabs P'nut's eye lids then draws a thick charcoal line with the eye-line pencil. Turns his head to the mirror.

(CONTINUED)

DAI

Like?

She nods him like a ventriloquist dummy. Her cheek touches his.

DAI

"Yes, Miss Dai, I like".

She draws along the other eye.

P'nut places Dark and Lovely in her palm.

DAI

Later. Give me that. No that.

P'NUT

Orajel?

Nods. She snips the nose off the tube, squeezes and dabs along the penciled eye corners.

DAI

Numbs.

She opens a pack of razors.

EXT. KHANH'S HOUSE - DAY

White van plows by, swerves then reverses a halt. Harrie leaps out and leaves the van running.

PORCH

Harrie bangs.

HARRIE

P'nut! P'nut!

Harrie enters the unlocked door...

LIVING ROOM

Tan flies out of the kitchen.

HARRIE

P'nut!

Harrie is about to search the house when Tan blocks her.

(CONTINUED)

TAN

No P'nut!

Harrie shoves Tan to the floor.

HARRIE

Get out of my way, snaggle-tooth
bitch!

TAN

I no snaggle-tooth bitch!

Tan jumps up and squats like a sumo. Harrie slams into her. Grappling. Tan bear-hugs Harrie's waist. Harrie drags her a few steps.

Harrie wrenches Tan loose and throws her to the floor.

TAN

You nigger--

Harrie spins. N-word, huh? Harrie yanks Tan's hair and slams Tan's face into the floor. She's pinning Tan when Dai emerges from the bathroom.

Dai rides Harrie's back hailing wild punches.

DAI

Stop! Stop hitting my mother!

Harrie thrusts backwards and she and Dai hit the floor.

P'NUT

Momma?

P'nut's voice punctures the tension in the room. He's standing in the doorway.

HARRIE

P'nut?

Bandages criss-cross his eyes...cross his skull.

Harrie rolls off Dai.

Harrie places her hand on her hands on the ill-wrapped mummy's head.

HARRIE

What kinda people are you?

Harrie hoists the young pharaoh into her arms, turns and kicks open the front door...

EXT. KHANH'S HOUSE - STREET - DAY

...where curious VIETNAMESE GAWKERS gather at the Khanh house porch and at the idling van.

Harrie forces her way through the crowd.

HARRIE

Get back!

The Vietnamese sea parts. Harrie cradles P'nut into the passenger's seat.

At the rear of the van, Harrie swings open the cargo doors and sweeps boxes of candy to the pavement.

HARRIE

Here ya go, fuckers!

Harrie springs into the van and peels away as onlookers pick up the gold-wrapped chocolate bars.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - BRIDGE - DAY

The white van whips under green bridge girders and beneath--

INSERT - SIGN

A green traffic "Entering Washington" sign.

BACK TO SCENE

The van rumbles over the bridge.

INT. VAN - DAY

Blood splotches rim the corners of the gauze bandages around P'nut's eyes. P'nut breaks the miles-long silence.

P'NUT

Where we goin'?

HARRIE

We need to stop for gas.

EXT. WASHINGTON GAS STATION - DAY

Harrie pulls the van to a secluded pump near the rear of the station. Harrie gets out and meets the WASHINGTON ATTENDANT as he strolls up.

WASHINGTON ATTENDANT
Hey! Hey! Can't pump your own.

HARRIE
I know.

WASHINGTON ATTENDANT
How much?

HARRIE
Fill'er up.
(beat)
How far to Canada? Didn't see no signs.

WASHINGTON ATTENDANT
Canada? Bout three hundred miles.
Don't worry, you'll see signs.

HARRIE
Got any gauze here?

WASHINGTON ATTENDANT
Gauze? Nope. Got bandaides.

HARRIE
No. Need gauze. My boy just had... surgery.

WASHINGTON ATTENDANT
Don't usually carry it. Safeway or the Piggly Wiggly might. Providence Hospital is just down--

HARRIE
Don't need a hospital, thank you.

Harrie pays. Jumps into the van.

EXT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Harrie has a brown bag of groceries that she puts in the van rear. Close in on Harrie taking gauze from the bag.

She goes to the passenger side.

INT. VAN - DAY

She unwinds the bandages revealing half-inch razor slits at the corners of each puckered eye. Looks like a mask of the blood-weeping Kabuki.

He squints but can't open his eyes.

P'NUT

See? Don't I look Vietnameez,
Momma?

Harrie drops the gauze.

HARRIE

No baby you'll never be...

P'NUT

Uh-huh. Yes I am.

