

COVENANT

Chapter One: Home

Written by

Little Marvin

Sony Pictures Television

July 9, 2018

Copyright © 2018

SONY PICTURES TELEVISION INC.

All Rights Reserved

No portion of this script may be performed, or reproduced by any means, or quoted, or published in any medium without prior consent of SONY PICTURES TELEVISION INC.

* 10202 West Washington Boulevard * Culver City, CA 90232 *

"I've always felt that the real horror is next door to us, that the scariest monsters are our neighbors."

- George A. Romero

"The past is not ever dead. It's not even past."

- William Faulkner

"REAL ESTATE INDUSTRIAL FILM" -- CIRCA 1953 -- BLACK & WHITE IMAGERY & UPBEAT JINGLE:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Compton, California. Settled in 1867, and named for its brave founder: Mr. Griffith Dickenson Compton.

IDYLIC POST-WAR SUBURBAN SETTING: ROWS OF MODEST, SINGLE-FAMILY TRACT HOMES... CLIPPED FRONT LAWNS, FRESHLY-PAINTED FENCES... TREE-LINED STREETS...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

A Promise Land. Where good, decent families can live a good, decent life, away from the hustle & bustle of city proper.

*GOOD DECENT FAMILIES -- FATHERS, MOTHERS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS -- WAVE FROM FRONT LAWNS, FROM AUTOMOBILES, FROM SIDEWALKS. *IT SHOULD BECOME QUICKLY APPARENT THAT ALL OF THESE GOOD, DECENT FAMILIES ARE CAUCASIAN...*

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Abutted by verdant valleys to the east, vibrant orange groves to the north and, of course, that jewel of Southern California living: The crystal-blue Pacific...

SURFERS SURF... A MODEL BITES INTO A GLORIOUS ORANGE...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...Compton is also a beacon of Opportunity: Just a shiny new Cadillac away from the thriving Los Angeles industrial complex. Fathers, get your engines, ready!

CADILLACS LEAVING DRIVEWAYS... FATHERS ON THE WAY TO WORK... MOTHERS WAVING GOOD-BYE FROM FRONT DOORS...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Schools sound, streets safe and swimming pools kid-friendly. Mother meet Mother. Sister meet Sister. And there's always a baby nearby in need of a bottle.

*EXASPERATED MOTHERS FEED AND LAUGH... DAUGHTERS MIMIC WITH LITTLE DOLLS... *THE EDGES OF OUR INDUSTRIAL BEGIN TO PUCKER AND BUBBLE...*

NARRATOR (V.O.)

So, why not consider Compton...?

PUSH IN ON... ONE HOME IN PARTICULAR: MODEST, SINGLE-FAMILY RANCH. WHITE. ORDINARY. **THIS IS 2324 REEVE STREET.**
 *CRUDE BUTTERFLIES OF DAMAGED FILM STOCK, AS THE CELLULOID CONTINUES TO MELT...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

... A place to truly call Home.

AND OFF THAT WORD -- HOME -- A HALLUCINATORY FLOOD OF IMAGERY SLASHES THROUGH IN QUICK, DISJOINTED SNATCHES OF SIGHT AND SOUND, WHILE OUR BUBBLY, INDUSTRIAL JINGLE CONTINUES:

-- A 1953 RAYTHEON TV IN A PRISTINE, FAMILY ROOM -- CHANNELS FLIP FAST, FINDING -- "BEULAH", BLACK "QUEEN OF THE KITCHEN", GLEEFULLY SERVING THE WHITE HENDERSON FAMILY WITH COMICAL EXASPERATION...

-- AS A "PICTURE-PERFECT, SUBURBAN BLACK FAMILY" WATCHES, PARALYZED FROM THEIR SOFA BEFORE DINNER TRAYS, EXPRESSIONLESS...

-- A PICK-AXE STRIKING BLOOD-RED BEDROCK WITH A SIZZLE OF SPARKS

-- FOUR FIGURES -- JET BLACK, NUDE -- CROUCHED DOWN IN A DIM AUREOLE OF FADED LIGHT, BARELY VISIBLE... ROCKING, HEADS BOWED, WHITES OF EYES GLISTENING, BLANK, PUPIL-LESS...

-- TIME-LAPSE: A GOURD, FESTERING AND SPLIT OPEN ON KITCHEN-NOOK FORMICA, INNARDS ROTTEN, INFESTED... A TRIM WHITE HOUSEWIFE REMOVES HER APRON, AND PRESENTS IT TO US - NIGHTMARISH, TOOTHPASTE COMMERCIAL-GRIN...

-- THE BACK OF AN IMPOSSIBLY TALL, RAIL-THIN MAN... PALE, WHITE HANDS EXTENDING UPWARD TOWARD THE RAINING HEAVENS WITH RELIGIOUS FERVOR...

-- A BLACK ABYSS OF DEEP, RICH SOIL PELTED BY SWOLLEN TEARS OF RAIN...

-- A SINGLE, PALE KNOB OF BONE JUTTING FORTH FROM THAT SOIL LIKE A RELIC...

AND: **FREEZE FRAME ON THE HOUSE AT 2324 REEVE STREET.**

OUR UPBEAT JINGLE - WARPED - WINDS DOWN, DISTORTS, DEGRADES TO ELECTRONIC STATIC AND ODD WHITE NOISE...

OVER a SCROLL IN BLOOD RED TYPE:

Widely known as "The Great Migration", roughly 6 million African-Americans fled the rural South to the cities of the North, Midwest and West from 1916 to 1970. Driven from their homes by terror lynchings, Jim Crow laws and little to no economic opportunity, many chose to make the journey West. However, widespread redlining, racial hysteria and mass violence ensured the South was never far behind.

On September 14, 1953, Alfred and Luquella "Lucky" Emory moved their family from Chatham County, North Carolina to a new home in Compton, California.

The following is what occurred at 2324 Reeve Street.

Inspired by True Events

...AND AS THESE LAST WORDS FILL OUR SCREEN, 2324 REEVE STREET FLICKERS AND BLEEDS OUT TO BRIGHT WHITE.

And as that WHITENESS becomes THE BURNING WHITE EYE OF THE SUN, we ANGLE DOWN on:

EXT. EMORY HOME - CHATHAM COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA - DAY - CIRCA 1952

A modest farmhouse at the end of a private dirt road. Lived in, but well-loved. The air is hot and still.

LUCKY
(PRE LAP, "peek-a-boo")
I'm right here.

INT. EMORY HOME/KITCHEN - NORTH CAROLINA - DAY - 1952 - CONTINUOUS

TIGHT on the face of:

LUQUELLA "LUCKY" EMORY (Black 35).

Warm, sharp eyes that twinkle with mischievous spirit, as she watches her world...

REVERSE:

CHESTER EMORY (2)

"Standing" in his WOODEN CRIB an arm's length from the kitchen window, on the FRONT PORCH.

He supports himself with the bars of his crib, wobbles, a raucous belly laugh. No greater game on God's green earth than "*I'm right here*".

INT. EMORY HOME/KITCHEN - NORTH CAROLINA - DAY

LUCKY cleans the last of the peaches in the colander, wipes her wet hands on the pockets of her white cotton housedress and turns off the sink.

LUCKY
I'm right here.

BELLY LAUGH.(OC)

LUCKY (CONT'D)
I'm right here!

SQUEAL!(OC)

LUCKY, enjoying this, ducks under the kitchen window, just out of view.

CHESTER:

Watching, waiting... GURGLES of anticipation.

LUCKY:

POPS up, hands outstretched. "*I'm gonna get you!*"

And the crib goes WILD. Bliss.

And FOLLOW LUCKY as she grabs the colander, and winds her way out the KITCHEN and through

THE FRONT ROOM

Books. Everywhere. Stacked in piles, waist-high, along the walls. LUCKY'S BARE FEET stepping over SERGEANT, the family's Cairn terrier, sitting vigil in the FRONT DOORWAY.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
Peaches, Sarge.

A lazy, overheated HARUMPH from SERGEANT.

And continue FOLLOWING LUCKY'S FEET across the WOODEN FLOORBOARDS as she steps out onto the

FRONT PORCH

Over CHILDREN'S JOURNALS and TEST PAPERS and RED INK. The detritus of a teacher's lazy Saturday afternoon spent grading homework.

And from this LOW ANGLE we see what LUCKY doesn't:

A FIGURE

Standing at a remove, in the near distance.

And as LUCKY bends, placing the colander of fresh peaches before an elated CHESTER -

WOMAN (O.C.)

Peaches.

LUCKY startles. Peaches tumble. Turns. Sees.

A WOMAN (Caucasian 40)

Standing near the foot of the PORCH.

Dirty hair. Nightgown. Strange. Her eyes, far away.

LUCKY

You startled me.

(pause)

Ma'am.

LUCKY recovers. Exposed. Her arms fold over her breasts.

WOMAN

Sorry. Didn't mean to startle you.

Under the CICADAS, she SINGS to herself. An unfamiliar, yet persistent MELODY. Soft.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Beautiful day.

WOMAN steps forward now. LUCKY, on instinct, lifts CHESTER from the crib. Holds him against her chest.

LUCKY

Yes. Yes it is.

LUCKY'S EYES take inventory: Bare feet. Dirt soiling the bottom edges of her nightgown. Fingers tapping aimlessly at her neck. Her SONG...

WOMAN appears to notice CHESTER.

WOMAN

Oh. Is that your baby?

LUCKY
Yes, ma'am. Yes, he is.

WOMAN
What's his name?

LUCKY
(unnerved, impatient)
Chester. Chester Emory.

WOMAN smiles like someone who's forgotten how.

WOMAN
Chester Emory. That's a beautiful name.
Beautiful name for a beautiful baby boy.

LUCKY
Is there something I can help you with?
Not lost, are you?

