

THE FILL-UP

By

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FADE IN:

Pale dashboard light, gas gauge needle riding E.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

From the dark country road two headlights form a car as it rolls to a stop in front of a few pumps wrapped like Christmas packages in yellow caution tape.

The engine cuts off.

INT. CAR

KIRBY JENSEN, 20s, beautiful in a simple flower girl way, counts stacks of money from a bag in her lap.

Resting on the wheel pleased with himself, DALLAS KENT, also 20s and roguishly handsome, watches her, waiting.

Kirby runs out of bills. She beams at Dallas.

KIRBY
How did you know?

DALLAS
Could tell by the weight as I
carried it out the door.

Kirby lets out a squeal and dives over the seat onto Dallas scattering money and a picture clipped to the dash. They kiss then she melts into his chest with a soft purr.

KIRBY
And that is that. Do you think it
will be enough?

DALLAS
I guess it has to be.

KIRBY
Even enough for three of us?

Dallas stretches over, replaces picture to dash. Between a younger Dallas and Kirby rests a sweet looking ELDERLY WOMAN in a wheelchair.

DALLAS
Why? Want another Grandma?

(CONTINUED)

KIRBY

Stop it. You know what I mean.
Something she always wanted us to
have. A family.

Dallas pushes her up.

DALLAS

I know, I know. Not now baby.

KIRBY

If we get to that boat and we get
out of here? Far away where they
will never think to go. Maybe then?

DALLAS

Yes, maybe then, but now if you
don't get up there won't be a
tomorrow.

Kirby searches his face.

KIRBY

I hate it when you talk like that.

She crawls dejectedly over. Dallas gets out, slams the door,
leaving her pouting.

EXT. GAS PUMP - DALLAS

Dallas stretches, surveys the station. Streaky windows,
fading signage, a dirty dime-store antique forgotten by all
except time.

From the unseen road ahead wind whips the yellow caution
tape. Dallas pulls up his leather jacket. There is no
illumination for the path ahead, the one already traced left
in darkness. The gas station is completely alone.

INT. CAR

Kirby stares dismally. On the opposite side, Dallas leans in
through the window.

DALLAS

Hey, we're not gonna get caught.

She pretends to adjust the picture.

(CONTINUED)

DALLAS

I know what I say sometimes, but I have to worry. Even though there is nothing that is going to happen to us. It's my job to take care of you.

She makes eye contact with him.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

What do you say we pull one more.
(motions to station)
Give them something a little extra to remember us by?

KIRBY

A little extra never hurt.

DALLAS

Come on. Grab your toy.

Kirby excitedly pops the glove compartment. Out falls a snub-nosed 38 into her pretty little hands.

Dallas opens the door and offers her help. She accepts and exits the car like a pampered duchess.

EXT. GAS STATION

Kirby throws her smaller body around Dallas, gun in hand.

KIRBY

I love you Dallas Kent.

DALLAS

And I love you Kirby Jensen.

Together they approach the station hand in hand. Dallas reaches around, readies a sawed off shotgun hidden underneath his jacket.

EXT. GAS PUMPS - TRASH CAN

The stained bones of a dried skeleton freeze in the night.

INT. GAS STATION

A beeping noise. Dallas enters smugly, arm shoved up behind his jacket. Stops dead, mouth drops.

Behind the counter the clerk cleans a 44-caliber magnum. He's 40s, wearing a shirt as greasy as his hair, on the work shirt is pinned a nametag: CHICK.

Chick looks up from a TV he has behind the counter. Seeing Dallas, puts the hand cannon down and smiles.

CHICK

Oh sorry about that. Just the night watch dog around here I guess.

Dallas moves his arm to where Chick can see it.

DALLAS

Sure thing. I was hoping to just fill up, if I could.

CHICK

Of course, what pump?

DALLAS

You know, I'm not sure.

CHICK

Well how bout 4, it's the only one that works.

Chick shines a big Travis Bickle-like smile at Dallas who repays it slightly. The TV blares a special report.

TV O.S.

Tonight families of police officer's Kelly and Hamtrill wait and pray for a swift recovery. The officer's were wounded in an armed bank robbery. The suspects, a young couple, are believed to be heading swiftly south to the delta. Do not engage they are to be considered armed and extremely dangerous.

CHICK

Ahem. How much?

DALLAS

I'm sorry?

(CONTINUED)

CHICK
How much do you want?

Dallas scrambles for his back pocket.

DALLAS
I think I left my wallet in the
car.

CHICK
Well that doesn't bother me. I am
the night shift around here. Just
come back to me, Chick, when you're
ready.

Dallas turns to go.

CHICK (CONT'D)
Hey. Is that your girlfriend?

Dallas looks. Chick is pointing out Kirby, conspicuously
waiting at the door.

DALLAS
Yeah, that's her.

CHICK
Real cute.

DALLAS
Uh, thanks.

Chick flashes a glance at the television, smirks a hole in
Dallas' back double-fists the 44.

CHICK
Your welcome.

Finger tightens on trigger.

