

Barry

Get on
The Bus
~~SECRET~~

Written by
Reggie Rock Bythewood

REV. SECOND DRAFT
02/28/96

SHACKLES... That's all we hear.

Shackles and then footsteps.

FADE IN:

1 EXT. FIRST A.M.E. PARKING LOT - DAY

1

Ghettos have at least three things. Poverty, alcohol and Jesus. First A.M.E. is the Jesus part -- the most renowned church in the hoody hood of South Central.

The cross on the top of the church looms from up high. Staring at it from down below is fifteen year-old EVAN THOMAS JUNIOR. He's the type of young brother old folks describe as Black and evil.

Around Junior's wrist is a handcuff attached to a shackle. The Shackle is connected to a thick brown belt worn by his thirty-five year old father, EVAN SENIOR.

Evan leads the way, walking away from his Jeep Wrangler and heading to the front of the church. Junior stops dead in his tracks which pulls on the shackle.

EVAN

What?

Junior drops the small duffel bag he's carrying.

JUNIOR

I ain't going.

EVAN

I'm getting on that bus. Which means you're getting on that bus.

JUNIOR

You see how stupid we look?

EVAN

Now you want to be embarrassed?
Should have thought of that before.

JUNIOR

I ain't going, man.

Evan slowly walks to his son, gets in his mug.

EVAN

Call me "man" again and see if I don't knock you on your ass. Regardless of what you may or may not think of me, I'm your father. Now walk.

Junior picks up the duffel bag and grudgingly walks with his Pop.

CAMERA FINDS a BMW in the parking lot. Behind the wheel is an attractive, corporate looking sister, thirty-two years of age. Her name is SHELLEY MAXWELL. Shelley's passenger is her twenty-nine year old boyfriend, half Black, half White. His name is GARY.

Shelley frowns as she turns off the ignition.

GARY

So...we cool?

She rolls her eyes thinking that's the dumbest shit he's ever asked.

SHELLEY

(dryly)

Mhm.

GARY

(handing her a key)

And you're gonna feed Max for me, right?

SHELLEY

Feed him. Watch him shit. I'm really looking forward to it.

GARY

You make it like I'm about to run off with some other woman.

SHELLEY

Well what, you expect me to get moist between the legs, Gary? Like you're doing something incredible? This whole thing is sexist. But I guess how I feel doesn't matter.

GARY

It does matter. But I also told you, how I feel.

They exchange looks.

SHELLEY

Fine.

Gary leans over to the backseat, grabs a knapsack.

GARY

You gonna walk me to the bus?

SHELLEY

I'm late for work.

Gary sighs.

GARY

Okay Shelley. Well...I love you anyway.

SHELLEY

(still pissed)

'Love you anyway too.

Gary opens the car door and breaks out. Shelley wastes no time. Before Gary even takes a step, she speeds off.

2 EXT. CORNER OF WESTERN AND ADAMS - DAY

2

The local RTD bus pulls up and sixty-five year old JEREMIAH WASHINGTON steps off, carrying clothes and stuff in a pillowcase. Jeremiah is an old brother with a welcoming face. He looks up and spots the cross from First A.M.E. towering over the tenements. It's all the inspiration Jeremiah needs to trudge up the hill.

3 EXT. FIRST A.M.E. - DAY

3

A bus sits in the front. The emblem on the side of it reads, "Spotted Owl Chartered Buses." And below the words is a picture of the endangered species -- the Spotted Owl.

Several Black men are lined up along the side of the bus. GEORGE, the forty year old, Black bus driver, checks tickets as the brothers board.

Then Evan and Junior step up.

EVAN

(showing George the tickets)

For me and my son.

But George can't ignore the shackle.

GEORGE

You want to tell me what this is about, brother?

EVAN

Court order says I have to keep my son tethered for seventy-two hours.

Evan allows George a glance at the court order.

GEORGE

Okay, go ahead.

Evan and Junior board. Then Gary boards.

A few feet away, JAMAL, twenty-five years old, sporting a kufi, dialogues with his twenty-five year old girlfriend, JINDAI.

She is a beautiful Black sister who wears a gold stud in her ear and is dressed in a colorful Muslim garb.

THROUGH A HIGH 8 CAMCORDER, we watch them talk.

JINDAI
Proud of you.

JAMAL
What for?

JINDAI
For going to the March. For being a strong Black man.

JAMAL
Proud of you too.

JINDAI
For?

JAMAL
Being a strong Black woman.
Supporting your man.

She takes in the implication, giving him loving eyes.

JINDAI
So you're calling yourself, my man?

JAMAL
Does that bother you?

Blushing, she ignores the question.

JINDAI
White people are still mad about Orenthal. If any trouble breaks out, try not to be in the middle of it.

Jamal is flattered by her concern.

JAMAL
I'll be fine.

Then awkwardly, he gives her a peck on the cheek.

JAMAL
As-Salaam-Alaikum.

JINDAI
(taken aback by the
kiss)
Wa-Alaikum-Salaam.

Then Jamal joins the line of brothers boarding the bus.

CAMERA REVEALS, the person holding the camcorder is nineteen year old XAVIER MOORE.

He's suited down in U.C.L.A. Bruins gear, sports number 31 -- Ed O'Bannon's digits.

Xavier turns his camera to catch someone else.

THROUGH THE CAMCORDER we see Jeremiah approaching. Jeremiah is now sweating, breathing hard, but a look of joy is on his face. He lines up to board the bus.

GEORGE

Anybody else going to The Million Man March, this is the final call! I did say, final call!

A few more brothers kiss their wives, girlfriends, mothers and daughters goodbye.

Xavier TURNS OFF HIS CAMCORDER, gets his ass on line.

GEORGE

(checking tickets)
Okay, go right ahead.

A Black man boards. Jeremiah steps up.

JEREMIAH

How you doing young man?

GEORGE

Doing fine sir. Doing fine. You?

JEREMIAH

(presenting his ticket)
Ain't felt this good in years.

GEORGE

(checks the ticket and nods)
Heard that.

Jeremiah makes his way on.

4 INT. SPOTTED OWL - CONTINUOUS

4

Jeremiah steps on the bus, nodding to all the brothers as he makes his way down the aisle.

JEREMIAH

(to Evan)
Black power.

EVAN

Black power.

Two other brothers, KYLE, thirty years old, muscular and clean shaven, sits next to his friend, RANDALL.

Randall is also thirty, very good-looking, sports a clean bean and has the slightest Jamaican accent.

As Jeremiah passes Kyle and Randall --

JEREMIAH

Black power.

KYLE

(respectfully)

Black power.

Randall offers up a nod. Jeremiah walks on. Then Randall turns to Kyle whispering with a snicker.

RANDALL

Old Feet must think this is the sixties.

Jeremiah stands next to the empty seat by Jamal, lifts the pillowcase to put in the overhead.

JAMAL

Got it?

JEREMIAH

Got it.

Jeremiah gets the pillowcase up there then slides into the empty seat.

JEREMIAH

(extends his hand
to Jamal)

I'm Jeremiah.

JAMAL

Jamal.

They shake hands the way brothers young and old shake. Then Jeremiah settles uncomfortably in the chair.

JAMAL

Not much leg room, is there?

JEREMIAH

Noooo sir. I'm gonna definitely be stretching these crackerjack bones in between stops.

JAMAL

That's the truth.

JEREMIAH

You know these fools at the barbershop had the nerve to ask me what I expect to accomplish by going to the March. I mean, these were Black men nagging at me.

JAMAL
What'd you tell them?

JEREMIAH
Told them that I'd see I'm not in the struggle alone. That I'd be on the front lines of the revolution. And that by the time I return, my rusty behind will be twenty years younger.

Jamal and Jeremiah laugh at the last part of the answer.

JAMAL
The fountain of youth, huh?

JEREMIAH
Ohhh buddy, if I'm lying I'm dying. It's right there on The Mall.

JAMAL
(still amused)
I don't doubt you, sir. I don't doubt you.

George gets on the bus that now has about twenty Black men on board.

GEORGE
Brothers, can I have your ears please! If you want to go to the Slauson Swap Meet, the Brentwood Mansion or the L.A. Zoo, then motherfucker, you're on the wrong bus!

The Black men laugh.

GEORGE
This bad boy is going to Washington D.C. for The Million Man March! My name is George. This is my partner, Craig.

In the driver's seat is another Black man, forty years old, named CRAIG. Craig throws up a peace sign.

CRAIG
Yo!

GEORGE
We'll get you to and from the March safely within six days. But there are a few rules we must observe. One, no drinking alcohol while on board. Two, no smoking. Three, no using illegal substances.

RANDALL
Damn. We are on the wrong bus.

More laughter. George takes it in stride.

GEORGE

If you need to use the bathroom, there's one in the back. I trust that none of you are on the rag, so we don't have to worry about that. But please flush the toilet after you use it. And try not to piss on the seat.

GARY

(all in fun)

You sound like my mother.

GEORGE

Good. 'Cause for the next six days I am your mother. -- Don't make me use my belt.

The brothers crack up. It's as if it's a fucking party. Jeremiah stands up.

JEREMIAH

Excuse me. We should pray that the Creator travels with us.

George takes it in with a nod.

GEORGE

I don't have a problem with that. Any objections?

No one objects.

GEORGE

The floor is yours, Pop.

JEREMIAH

Let us pray.

The men on the bus stand. Some are in front of their seats, others are in the aisle. They close their eyes.

JEREMIAH

Father God, you were with Moses when he parted the Red Sea and freed the slaves from bondage. You were with Noah when he was on his Ark while it rained forty days and forty nights. You were with Brother Malcolm when he journeyed to Mecca. Now we ask, oh Mighty One, that you stand with us on our journey to fellowship with a million Black men. We know that we are not perfect, but we seek perfection. We know that we are not guilt free, but we ask for your forgiveness. And if nothing else oh Lord, we pray that --

Just then, FLIP CARTER, twenty-seven, Mr. Black Hollywood, jumps on.

FLIP
(out of breath)
Hot damn!

All the brothers look up.

FLIP
(showing the ticket
to George)
Thought ya'll was gonna jet without a
brother but hot damn! My horoscope
said the moon was aligned for me and
shit.