WOMAN
No. Not lost. Just out walkin' around and
saw your beautiful home.

Her words hang for a beat too long.

LUCKY
Well. If there isn't anything I can help
you with, I should get back inside. My
husband -

WOMAN steps onto the FIRST PORCH STEP, silencing LUCKY.

WOMAN
The man left from here with two lil'
girls, bout an hour ago?
(pause)
We seen him.

We.

HUMMING stops. WOMAN eyes CHESTER like a cat toy, then
locks eyes with LUCKY. A banal calm.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Can I have him?

Beat.

LUCKY
Ma'am?

WOMAN
 (innocent)
 The boy. I'd like him very much. Will you
 give him to me?

LUCKY'S HANDS tighten around CHESTER.

LUCKY
 I think you better be on your way. Now.

WOMAN throws her hands up over her mouth. GIGGLES. A
 child's game.

WOMAN
 (mimicking Lucky)
I'm right here!

CHESTER turns. Smiles. LUCKY guides his face back to her
 breast. Takes a step backward toward THE FRONT DOOR.

LUCKY
 Go on. Now.

WOMAN GIGGLES again. Closer.

WOMAN
 Give him to me?

LUCKY, backward, BARE FEET stepping on HOMEWORK. Falters.

Looking past WOMAN now. EYES fixed on the farthest end of
 the PRIVATE DIRT ROAD:

THREE WHITE MEN

Standing. Watching. Silent.

LUCKY. Blood cold.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
 Give him to me.

Spotted, THE THREE MEN begin walking up the DIRT ROAD
 toward THE FARMHOUSE with horrible purpose.

As LUCKY turns, WOMAN LUNGES forward suddenly -- *Arms
 outstretched, nails like talons... Face twisted with
 seething malice* --

WOMAN (CONT'D)
 (venom)
GIVE ME THE BOY.

SLAM:

TIGHT on LUCKY'S EYES STARTLING OPEN.

ALFRED (O.C.)
Sorry, Luck. Pothole.

INT. MOVING TRUCK - LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA - DAY - CIRCA
1953

We won't have to "**CHYRON: 1 YEAR LATER**" to see how time has changed LUCKY. Eyes, electric with sleeplessness. Like two exposed nerves.

LUCKY
Thought we left those in Chatham.

ALFRED EMORY (Black 38)

Drives, eyes ahead. A large man. Brawn belied by a bookish sensibility.

ALFRED
Sleep well?

LUCKY reaches into the glove box. Retrieves a CIGARETTE AND MATCHBOOK: Strikes. Question answered.

GRACIE (O.C.)
Mama: *ALWAYS* smoking.

Between LUCKY and ALFRED, precious cargo. Their DAUGHTERS:

GRACIE (6). A mouse of a child with giant spectacles and larger opinions.

JACQUELINE (14), Dorothy Dandridge in the making, though she doesn't know that yet.

SERGEANT sits in Gracie's lap, enjoying the breeze.

LUCKY, takes a slow, steady DRAG out the truck window.

As she EXHALES, smoke climbs in GRAY SPIRALS and we glimpse the vast SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SKY stretching out above: Technicolor-blue. Hopeful. Mocking her.

ALFRED
(sensing storm clouds)
Girls, tell your mother all the things she's missed.

GRACIE
You GOT to stay awake mama!

LUCKY

Have to, Gracie Jean.

GRACIE

Have to. Have to. Have to...

(pause)

You only missed just about *everything*.

LUCKY

Hm.

GRACIE

We saw Jimmy Stewart *coming out the bank!*
Didn't we Daddy?

ALFRED

Sure did.

JACQUELINE

Don't forget Veronica Lake. Eating that
burger like a big old heifer. Her hair
looking *dreadful*.

ALFRED

Uh-oh, girls.

(points out window)

Look, over there! It's ugly old Bela
Lugosi, picking rubbish outta that trash
can!

REVERSE - SIDEWALK:

A GARBAGE MAN. Hunched. Gaunt. Grumpy. Pulls trash from a
receptacle. The spitting image of Nosferatu.

Gracie laughs HARD. Then -

GRACIE

Who's *Belza-Go-See?*

LUCKY flicks her CIGARETTE out the window. Enough.

LUCKY

Your Daddy watches too many pictures.

Heavy Beat. Her family, adept at dancing.

ALFRED

(covers)

Well. Isn't that something?

JACQUELINE
 (covers)
 Who do you see now Dad?

EXT. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD - LOS ANGELES - CONTINUOUS

THE MOVING TRUCK pulls to the side of the road, where:

A SINGLE PALM TREE, climbs from a dirt plot in the sidewalk. Massive, sturdy trunk. WIDE FRONDS slope and sway in the breeze; casting exotic shadows.

LUCKY POV:

ALFRED, GRACIE AND JACQUELINE leap from the TRUCK, run to the PALM. Marvel at it, as if a mirage. SERGEANT runs around it, relieves himself.

LUCKY watches her HAPPY FAMILY from the window like a spectator in the cheap seats. Removed.

Turns away from them. Looks out the DRIVER'S WINDOW.

PUSH IN through the OPEN WINDOW:

COMMUTERS whizz by in either direction. And ACROSS WILSHIRE, on the opposite sidewalk, A BUS STOP where:

A GROUP OF MAIDS, stands. Waiting for the bus.

All wear freshly starched UNIFORMS of crisp white with black piping. Various ages. They are all Black.

AND CLOSER... As LUCKY locks on

A YOUNG MAID (Black 20).

Sitting. Alone. She appears to be looking directly at LUCKY.

CLOSER STILL... As the YOUNG MAID stands, rocking ever so slightly side to side, revealing:

She is very pregnant.

PUSH IN SLOWLY as she smiles faintly, gently patting her baby bump, distant eyes locked on LUCKY...

REVERSE: LUCKY: entranced. Traces of a forgotten smile ever so slightly summoned by the sight of impending life...

And then, THE YOUNG PREGNANT MAID'S smile erases.

Expressionless. Unmoving. Glassy eyes dissolved to *blank, milky husks...*

Without warning: THE YOUNG PREGNANT MAID steps off the sidewalk directly into COMMUTER TRAFFIC.

REVERSE: LUCKY's mouth drawn back into a WIDE, SILENT SCREAM as...

THE YOUNG PREGNANT MAID walks quickly toward her now -- *incongruously, impossibly fast* -- through SCREAMING, SQUEALING COMMUTER TRAFFIC...

Cars WHIZZING past her on either side, as she stops dead center. Beat.

Then her mouth slowly yawns open into an *IMPOSSIBLY BLACK, PAINED "O" AS* --

HER WATER BREAKS IN A PROPULSIVE DELUGE --

ALFRED (O.C.)

Looking for potholes?

LUCKY STARTLES.

ALFRED leans into her window. Gently caresses her damp forehead.

LUCKY turns away quickly to look back at the traffic where -- It's business as usual.

Commuters on the way to work. Traffic moving this way and that. A GROUP OF BLACK MAIDS sitting at the bus stop. *Normal.*

LUCKY turns back to ALFRED, perplexed. Beat.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Only view that matters is over there.

He points: JACQUELINE measuring GRACIE against the PALM. She eyes it. Caustic.

LUCKY

That's what's missing. A goddamned tree.

Regret, immediate. Her eyes close. ALFRED kisses her forehead.

HOUSEWIFE

(PRE LAP)

Do you have children?

INT. AUTOMOBILE - REEVE STREET - COMPTON, CA - DAY -
LATER

HELEN KOISTRA (White 35) sits behind the wheel of her parked '51 Ford Victoria. No muss. No fuss. Next stop: "Over this shit".

Front and back seats ground zero for MESSY BOXES of TENANT PAPERWORK.

A RAP at the WINDOW pulls focus from a stack of heavily redacted contracts in her lap.

WISPY HOUSEWIFE (White 20s) with RED-FACED TODDLER balanced on one hip, glares at HELEN from OUTSIDE. Gestures: "roll down your window".

HELEN
Fuck's sake.

HELEN rolls it. Inches.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Sorry?

HOUSEWIFE
I asked if you have children.

HELEN
No ma'am. I do not.

HOUSEWIFE gives HELEN a withering once over.

HOUSEWIFE
I'm *not* surprised.

HELEN
Well. I'll let my ovaries know you said so.

Beat.

HOUSEWIFE
Is this some kind of joke to you?

HELEN
Not at all.
(pause)
I take my ovaries very seriously.

HELEN starts ROLLING UP. HOUSEWIFE leans in quick.

HOUSEWIFE
 (hisses)
Bulldagger.

She HOCKS a hot glob of SPITTLE at HELEN.

It rolls off the WINDOW, and down HELEN'S cheek. Beat.

HELEN
 Classy.
 (pause)
Cunt.

She ROLLS up. Wipes her cheek. Looks out the FRONT WINDSHIELD, as if for the first time.

This day has gone from worse to hell. Fast.

EXT. REEVE STREET - COMPTON, CA - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Her AUTOMOBILE is surrounded by NEIGHBORS.

MOTHERS with TODDLERS. FATHERS AND SONS. A GROUP OF MAILMEN huddled together as if at a sporting match.

*They could all be extras from THE INDUSTRIAL FILM.

There's a palpable electricity - anticipation - in the air that borders on morbidly festive.

BETTY
 (PRE LAP)
 You've only been here 6 months.

INT. WENDELL HOME/KITCHEN - COMPTON, CA - DAY - CONTINUOUS

BETTY WENDELL (35) MOVES through her densely-packed KITCHEN. Rotary in one hand, day planner in the other. Not quite *LIFE*, and knows it. Reaching. Always reaching.

HIVE OF ACTIVITY: HOUSEWIVES AND MOTHERS - seated, standing - Making SIGNS. Folding FLIERS. Drinking COFFEE. Energy of an election phone bank.