EXT. GAS STATION

Kirby shifts her weight to the other foot. Sighs.

From inside the gun sounds like a crack of thunder, the
frontal windowpane lights red. Kirby screams, drops to her
knees pressed against the glass door.

Inside Dallas lies sprawled. He looks to Kirby, mouths: RUN.

(CONTINUED)

KIRBY

No.

A pair of combat boots steps over Dallas going for the door.

DALLAS

(through glass)

Run.

Kirby stumbles, speeds for cover. Behind her, the doorbell sounds. A thunderclap rolls. The window washing station explodes showering her with dirty water. She screams, ducks behind the nearest pump.

CHICK

Great balls of fire, little girl.
You want us all to meet the spirit
in the sky?

Kirby clutches the 38, her hands shake violently.

CHICK

All I got to do is put one square
in that gas pump and-

-simultaneous sounds of the 44 firing, a tire on Dallas' car exploding hit Kirby's ears.

CHICK

Boom! Come on Sweetheart how many
little bullets can I have left? I
do believe in a fair gunfight.

Kirby looks at the 38 as if for the first time. She fumbles back the hammer. Click.

CHICK O.S.

That's right honey.

Kirby screams. Aiming upward at the light, the 38 fires four rounds. Glass and sparks rain a fiery second, then the darkness follows.

CHICK

Well ok then. Two can play this
game little girl and you got
nowhere to run. Nowhere but the
delta swamp out there and your
boyfriend in here. With me.

He disappears back into the store. A second later, the lights go out.

(CONTINUED)

Shaking Kirby sticks her head out. The storefront is pitch black. She looks hard into it. On the side of the store is parked another small car.

Kirby struggles to push herself up. She takes a few gulps of air and dashes across the pavement.

EXT. GAS STATION - CHICK'S CAR

Kirby reaches the car door- locked. She points the gun point blank at the window. Stops. Inside the car a noose hangs around the driver's rear view mirror.

KIRBY

Oh Dallas. Dallas.

Shakes away the tears.

INT. GAS STATION

The station is dark except for the lights in the cooling units and the counter that is still brightly lit. The noise of refrigeration hums.

Kirby, barely breathing, sneaks along an aisle. Glinting wetly Dallas' blood is streaked across the floor. She gulps, trying not to puke. Pausing at the end of the aisle she looks for Chick then fast walks in a crouch to the counter, hops over.

Landing, Kirby draws herself in a ball, knees to chest, listens. Her breathing settles. She stretches her neck backward. Her eyes lock onto another noose hanging from the highest rack. The noose doubles as Chick's key ring. Cautiously Kirby stands, peers wildly about, trying to reach the keys. Just out of reach.

Mounting the counter once more, she leans out, steadying herself with the television. She leans farther, farther. The television clicks on. Kirby almost falls, her mouth parted in a dead scream before angrily shutting it off. She ducks behind the counter once more.

From her foxhole she watches intently. Once more there is nothing. Determined, she tries again, this time climbing up the bottom rack. She reaches out for the keys, the other hand clinging gun and rack for support.

Behind her the shadows sift. Kirby snatches the keys with a look of joy-- a gleaming kabar blade leaves the shadows.

(CONTINUED)

CHICK

Hiya .

She screams. The knife stabs, missing Kirby as she whips her body around, loses her grip, falls. The 38 explodes.

Chick yelps, reels back his hands covering a bloodied face.

Kirby launches to her feet, runs away still screaming.

INT. BATHROOM

Kirby throws the bolt frantically locking the door. Backing up, she splashes through a large pool of water on the floor. She crouches, her back against sheets of loose plywood stacked along the wall. She waits watching the door, gulping breaths that form clouds of condensation.

The bathroom is a single square room. The opposite wall brown with rust. A gut-revolting toilet in the corner.

Kirby stands, dripping floor water, shivers, the air from her lungs still forming clouds of moisture.

Drops of blood spatter preciously the overflowed sink and mirror. Kirby reaches in the sink, retrieves Chick's gun. In the floor water wavers more drops of blood with 44 ACP brass shell casings. On the plywood crude letters read:
FORECLOSED, PRIVATE PROPERTY.

Footsteps fall outside. Kirby flies against the wall, rattling the loose lumber. A shadow hangs beneath the doorway. Leaves.

Kirby jolts, pulling her hand away from the wall-- cold. She leans over inspecting the plywood, her breath frosty. Around the plywood ice has formed. On the floor small chunks of ice float in the water. Slowly Kirby traces the plywood-- rips it off the wall. A cloud of fog follows.

Revealed is a small icy tunnel, room for one person to crawl through. Shivering Kirby gets down on her soaked knees.

INT. FREEZER

Frozen food packages are pushed aside. Kirby emerges from the tunnel into the icy blue of the gas station's cold storage unit. A lamp illuminates a nearby table displaying a home-made-bomb-makers delight; a soldering iron rests above a device with a fuse and detonator in progress.