GEORGE
Listen up, C.P. time. We're in the
middle of a prayer here.

FLIP
Oh, my bad...go right ahead.

The brothers close their eyes again.

JEREMIAH
(continuing the
prayer)
If nothing else oh Lord, we pray that
after this trip, each and every one of
us become more of a man than we were
before. Amen.

ALL THE BROTHERS
Amen!

GEORGE
Alright ladies, hold on to your
panties. Do it Craig.

Craig turns the key, presses a starter button and THE ENGINE
FIRES UP.

5 EXT. FIRST A.M.E. - DAY

5

The sisters wave goodbye to the brothers as the bus pulls
off.

6 INT. SPOTTED OWL - DAY

6

George stands at the front.

GEORGE
Alright. So let me ask ya'll a
question?

(MORE)

GEORGE (Cont'd)

What would a bus trip be without James Brown?

(no response)

No, I'm asking. What the fuck would a bus trip be without James Brown?

FLIP

Wouldn't be shit!

KYLE

Would be one sorry ass trip!

GEORGE

That's all I needed to hear.

George presses play on the tape recorder and James Brown's, "Papa Don't Take No Stuff" BLARES. The brothers jam to the song, singing along. They sound like shit, but they're having fun.

7 EXT. WESTERN BOULEVARD - DAY

7

The Spotted Owl roars through the South Central streets and turns onto the 10 freeway.

THE BROTHERS

(singing)

Papa don't take no stuff!

8 INT. SPOTTED OWL - DAY

8

THE JAMES BROWN SONG SUBSIDES.

Junior sits at a window seat watching the hood go by. Headphones from a Walkman cover his ears but the HIP-HOP he's consumed by BLARES anyway. It completely annoys Evan.

EVAN

Junior...

Junior bobs his head, not hearing his father or at least ignoring him. Evan elbows him. Junior takes off the headset.

JUNIOR

Yeah?

EVAN

It's too loud, Junior.

Junior frowns, TURNS IT DOWN.

JUNIOR

Let me ask you something. You don't want me to call you, "man." Right?

EVAN
Dad, Daddy, Sir. Take your pick.

JUNIOR
Then I should have the right to say I
don't want to be called Junior.

EVAN
Then what? Evan?

JUNIOR
Hell no.

EVAN
Well...

JUNIOR
Smooth.

EVAN
Excuse me?

JUNIOR
My friends call me Smooth.

Evan cracks up.

JUNIOR
What?

EVAN
Ain't no kind of way I'm calling my
son, Smooth. Must be out of your damn
mind.

JUNIOR
All of a sudden, I'm your son again.
But I'm the one out of his damn mind.

Junior puts the earphones back on. Evan has no comeback as
his son turns his head to the window.

Xavier sits in a window seat. Right next to him is Flip.

FLIP
Bruins fan, huh?

XAVIER
(nods)
N.C. double A champs.

FLIP
Can't argue with that.

XAVIER
You like them?

FLIP
I went to S.C.

Almost as bad as a Blood meeting a Crip.

XAVIER

Oh.

Xavier turns away, looks out the window.

FLIP

Tell you this, though. I give your boys props for dissing Clinton. He's up there in the stands cheering for Arkansas but the Bruins spanked that ass, didn't they? Shit. Clinton didn't need the Secret Service protecting him. Secret Service should have been helping Arkansas protect the ball.

(then)

Flip Carter.

XAVIER

X.

FLIP

That's your first name?

XAVIER

Yeah.

FLIP

You mean like, X marks the spot?

XAVIER

(not amused)

Just X.

FLIP

Nah, nah, nah. Now see I done heard some trippy names in my life. Ezekiel, Cadillac. Even know a brother named Porcupine. But I don't care if your mother was in labor with a bottle of O.E. in one hand and a big fat Jamaican blunt in the other. Ain't no way a mother's gonna name her son a damn letter in the alphabet.

XAVIER

You saying your mama named you Flip?

It gives Flip pause.

FLIP

Flip is my stage name. I'm an actor.

Then --

XAVIER

My real name is Xavier.

FLIP
Xavier. That I can get with.

He slaps Xavier a pound. Then Flip turns to his left.
Across the aisle, Gary sits alone reading a book.

FLIP
What up, Black?

GARY
How you doing man?

FLIP
Made this damn bus. It's all good
now.

GARY
Had trouble waking up, huh?

FLIP
Sheeit. I wake up with the roosters,
baby.
(then)
Had an early audition today.

We begin to see this conversation THROUGH XAVIER'S
CAMCORDER.

GARY
You a singer or something?

FLIP
Actor.

GARY
Straight up? So you been in any
movies?

FLIP
'Seen Boyz 'N The Hood?

GARY
(excited)
You were in that?

FLIP
Almost. But at the last minute they
gave the shit to Ice Cube.

GARY
Damn.

FLIP
That's alright though. Just went up
for this role opposite Denzel.
(flashes his cell-
phone)
'Should hear something by the end of
the day.

Gary notices Xavier pointing the camcorder.

GARY
So what is this, CNN?

XAVIER
Film school. I'm making a documentary
for my class project. My name is X.

GARY
Gary.

Xavier keeps recording.

XAVIER
So how come you're going to the March?

GARY
Huh?

XAVIER
The March. How come you're going?

GARY
I guess...if the brothers are meeting,
talking about how to change things,
then I want to be there.

FLIP
Where are you from?

GARY
I live in Pasadena.

FLIP
No, not where do you live. Where are
you from?

GARY
Monterey.

FLIP
Monterey? Damn. Didn't know they had
Black folks up there.

GARY
There's a handful.

FLIP
If you don't mind me asking, you
Mulatto or just light-skinned?

GARY
You mean, bi-racial.

FLIP
Bi-racial. So that's a yes.

GARY
I consider myself Black.

FLIP
Well as long as you were raised by at least one Black parent, I guess you're down. Shit. Half the brothers I know were raised by only one Black parent anyway.

GARY
I was raised by a White mother. That doesn't mean I'm not down.

FLIP
No disrespect, man.

XAVIER
So...what's the deal with your Pop?

GARY
(hesitates)
He was a cop. Got killed.

XAVIER
Damn.

FLIP
That must have tripped you out.

GARY
I don't really remember. I was young.

XAVIER
Gary, you mind if I ask you something?

GARY
Why stop now?

XAVIER
Did a brother kill your father?

GARY
What the fuck differences does it make?

XAVIER
Sorry man. I...I was just wondering.

A beat.

GARY
Yeah. My father was killed by a Black man.

Flip and Xavier take this in.

9 EXT. 10 FREEWAY - DAY

9

The bus speeds down the freeway making it's way out of L.A.

10 INT. SPOTTED OWL - DAY

10

Randall looks at Kyle who has his eyes closed.

RANDALL

So you think I'm stupid, huh?

(then)

I know you can hear me, Kyle.

Kyle opens his eyes.

KYLE

What are you beefing about?

RANDALL

You think 'cause you pretend to be asleep, I'm gonna forget what we were talking about?

KYLE

Why do you always think I'm trying to play you?

RANDALL

'Cause you're always trying to play me.

KYLE

I said what I had to say. That's it.

RANDALL

Bullshit that's it. You can't wake up one morning and say you need space then expect that to be case closed. Not after two years.

KYLE

Would you keep your voice down?

RANDALL

Oh, I forgot. We can't let your macho ass out of the closet.

KYLE

What do you want me to say?

RANDALL

That it's another man. That it's a woman. That you're confused about your sexuality. Anything other than, "I need space."

KYLE

Look Randall, I need space. Sorry,
but there's nothing more to it.

RANDALL

That's not good enough.

KYLE

It's gonna have to be.

(then)

If I'd have known you came to trip on
me, I would have told you to keep your
ass at home.

RANDALL

Don't even flatter yourself. You're
not the reason I'm going to the
March.

KYLE

Good. Then you won't mind if I move
the fuck away from you.

Kyle gets up and takes an empty seat.

RANDALL

(yelling across the
bus)

I do mind. I mind that you're not man
enough to admit you love me!

The whole bus turns silent as this bomb is dropped.
Brothers on the bus stare in shock. Some crack the hell up.
Out of embarrassment, Kyle lowers his head, resting his face
in his hand. Randall realizes he just let the cat out of
the bag, doesn't give a shit. He sits back down.

Junior turns to his father. Sarcastically --

JUNIOR

Cool Dad. We're going to the Million
Man March with a bunch of homos.

Evan looks over at the gay dudes and frowns.

Flip turns to Gary.

FLIP

Tell me I didn't just hear what I
think I heard?

GARY

Wish I could.

Then Flips turns to Xavier.

FLIP

Can you believe this?

XAVIER

So?

FLIP

So? Wait, you mean you bend down and grab your ankles too?

XAVIER

I ain't gay. I'm just saying, what's the big deal?

FLIP

Man, if you turn your camera on and ask them why they're going to the March, you know what they'll say?

(like a queen)

'The thought of seeing one million strong Black men gives me little goose bumps.'

GARY

(laughs, slaps Flip a pound)

You know that's real.

From his seat, Kyle hears the joke but he's more humiliated than pissed off.

Jeremiah turns to Jamal.

JEREMIAH

Guess they got a right.

JAMAL

Excuse me?

JEREMIAH

Homosexuals. I never thought about it, but I guess they got a right to be going.

JAMAL

What right is that?

JEREMIAH

They're oppressed. Getting screwed like the rest of us.

JAMAL

They're getting screwed alright.

JEREMIAH

C'mon young blood. You know what I'm saying.

JAMAL

Sorry but I don't agree. We got too many drug dealers, too many sell outs and too many gays.

JEREMIAH

Seem to have your mind made up about it.

JAMAL

If there's one thing the Black community is not short on, it's confusion. Makes me want to think twice about getting married.

JEREMIAH

You're engaged?

JAMAL

Well...not exactly.

JEREMIAH

Oh. You mean you bought the ring.

JAMAL

I'm...I'm in the process of thinking about buying the ring.

JEREMIAH

In the process of thinking about it.
(half-laugh)

Sounds like there is confusion in the Black community.

Jamal cracks a smile admitting his guilt.