BETTY
 (into phone)
 What if Fred should want to resell? He'll never get the full asking price now.
 (eyeing a sign)
Upper-case, Midge.

MIDGE mans a SIGNAGE STATION at THE KITCHEN TABLE:

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD! FAMILY VALUES! PROPERTY VALUES! NO NIGGERS! NO PROBLEMS!

BETTY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Thrilled I can count on you, Marlene. Us ladies have to stick together. It's all about the sisterhood!

BETTY glimpses CLARKE WENDELL (38) beelining for the FOYER. Overnight bag.

BETTY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Gotta go, dear. We'll see you tomorrow.

BETTY crosses through the FAMILY ROOM into the FOYER.

CLARKE

Taxi's here.

BETTY

Today of all days.

CLARKE

Yeah, well. Looks like you've got *Normandie* under control.

BETTY leans in for a kiss. Intercepted by the coat rack.

BETTY

Don't forget: H.O.A. Kiwanis tomorrow at 6.

CLARKE

(over)

If we land in time -

BETTY

(over)

Darling, you must. Dale and Marty will be there -

CLARKE

(quiet explosion)

Good for fucking Dale and Marty.

Beat. BETTY turns. A MOTHER watches from the FAMILY ROOM.

BETTY

I just thought you'd want to see me, that's all.

CLARKE pinches BETTY'S belly. Opens the door. Leaves.

SALLY (O.S.)

Mommy look!

BETTY breathes. Turns. Smiles.

BETTY

Well. Aren't you just adorable?

SALLY (8) holds up her SIGN: **KEEP COMPTON WHITE!**

CUT TO:

A ZENITH BLACK & WHITE TELEVISION SCREEN:

REX HUMBARO (salt and pepper 40) sermonizes before CHURCHGOERS of his "Cathedral of Tomorrow".

INT. KELLER HOME/KITCHEN - COMPTON, CA - CONTINUOUS

REX'S VOICE spills OVER from the FAMILY ROOM as we see:

A WOMAN from behind, seated at her KITCHEN TABLE before a sturdy SINGER SEWING MACHINE. Formica table covered in all manner of fabric swatches.

Her HANDS work the machine with a dexterity that borders on grace.

SUE KELLER (40). Plain housedress. Earthy, handsome features.

Her lips move, soundlessly, along with the BROADCAST as she works. A fugue state.

She stops. Sensing something. Looks toward the KITCHEN WINDOW as if pulled.

SUE'S POV:

As A MOVING TRUCK passes by the WINDOW...

INSIDE THE TRUCK: The Emory Family.

A quick glimpse of LUCKY'S FACE in the PASSENGER WINDOW as THE TRUCK disappears from view...

SUE sits. Still. Watching.

And we PULL BACK TO FIND:

A TALL BOY (15) standing in the KITCHEN DOORWAY. Also watching.

Reed-thin. Gray, hollowed eyes. Man's oversized sport coat. This is DAVIS KELLER.

DAVIS

That them, Ma?

Beat.

SUE

That's them, Davis.

MOTHER AND SON continue looking out at the EMPTY STREET.
Silent.

INT. MOVING TRUCK - COMPTON, CA - CONTINUOUS

ALFRED

(quiet)

Welcome Wagon come early.

LUCKY turns from her WINDOW. Follows ALFRED'S gaze to the FRONT WINDSHIELD and the COMMOTION brewing just up ahead.

Beat.

LUCKY

(under breath)

She told you we should move in at night.

GRACIE

At night?

JACQUELINE

Why Daddy? Are we ok?

ALFRED

We'll be just fine, girls. Everything will be just fine.

LUCKY shuts her eyes. Tight. Shallow breaths - 1,2,3 - 1,2,3, - as if remembering how.

GRACIE notices this. Rests her hand on HER MOTHER'S hand. LUCKY'S eyes open.

GRACIE

It's OK, Mama. I'm right here.

EXT. REEVE STREET - COMPTON, CA - DAY - CONTINUOUS

THE MOVING TRUCK turns the corner onto REEVE STREET.

Engulfed. ONLOOKERS. SIGNS. The CROWD has multiplied.
Once curious. Now curdled. A SIMMERING MOB.

THE ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD has taken to the streets.

They SURROUND the truck on all sides. A FRENZY. Faces.
Red. Jeering.

THE TRUCK slows to a HALT. An IMPASSE OF TIGHTLY-CRAMMED
BODIES making movement impossible. Then it steadily
TRUDGES forward again, as NEIGHBORS cut a grudging path:
Moses and the Sea.

And as THE TRUCK finally maneuvers to the curb, we LAND
HARD ON: **2324 REEVE STREET.**

INT. MOVING TRUCK - COMPTON, CA - DAY - CONTINUOUS

ALFRED

Girls, you hold my hands tight now ok?

GRACIE

I got to hold -

(self-corrects)

- I have to hold Sergeant.

JACQUELINE

I'll hold him til we get inside -

LUCKY looks at her DAUGHTERS. Her HUSBAND.

*SOUND DISTORTS: As if UNDERWATER... Their LIPS move.
Unintelligible. VOICES snuffed to A DULL, STATIC HUM. We
HEAR as LUCKY HEARS... Her EYES shut --

FLASH:

CHESTER: *Laughing from THE WOODEN CRIB ON THE FRONT
PORCH...*

ALFRED (O.C.)

Luck?

SLAM:

ALFRED (CONT'D)

LUCKY.

-- LUCKY'S eyes OPENING AGAIN.

A RING OF HOWLING FACES just outside the WINDOW.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
Stay with me baby. We'll be inside soon.

EXT. 2324 REEVE STREET - DAY - CONTINUOUS

LUCKY exits THE MOVING TRUCK. And the AIR GOES DENSE.

FOLLOW LUCKY

As she's swallowed up by THE CROWD... NEIGHBORS PUSH INTO HER. HARD. JOSTLING for a closer LOOK... A harder LAUGH... A LEERING, CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE.

CHILD
(underwater)
...NIGGERS GO HOME!

LUCKY glances back at ALFRED, JACQUELINE AND GRACIE as they're joined by HELEN... HELEN AND ALFRED shake hands, sending a RIPPLE OF MALIGNANT HUMOR through the CROWD.

LUCKY looks to the left --

FATHER
(underwater)
...FIND YOUR OWN DAMN NEIGHBORHOOD!

And to the right -- where AN LAPD OFFICER (35) leans against his cruiser, watching the action. Placid.

He makes eye contact with LUCKY for a split second. Nods.

And as LUCKY turns back toward the MOB ahead -- A FIGURE LUNGES AT HER SUDDENLY THROUGH THE MELEE...

DIRTY HAIR, YELLOWED SMILE TINGED WITH REPULSIVE GLEE...

THE WOMAN --

WOMAN
I'M RIGHT HERE.

LUCKY REELS, just as ALFRED reaches her, grabs her hand -- Pulls her back to earth with his eyes --

...And THE EMORY FAMILY crosses THE FRONT FENCE onto the TINY WALKWAY that bisects THEIR NEW FRONT LAWN. Together.

Home. "Safe".

GRACIE runs to LUCKY. Grabs her hand. Points to the SMALL GREEN PATCH OF FRONT LAWN with wonder.

GRACIE

Look mama.

(pause)

The backyard's in front.

WHIP TO:

THE FRONT DOOR SLAMMING SHUT.

CHYRON: DAY 1.

INT. 2324 REEVE STREET / FAMILY ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Silence. Momentary decompression chamber. Then:

HELEN

(awkward in the extreme)

Welcome home.

An irony lost on no one.

***NOTE:** Though MUTED, THE MOB can still be heard from OUTSIDE. They can always be heard. Just a matter of degrees.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Where should we start?

(trying -)

The walls in the kitchen have been freshly painted. I think it's called Sunbeam -

As if on cue, SERGEANT darts ahead into the KITCHEN to inspect.

GRACIE

Sergeant, get back here!

GRACIE gives ALFRED a "Can I get him?" look. ALFRED winks.

ALFRED

(mouths)

Careful.

GRACIE winks back and walks ahead, disappearing into the KITCHEN.

LUCKY steps forward into the FAMILY ROOM. NEW CARPET sinks under her HEELED FEET.

The interior is deceptively big in that way ranch homes can be. Narrow. Flat. Long. A SPRAWLING "RAILROAD" HALLWAY at the center leads to BEDROOMS and A BACK DOOR. Through its WINDOW: A SMALL BACKYARD just visible.

LUCKY

Bigger than it looked in the pictures.

ALFRED, sensing, walks over to her.

ALFRED

Can see most of the place from here though. Which is good.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

GRACIE

What are you looking at?

GRACIE walks over to SERGEANT who is standing at attention before A CLOSED DOOR.

He cocks his head, paws at THE DOOR playfully. *A little game with whatever's inside.*

GRACIE reaches out, tries the knob. Locked.

Beat.

GRACIE slowly leans forward, presses her ear against the DOOR. Listens.

Her body goes still.

HARD CUT:

Jacqueline visibly shivers.

JACQUELINE

It's freezing.

HELEN

Right.

(to Alfred)

As you might imagine, been a bit of a hullabaloo getting gas and electric over here. We'll have it all straightened out in a day or so.

LUCKY

(under breath)

Or so?

GRACIE
Can I look at the bedrooms, daddy?

ALFRED
Sure, baby girl.

LUCKY
Keep away from the windows.

Beat.

ALFRED
Just til we get some drapes up.
(pause)
And mind your sister.

Jacqueline walks down the HALLWAY checking things out.

HELEN
Mr. and Mrs. Emory. Now might be a good
time to talk about the elephant outside
the room.

LUCKY turns.