He takes his fingers to the corners of his eyes and slowly raises them.

P'NUT

See? Vietnameez. You said Black
people always have it hard here,
right?

HARRIE

You can't change that--

P'NUT

I can change me! If I don't like
it..I can change back!

Harrie pulls him to her. Squeezes him. They sway.

INT. PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Harrie's SHRIEKING the HORN as she sidewalks the van in front of the Providence Hospital Emergency entrance.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

She's through the door with P'nut in her arms.

HARRIE

Help! Help! My baby needs help!
He's bleeding!

Commotion draws the attention of a couple of PARAMEDICS.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR and a nurse walk-run to Harrie.

A paramedic wheels up a gurney. He assists lying P'nut on the gurney.

The doctor bends over P'nut and gently pokes swelling pustules. He looks up.

DOCTOR
You the mother?

Harrie nods.

Paramedics push P'nut through flaps tailed by the doctor and nurse.

Harrie watches the entourage disappear and leaves through the emergency doors.

EXT. PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL - DAY

Van's motor's running. Harrie climbs into the driver's seat.

INT. VAN - DAY

Harrie puts the car in drive and circles the parking lot. Parks. Backs out.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Pulls onto Washington Street. Pulls back into the parking lot and up to the Emergency Room entrance.

Idles.

Pulls out of the unloading zone.

Stops.

Turns off the ignition.

Rests her head on the steering wheel.

EXT. PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - DAY (LATER)

Hospital security guard approaches a suspicious van idling in the parking lot.

EXT. OREGON CORRECTIONAL FACILITY FOR WOMEN - DAY

Gray light filters just above the ground. Oregon overcast. Sparse sunrays russet the brick face of the prison walls.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Harrie, through a window, overlooks a sage sparrow wandering into the prison courtyard. It disappears skyward.

INT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - VISITATION ROOM - DAY

Clipt metal toad stools align uniform rows of phones. Phones front before an impenetrable sheet of glass.

Brenda and FRANK file behind bedraggled conjugals. Frank's lawyerly but he ain't no Atticus Finch.

Brenda sits at a booth opposite the glass partition. Frank straddling his briefcase, sits on it. He's in Brenda's people-space, but he's oblivious to people-spacing.

Reverse angle on GUARD escorting Harrie to the stool opposite Brenda.

Brenda waves. Picks up phone. Harrie does the same.

BRENDA

This is Frank. A real attorney.
He's showin' me the ropes. Be a
paralegal in no time.

Frank waves at Harrie. Brenda leans forward.

BRENDA

Guess you know they shipped Big
Dee's body to Arkansaw.

Harrie nods.

BRENDA

Beautiful Service. Military Honors.
Buried next to his brother at
Oakland cemetary.

(beat)

We served Passa...

Harrie looks up.

(CONTINUED)

BRENDA

He never wanted the boys no
how...Don't think he'll fight
custody.

HARRIE

Just recruits.

BRENDA

Yeah. Just recruits.

Brenda swivels the toad stool toward Frank who rises and unlatches his briefcase.

FRANK

We've prepared a statement, Miss
Hobson.

Brenda smiles.

BRENDA

See? A real attorney. Frank's
always prepared.

Harrie bows her head. Silence.

BRENDA

Sierra's sleepin' with Ted and I.
So P'nut is in Sierra's room. I can
make a room in the basement for
Tiney, too.

Harrie sets her phone down. Sleeves across her eyes.

BRENDA

P'nut? He...

Don't tell her. Let her sleeve some more.

BRENDA

Didn't wanna see you here. Wanted
to wait til you were out.

Yeah.

BRENDA

He wrote you a letter. Wouldn't let
me see it, though. Said he'll bring
it himself...won't be long.

The guard appears behind Harrie. Brenda stands.

BRENDA

P'nut says he likes Sierra's room.
But, maybe it's a tad
girlie...We'll see.

(beat)

Oh. Almost forgot. He wanted you to
have this. Together they'll bring
peace.

Brenda lifts her clear plastic purse to the glass partition.
The plastic purse has her i.d., coins, and a two inch
porcelain Buddha.

BRENDA

He wants them back when you get
out.

INT. CELL - DAY

Harrie places the porcelain Buddha next to the Quan Am
statue on the cell window sill. Buddha brings a grotesque
joviality to Quan Am's demure smugness.

The sun sets across Buddha's belly. And he's so fucking
sweet and jolly he can practically melt the bars.

Harrie sits and crosses her legs. She gazes on the two white
figures and slowly closes her eyes. Her lips move but we
hear nothing.

FADE OUT.

THE END