JAMAL

The Holy Quran teaches, "As we conceive happiness in this life, it is not complete if it is only solitary." But okay, say I do get married. I don't know if I would want to have kids. I mean, I want to have kids, but not on this mixed-up planet.

JEREMIAH

You mean, you're scared if you had a son, he'd turn out to be a homosexual?

JAMAL

Oh no. Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh? Could never happen. No, no no.

JEREMIAH

Then if you ask me, the kid thing is just an excuse. What's your lady's name?

JAMAL

Jindai.

Jamal pulls out a picture, shows it to Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH

Jindai. Pretty. You don't want a
looker like that to get away. How
long you two been together?

JAMAL

We've been talking for two years.

JEREMIAH

Two long years? Or two short years.

JAMAL

I guess...short.

JEREMIAH

How'd you meet?

JAMAL

She was crossing the street.

JEREMIAH

(chuckles)

What are you telling me brother? That
you did the, 'yo baby' thing?

JAMAL

The 'yo baby' thing saved my life.
The day I met her, I was thinking
about canceling myself.

JEREMIAH

A young man like you?

JAMAL

(nods)

'Had the gun, had the bullet, I was
even on my way to giving my car to my
cousin.

JEREMIAH

And like an angel she appeared.

JAMAL

I don't know about all that angel
stuff. But in my unenlightened days,
a big booty would catch my eye. It
was like, I had a big booty radar.

Jeremiah laughs.

JAMAL

Knew there was no way I was killing
myself before, as I used to say, I
tapped some of that.

JEREMIAH

Boy, you ain't in love, you're in
lust.

JAMAL
Nah, far beyond that now. Since we've been together...we have never been together.

JEREMIAH
You're kidding me.

JAMAL
She's a muslim. So am I.

JEREMIAH
Nation of Islam?

JAMAL
Orthodox. Living clean, you know?

JEREMIAH
No loving in two years. That's pretty damn clean alright.

Jamal, amused by Jeremiah's response --

JAMAL
That much is true.

George and Craig are in the front of the bus having a private conversation.

CRAIG
I don't get it man.

GEORGE
You're a good parent. It's not your fault.

CRAIG
Just doesn't make sense. Sent the girl to private school her whole life, church every Sunday, Sunday school. How the fuck is she going to come home with a bun in the oven?
(shakes his head)
Only sixteen years old.

GEORGE
How 'bout the little motherfucker that got her pregnant?

CRAIG
He's sixteen also. Says he's going to quit school, get a job and rent an apartment for the two of them. Tell you, if Farrakhan has a way to handle this shit, I'll be all ears. 'Cause right now I'm about to kill that boy.

Suddenly --

CRAIG

Shit!

11 EXT. THE 10 FREEWAY - DAY

11

A car cuts off the Spotted Owl. The bus has to quickly swerve out of the way. It lands in a ditch on the side of the freeway.

12 INT. SPOTTED OWL - DAY

12

The brothers on the bus fall back in their seats.

GEORGE

Is everybody alright?

The brothers respond with nods and shouts of "Yeah." Craig steps on the gas and nothing happens.

13 EXT. THE 10 FREEWAY - DAY

13

The back tire is stuck in a ditch. George and Craig get off the bus to assess the damage.

CRAIG

Damn.

GEORGE

What do you think?

CRAIG

Basically, we're fucked. No way are we getting out of this ditch.

GEORGE

Don't be so negative.

CRAIG

Alright little Orphan Annie. The sun will come out tomorrow. But what the hell does that have to do with us?

GEORGE

Haven't you heard the expression, there's strength in numbers?

George looks through the window of the bus checking out the twenty Black men.

14 EXT. THE 10 FREEWAY - DAY

14

A FEW MINUTES LATER.

The brothers are off the bus, sleeves rolled up, some crack their knuckles. Craig is still on the bus in the driver's seat.

GEORGE

Alright fellas on three.

The brothers position themselves and take hold of the Spotted Owl.

GEORGE

One, two, three.

As Craig steps on the gas, the brothers try to lift the bus out of the ditch. No progress.

JAMAL

We can't do it.

GEORGE

Can't? What do you mean, "we can't do it?" There's no such word as can't.

FLIP

Then I'll give you three other words.
Too damn heavy.

The Black men laugh as they lean against the bus catching their breath.

GEORGE

Wait a minute. I can't believe ya'll are so shiftless and lazy that you're gonna just give up.

EVAN

Oh, now you got to get all plantation on us.

Jamal, checking out the shackles --

JAMAL

The way you look I can't blame him.
I thought slavery was over.

EVAN

It doesn't concern you.

GARY

Maybe it does.

(to Junior)

You want to tell us what's going on?

GEORGE

He's got a court order. I've seen it.

GARY

I'd like to take a look at it.

Evan shows it to Gary.

EVAN

Does it meet your approval?

GARY

I guess.

EVAN

(to everyone)

Then I'm going to say this just once.
The boy has one father. That's me.
Rest of ya'll want to stick your damn
noses somewhere, make sure it's not in
my business.

GEORGE

See brothers. You see? The devil
doesn't want the Black man to have
atonement. Am I right, Pops?

JEREMIAH

You're right.

GEORGE

But God wants us at that March. It's
our mission. So on three, you strong,
Black, African Mandika warriors will
lift this damn bus out of this
motherfucking ditch so we can be on
our way! Now, one! Two! Three!

The brothers dig deep and strain. It seems even heavier
than before. But with their new found inspiration, they
lift the bus out of the ditch.

GEORGE

That's what I'm talking about!

The brothers cheer and slap each other five.

THE BROTHERS

Mandika! Mandika!

15 INT. SPOTTED OWL - DAY

15

Craig steps on the gas. The bus still doesn't move.

16 EXT. THE 10 FREEWAY - DAY

16

The laughter and smiles subside as the brothers hear THE ENGINE REVVING but see that the damn bus won't move an inch.

GARY

Now what?

RANDALL

If you ask me, right about now the devil's kicking our Mandikan asses.

Craig gets off the bus to talk to George.

GEORGE

What's going on?

CRAIG

I'm flooring the bitch and nothing's happening. Must be the axle or something.

GEORGE

Shit. Alright, I'll call the base.

17 INT. SPOTTED OWL - CONTINUOUS

17

George jumps on the bus, picks up the transmitter on the radio.

GEORGE

731 to base. 731 to base.

THE BASE

(through radio)

This is base, 731.

GEORGE

Our bus is out of commission. Looks like the axle or something.

THE BASE

(through radio)

Who was driving?

GEORGE

Miller.

THE BASE

(through radio)

Where are you?

George looks out the window, notices Xavier is video taping him.

GEORGE

On the Ten, right where it meets the Fifteen.

THE BASE
(through radio)
Tell Miller to remain with the
vehicle. We'll send you a replacement
and new driving partner.

GEORGE
I think Miller would prefer to
continue this assignment.

THE BASE
(through radio)
The driver of a broken down bus
remains with the vehicle to fill out
a report. You know the policy.

GEORGE
Stupid rule.

THE BASE
(through radio)
So whine to our insurance company.
The voice leaves the radio and the line goes dead.

GEORGE
Bastards.

18 EXT. THE 10 FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS 18

George gets off the bus, steps to Craig.

CRAIG
They want me to stay, don't they?

GEORGE
Sorry man. You know those idiots.

CRAIG
Ain't that a bitch. So who's
replacing me?

GEORGE
They didn't say.

19 EXT. THE 10 FREEWAY - DAY 19

THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Twenty pissed off brothers wait at the side of the road for
rescue.

XAVIER
Here it comes!

The new improved Spotted Owl comes into view. Xavier quickly turns on the camcorder. THROUGH THE CAMCORDER we see the bus approaching. Then the bus pulls up and the door flings open.

The driver is RICK MOSKOWITZ, a thirty year old, Jewish guy.

The brothers stand stunned. Xavier is so shocked he almost drops his camcorder. Rick isn't anymore thrilled to see the twenty Black men.

20 INT. SPOTTED OWL - CONTINUOUS

20

George pokes his head in.

GEORGE

What's up Rick.

RICK

What's all this?

GEORGE

They're going to The Million Man March.

RICK

The Faracan thing? You're bullshitting me.

GEORGE

Okay, I'm bullshitting you. They're the Harlem Globetrotters.

Rick ignores the sarcasm.

RICK

They said it was a trip to the Capitol.

(shakes his head)

Should have known.

GEORGE

Guess so.

George steps away from the bus.

21 EXT. THE 10 FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS

21

George turns to the brothers.

GEORGE

Alright brothers. This is our ride.

RANDALL

You're joking, right?

GEORGE
You see me laughing?

FLIP
We can't roll to no Million Man March
with a White boy behind the wheel.

JAMAL
Yeah. What about all that Mandika
warrior stuff?

GEORGE
Look at it this way. Used to be we
always had to chauffeur the White man.
This time the White man is
chauffeur us. C'mon.

The Black men line up with duffel bags and knapsacks to get
on the new and improved Spotted Owl.

22 INT. SPOTTED OWL - DAY

22

The brothers pile on. Rick puts on a friendly smile masking
his fear and mistrust. Basically, none of the brothers
throw him any love.

Then George steps on smiling.

GEORGE
You're not scared or anything, are
you?

RICK
(as if it's
ridiculous)
Of course not.
(then)
Why, should I be?

GEORGE
Of course not. -- At least, I don't
think so.

George's uncertainty doesn't sit too well with Rick.

23 EXT. THE 10 FREEWAY - DAY

23

The bus pulls off leaving behind the raggedy bus and Craig.
Craig throws them the clenched fist. The bus drives on to
the Fifteen freeway.

CUT TO

A MAP OVERTAKES THE SCREEN.

A dot moves across it showing us that the Spotted Owl has gone through Arizona and Alburquerque.

24 INT. SPOTTED OWL - NIGHT

24

It's quiet. Not like before. The brothers are sullen, almost angry. Rick looks through the rear-view mirror, can't believe he's in this minority situation.

JAMAL

(to Jeremiah)

A White boy driving us to The Million Man March. It's an omen.

JEREMIAH

I wouldn't worry about it.