TIME CUT:

MOVING ACROSS TYPED WORDS on a PAGE. A CONTRACT as it's
read:

*NO PERSON WHOSE BLOOD IS NOT ENTIRELY THAT OF THE
CAUCASIAN RACE...*

*...AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS PARAGRAPH NO JAPANESE,
CHINESE, MEXICAN, HINDU...*

*...SHALL AT ANY TIME LIVE UPON ANY OF THE LOTS IN SAID
TRACT.*

CUT:

LUCKY looks up from the paperwork in ALFRED'S hand.

LUCKY
(to Helen)
You might have read this over the phone
and saved us a few thousand miles.

HELEN hands her ANOTHER SET OF PAPERS. Redacted.

HELEN
I'm not showing you to dissuade you.
These sorts of covenants are *out of
vogue*, mostly.
(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

Though I'm hard-pressed to think of a single broker in Los Angeles who won't still honor them.

Beat.

HELEN (CONT'D)

This house is really quite a bargain, Mrs. Emory. And I do believe it's meant to be your family's home.

(pause)

I'm simply sharing so that you have an idea of what you're up against out there.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

LUCKY AND ALFRED stand before the LARGE PICTURE WINDOW where the WHITE MOB LEERS. Teasing the edges of the property line; an impending FORTRESS BREACH.

HELEN

(over)

Those people have no intention of making this easy for you. It will likely get much worse before it gets any better.

LUCKY

(under breath)

Those people.

LUCKY turns from the WINDOW. Faces HELEN squarely.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

How many of *those women* outside *my* front lawn have degrees do you think?

Confused beat.

HELEN

I'm - not sure that I know, Mrs. Emory?

LUCKY

How many of *those grown men* screaming at *my children* came back and had to hide their uniforms in a box?

HELEN looks to ALFRED: *Help me out here.*

HELEN

I wasn't defending them -

LUCKY

With respect, I'm not sure I give a good
goddamn what *those people* intend.

Alfred steps forward.

ALFRED

We appreciate your honesty, ma'am -

LUCKY

(over --)

We appreciate you doing your job, Ms.
Koistra. But we didn't come here to make
friends. We came here to make a life.

HARD CUT:

LUCKY'S HANDS as they remove THE MAGAZINE from:

A COLT .45 PISTOL

CLEARs the weapon. INSPECTS the chamber. RECOILS the
spring plug. Swift, rote movements. Pro.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

DARKNESS has fallen. VOICES echo from OUTSIDE.

LUCKY checks the GUN by LAMPLIGHT in her nightgown from a
mattress on the floor, surrounded by boxes.

JACQUELINE, GRACIE AND SERGEANT: Asleep on an adjacent
mattress in the corner.

CLOSER: TINY PUFFS OF CHILL AIR as they EXHALE. The house
is freezing.

ALFRED enters with a box. Pulls a BLANKET, HAMMER AND
NAILS from it and moves to the WINDOW to fashion
MAKESHIFT CURTAINS.

THROUGH THE WINDOW: A GROUP OF WHITE MEN stands in the
NEIGHBORING YARD. Smoking. One watches the house from
behind a chain link fence.

LUCKY

Ma'am.

ALFRED

Baby?

LUCKY

"We appreciate your honesty, *ma'am*...
Thank you, *ma'am*..." So fawning. Servile.
Doesn't it exhaust you?

ALFRED

She got us in here didn't she?

LUCKY

House where we're not wanted in a city
where we're not wanted.

ALFRED

She's not the enemy. Pick your battles,
Luck.

LUCKY

Don't call me that.

LUCKY removes the SLIDE STOP. RECOILS the 45's springs.
CLACK.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Just seems to me that *ma'am* ought to be
earned. That's all.

ALFRED

Yes, well. I suppose dousing everything
with piss and vinegar will help. How's
that working for you?

Strained beat.

LUCKY inserts the MAG. A METALLIC CLINK.

ALFRED walks over to the mattress, sits down beside
LUCKY. Gets to work on A SECOND COLT .45.

ALFRED admires LUCKY for a moment while they assemble
their GUNS. A wistful melancholy.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Quite the honeymoon suite.

(trying -)

Mrs. Emory. Would it be in poor taste to
say that I'm a bit turned on by the sight
of you with that gun?

LUCKY continues with her WEAPON.

LUCKY

It's 1 am, there's a group of white men standing out that window, and your children are sleeping a foot away. So, yes. Your timing's unfortunate.

ALFRED lowers the GUN now. Reaches out to touch LUCKY'S FACE. She flinches.

ALFRED moves in, gently, to kiss her on the lips. LUCKY maneuvers away from him like a stranger. Stands. Continues with the WEAPON.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Maybe another *ma'am* would've gotten the gas and electric turned on. Maybe another *ma'am* could bring back your -

LUCKY stops. Fearful of her own words. ALFRED lowers the GUN. Struck. Heavy silence.

ALFRED

You're my wife.

He was my son.

(pause)

Don't be cruel.

It's as if those words have vacuumed all of the oxygen from the room. LUCKY'S hand falters for the first time.

The air thick with a thousand unsaid things.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

TIGHT ON:

LUCKY'S FACE, as she "sleeps". Eyes, tight. Jaw, working. Feverish. Fitful -

FLASH:

WOMAN

(venom)

GIVE ME THE BOY.

LUCKY turns, through the FARMHOUSE DOOR --

WOMAN'S HANDS reach OVER THE THRESHOLD --

*LUCKY grabs the KNOB. **SLAMS** the WOODEN DOOR --*

A FRENZIED HARPY'S SCREAM as WOMAN'S FINGERS JAM UP INSIDE THE FRAME, DOOR swinging back OPEN --

WOMAN (CONT'D)

KILL THE BLACK BITCH!!

BOOTS ON DIRT... BOOTS ON GRAVEL... BOOTS ON STAIRS... --

FLASH:

LUCKY bolts upright. Eyes search the DARKNESS.

ALFRED's back, rising and falling with sleep. GRACIE AND JACQUELINE asleep on the next mattress. No Sergeant.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

LUCKY, pulls her robe tight against the chill. Aims the LAMPLIGHT into the DARK HALLWAY. FLICKERING FLAME teasing SHADOWS.

LUCKY

(whisper)

Sergeant.

Nothing. A bit louder:

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Sarge. Come here, boy.

She holds the LAMP out a bit further. Strains to see in the dim aureole of YELLOWED LIGHT. Silence. Then:

The COMFORTING JINGLE of a DOG'S COLLAR.

SERGEANT emerges from DARKNESS at the far end of the HALLWAY. He hangs back in the SHADOWS. Looking at her.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Well? Come on now.

Pause. SERGEANT takes a few steps forward. Stops again.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Sergeant.

SERGEANT turns. Confused. Looks back into the DARKNESS behind him... *As if hearing his name called out from the EMPTY FRONT OF THE HOUSE.*

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Come here right now.

SERGEANT contemplates LUCKY. Then BOUNDS AWAY from her, disappearing back into THE PITCH BLACK END OF THE HALLWAY - THE KITCHEN.

LUCKY takes a few steps after him now. Then -

SERGEANT SHRIEKS from the DARKNESS.

The AGONIZED YELP of a dog whose tail has been stomped on.

LUCKY. Frozen.

And SERGEANT comes BOUNDING BACK through the SHADOWS toward LUCKY. Little body quaking with fear.

LUCKY scoops up the shivering pup in one arm. Holds him. Close. He shakes. Licks her face. *Safe.*

LUCKY stares back down the long hallway to where it's swallowed up by EMPTY BLACKNESS. Silence. Nothing.

CUT TO:

A PHILCO AM RADIO on a card table. Tinny speakers BLASTING Patti Page's (*How Much Is*) *That Doggie In The Window.*

EXT. REEVE STREET - COMPTON, CA - MORNING

Beside that card table, a SECOND CARD TABLE with another AM RADIO. This one BLARING Dean Martin's *That's Amore.*

PULL BACK

And we see more of THE STREET. More CARD TABLES. More AM RADIOS. TRANSISTORS. All ON. All at MAX VOLUME. All positioned facing A SINGLE TARGET:

The Emory Home.

A BLARING CACOPHONY of standards, showtunes and sports highlights. Discordant. Aural waterboarding.

BETTY, MIDGE AND NAT stand beside the tables, shielding their ears from the RACKET. Eyes on 2324.

MIDGE

(shouts)

I thought those people were supposed to like music?

NAT

(shouts)

Not like *this!* It's enough to drive you
crazy!

BETTY

Let's hope so.

SALLY WENDELL dances wildly in the DIN beside HER MOTHER.
BETTY smiles.

BETTY (CONT'D)

(shouts)

Pace yourself, sweetheart. It's gonna be
on all day!

BETTY looks up. Waves at the KITCHEN WINDOW.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER RADIO. This one BLASTING Ruth Brown's *Mama He
Treats Your Daughter Mean.*

ANGLE ON the COLT 45 sitting by its side on the
countertop.

ALFRED watches BETTY from the KITCHEN WINDOW.

ALFRED

(under breath)

Dumb ass bitch.

A LOW GROWL turns his attention away from the WINDOW, to:

SERGEANT. Sprawled out before THE DOOR.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

That's right, Sarge. Dumb ass bitch.

ALFRED walks over to THE DOOR. Pantry? Closet? Tries the
KNOB. No dice. Jiggles it again. Harder. Locked.

SERGEANT GROWLS again. On guard.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

FOLLOW ALFRED coming down the hall, just as JACQUELINE
leaves a BATHROOM. Towels wrapped tight around her.

JACQUELINE

Dad, the water's *freezing!*

ALFRED
We'll get it fixed, baby girl. Bus leaves
in 30, let's go!

JACQUELINE
I know I know! Which box are clothes?

ALFRED
Check the back bedroom.

As JACQUELINE runs past, ALFRED walks by a SPARE BEDROOM.
EMPTY save a few boxes. Stops. Turns back.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

ALFRED
Whatcha doing in here, Gracie Jean?

Gracie sits in the CORNER.