(CONTINUED)

Across a wall hang several different bladed weapons, medieval in nature. A Nazi flag hangs proudly as their centerpiece. Labeled skulls adorn crates, random bones lie scattered throughout like a lion's den. From ceiling hooks hang various pieces of mysterious leather and meat slabs. One of them groans.

KIRBY

Dallas.

She runs over to him. He looks bloody, hung upside down.

DALLAS

Kirby no. Get out of here. Why did you come back?

KIRBY

I couldn't leave you.

DALLAS

Leave now. Kirby, where is he?

KIRBY

I don't know. We're getting out of here.

CHICK O.S.

I'm right here soul sister.

Chick stands silhouette in the frothy blue, cigar ember glowing from his mouth.

CHICK

I know it was you two stole that money from that bank.

KIRBY

(arms around Dallas)

Is that what you want? It's in the car, take it.

CHICK

Now where will that get me in life?

KIRBY

A new shit-hole to murder people in. Just take it and let us go.

Chick steps forward, light falls on a fresh wound that moves across his face where the bullet grazed the cheek. He is otherwise painted in camo-grease; his greasy clothes replaced by a barbarous armor made from human leather and bone. He resembles a primordial horror forgotten by history.

(CONTINUED)

CHICK

I like it here just fine, don't you? It's like our very own private fun house.

KIRBY

He wasn't going to harm you.

CHICK

He did a helluva job harming those police officers and they got more right to live than you. I've seen a lot die who had more right to live. Some hanging up there with him now.

Chick slides a primitive spear from the wall.

CHICK (CONT'D)

But that's what we are, ain't it? Seeds of the apocalypse, continuing to grow beneath a surface of sugar-coated society.

Kirby frustratingly aims the 38 at Chick's chest.

KIRBY

You're crazy.

CHICK

(mimicking Dallas)

Now baby, how many times did you shoot your gun?

Kirby pulls the trigger- a resounding click, click, click. Dallas groans.

CHICK

One, two, three, and kill me.

KIRBY

Ok, fine. Why don't you just shoot us and get it over with?

CHICK

I knew you didn't have anymore bullets sweetheart; it just didn't seem very fair.

Chick haunches like a hunter against a leopard.

Kirby holds Dallas around the middle. She puts her weight against him; he does not fall.

(CONTINUED)

KIRBY

Please... we're just kids.

CHICK

No honey, you're a thief, he's a murderer, and I'm a little bit of both. You see the label don't change the soul inside we're all animals and now its your turn.

Chick calmly poises like a cat-- lunges. Kirby jumps, leaving Dallas. Chick smiles at her, caresses Dallas cuts him slightly with the spear. Kirby is beside herself with obvious hatred. Chick thrusts with the spear. She ducks, the spear splits a pipe, leaks freezing blue coolant.

The coolant runs over the icy floor. Kirby trips. She falls hard, begins desperate sobbing.

DALLAS

Kirby get up baby.

Chick bends the spear shaft, wrenches it free of the pipe.

CHICK

Don't make me wish I'd just shot you.

Getting up, Kirby backs away desperately defenseless.

DALLAS

Kirby. The bomb.

She backs into the table, glances at it.

CHICK

Funny thing about half-baked, home-made bombs. They are kind of picky as to how they like to be stroked.

Kirby sets her jaw, moves the soldering iron to a fuse. It catches like a 4th of July sparkler. She picks up the lit bomb delicately.

Chick looks nervous, puts the spear to Dallas' throat.

CHICK

We can all die, fine by me, but I swear to every god ever believed in you can watch him bleed out before we go. Put it out.

Kirby holds the bomb, ready to die. The fuse burns down.

(CONTINUED)

CHICK

Look, so you have the bomb. Now you keep your bomb and I'll give you him, but if you don't stop the wick we're all dead.

The fuse is burning closer to the explosive. Kirby plucks it away just in time.

Chick hollers, charges. Kirby screams with nothing left, throws the bomb. The detonator catches the side of some stacked crates. The small explosion catches Chick, topples the crates onto him in an avalanche of surprise.

Kirby runs to Dallas. Grabbing the fallen spear, she slices Dallas' bonds overhead. He falls with a thud. Kirby has him at once in her arms.

DALLAS

I guess you really do love me then?

KIRBY

I couldn't leave without you. Where would I go?

DALLAS

Let's call ourselves retired officially now.

Their kiss is interrupted by stirring beneath the crates. Underneath Chick lifts up weakly, pinned to the floor.

CHICK

Homemade detonator... random chance is a bitch.

He collapses, as do Dallas and Kirby against each other.

EXT. GAS PUMPS - NIGHT

Kirby tips a gas can into Chick's car watching a bandaged Dallas rest comfortably inside.

EXT. GAS STATION

Formerly Chick's car now theirs begins to drive off into the blackened road once more, leaving the station of horror behind.

The brake lights flash and hold.

Kirby jumps out, runs back to their abandoned getaway car.

INT. CAR - FRONT SEAT

She leans in, plucks Grandmother's picture from the dash.

EXT. GAS STATION

Kirby runs back to the waiting car. It pulls away far into the impenetrable gloaming twilight.

FADE OUT:

THE END