JAMAL

And what's the deal with Kunta Kinte?

JEREMIAH

(shrugs)

Man said for us to stay out of his business.

JAMAL

Well I wouldn't care what some judge said. No way would I handcuff my son like that. You?

JEREMIAH

Couldn't tell you.

JAMAL

No kids?

JEREMIAH

Nope. No kids. Never been married.

JAMAL

No family at all?

JEREMIAH

No family at all.

JAMAL

How does that happen?

JEREMIAH

(shrugs)

You work. Work some more. And before you know it, the woman you love moves on.

JAMAL

Must have been some serious work.

JEREMIAH

Done just about everything you can think of. Real Estate. Owned a cosmetic company. Even sold 'Teas from around the world.' Think I arrived a little before my time.

JAMAL

Why's that?

JEREMIAH

Back in the sixties, people weren't to keen on buying real estate from me. White people wouldn't give me the time of day. And Black folks figured I was some kind of hustler. There's some people in this world that always make the wrong choices. I'll be damned if I'm not one of them.

Jamal takes this in.

Xavier approaches Rick, TURNS ON THE CAMCORDER.

XAVIER

How do you feel?

RICK

Pardon?

XAVIER

You're on a bus with twenty Black men.
How do you feel?

Rick nervously shrugs it off. George sits behind Rick, tickled by all this.

RICK

Black men, White men. All the same to me. I like to think of myself as...color blind.

XAVIER

So, you didn't notice that everyone on this bus is Black, except you? Black men. Descendants of slaves.

RICK

We're...we're all brothers under the skin, right?

Randall rolls his eyes.

RANDALL

Now we're your brothers. Just 'cause you're on the Black of the bus.

RICK

Hey look, I never wore a white sheet over my head, okay? I'm Jewish.

RANDALL

God forbid we think a Jewish person is prejudiced.

RICK

My parents were in the Civil Rights Movement. They had Black people at our house all the time.

RANDALL

Are you getting this Xavier? They actually had Black people at their house.

RICK

I didn't mean it like that.

RANDALL

Bullshit you didn't. And as far as I'm concerned, only two things came out of the Civil Rights Movement. One, Black people got a few crumbs. And two, condescending White people got the right to say they struggled with us. Difference is, our struggle didn't end with the March On Washington. We're still catching hell.

RICK

At least my parents did their part.

RANDALL

Their part to make a difference? Or their part to appear liberal?

RICK

What are you saying? That it's their job to solve your people's problems?

RANDALL

(sarcastic)

No. After four hundred some odd years of slavery, oppression and pink soles on our backs, me and my people are suppose to just fix everything ourselves.

GEORGE

Damn right we are. And you don't know shit about the Civil Rights Movement. Now cut the man some slack. If he can help me drive this damn bus, then that's all that matters.

Xavier TURNS OFF HIS CAMERA. He and Randall cross away.
Rick whispers to George.

RICK
Thanks George. You're alright.
But George ain't about to sing "We Are The World."

GEORGE
As long as you do your share of the
driving, I don't have a problem with
you either.

25 EXT. ROUTE 40 - NIGHT

25

It's pitch black. A sign reads: OKLAHOMA CITY - CITY
LIMITS.

26 INT. SPOTTED OWL - DUSK

26

Junior nudges his father who's fallen asleep.

JUNIOR
I gotta piss.

EVAN
(groggily)
What?

JUNIOR
Piss. The bathroom. And if you don't
mind, I'd like to go by myself.

With a key, Evan unlocks the cuffs off of Junior. Junior
walks to the back and goes to the bathroom.

A cell-phone rings. Flip reaches in his pocket and pulls
out his cellular.

FLIP
Yeah. What's up Barbara?..Yeah. So
they liked me?..Uhhuh...Oh believe
that. I'm keeping my fingers and toes
crossed.

Flip hangs up the phone.

GARY
You get it?

FLIP
They're making a decision over the
weekend. But it looks good.

GARY
So is it a big role?

FLIP

Kidding me? They throw me in that movie and I'm gonna blow up too large. People will be like, "Denzel who?"

GARY

Well, I hope it works out. Then I can say, I knew you when.

FLIP

For real, though.

(then)

So yo, what you think my man's thinking?

GARY

Who?

FLIP

Mighty Whitey driving the bus.

GARY

He's probably thinking about kicking his boss's ass.

Flip and Gary laugh.

FLIP

I guess...you don't have a problem with him though.

GARY

(losing patience)

That again. Look, I already told you, I consider myself Black.

FLIP

No disrespect partner, but I can consider myself six foot four and ugly. That don't change the fact that I'm five ten and cute as a motherfucker.

Jeremiah turns around in his seat.

JEREMIAH

Look Hollywood, the brother is Black. Why don't you leave him be?

FLIP

Yo, I ain't tripping on him. I'm just saying he's just as White as he is Black.

JEREMIAH

If this was slavery, you think the master would care that he was half-white. Shoot. He'd be a slave just like the rest of us.

FLIP

But he'd be a house slave pimping around the big house. And while the rest of us would be talking about "grits, dummy." This motherfucker would be eating potatoes. He'd have the breast of chicken, we'd have the neck bones. Our woman would be blistered up and stinking from picking cotton. His women would be all bathed, smelling good. And nine times out of ten the honey he'd be banging in the big house would be some White girl.

GARY

So that's your beef? You want a White girl?

FLIP

Sheeit. Player is written all over me, cousin. I tag all kinds of freaks. Black, White, Chinese, Mexican. If you can think it, I can bang it.

GARY

And that makes you a man?

FLIP

Oh, so what's your deal? You on that hen peck tip?

GARY

Just 'cause I don't mess around on my woman doesn't make me a hen peck. It makes me honest.

FLIP

Look, you're all strung out and in love. I can respect that. But personally, I'm young, single, why the fuck not mingle?

GARY

'Cause there's more to life than chasing every piece of ass.

FLIP

Wish I could see how straight up noble you'd be if you had as many draws thrown in your face as I do. Guess we'll never know.

RANDALL

If you ask me, you're insecure.

Flip is taken aback by Randall having the nerve to speak.

FLIP
What did you say?

RANDALL
You're insecure. ~~He~~ ~~is~~

Flip gets out of his chair leans into Randall.

FLIP
Look Harriet Tubman, Alice Walker, Angela Davis or whichever sister you think you are --

RANDALL
The name is Randall, thank you very much.

FLIP
Well Randall, just 'cause I like pussy, like the way it feels, like the way it smells, doesn't make me insecure. Can you even say that word? Pussy. C'mon say it. Puhseee.

RANDALL
Get out of my face.

FLIP
Not till you say it faggot. Pussy!
Pussy!

Kyle jumps up.

KYLE
Leave him alone!

The entire bus gets quiet. The tension of a fight is in the air.

FLIP
Stand by your man, Huh?
(gets in Kyle's face)
Nah. Nah actually, I think, you're the man of the relationship. Am I right?

Kyle tries to stand his ground.

KYLE
He wasn't bothering you.

FLIP
He was bothering me! Just the fact that we got faggots on the bus bothers me!

EVAN
Why don't you leave them alone.

FLIP

Oh, so now Mr. Chain gang is in the mix. What, you got an enter sign on your ass, too?

Evan jumps up.

JUNIOR

Dad. Let it go.

Junior makes his way back from the bathroom, stands next to his Pop.

FLIP

Yeah Dad, let it go.

Flip and Evan stare each other down. Then Evan takes a seat. Flip shakes his head, walks towards the back, takes a seat by himself.

Everyone relaxes a bit, chills out. Randall goes to the seat next to Kyle.

RANDALL

Thanks.

Kyle nods and Randall goes back to his own seat. Then Evan puts the handcuffs back on Junior.

CUT TO

THE MAP OVERTAKES THE SCREEN.

The dot moves up to Little Rock, Arkansas.

27 INT. SPOTTED OWL BATHROOM - DAY 27

Jamal is at the sink. He performs a ritual, washing his face three times, head, feet, etc.

28 EXT. ARKANSAS SERVICE AREA - DAY 28

The scenery is barren but beautiful. The brothers are spread out on the parking lot stretching and loosening up. Kyle has a 35 millimeter and takes pictures. Flip is on the ground doing push-ups.

Xavier approaches Randall. He looks at him THROUGH HIS CAMCORDER.

XAVIER

Excuse me?

RANDALL

Yes.

XAVIER

Just wanted to ask, why are you going to the March? A lot of um...

RANDALL

Gays?

XAVIER

Yeah. A lot of gays think Farrakhan is homophobic.

RANDALL

He called for a day of atonement, right?

XAVIER

Right.

RANDALL

Well I didn't hear him say atonement to everyone except gays. When I walk down the street White women clutch their purses same as they would do for a brother who's straight. I'm going to the March 'cause I'm a Black man. My sexual preference has nothing to do with that.

Randall crosses away. Jamal exits the bus with a prayer mat. He finds a private spot, faces East and kneels on the mat to pray.

George walks up to Rick.

GEORGE

If you want, I'll drive the damn Owl for awhile. Let you kick back.

RICK

No I'll stay behind the wheel.

George smirks to himself knowing Rick's trying to stay as far away from the brothers as he can.

Junior and Evan sit on a bench. Evan lights a cigarette, smokes.

EVAN

Little Rock Arkansas. A lot of history in this place. White folks yanking their kids out of school 'cause they didn't want to see an end to segregation. Watching it on T.V. used to trip me out.

JUNIOR

Do you mind?

EVAN

What?

JUNIOR

I'm allergic to cigarettes. Besides it stinks.

Evan gives up on meeting his son half-way.

EVAN

Yeah? Well turn your head.

Evan continues to smoke. Junior turns away.

Flip finishes his set of push-ups, Jeremiah walks up to him.

JEREMIAH

Seem kind of angry brother.

FLIP

Very astute.

JEREMIAH

You know, the Black man ain't your enemy.

FLIP

Oh don't come here with that.

JEREMIAH

You don't believe me?

FLIP

What Black man are you talking about? The queen or the mutt?

JEREMIAH

I used to be just like you.

FLIP

Is that so?