She arranges pencils, paper and dolls around her.
Makeshift classroom.

GRACIE
(without turning)
Sssshhh Daddy! School's about to start.

ALFRED
(smiles)
Teach already got you in the corner huh?

ALFRED follows GRACIE'S eye line up the CORNER OF THE
WALL to A DARK GREY STAIN spreading upward and outward
into the CEILING: A Rorschach of WATER DAMAGE.

He makes a mental note of it. Keeps walking.

GRACIE sits still for a beat. Then smiles at the WATER
STAIN.

GRACIE
(whispers)
That's my Daddy.

Another quiet beat. *As if listening to someone speak.*

GRACIE (CONT'D)
(answers)
Of course he lives with us. Don't be
silly.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

ALFRED (O.S.)

Any idea what that door in the kitchen
is?

ALFRED enters, stops.

LUCKY'S sitting up. Still in bed. CIGARETTE in one hand.
GUN in the other. Eyes, far away.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Hey.

LUCKY finds ALFRED'S face. Searches it. Registers.
Softens.

LUCKY

I shouldn't have said those things to you
last night. It was cruel. I was cruel.

ALFRED moves over to the bed, sits.

ALFRED

Just words.

He places his hand on hers. The one with the GUN.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Why don't I find a phone, call the plant.
Let them know I can't start til next week
huh? Give us some time.

LUCKY

Time won't fix anything.

Beat.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Can't lose the job before you start it.

ALFRED leans in quickly. Kisses LUCKY.

This time, LUCKY meets him there. A tender beat as
HUSBAND AND WIFE register this first in a long time.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Go get handsome, Mr. Emory.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

SERGEANT. Still standing before the LOCKED DOOR. Cocks his head. *Listening...*

SMASH:

LUCKY opening the FRONT DOOR, revealing:

Card table after card table. RADIO after RADIO. GLARING MOTHER after GLARING MOTHER.

She contemplates her next move. Then she SLAMS the FRONT DOOR, and --

SMASH:

-- THE BACK DOOR swings OPEN now.

LUCKY, JACQUELINE AND GRACIE exit quickly through the BACKYARD.

And as the back door SLAMS SHUT, we hang on the DOOR KNOB for a beat.

CUT TO:

The outline of THE COLT 45 just visible in the pocket of LUCKY'S housedress.

MOVE UP TO FIND:

LUCKY, JACQUELINE AND GRACIE standing on the CORNER with A CLUSTER OF WHITE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, awaiting the SCHOOL BUS.

TWO BLONDE GIRLS (15) stare at JACQUELINE. Whispers. One GIGGLES from behind her textbook. LUCKY glares at them.

LUCKY

(eyes on the girls)

Jacqueline. What do we do if anyone thinks of messing with you at school today?

JACQUELINE, looks down quickly. *Oh my God, is she really doing this right now?*

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Jacqueline?

JACQUELINE

(whisper, inaudible)

Beat their asses?

LUCKY
 (eyes on the girls)
 What was that? I couldn't hear you.

JACQUELINE
 (louder, mortified)
Beat their asses.

LUCKY nods. Eyes boring holes straight into THE BLONDES who quickly look away. Terrified.

LUCKY
 That's right, baby. We beat their asses.

THE BUS pulls up. No one moves.

CUT TO:

EXT. MCDONNELL AIRCRAFT COMPANY - LOS ANGELES - MORNING

ALFRED stands in the parking lot of this BUSTLING "MODERN" INDUSTRIAL PARK.

White shirt. Windsor knot. Loafers glued to the asphalt.

A FLOOD OF WORKERS shuttling in and out of the building, all around him. Blueprints under their arms. Briefcases and thermoses. All Male. All White.

Breathe. ALFRED wills his feet forward into the building.

INT. MCDONNELL AIRCRAFT COMPANY - LOS ANGELES - CONTINUOUS

A MASSIVE RECEPTIONIST COUNTER. FRENZIED SECRETARIES roll calls.

ALFRED walks up to the counter, smiles.

ALFRED
 Morning, ma'am. My name is -

RECEPTIONIST
 (without looking up, hand over phone)
 Kitchen's on the third floor -
 (back to call)
 -- I'm afraid Mr. Fredrickson's at the Dallas plant this week, but if you'd like his number there --

ALFRED smiles, let's try this again.

ALFRED

So sorry to bother you, ma'am. But,
today's my first day and I'm looking for -

RECEPTIONIST shoots ALFRED a withering glance. Hand over receiver --

RECEPTIONIST

(subtext: "boy")

Kitchen's on the third floor. Past
accounting. Can't miss it.

AN OFFICE "ERRAND BOY" (Black 40) enters the reception area pushing a ROLLING CART stuffed with inter-office mail. He sees ALFRED, and hangs back a beat. Bemused. This is CALVIN.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

(rolling)

McDonnell, please hold. McDonnell, please
-- Oh, why Mrs. Winters! Quite sorry,
such a day! Of course, I'll patch you
through to your husband immediately --

ALFRED

(direct)

Miss.

Beat. RECEPTIONIST: Shock. TWO SECRETARIES look up: *Did he really just call her that?*

ALFRED (CONT'D)

As I was saying, sorry to bother, but
today's my first day. And I'm here to see
a Mr. Edwin Strank.

(pause)

In Engineering.

TWO MALE VP-TYPES walking past look up. They keep walking, staring behind them at ALFRED as if they've just seen a sloth reading The New York Times.

CALVIN

(overly deferential)

Ms. Greta, maybe I oughta help?

He hurries over to ALFRED, offering a hand. ALFRED shakes. Confused.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

(big smile)

I'll get ya where you're going now.

RECEPTIONIST
 (exaggerated)
 Oh, Calvin. *Please!* Would you?
 (to ALFRED)
 I'm quite sure I don't have time for
 anything like this today.

And back to rolling calls. As if ALFRED was never there.

**INT. CORRIDOR/MCDONNELL AIRCRAFT COMPANY - LOS ANGELES -
 CONTINUOUS**

ALFRED follows CALVIN'S quick lead down a long corridor.
 CALVIN'S "act": over. He's a completely different person.

CALVIN
 That Greta got a head like a fuckin'
 honeydew don't she? But she ain't all
 bad. See that one over there?

He motions in the direction of an EXPOSED OFFICE where a
 HEAVYSET WHITE MAN sits at his desk on the phone.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
 Been delivering that fat motherfucker's
 mail every day for the past 6 months and
 he still asks me what's for lunch.

HEAVYSET MAN spots CALVIN, waves. CALVIN waves back: huge
 smile. "Act" on for a beat. Then gone. Fast as it came.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
 (genuinely impressed)
 A brother in engineering. Damn! Man, I
 thought I seen everything.

ALFRED
 (mordant)
 Well. You know what they say: If you
 can't fly 'em, make 'em.

Shared recognition.

CALVIN
 Had you over there too huh?

ALFRED nods.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
 Seen any action?

ALFRED

Some. Not as much as I would have liked.

CALVIN

Me neither. Less you count the bombs those white boys be dropping in the latrine "action". Nasty asses. We were there though huh.

(pause)

We were there.

They round a corner into the ENGINEERING WING.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Where they got you staying at? Sixty-Fourth? Slauson?

ALFRED

No. We're - my family and I - We're in Compton.

CALVIN stops. MAIL goes flying.

CALVIN

Hold up. A Black engineer living in lily white Compton? Boy...? You running for President after lunch?!

ALFRED

Well, the welcome's been less than Presidential.

(beat)

Move your family 2000 miles for a new start, and end up right back in Chatham County.

CALVIN

They say California. We see Carolina.

CALVIN stops at a LARGE SET OF OAK DOUBLE DOORS. Beat.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Y'all be careful. For real. Those white folks straight up evil out there, man. Cousin told me about this brother and his wife up on Dunsmuir got bombed out a week ago. Beautiful new house one second, nothing there the next. Now they got nowhere. Wife expecting too. Damn shame.

(pause)

Well, this is you.

ALFRED: Processing this information. Processing the DOOR.

CALVIN puts a reassuring hand on ALFRED'S shoulder.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Go on, show those pasty sons of bitches
how we do. Mr. President.

CALVIN continues on his way, smiling and waving: "The Act" back on. Clockwork.

ALFRED takes a deep breath. PUSHES the double doors OPEN. The resultant SWOOSH turning all heads inside toward the DOOR.

A HUDDLE OF WHITE ENGINEERS looks up at ALFRED as he enters. Dumbstruck.

CUT TO:

A MOVING BOX with the letter "C" handwritten on it.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

LUCKY, on her knees, kneeling before the box.

Fingers moving along its lid. Heavy with emotion.

She opens the box. We won't see what's inside. Don't have to. She studies the contents. Wills herself to look at them for as long as she can.

Then quickly shuts the lid. Picks up the box. Walks it over to THE CLOSET. Shoves it deep inside. Shuts the door.

Stands there. Looking at the door. As if daring it to open.

CUT TO:

KITCHEN CABINETS swinging open --

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

LUCKY stands in front of the CLOSED OVEN, rooting through a box. The CLINK of glass as she pulls out a dusty dark bottle of whiskey. Studies it.

As if on autopilot, she removes the top and takes a quick swig of alcohol. Breathes in its taste.

LUCKY moves to the KITCHEN WINDOW, bottle in hand. A growing GATHERING OF MOTHERS outside her front lawn. Folded arms. Peering eyes. BLARING MUSIC...

LUCKY lifts the bottle of whiskey to the lip of the window, as if in toast. Shuts her eyes. Downs the rest of the liquor. Fast. Hard. Choking on its hot sting.

After a beat, she opens her eyes. Turns back to the box. Stops.

REVERSE:

The OVEN DOOR: Wide open.

LUCKY stares at it.

LUCKY

Gracie?