JEREMIAH

I was the only one that knew what it meant to be Black. All my friends talking about joining the movement and shoot, half of them didn't even have jobs. I figured the White man didn't respect us 'cause we didn't respect ourselves. So I watched. I watched as people boycotted White businesses that didn't hire Black folks. I watched as people joined the Panthers.

FLIP

And other than watching, you didn't do shit, did you?

JEREMIAH

Didn't do anything but judge. Like I said, I used to be just like you.

FLIP

You saying I got to be marching for gay and mulatto rights to be revolutionary?

JEREMIAH

I'm saying, we all got to come together to be revolutionary.

FLIP

(seeing something)
Well later for the revolution. I'm a lover not a fighter.

Just then a car pulls in the rest area. It's occupants, two Black women in their twenties.

JEREMIAH

Flip, if you're a lover then you are a fighter.

FLIP

Hold that thought.

As the sisters exit their ride, Flip wastes no time.

FLIP

(approaching the sisters)

Hello ladies. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Little Rock Arkansas rest area.

One of the sisters, JAMILIA, gives him attitude.

JAMILIA

And who are you suppose to be?

FLIP

The welcoming committee for all the fine sisters that pass through.

JAMILIA

Really?

FLIP

Oh yeah. See fine sisters aren't allowed to pass through here without talking to me. My name is Flip.

The other sister named ANNE speaks up.

ANNE

We're very sorry, Flip but it's been a long day.

Anne and Jamilia head to the restroom. The other brothers check Flip out -- Mr. Mouth in action. Anne is the one Flip likes the most.

FLIP

So where you from?

ANNE

Dallas.

FLIP

Dallas, Texas. Should have known. I always heard Dallas had the finest honeys on the planet.

ANNE

(unimpressed)

What do you know.

Then Gary steps up.

GARY

I know he must be getting on your nerves. Hopefully Farrakhan will teach him not to bother young ladies.

JAMILIA

You're going to the March?

GARY

(nods)

Time for the brothers to work things out.

ANNE

And you think you could work things out without the sisters?

FLIP

(trying to get on
her good side)

Nah. See, it's not right. It's not right to exclude Black woman. Not after everything beautiful, Nubian sisters like yourselves have done for the original man of color.

GARY

I have to disagree with you. The reality is, Black men have issues, concerns and downfalls that are specific to questions of manhood. One of them is how we can be better brothers for and to the Black woman.

(to Jamilia and
Anne)

See, this isn't about leaving sisters out. It's about doing what we can to gain your respect and keep it.

ANNE
I can definitely get behind that.

JAMILIA
Me too.

GARY
By the way, my name is Gary.

ANNE
Anne.

JAMILIA
Jamilia.

Flip starts to get pissed as he realizes he's losing ground with the ladies, especially Anne.

JAMILIA
(to Anne)
Girl, don't you wish we could go to D.C., just to peep the whole thing out?

FLIP
Sisters as fine as you? Oh hell no. You'd start a riot. Tell you what, slide me your digits and as soon as it's over, I'll call you up, give you the whole run down.

ANNE
I don't know.
(to Gary)
Can we trust him?

GARY
Better go on that female intuition. I just met the brother.

ANNE
Well in that case, can we trust you?

A beat as Gary contemplates his response.

GARY
Me?

FLIP
(jumping in)
Shit, brothers don't come more trustworthy than good old Gary here. All you gotta do is ask his girlfriend.

Gary shoots Flip a look.

ANNE
Girlfriend?

GARY
Yeah. And he's right. She will tell
you I'm trustworthy.

Then George calls out to all the brothers.

GEORGE
Alright everybody! Time to roll!
Let's go! Let's go!

The brothers begin to pile on the bus.

JAMILIA
Well, nice meeting you both.

FLIP
(dejected)
Yeah. The conversation's been too
damn stimulating.

Flip walks to the bus.

GARY
You sisters take care.

ANNE
You too, brother.

Gary nods, then jets to the bus.

29 INT. SPOTTED OWL - CONTINUOUS

29

Gary walks on the bus as the brothers cheer calling him
"player" and "Mack Daddy." Gary laughs.

GARY
You guys are crazy.

He takes a seat. Flip stares at him.

GARY
What?

FLIP
Nothing.
(then)
Mr. "I don't cheat on my girlfriend."

GARY
I don't cheat on her.

FLIP
So what the hell was that?

GARY
Conversation.

FLIP

Oh bullshit.

GARY

You probably think if you didn't bring up my girlfriend I would have went for it.

FLIP

And you're gonna deny that?

GARY

Damn right.

FLIP

Give me a break. You were salivating all over baby girl.

GARY

You're crazy.

FLIP

Hey Pops, you hearing this?

JEREMIAH

I hear it.

FLIP

Now you tell me, what man who likes women ain't gonna get a little on the side if he can get away with it?

JEREMIAH

A lot of brothers wouldn't.

FLIP

Name one. Better yet, how 'bout you? Have you ever cheated on one of your women?

GARY

Ignore him Jeremiah. He's just mad 'cause he couldn't get the digits.

FLIP

Nobody's talking to you. I'm asking the man a question.

(to Jeremiah)

You ever cheat on one of your women?

JEREMIAH

Well...I suppose in my youth.

FLIP

Suppose my ass! That's a yes. What about you George?

GEORGE

Never.

FLIP

Never?

(unrelenting)

Never, ever, ever?

GEORGE

Well, never on my wife.

FLIP

Ha! Then you have fucked around on a woman before.

GEORGE

I didn't say that! I gotta think about it.

FLIP

You ain't got to think about a motherfucking thing George and you know it.

XAVIER

I ain't never cheated on any girlfriend.

FLIP

How old are you?

XAVIER

Nineteen.

FLIP

That's alright. You got time.

JEREMIAH

Brother Jamal doesn't cheat on his woman.

FLIP

Well of course not. Why the fuck you think he prays five times a day?

JAMAL

George! Throw on some more of that James Brown so we don't have to keep listening to this fool.

GEORGE

I left the tape on the other bus!

(to Rick)

You bring anything?

RICK

Well...yeah, but --

GEORGE

Okay, we got something.

George presses play.

Suddenly the most HARD-CORE HEAVY METAL SHIT PLAYS. Wild guitars, screaming singers, etc.

KYLE

Oh hell no!

FLIP

What the fuck is this?!

XAVIER

I'd rather walk to chocolate city than ride listening to this!

JUNIOR

And they call our stuff Jungle music.

JAMAL

Turn that off, George! I want to hear that like I want to see a cross on my lawn.

George presses stop.

RANDALL

Damn that was scary.

Rick feels humiliated as the brothers continue to jeer and dis his music.

JEREMIAH

Hey! Don't worry young bloods! You want music, you got it.

Jeremiah reaches into his pillowcase.

GARY

What you got in there, a set of spoons or something?

FLIP

Bet it's tap shoes.

The brothers laugh. Jeremiah pulls out a small single headed African drum.

JUNIOR

(rolling his eyes)

Oh no.

XAVIER

You gotta be kidding.

JEREMIAH

The hell I am. Say hello to my djembe drum.

GEORGE

And what exactly are you going to do with that?

JEREMIAH

Take your sorry behinds back to the Motherland.

All eyes are on Jeremiah as he sits down, puts the djembe between his legs and begins to play a RHYTHMIC AFRICAN BEAT. The brothers on the bus begin to nod vibing with the music. It's not bad.

GARY

Check him out. Damn.

Jeremiah displays serious talent. He's no rookie. Then Randall jumps out of his seat, begins dancing like an African warrior.

FLIP

(rolling his eyes)

Shit.

But Randall is clearly being a clown. Making fun of himself before any one can make fun of him.

Rick glances around the bus feeling out of place and lost.

As the beat becomes more furious, so does Randall's dancing. The brothers are in hysterics. Even Kyle shakes his head having to admit the shit is funny.

CUT TO

THE MAP OVERTAKES THE SCREEN.

The dot moves from Arkansas up to Memphis, Tennessee.

30 INT. SPOTTED OWL - NIGHT

30

Xavier turns on his camcorder. THROUGH THE CAMCORDER we see that George is fast asleep as are half the brothers on the bus. It's quiet. The brothers that are awake basically look out the window reflecting on women, life and how bad the Clippers are.

The bus pulls off at the next exit.

31 EXT. GRACELAND COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

31

The Spotted Owl pulls into the parking lot.

32 INT. SPOTTED OWL - NIGHT

32

RICK
George. Hey...

GEORGE
(waking up)
Yeah.

RICK
Memphis.

George looks around, nods.

GEORGE
Okay.

Then he rises, lets out a yawn.

GEORGE
Alright listen up everybody. It's
just about two a.m. We need to be
back on our way by three. And I'm not
having none of that C.P. time. If you
don't get back in time, your ass gets
left.

The doors of the bus open and the brothers pile off. George
turns to Rick.

GEORGE
Let's go put some gas in this bad boy,
then I'll take over the driving for
awhile.

RICK
I need you to do me a favor George.

GEORGE
You can't drive the Spotted Owl the
whole way, Rick.

RICK
That's not it.
(then)
When the base asks, I need you to say
I got sick.

GEORGE
Why?

RICK
(hands George the
keys)
'Cause I'm not coming back.

Rick gets off the Owl.

33 EXT. GRACELAND COFFEE SHOP PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

33

George follows Rick.

GEORGE

'The hell you mean, you're not coming back?

RICK

I can't do it.

GEORGE

You're just gonna get off here in the middle of nowhere?

RICK

Be a lot safer out here.

George grabs Rick by the arm, stops him.

GEORGE

What's that suppose to mean?

RICK

Drop it.

GEORGE

I don't want to drop it. What do you think, we're gonna put you in boiling water, have you for supper?

RICK

You already have the African drums...

GEORGE

Fuck you.

A beat as the two men stare each other down.

RICK

Alright George, here it is. Maybe I am a little bit prejudiced against Blacks. But no more than your prejudiced against White people. You want me to stay on, prove how liberal and shit I am? Well I don't have to prove shit to anyone. I think O.J. was guilty. He's a cold blooded murderer who killed two innocent human beings. I also think Affirmative Action is fucked-up. And I wish there were more White players in the N.B.A.

GEORGE

And for that, you want me to cover for you?

RICK

That bus is going to Farracan's March.
I can't be a part of that.

GEORGE

It's not just his march.

RICK

I don't want to debate it. He called
Judaism a gutter religion. I wouldn't
expect you to drive a bus to a Klu
Klux Klan rally. So don't expect me
to do this.

GEORGE

Now you're comparing this to a Klan
rally?

RICK

George, either I'm gonna get fired or
you're gonna cover for me. But no way
am I gonna get back on that bus. So
what's the deal?

GEORGE

You want me to say you're sick. Fine.
I won't be lying.

Rick takes this in.

RICK

Thanks.

George watches Rick walk off. Then George goes back to the
bus and drives to the nearby gas station.

34 INT. GRACELAND COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

34

A shrine of Elvis shit. Album jackets line the wall.
Pictures of Pink Cadillacs and the letter TLC that has a
lightning bolt running through it.

The place is half empty with redneck cowboys and women.
Suddenly a Black man enters, followed by another Black man
and another Black man...

The brothers from the bus crowd the place.

JEFFERSON, the White clerk dressed like Elvis, stands
shocked.

JEFFERSON

(to no one in
particular)

What the fuck is going on?

The place is quiet. Whites stare at the Blacks and vice
versa. Finally, Flip breaks the ice.

FLIP
What's happening?

JEFFERSON
(in a daze)
Not much I guess.

FLIP
Not much is better than nothing. Can we get a couple of menus?

JEFFERSON
Sandy, get them some menus.

SANDY, the White waitress grabs a bunch of menus. She passes them out as the brothers take seats.

FLIP
Ya'll must really like Elvis up in this motherfucker.

JEFFERSON
Around here, everybody likes Elvis.
Jamal whispers something to Gary.

JAMAL
Someone needs to tell that fool to shut up before he gets us shot.

GARY
Maybe we'll get lucky and they'll just shoot him.

Sandy pulls out a pad and pencil.

SANDY
You gentlemen ready to order?

FLIP
Yeah. Let's see. I'll have the uh...Hound Dog omlette with the Blue Suede french fries, and a coke.

SANDY
Okay.
(to Jeremiah)
Sir?

JEREMIAH
Yes, how 'bout the Love Me Tender chicken and a glass of water.

Sandy jots down his order.

At another table, Evan sits with Junior. A cowboy named RODNEY notices the chains.

RODNEY

Ya'll magicians or something? Like Houdini?

EVAN

Yeah. We're...taking our act on the road.

Junior smirks at the cornball response.

JUNIOR

We're from Cali. Going to the Million Man March.

RODNEY

Is that right? Hey Mitch, guess where these guys are going?

MITCH, a redneck sitting a few feet away shouts back.

MITCH

Where?

RODNEY

The Million Man March.

MITCH

No shit?

RODNEY

That's what they said.

Mitch crosses over to them.

MITCH

So this Farrakhan guy, he like snaps his fingers and colored people come running, huh?

Junior rolls his eyes.

EVAN

This is a lot bigger than Farrakhan.

MITCH

But, he is the Black leader ain't he?

EVAN

The Black leader?

RODNEY

Like Martin Luther King was.

JUNIOR

You could say that.

EVAN

Not really. He's one of our leaders.

JUNIOR
(defiantly to his
father)
But he's the only one that could pull
this off.

MITCH
So what about all that stuff they say.
About him thinking the White man is
the devil. That true?

JUNIOR
(quickly)
Yup.

EVAN
(jumping in)
No. It's not true. He's pro Black.
Doesn't mean he's anti White or
anything else.

RODNEY
Tell you one thing, the man speaks his
mind. I mean that dodo bird Gingrich,
I wouldn't piss on him if his dick was
on fire.

MITCH
But you trust Farrakhan?

RODNEY
I don't have a problem with the guy.
(to Junior)
You have a problem with him?

JUNIOR
Nope.

MITCH
Well I'll be honest. I think it's
people like him that cause division in
the world.

JUNIOR
(challenging Mitch)
You ever hear the man talk?

MITCH
Well...not directly.

RODNEY
Then maybe you should shut the fuck
up.
(to Junior)
Right?

JUNIOR
That's right, dog.

Rodney and Junior slap five. Mitch notices the shackles.

MITCH

So what's with the handcuffs, Smooth?

JUNIOR

The truth? It's a court order. I'm in my father's custody.

EVAN

You talk too much Junior.

MITCH

A judge mandated that?

JUNIOR

It was either community service and this for 72 hours or me serving a one year sentence.

RODNEY

So what'd you do?

JUNIOR

I stole something from a grocery store.

MITCH

Like a candy bar or something?

JUNIOR

Like money out of the cash register.

MITCH

Damn.

JUNIOR

But it's not like it was at gun point or anything.

EVAN

It was still a bone-headed thing to do. You know better.

JUNIOR

How do you know what I know?

EVAN

I know your mother raised you with better sense.

JUNIOR

Put it off on Mom, right?

EVAN

We'll talk about it later.

At another table Kyle talks to the waitress Sandy.

SANDY

So you work out, huh?

KYLE

Yeah. Yeah I try.

SANDY

I tell you, the bums around here, they got nothing but big bellies and flabby arms. Women appreciate a man who takes care of his body.

As Randall crosses by --

RANDALL

You should see him with his clothes off.

Randall crosses to the bathroom.

At the counter, Jefferson stands over Jeremiah as he eats.

JEREMIAH

Ever hear of Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup?

JEFFERSON

Can't say that I have.

JEREMIAH

He wrote and recorded 'That's All Right Mama' in 1947. It didn't sell that much. Then in 1955, Elvis takes the song, re-records it and the radio played it so much, it became a big hit. And Elvis became a star.

JEFFERSON

Wow. Never knew that. So what happened to old Big Boy?

JEREMIAH

He died in 1974, just as broke as he was Black.

JEFFERSON

(shakes his head)

Shit.

35 INT. THE BATHROOM - NIGHT

35

Randall stands at the urinal, finishing up a piss as Jamal walks in. Jamal hesitates when he sees he's alone with Randall. Then plays off the discomfort like it's no big deal.

RANDALL

Hey.

JAMAL
(coldly)
What's up.

RANDALL
There is another urinal. You don't
have to wait for me to finish.

JAMAL
Nah, that's alright. Gotta comb my
hair.

Jamal looks in the mirror busies himself with combing his
hair. An awkward silence, then --

RANDALL
These White people are a trip, aren't
they? I mean, you ever meet such cool
rednecks?

JAMAL
Don't get too comfortable. When they
start pulling out their lassos and
yelling yeehaw, it ain't 'cause they
want to jump double dutch.

Randall laughs.

RANDALL
That's funny.

Randall goes to wash his hands, stands right next to Jamal
who's still combing his hair.

RANDALL
You comb your hair anymore and it's
gonna fall out.

JAMAL
Oh...yeah.

Jamal walks over to the urinal. Pulls out his meat but
stands extremely close to the urinal to make sure Randall
can't see his package.

Randall knows exactly what Jamal is doing which brings a
smirk to his face.

RANDALL
See ya later.

JAMAL
Later.

Randall enters from the bathroom, passes Jefferson who
stands at the jukebox.

JEFFERSON

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'd like to play a song. This is dedicated to the memory of my main man, Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup.

Jefferson drops a quarter in the jukebox and "That's All Right Mama" plays. Some of the locals get up and begin dancing. Gary nudges Jeremiah.

GARY

Oh no, you see this fool? What does he think he's doing?

They are looking at Flip.

Flip walks over to a couple. A huge White guy named TREE and his woman EILEEN.

FLIP

Excuse me, you want to dance?

TREE

She don't dance.

EILEEN

Just 'cause you don't dance doesn't mean I don't dance.

(to Flip)

C'mon.

Flip grabs her hand, they get on the floor and dance. The two of them look pretty damn good on the dance floor...considering it's a fucking coffee shop.

Then Sandy crosses to Kyle.

SANDY

So how 'bout it?

Kyle contemplates, then nods.

KYLE

Bet.

Kyle joins Sandy on the dance floor.

The brothers and rednecks clap their hands to the music. The place is bumping. Even some of the other brothers get up and dance as if they were dance partners.

Xavier video tapes the whole thing. It ain't Soul Train but then again, this is Memphis.

WENDELL PERRY, a thirty-three year old, straight-laced, tight ass brother enters, seems annoyed by all the noise. But it doesn't deter anyone else from having fun.

Then George enters and can't believe what he's seeing.

GEORGE
I'll be damned.

37 EXT. GRACELAND COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

37

The brothers exit, laughing and joking. They sure as hell didn't expect to have that much fun. Jefferson and Tree walk them out.

JEFFERSON
Ya'll be sure to stop here on your way back.

JEREMIAH
Count on it.

TREE
(pulls Flip to the side)
I was thinking, if you come through here again, maybe you can teach me one of those steps.

FLIP
I'll see what I can do.

The brothers head for the Spotted Owl.

JEREMIAH
So where's your driving partner?

GEORGE
I don't know.

FLIP
What do you mean, you don't know?

GEORGE
He's got a problem with Farrakhan.

FLIP
So he bailed on us?

GEORGE
Don't worry about it. I'll still get us there.

GARY
How you gonna do that? It's not like D.C. is around the corner, you know.

GEORGE
The devil wants us to throw in the towel. But like I said, I'll get us there. Now c'mon.

They continue to walk.

VOICE

Hey! Excuse me!

The brothers stop. Wendell runs up.

GEORGE

What can we do for you?

WENDELL

Word has it, you gentlemen are going to the D.C. March.

JEREMIAH

Hopefully.

WENDELL

Well my name is Wendell Perry. I own a car dealership here in Memphis.

GEORGE

We already have a ride.

WENDELL

No, I'm not trying to make a sale. I was hoping I could tag along with you.

GEORGE

You want to come with us to D.C.?

WENDELL

The guys at the gas station over there said they'll keep an eye on my car. I'm about to sell it and I'd hate to run up the mileage.

Wendell points to his Lexus in the nearby gas station.

GEORGE

Wish I could help you brother but everybody paid money to get on this bus.

WENDELL

Well if it's money you're concerned about --

He pulls out a wad of bills from his wallet.