She moves quickly and SLAMS the oven SHUT.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

LUCKY enters to find GRACIE seated at her "classroom". Careful attention still being paid to the "teacher" in the CORNER.

LUCKY

(relief)

Look at you.

GRACIE

Quiet mama! Class is almost over.

Lucky sits down beside GRACIE. After a moment, GRACIE retires her pencil and paper.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Ok. It's break time now.

(pause)

When do I get to go to real school mama?

Beat. LUCKY gently musses GRACIE'S hair.

LUCKY

Soon, baby. Real soon. Just have to find one that's safe, that's all.

GRACIE

But Jacqueline gets to go.

LUCKY

Well, your sister's older than you. She can take care of herself a little bit more.

GRACIE

I can take care of myself too.

LUCKY

Oh you *can*, can you?

GRACIE nods.

GRACIE

Don't you miss school?

LUCKY

Very much. Miss my students every day. But, I have the smartest little girl I know sitting right here in our very own classroom. So this teacher's doing just fine.

GRACIE

But... I already got a teacher.

LUCKY

Have, baby. You already *have* a teacher.

GRACIE

Have. One! *Have one... Have one... Have one...*

LUCKY

You do?

GRACIE nods.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

And who is that?

GRACIE thinks on it.

GRACIE

Ms. Vera.

LUCKY

Oh really. *Ms. Vera* huh? Sounds fancy.

GRACIE

She is! And she teaches us all the best songs and everything!

LUCKY

That's nice of her. What songs? Sing one for me?

GRACIE shoots up from the floor. *Thought you'd never ask!* Clears her throat with pomp. A real ham.

LUCKY, savoring this respite. This normalcy. Sits back.

GRACIE

Ready?

LUCKY

I'm ready, baby girl.

GRACIE

(stammers, unsteady at first)
*Gone are the days when my heart was young
 and gay, Gone are the... toils of the
 cotton fields away...*
 (a little louder)
*...Gone to the fields of a better land I
 know, I hear those gentle voices callin'
 "Old Black Joe"....*

Beat. Something shadows LUCKY'S face now. A recognition. The smile slowly draining from her face.

LUCKY

Gracie?

FLASH:

*WOMAN. BARE FEET. HER NIGHTGOWN, DIRTY. FINGERS AIMLESSLY
 TAPPING THE BACK OF HER NECK. GENTLY SINGING...*

WOMAN

(in unison with Gracie)
...I'M COMIN'... I'M COMIN'...

FLASH:

GRACIE

(in unison with WOMAN)
...For my head is bendin' low...

LUCKY

Gracie Jean. That's enough of that -

FLASH:

WOMAN
 (in unison with Gracie)
I hear those gentle voices callin'...

FLASH:

GRACIE
 (in unison with WOMAN)
 ..."Old Black Joe"...

LUCKY
 I said cut it out --

GRACIE ignores her, lost in FEVERISH REVERIE. She STOMPS around the floor, gesticulating WILDLY as she SINGS, FULL-THROATED AND EXAGGERATEDLY WIDE-EYED. A CHILD'S QUEASY MIMICKING OF "COONERY":

GRACIE
 ...I'M COMIN' HOME, I'M COMIN' HOME, FOR
 MY HEAD IS BENDIN' LOW...

LUCKY
 STOP IT Gracie Jean!

GRACIE
 (delirious)
 ...I HEAR THOSE GENTLE VOICES CALLIN'
"OLD BLACK JOE"!!!

LUCKY shoots forward. Grabs GRACIE by the shoulders. Shakes her. Hard.

LUCKY
 I said STOP goddamn it!

GRACIE
 Mama, you're hurting me --

LUCKY
 Why won't you stop?!

GRACIE
MAMA!!

The pained tenor of GRACIE'S CRY breaks LUCKY from her GRIP.

She backs away, across the floor. Away from the child Like a stranger. Frightened. GRACIE sobs.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
I hate you!!!

LUCKY

Who taught you that terrible song?

GRACIE

It's NOT a terrible song! It's a GOOD song!

LUCKY

NOT for a little girl like you to be singing. Who taught you to sing like that?

GRACIE

You're ALWAYS mean. To me! To Daddy! To EVERYBODY!

LUCKY

Who taught you the song Gracie?!

GRACIE

(wails)

MS. VERA!! MS. VERA!! I TOLD YOU ALREADY, STUPID!!

LUCKY SLAPS GRACIE. Stunned silence.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

FOLLOW LUCKY

As she TEARS down the HALLWAY. Away. Away from her daughter. Overwhelmed.

GRACIE follows after her.

GRACIE

Jacqueline says you're crazy mama! She said you're mean and you're crazy!!

LUCKY covers her ears with her HANDS, shakes the CHILD'S VOICE from her head.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

I miss my brother! And I HATE YOU!!!

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

SLAM!

LUCKY. Frenzied. Wild-Eyed. Paces the TINY BATHROOM like an animal in a cage.

BATHROOM WINDOW: Where A BACKYARD is visible.

A GROUP OF MOTHERS. Whispers. Points. Eyes on the EMORY HOME.

LUCKY ducks. Trapped. Falls to her knees. Moves to the toilet. Suddenly sick. Lifts the lid. Vomits hard. Lowers herself to the cold floor.

A beat. And her body goes still. Numb.

Her HAND moves to the pocket of her housedress.

She registers THE GUN in her hand as if it isn't her hand and it isn't HER GUN.

It moves to her MOUTH.

Gripped by something bottomless and inevitable.

LUCKY takes THE GUN in her mouth.

GRACIE (OS)
(outside the door)

Mama?

LUCKY shuts her EYES.

GRACIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(outside the door)

MAMA?

FLASH:

LUCKY:

I'm right here!

LUCKY POPS UP IN THE WINDOW. CHESTER SQUEALS --

FLASH:

LUCKY'S EYES open.

THE GUN in her mouth. HER DAUGHTER outside the DOOR. Bathroom, empty. Bare. A stranger to herself.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The BATHROOM DOOR OPENS now and LUCKY steps into the HALLWAY.

Falls to her knees. Grabs GRACIE. MOTHER AND DAUGHTER hold one another. Tight. Neither moves.

GRACIE

I'm sorry Mama -

LUCKY

You have nothing to be sorry about. I'm
sorry, baby -

GRACIE

I'll tell nasty Ms. Vera to go away and
never sing that song again!

LUCKY AND GRACIE hold onto each other like they may never
let go.

THE DOORBELL RINGS.

Beat. They both look toward the FAMILY ROOM.

CUT TO:

LUCKY opens THE FRONT DOOR ever so slightly:

A HOT WAVE OF LAUGHTER AND HOLLERS from the MOTHERS
outside. On the front step:

SUE KELLER. Dress, oddly formal. Like someone playing
someone who gets invited places. She holds up TWO SMALL
BOXES wrapped in plain butcher paper.

SUE

I come bearing gifts.

LUCKY AND GRACIE stare at this stranger. Silent.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SUE enters the FAMILY ROOM and LUCKY quickly SLAMS the
DOOR shut behind her.

An awkward silence. Then SUE holds out one of the BOXES
to GRACIE.

SUE

Out of key lime. Hope you like
boysenberry.

GRACIE slowly reaches for the box. LUCKY quickly
intercepts it.

LUCKY

Thank you. Ms. - ?

SUE
Keller. Sue Keller.

LUCKY
Luquella Emory.

GRACIE
But Daddy calls her Lucky.

SUE smiles at GRACIE.

SUE
I can certainly see why.

GRACIE smiles back. SUE hands LUCKY the second box.

SUE (CONT'D)
Just some drapes. Made them myself,
nothing fancy. Pattern I found in
McCalls. Thought they might help -

She motions to the FRONT WINDOW. LUCKY takes the box.

LUCKY
That's kind of you, Ms. Keller.
I'd offer you something cold, but
nothing's been turned on yet.

SUE
No need. Don't drink or eat after 3.
Dulls the Ghost.

SUE wanders further into the FAMILY ROOM, looking around.
Studying. Curious. LUCKY watches her. *Who is this woman?*

SUE (CONT'D)
Place is starting to feel like a family
finally lives here. It's needed that.

LUCKY
Been empty awhile?

SUE
Oh yes. Months now. Was beginning to
think it may just sit here and never be
lived in again. Then you came.
(pause)
The house got Lucky.

She smiles faintly. Beat.

SUE (CONT'D)
I want to apologize for what's happening
outside your home. It isn't Christian.
(MORE)

SUE (CONT'D)

And it isn't neighborly. But if I've learned one thing:
There always has to be a witch.
This week, unfortunately, she's you.

GRACIE

My mama's not a witch.

LUCKY

Just a figure of speech, Gracie.

SUE

Must admit, it's been me so long I was quite looking forward to someone new taking up the mantle.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

SERGEANT, still enamored with the LOCKED DOOR. He lays before it, one paw needling the crack beneath.

SUE watches him from the KITCHEN DOORWAY. Transfixed.

SUE

Some advice, Mrs. Emory: Get yourself a nice loud television and keep it on all day.

GRACIE

Mama says television is for dumb people and rots your brains all the way out.

LUCKY

Gracie!

SUE laughs. LUCKY can't help but join her. This small release, welcome.

SUE

Well, your mother's not entirely wrong, smart girl. But I've also found that a television can be a lonely woman's best friend.

SUE looks at LUCKY. Her gaze, penetrating. LUCKY, unnerved, puts her hand on GRACIE'S shoulder.

LUCKY

I appreciate the advice, Ms. Keller. But I'm not lonely.

Beat.

SUE
I suggest Zenith, dear.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

LUCKY stands at the window watching SUE walk down the front walkway toward the sidewalk.

EXT. 2324 REEVE STREET - CONTINUOUS

BETTY
Making play dates with the Negroes, Sue?

SUE
Just welcoming a new family to the neighborhood.