GEORGE

It's not just that. Look Wendell, if I pick up strays I could lose this gig. Understand?

JAMAL

How are they gonna know?

GARY

Yeah George. It ain't like we're gonna tell anybody.

JEREMIAH

I'm with them. The man says he wants to come with us to the March we should let him come. This is a brother we're talking about.

RANDALL

I agree.

XAVIER

Me too.

George contemplates.

GEORGE

Does anybody have a problem with us picking him up?

The brothers shake their heads no.

GEORGE

Fine. Wendell, welcome aboard the Love Boat.

The brothers pile on the bus as they introduce themselves to Wendell. Then the Spotted Owl drives off and we hear CRUDUP'S VERSION OF "That's All Right Mama."

38 INT. SPOTTED OWL - DAWN

38

Signs on the freeway let us know that we are in Nashville.

Everybody on the bus is catching z's as George drives. It's about 5:30 A.M., sunrise. Outside, the view couldn't be better.

George looks in the rear-view, sees Xavier looking out the window.

GEORGE

Can't sleep, huh?

XAVIER

I'm not tired. Kind of like it like now.

GEORGE

Nothing like sunrise.

XAVIER

Yeah. Reminds me of Heaven or something.

GEORGE

Oh you've been there, huh?

XAVIER

I'm just saying, can't imagine what could be nicer.

GEORGE

I hear you. Times like now, you couldn't pay me a million bucks to do something else.

XAVIER

So if you weren't hired to drive, would you still be going to the March?

GEORGE

Hell yeah. It'd be worth it just to get away from the women for awhile. Got three of them in my house. Two daughters and a wife. Even my damn dog is a female.

XAVIER

No sons?

GEORGE

No such luck. How 'bout you, any kids?

XAVIER

(as if he's crazy)

Naw, man.

GEORGE

That's good. Good. Keep Jimmy in your pants, finish school, get married then start making those babies.

XAVIER

(defensive)

I got my priorities straight. You don't have to worry about me.

GEORGE

Sorry. I don't mean to get on your case, that's just how I was raised. Wasn't just mom and dad telling you what you needed to hear, it was all the grown folks. Shit. If more people took the time out to talk to these knuckleheads running around, we wouldn't have half the problems we have right now.

XAVIER

What makes you think these knuckleheads will listen?

GEORGE

You got a point.

Xavier TURNS ON THE CAMCORDER, shoots the scenery that passes by.

GEORGE

Kind of attached to that thing, huh?

XAVIER

One day, I'll let my kids see this tape.

GEORGE

So you're gonna be some big Hollywood guy, huh?

XAVIER

(shrugs)

Maybe. Just want to tell different stories. Stuff Hollywood doesn't know about Black people.

GEORGE

Yeah, they got us all figured out don't they? Hollywood and the evening news.

XAVIER

Yeah, they sum us up with the four R's. Rap, Rape, Rob and Riot.

Wendell lets out a big yawn as he wakes up.

WENDELL

Who's making the coffee?

GEORGE

Shit. When you find out, let me know.

Wendell laughs.

GEORGE

So how long you been in Memphis?

WENDELL

Born and raised.

XAVIER

(pointing the camera at him)

You never lived anywhere else?

WENDELL

Nope. Don't intend to either.

GEORGE

Business must be good.

WENDELL

Couldn't get any better.

(to Xavier)

Let that be a lesson to you. If you work hard, graduate from school, the White man can't hold you down. I don't care what anyone says.

GEORGE

Amen.

All the brothers begin to wake up, as Wendell preaches.

WENDELL

Niggers nowadays want the White man to do everything for him.

(like a whiny baby)

"Hire us, feed us, Affirmative Action." Like we need America to keep a nipple in our mouth.

XAVIER

You a Republican or something?

WENDELL

Damn right.

Evan shakes his head.

WENDELL

What?

EVAN

I don't see how any Black man can be a Republican. If that ain't selling out, then what is?

KYLE

Being a Democrat.

RANDALL

You're saying Democrats are sell outs.

KYLE

Democrats want to keep us powerless and docile so we have to keep begging for welfare and handouts. And then if we run around having babies, Democrats say that's okay. Take some more handouts and have a few more babies.

FLIP

A gay Black Republican. Now if that ain't some shit. You trying to tell me the Republicans are looking out for your ass?

KYLE

I'm saying, they make sense.

FLIP

Yeah they make sense as long as you're pulling six figures a year.

WENDELL

Man oh man. We are an endangered species. As endangered as the owl painted on the side of the bus. Know why?

XAVIER

Why?

WENDELL

'Cause of that nigger mentality. See if our people would stop wearing suffering like a badge of honor, maybe more of us would make six figures.

FLIP

Oh wake up Uncle Tom and smell the coffee. 'Cause nine times out of ten your mama's in the White man's kitchen brewing it.

WENDELL

That's better than her being at his doorstep begging. Our problem is not Republicans, our problem is lazy, ignorant niggers.

GEORGE

You trying to say that all brothers and sisters who haven't made it are lazy and ignorant?

WENDELL

Basically.

EVAN

What's wrong with you man? Haven't you ever heard of racism and discrimination.

WENDELL

Figments of the Black man's imagination. Just like the bogey man or the tooth fairy. Let me illustrate it for you.

RANDALL

We're listening.

WENDELL

An athlete graduates from college. Let's say he's a football player and gets drafted by the Cowboys.

(MORE)

WENDELL (Cont'd)

Now if he's a running back he's probably fighting Emmitt for the starting position. So he has to bust his ass in practice. He has to go all out till he can't go anymore. 'Cause if he doesn't measure up, he gets cut or ends up warming the bench all season. And it doesn't matter if this rookie is Black or White. 'Cause it has nothing to do with race. It has to do with competence.

GEORGE

Everything has to do with race. Allow me to illustrate.

WENDELL

I'm absolutely all ears.

GEORGE

Let's say old White man Billy Bob, has a business, multi-million dollar business. Now when old Billy Bob is about to die, he doesn't care about the Black man who's worked for him for twenty years, busting his ass.

RANDALL

(as if it's church)

Well...

GEORGE

No, he's got the power and he's not giving it up to some coon. So he calls his son in the office and tells Billy Bob Junior the company is his.

FLIP

(being Billy Bob)

"Make me proud son. Make me proud."

GEORGE

You following so far.

WENDELL

With much anticipation.

GEORGE

Now the first thing Junior does is, fire the loyal Black man and hire a bunch of his White friends. But see, that cycle repeats generation after generation.

(MORE)

GEORGE (Cont'd)

Then every now and then when some lucky Black motherfucker slips in between the cracks, becomes a success, White people say, "See Wendell made it and he didn't need Affirmative Action. Wendell made it so I must not be a racist."

FLIP

"Why can't you all just be like Wendell?"

GEORGE

As if they made room for more than one to slip through.

EVAN

Preach it pastor! Preach it!

GEORGE

(then indicating
Xavier)

And you're telling that kid he could learn a lesson from you? Mister, you ain't nobody's inspiration. You're just a tool for the White man and you don't even know it.

JEREMIAH

Amen!

The brothers cheer for George as if he just gave a rousing sermon.

WENDELL

Let me get this straight. I'm a tool but people like O.J. are heroes? Niggers are dancing in the street for him like he's the second coming. Shit. How many of you were out there with them?

JAMAL

People weren't celebrating because he's a hero. They were celebrating because for once, the shoe was on the other foot. For once White people could be angered by injustice the same way our people have always been angered by injustice.

WENDELL

So you admit he's guilty.

GEORGE

He didn't say no such thing. The man is just saying White people get over on us all the time.

RANDALL

That's right. Maybe now since they see how it feels, shit will get better for everyone. But I guess sellouts like you don't have to worry about that.

WENDELL

(to Kyle)

You hear this? Just 'cause you and I are Republicans, we're sell outs.

KYLE

You and I nothing. I may be a Republican but at least I have enough sense to realize that racism isn't imaginary.

GEORGE

Jeremiah, what do you think about all this?

JEREMIAH

Forget the Democrats and Republicans. Best thing we could do is form a new party. One that doesn't put our concerns on the back burner.

JAMAL

I'm with that.

JEREMIAH

If we want better housing, better education, then we shouldn't have to beg for it. We should legislate it ourselves.

WENDELL

Our people coming together to form a party? You're crazy. Our people only come together to have a party.

EVAN

Then why are you even going to the March?

WENDELL

Niggers and cars. Think I was going to miss out on networking?

JEREMIAH

Brother don't you know any word other than nigger?

WENDELL

Such as?

JEREMIAH

Kings and Queens.

WENDELL

Sorry old man. But, "If it don't fit,
you must acquit."

(laughs)

Hey, what do you get when you cross
one million lesbians and The Million
Man March? Two million people that
don't do dick.

Wendell cracks the fuck up.

39 EXT. ROUTE 40 - MORNING

39

The Spotted Owl speeds up to the side of the freeway and
stops. Suddenly the door opens and Wendell comes tumbling
out.

The bus speeds off and then a window opens. Wendell
suitcase goes flying out the window. They leave his
"nigger" ass stranded.

CUT TO

THE MAP OVERTAKES THE SCREEN.

The dot moves from Nashville heading towards Knoxville.

40 INT. SPOTTED OWL - DAY

40

One brother sits in the back, sneaking a puff on his
cigarette. He blows the smoke out of the window. The wear
and tear inside the bus is starting to show. Candy wrappers
and trash on the floor, newspapers piled on seats. Some
brothers have their shoes off as they sleep.

Jeremiah is tutoring Xavier on playing the djembe. Jeremiah
plays a beat, then Xavier gives it a shot.

JEREMIAH

No. See your hands are too tense.

It's just like dancing.

(he demonstrates)

You gotta be loose. Loose.

Xavier tries again.

XAVIER

Like this?

Xavier is getting the feel of it.

JEREMIAH

(nods)

Yeah, now there you go.

Jeremiah continues to tutor the kid.

Randall crosses over to Kyle.

RANDALL
Mind if I sit for a second?

KYLE
Go ahead.

RANDALL
I was thinking about what you said.
About you needing space. And well,
the answer is no.