SUE pushes her way past BETTY, MIDGE AND NAT onto the sidewalk, continues walking. They follow her.

BETTY
That's sweet. I hope you don't miss them too much when they move out this week.

SUE
It's nice to see you've finally found a hobby to occupy yourself, Betty. Shame it's this.

Beat.

BETTY
Speaking of hobbies: You and that little freak of yours kill anyone new lately?

MIDGE AND NAT gasp. SUE stops walking. Recovers. Turns.

SUE
Not yet.
(pause)
But when we're ready, you still at 2320?

BETTY'S smile fades. SUE turns, fast. Continues down the sidewalk. Stung.

BETTY (O.S.)
(PRE LAP)
I have nothing for or against the Negro Cause, personally speaking.

INT. KIWANIS CLUB/CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - EVENING

A wood-paneled civic space. Packed. HUSBANDS AND WIVES spill out of chairs and into aisles. Fanning themselves. The air is hot. Electric.

BETTY stands before them. On a SCREEN behind her, a PROJECTOR silently plays: THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRIAL FILM FROM OUR OPEN.

BETTY

This isn't a matter of *civil rights*. It's a matter of *real estate*. Plain and simple. When Clarke and I moved to Compton 2 years ago, we knew we'd found home. A safe place to raise our Sally. Great schools. Fine neighbors who work hard and share our same principles. Isn't that what all decent Americans want at the end of the day?

QUIET NODS, MUMBLES OF APPROVAL.

EXT. 2324 REEVE STREET - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

POV: From a REMOVE we see ALFRED walking through the FRONT YARD toward the house, a bag of GROCERIES under his arm.

LUCKY AND GRACIE framed by the FRONT DOOR. SERGEANT runs outside.

BETTY (O.S.)

(OVER)

It's selfish, really, what these people are doing. Coming to a place where they aren't wanted. Upsetting the order we've worked so hard to maintain. Devaluing our property. And for what? Another stop on *The Freedom Train*?

INT. KIWANIS CLUB/CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - CONTINUOUS

BETTY

Well, excuse me, but it's time for that train to pull into another station! Now, Midge, Nat and I plan to stay outside that house every single day until --

DALE (OS)

(shouts out)

That's all well and good, Betty. But --

All heads turn to seats near the back where DALE AND MARTY (Midge and Nat's husbands) sit.

BETTY

Yes, Dale? Please. By all means, continue.

DALE stands.

DALE

Well, I was just going to say that - it's swell Betty, truly, how you and the gals are out there trying to get us started but... Well, the truth is, it's gonna take more than a few radios to send these people a proper message.

A FEW MALE WHOOPS OF APPROVAL FROM THE CROWD. BETTY notices.

MARTY

Dale's right.

(stands)

Seems to me the Negro only responds to one thing, and *it ain't* subtlety.

CHARGED LAUGHTER. A FEW HUSBANDS stand now.

DALE

It's time to speak to them in the only language they understand.

(pause)

Now, I don't know about you, but there isn't much I *won't* do to protect my family!

CATCALLS. HOLLERS. APPLAUSE. The ENTIRE AUDIENCE leaps to its feet.

BETTY takes a breath, registering. Looks out into the crowd, scans the faces.

INT. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE/PARKING LOT - LATER

BETTY stands in the lot with MIDGE AND NAT. DALE AND MARTY walk ahead toward their automobiles.

NAT

Fantastic job, honey. Just - *wild!*

BETTY

Yes. Well. I'm certainly happy *us gals* have tried getting things started --

NAT

Oh, you know how the boys can be, Betts. Always on the sidelines until credit is due.

MIDGE

Nat's right. It's a shame Clarke wasn't here to see you up there! He would've been so proud.

BETTY

Yes, well. You can blame Pan Am and their damn delays for that.

MIDGE

Oh? But that flight wasn't delayed. I'm almost certain Dale and Clarke shared a taxi back to the office late this afternoon.

Beat.

EXT. 2324 REEVE STREET - EVENING

POV: As ALFRED steps over the threshold, picks up SERGEANT, kisses LUCKY we REVERSE:

A 1953 FLEETWOOD parked across the street. Headlights, off. DARKNESS.

CLOSER... And we see BETTY, seated behind the wheel. Still.

She watches the Emory home long after the family has entered and the FRONT DOOR has closed.

And Clyde McPhatter & The Drifters' *Money Honey* PLAYS as we --

TIME CUT:

INT. FAMILY ROOM - LATER

-- and MOVE from the RADIO across a family dinner served picnic-style.

The Emory's seated on the carpet. Dinner plates set aside. Candlelight. A warm post-meal tableaux.

ALFRED and JACQUELINE improvising, while GRACIE and LUCKY watch the show.

ALFRED
 ("Greta" impersonation into
 fake phone)
 McDonnell, please hold. McDonnell, please
 hold --

JACQUELINE
 ("Alfred")
 But I'd just like to --

ALFRED
 ("Greta")
 -- Oh, Mr. Greeley! Yes, why your dry
 cleaning has *just* arrived and I must say
 your pocket squares look *GLORIOUS* --

JACQUELINE
 ("Alfred")
 -- But I'm an *ENGINEER*!

Beat. ALFRED'S eyes go GRETA-wide, as he clutches his chest and falls to the floor in the throes of a dramatic triple bypass.

LUCKY claps as JACQUELINE and ALFRED hop to their feet, take their bows.

GRACIE shakes her head.

GRACIE
 Mmm.
 (pause)
 White folks.

Beat.

And LUCKY bursts into LAUGHTER now. Sudden. Deep. A moment of unfiltered joy lost on no one.

Pin: released.

As The Drifters give way to Mama Thornton's *Hound Dog*, ALFRED flips the switch on the radio and the tune BLASTS.

GRACIE, JACQUELINE and ALFRED begin to dance.

LUCKY stands as if to join. Then quickly moves to the PICTURE WINDOW.

She begins pulling the drapes shut. Pavlovian response. The street outside: Uncharacteristically calm, quiet.

Beat.

Thinks better of it. Opens them up a bit more.

In the WINDOW'S REFLECTION, her FAMILY dances behind her.

LUCKY turns, watches them.

ALFRED takes in his wife's face. Her smile. Extends his hand.

LUCKY joins him. HUSBAND and WIFE hold each other. Dance together, as they once did.

EXT. 2324 REEVE STREET - CONTINUOUS

As Mama Thornton WAILS, we see the EMORY FAMILY through the picture window. Quite a picture.

FADE TO:

EXT. REEVE STREET - LATE NIGHT

Black, starless sky. Silhouettes. Silence.

SLAM TO:

GRACIE awakening with a start.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Darkness.

GRACIE looks at her bed. Lifts the comforter. Pats around. Strains to see.

GRACIE
(whisper)
Sergeant?

She looks across the room to another bed where JACQUELINE'S SHAPE lies. Asleep. No SERGEANT.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

GRACIE steps into the HALLWAY holding her spectacles.

GRACIE
(whispers)
Sergeant? Where are you?

Nothing.

GRACIE takes another few steps forward. Shaky. Unsure. Stares into the PITCH BLACK VOID at the FAR END OF THE HALLWAY. A beat.

THEN THE FAMILIAR JINGLE OF SERGEANT'S COLLAR from the DARKNESS ahead. Just as before.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
There you are. Good boy.

GRACIE rubs her eyes, strains to see. Puts on her spectacles.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Come here, Sergeant.

Nothing. ANOTHER JINGLE OF THE COLLAR.

GRACIE takes another quiet step forward, peering into the DARKNESS...

GRACIE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Come here boy?

Then, she stops. Frozen.

And now we hear what GRACIE hears:

BREATHING.

Faint at first... Then LOUDER...

Ragged, uneven...

Thick and wet with viscous spittle...

GRACIE (CONT'D)
(silent)
Sergeant?

Her body TREMBLES as --

The DARKNESS AT THE END OF THE HALL appears to YAWN OPEN with A GUTTURAL WHEEZE...

SHADOWS stretching and falling away as her eyes continue to ADJUST...

And then she sees them:

A PAIR OF WOMAN'S HANDS reaching out from the INKY BLACK.

WHITE.

PALE to the point of TRANSLUCENCE. Hands, knotted.
Arthritic...

They hold SERGEANT'S COLLAR out toward her.

Then - THE BREATHING stops.

Beat.

VOICE
(gravel)
I'm. Right. Here.

THE TINY BELL JINGLES.

GRACIE. Stricken.

Her feet continue forward... *as if pulled...*

Toward THE HANDS... Toward the JINGLING COLLAR...

As GRACIE is slowly swallowed up by THE DARKNESS...

Gone.

FADE TO:

EXT. 2324 REEVE STREET - EARLY MORNING

Dawn light. The world is still. The soft *tsk-tsk-tsk* of SPRINKLERS from a neighboring yard.

INT. 2324 REEVE STREET - EARLY MORNING - CONTINUOUS

THE FAMILY ROOM. A sofa and table. Books line the walls. Family portraits. Less bare, more lived in since we were here last.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING - CONTINUOUS

LUCKY lies in bed. Awake. She watches ALFRED as his chest rises and falls. Face, warm and open, even in sleep.

She leans in and kisses him gently on the lips.

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING - CONTINUOUS

LUCKY stands in the doorway for a moment, regards her DAUGHTERS' sleeping forms. The eyes of a mother watching her world.

She enters. Pulls the comforter from the floor and lays it back over JACQUELINE.

Moves over to GRACIE'S bed. Sits down beside her, strokes her DAUGHTER'S hair. Careful not to wake her. Stops.

LUCKY leans in closer. Lifts GRACIE'S hair back ever so gently from her neck.

Her eyes go wide. And we see what LUCKY sees:

TWO DARK WELTS running parallel along the base of GRACIE'S NECK. Purple. Painful. Raised. Ligature marks.

LUCKY

Baby - ?

GRACIE'S eyes, waking.

GRACIE

Mama?

LUCKY

Baby girl. What happened?

JACQUELINE

(stirring)

Mom?

LUCKY gently lifts her DAUGHTER towards her. Holding her. Trembling. Close.

LUCKY

Gracie Jean? Who did this to you?!

JACQUELINE

Mom what is it?

GRACIE coming to, sleep falling away, panic settling in.

GRACIE

She took Sergeant...

(realization)

She took Sergeant Mama!!!

LUCKY

Who Gracie? Who took Sergeant?

ALFRED (OS)
 Luck, what's going on?

LUCKY looks to the doorway where ALFRED stands.

LUCKY
 Someone's in the house. Someone's in the
 house and they hurt Gracie Jean!

GRACIE
 She took him Mama!! *NASTY OLD MS. VERA
 TOOK SERGEANT!*

GRACIE'S body goes RIGID. Shock.

LUCKY
GRACIE?

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

FOLLOW ALFRED

.45 in hand, as he moves, FAST, toward the BACK DOOR.
 Turns the KNOB. Locked.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Through the FAMILY ROOM now to the FRONT DOOR. ALFRED
 turns the knob. Locked.

OUT THE WINDOW: Morning light. The street calm. Quiet. A
 PAPERBOY makes his rounds.

Beat. ALFRED turns toward the KITCHEN DOOR.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

ALFRED stands in the DOORWAY. Still. Eyes, unbelieving.

REVERSE:

THE LOCKED DOOR NOW OPEN.

AND CLOSER STILL...

SERGEANT'S COLLAR hangs from the doorknob.

LUCKY (O.S.)
 AL?!

ALFRED

Don't come out here! Keep the girls right there!

LUCKY (O.S.)

BABY? WHAT IS IT?!

ALFRED

I said don't come out here, now!

ALFRED walks toward the DOOR. GUN raised. Steps forward, over the threshold...

Looks inside. We see as he sees:

WOODEN STEPS LEADING DOWN INTO A DARK BASEMENT...

MORNING LIGHT from the kitchen, spilling down, illuminating the first few steps to where they stop at A LANDING...

And on the landing: SERGEANT'S LIFELESS BODY.

Head bent back at an unnatural angle.

ALFRED reels.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

LUCKY

Alfred? Where is he?

JACQUELINE

Daddy?

ALFRED. Stricken. Silent.

LUCKY

No.

JACQUELINE

Daddy, where is he?

GRACIE

Is Sergeant dead???

ALFRED walks toward his GIRLS, just as -

LUCKY. Collapses.

HARD CUT:

FROM ABOVE:

LUCKY AND ALFRED lying, face to face, in bed. CHESTER, asleep, between them.

INT. BEDROOM - EMORY HOME - NORTH CAROLINA - DAY - CIRCA 1952

LUCKY reads to ALFRED from a small leatherbound book.

LUCKY

*I years had been from home,
And now, before the door
I dared not open, lest a face
I never saw before
Stare vacant into mine
And ask my business there.
My business - just a life I left,
Was such still dwelling there?
I laughed a wooden laugh
That I could fear a door,
Who danger and the dead had faced,
But never quaked before.
I moved from my fingers off
As cautiously as glass,
And held my ears, and like a thief
Fled gasping from the house.*

LUCKY closes the book.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Class?

Beat.

ALFRED

I think Emily Dickinson should've gotten out the damn house more.

LUCKY

Stop.

ALFRED

For real. Little sun. Little hooch.
Little -

ALFRED rolls his hips.

LUCKY

You're a damn fool.

ALFRED

- Wouldn't have given a crap about that old door.

LUCKY
You think so huh?

ALFRED
*Know so. Someone do her real good one
time and the poem would've been "I saw a
door. The end."*

LUCKY laughs.

LUCKY
Is that your professional opinion, Mr.
Emory?

ALFRED
I am an engineer, Mrs. Emory. Only
opinions we have.

ALFRED AND LUCKY kiss. CHESTER stirs.

JACQUELINE (O.S.)
Daddy, let's go!

LUCKY
Already?

GRACIE runs into the room in her coat and hat.

GRACIE
Mama, leave Daddy *alone!* We got to go!

LUCKY
Uh uh? You *have* to do what now?

GRACIE thinks for a beat.

GRACIE
We HAVE to go. Right *NOW!*

**EXT. EMORY HOME - NORTH CAROLINA - DAY - CONTINUOUS -
CIRCA 1952**

ALFRED SLAMS the door to the PICK UP. JACQUELINE AND
GRACIE wave from inside.

LUCKY stands on the FRONT PORCH beside the WOODEN CRIB.
CHESTER in her arms. She waves back.

LUCKY
Nothing scary right?

ALFRED

Not unless Gene Kelly's singing in the
rain to a werewolf.

(pause)

Back in a few.

LUCKY

I'm right here.

ALFRED hops in, starts the ENGINE.

LUCKY watches as THE PICK UP backs up in a cloud of dust,
turns, and heads down the private dirt road.

ALFRED throws a hand up out the WINDOW, and HER FAMILY
disappears from view. LUCKY looks at CHESTER.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Mama wants peaches. What do you say?

LUCKY kisses CHESTER on the head. Places him in the
WOODEN CRIB.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - ROAD - DAY - CONTINUOUS - CIRCA 1952

ALFRED

(singing it wrong)

*Singin' in the Rain is my favorite thing
to DO --*

JACQUELINE

(singing it wrong)

*Singin' in the Rain is good for me and
YOU --*

GRACIE

(singing it wrong)

*Singin' in the Rain is a whole lot better
than Singin' in the SUN --*

JACQUELINE

DADDY WATCH OUT!!

ALFRED looks forward. SLAMS on the brakes. Fast. The PICK
UP slides to a STOP. Beat.

ALFRED

Girls, you ok?

JACQUELINE

What's wrong with her?

ALFRED

Not sure.

ALFRED slowly edges the PICK UP forward, and as he rolls down his window, we see:

WOMAN.

Dirty hair. Bare feet. Nightgown. Fingers tapping aimlessly at her neck.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry ma'am, didn't see you there.

She doesn't look up. ALFRED eyes the strange WOMAN.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Everything alright, ma'am?

(pause)

We live just a few homes back. Happy to get you some water if you'd like?

WOMAN looks up. Odd smile. Eyes, far away.

Then she continues walking.

ALFRED waits a beat. Weighing. Then puts the PICK UP back into drive, and slowly continues forward.

ALFRED looks back into his REARVIEW MIRROR, where WOMAN continues walking down the center of the road. Aimless.

EXT. MOVIE HOUSE/BALCONY - NORTH CAROLINA - LATER - 1952

ALFRED, JACQUELINE AND GRACIE sit in the "COLORED BALCONY" of the MOVIE HOUSE, surrounded by other BLACK FAMILIES AND PATRONS.

FAR BELOW ON SCREEN: GENE KELLY, DEBBIE REYNOLDS AND DONALD O'CONNOR joyously tap-dancing their way through a spirited "GOOD MORNING".

THE WHITE AUDIENCE in the floor seats smile and pass popcorn.

REYNOLDS, O'CONNOR, KELLY

(singing)

*Good Mornin', Good Mornin',
Sunbeams will soon smile through,
Good Mornin', Good Mornin',
To you, and you, and you, and you --*

HARD CUT:

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER:

LUCKY.

Pulling herself. Through the dirt...

Naked. Bloodied. Bruised...

DEBBIE REYNOLDS (O.S.)
 (singing)
 -- *In the mornin', In the mornin',
 It's great! To stay up late,
 Good mornin', Good Mornin' to you...*

....Hands reaching for nothing. Arms cradling nothing...

LUCKY BLURRED POV:

In the distance, THE WOMAN AND THREE MEN fading into
 DISTANT SILHOUETTES...

*CHESTER'S CRIES getting FAINTER AND FAINTER as DEBBIE
 REYNOLDS CROONS LOUDER AND LOUDER --*

And LUCKY'S lips stretch back into a WIDE, SOUNDLESS
 SCREAM as we --

SMASH TO:

THE FRONT DOOR SLAMMING OPEN --

EXT. 2324 REEVE STREET - MORNING - PRESENT DAY

-- and LUCKY crosses over the THRESHOLD.

SOUNDS -- *SINGIN' IN THE RAIN, CICADAS, VOICES, HUMMING,
 RADIOS* -- rushing in, all at once, as if UNDERWATER as --

LUCKY throws a hand up over her eyes. Shields them.
 Blinks away the bright white morning sun.

Frenzied. Wounded. Lost.

She holds THE COLT .45 out in front of her...

She walks in a daze down the walkway that bisects her
 FRONT LAWN...

LUCKY
 Stay away from my home...

For now anyway: Not a soul in front of the Emory Home.

The GUN points at no one. Nothing.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Stay away from my fucking home! Do you hear me?!

We see FRONT DOORS opening.

NEIGHBORS - WIVES, MOTHERS, CHILDREN. They stare. From windows. From doors. From front lawns. Pointing. Whispering. Horror. Pity. Fascination.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

KEEP AWAY FROM HERE! *KEEP AWAY FROM MY FAMILY!!!!*

And ALFRED comes running out the FRONT DOOR toward LUCKY. JACQUELINE trailing behind him. GRACIE in the doorway...

And their CRIES join the DARK SONIC UNDERTOW --

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

-- And THE BASEMENT DOOR sits. Still open.

A PITCH BLACK YAWN at the center of the kitchen.

As we PUSH IN ON THE DOOR, the *CACOPHONY FLATTENS, DEGRADES, DISTORTS...*

And underneath the WHITE NOISE, it can be heard...

THICK, WET...

DARK AND GUTTURAL...

BREATHING...

BLACKOUT.

END OF EPISODE