KYLE
I didn't realize I was asking.

RANDALL
I know you don't want to let me go.

KYLE
Let's not get into it again.

RANDALL
Fine. Then we'll change the subject.
Why don't we talk about, the first
time I rocked your world.

KYLE
(lying)
I don't even remember it..

RANDALL
I gave you a hot bath. Scrubbed every
inch of your body. Then when you came
out, I rubbed hot oil on your feet, up
to your thighs, then onto your big
juicy cock.

KYLE
(getting hot)
Stop it...just stop.

RANDALL
No. If I remember correctly it was,
"Don't stop. Don't stop."

KYLE
Shhh.

RANDALL
You always worry about what this
person is going to say and what that
person is going to think. If you
decide you don't want me anymore, if
you don't want this lifestyle I'll
live with that.

(MORE)

RANDALL (Cont'd)

But walk away because that's what Kyle wants. Not because that's what people want from you.

(then seductively)

I should warn you, if you do try to leave me, I won't make it easy.

Randall gives Kyle a hungry glare, then crosses away.

George's eyes are getting heavy. Evan can see that he's definitely feeling the strain of driving. Junior is asleep so Evan whispers.

EVAN

You alright?

GEORGE

Yeah. If I get a cup of coffee in a little while, I'll be good to go.

EVAN

Listen man, I've been driving an eighteen wheeler for nine years. Say the word and I got your back.

GEORGE

Gonna be hard for you to take the wheel with them shackles.

EVAN

They're long enough where I'd have enough room.

GEORGE

You mind if I stick my nose where it doesn't belong? It's a bad habit of mine.

EVAN

If you need to back off I'll let you know.

GEORGE

I think you got yourself a good kid. I mean teen-agers fuck up. That's what they do.

EVAN

Your point?

GEORGE

Whatever crime he committed, he probably did it to get your attention. If I was you, I'd take the cuffs off the boy. Let the two of you work shit out man-to-man.

EVAN

I have a court order that says to keep it on him one more day.

GEORGE

'Don't know about you, but I don't see a judge on the bus.

Evan takes this in, looks over at his son who sleeps like a baby.

Jamal, Gary and Flip talk as they play pinochle.

JAMAL

I bet you lie to women all the time. See, a man doesn't have to sneak around no lady's back. A man says, this is how things are and then he lives by his word.

FLIP

Look just 'cause I have a multitude of honeys doesn't mean I lie to them. They know I'm not the settling down type. And either they accept that or they don't. Shit. Learned a long time ago never to lie to a woman. Especially a Black woman.

GARY

And how pray tell did you learn that?

FLIP

One day, I guess I was like thirteen years old, I told my mother I was going to the library after school. But instead I went to try out for the school's track team. Now my moms was real clear about it, "Until you get your grades up, I don't want you trying out for nothing."

GARY

But you had to be hard headed.

FLIP

You know I did. My mother went to the library and couldn't find me. So one of my friends told her where I was. Next thing I know, she comes marching on that track where the tryouts were with her big old thick ass belt. I mean this belt was so thick, couldn't nobody wear it. It was made for whipping ass. Swear to God, I ran so fast I set a new record.

JAMAL

But one thing mothers know, you can't run forever.

FLIP

You're telling me. She whipped my ass so good, till this day I hate wearing belts.

JAMAL

Worst beating I ever got was when I was about eight. We were all in church Easter Sunday I think. And this woman sitting next to me got the Holy Ghost. I mean, old gal was hooping and hollering talking about, "Thank you Jesus! Thank you!" And she stepped on my brand new suede British Walkers. Only thing I could think to do was kick her in her big old bubbly behind.

GARY

You didn't.

JAMAL

I did. And the whole congregation just about froze. Even the lady stopped hollering. Next thing I know my mother snatched the collection plate out of some usher's hand and whopped me up side the head. I tried to tell her the spirit made me kick that fat lady but that just made my mother hit me again.

GARY

(laughs)

I remember one time I stole candy from the grocery store and the manager caught me. So he calls my mother and my mother came right down to that store and man...

(laughs again)

She must have lectured me for about two or three hours.

JAMAL

Lectured you? You mean...she didn't beat you or nothing? Not even a slap?

FLIP

His mother is White.

Enough said.

JAMAL

Oh yeah.

They resume playing cards.

FLIP

So what do you do for a living?

JAMAL

I work with kids at risk.

FLIP

What kind of kids?

JAMAL

Gang bangers.

GARY

Good luck. I run into them every day at work. Trying to get through to them is like talking to a wall.

JAMAL

So what do you do?

GARY

I'm a cop.

Suddenly the game stops. It's like Gary has the plague.

JAMAL

A cop?

GARY

Yeah.

FLIP

Where's your precinct?

GARY

South Central.

FLIP

Damn. So let me get this straight. Your father was one eighty sevened by a brother and now you're Five-O in South Central?

GARY

What are you getting at?

JAMAL

He's saying we need cops on the street that aren't looking for every excuse they can get to smoke a brother.

GARY

I work South Central 'cause there's a lot of cops in the hood that don't give a fuck. They call an ambulance it takes twenty minutes. They call a cop it takes two hours.

FLIP

And when you get a call?

GARY

A.S.A.P.

FLIP

So you never pulled a Rodney King on someone?

GARY

No. And I hope I never have to.

JAMAL

You hope? 'The hell does that mean?

GARY

It means some of these kids out here play for keeps. Bloods and Crips ain't exactly choirboys.

JAMAL

Most White kids aren't choir boys. But you wouldn't take license to beat them at will.

GARY

Look, if I got to clock a brother to get through to him and save his life, then I'll clock the brother to save his life.

Flip shakes his head.

GARY

Yeah, think what you want. But all you know about it is what you read at your Boyz N The Hood audition.

(to Jamal)

And even though you work with kids at risk, hearing horror stories ain't the same thing as being out there, seeing how shit is up close. You have no idea what it's like.

JAMAL

Don't tell me I have no idea. 'Cause I've been on the front lines many times, my brother, okay? Many times.

Flip studies Jamal, gets the implication.

FLIP

You used to bang?

Beat.

JAMAL

Up until about two years ago.

Jamal rolls up his sleeve, reveals a "crip or cry" tattoo.

JAMAL

Been crippling since I was twelve years old. Gang banging, that was my job. You hear what I'm saying? 24-7 I had to watch my back. Kill or be killed? Why? 'Cause that's what every fool in my hood did. And who was I to pioneer something new?

FLIP

You ever smoke somebody?

Jamal contemplates. Then --

JAMAL

First time was on my thirteenth birthday. The O.G.'s wanted to test my manhood. So we pulled up on some bloods. They were kids but I just saw them as bloods. Then this fool probably thirteen or fourteen was kicking it to a girl, tickling her and what not. All of a sudden he turns to me, sees my nine pointed in his face. Didn't even give him a chance to blink.

GARY

You said that was the first time.

JAMAL

If I used both hands to count the number of times I canceled a kid, I'd run out of fingers. The problem with me was, I was so good at my occupation, I didn't know what else to do with myself.

GARY

What made you stop?

Jamal takes a breath, his eyes tear up.

JAMAL

I went to my best friend's funeral. Buried a lot of homies before, but D was like a brother to me...Wasn't like I wanted to go out and kill every Blood in the world. I wanted one of them to smoke me. Went into their hood and everything. Where I come from that's suicide. But there wasn't a Blood in sight. So then I figured I'd pull the trigger on myself. Next thing I know, I meet Jindai.

(MORE)

JAMAL (Cont'd)

She breaks it down how Allah has a plan for me. How he could use me...see brothers nowadays will kill each other over a glare, know what I'm saying?

FLIP

Yeah, man.

JAMAL

Well I was no different. But there's no way I'd have been able to dodge jail time if it was White boys I was smoking up and down those streets. You allow someone to get away with murdering a Black man, then you encourage them to murder a Black man. I was just as lost as these kids are today. But Jindai helped me realize, killing myself wouldn't end the cycle.

GARY

Well I wouldn't have let you get away with it. Matter of fact, when we get back, I just may bust you.

JAMAL

Of course. 'Cause you've got to meet an arrest quota.

GARY

No. 'Cause someone like you killed my father. And you can rationalize it all you want. But growing up in the hood ain't no excuse for killing people.

FLIP

How would you know? I mean, you're a mulatto from Monterey.

GARY

Mulatto means mule.

FLIP

Fine 'bi-racial.'

GARY

I'm Black, alright.

FLIP

According to who? All the Bloods and Crips chilling in Monterey?

Gary stands up, throws his cards at Flip.

GARY

Fuck off Flip.

Gary crosses away, takes another seat.

41 EXT. THE FREEWAY - NIGHT

41

The Spotted Owl speeds down the freeway. A sign reads:
KNOXVILLE CITY LIMITS.

42 INT. SPOTTED OWL - NIGHT

42

We hear the sound of a police siren.

GEORGE

Shit.

The brothers nervously look around as George pulls the bus over. Then he opens the door. SGT. CONNORS, thirty-five years old, White, from the Knoxville Highway Patrol steps on.

CONNORS

What's going on, here?

GEORGE

Officer I was keeping it under sixty.

CONNORS

(looks George over)
We've been asked to beef up
surveillance around here. A lot of
boys have been smuggling drugs through
our State.

GEORGE

What does that have to do with us?

CONNORS

You tell me.

GARY

Excuse me Sergeant.

Gary approaches, flashing his badge.

GARY

I'm Officer Miller. We're just taking
a bus trip to Washington D.C.

Connors looks at the badge.

CONNORS

L.A.P.D. right?

GARY

That's right Sergeant.

CONNORS

Well I hate to break it to you Miller,
but this is Knoxville son.

GARY

I just thought --

CONNORS

I know what you thought. Take a seat.

Gary takes his badge back, sits back down.

CONNORS

Mike, bring the dog up here.

Another officer, MIKE, boards the bus with a German Shepherd.

CONNORS

If one of ya'll are carrying some
illegal substance, now is the time to
confess your sins. Bruno here, has
one hell of a nose.

The brothers sit nervous and silent. Mike walks down the aisle with Bruno. Connors stands at the front keeping his hand on the butt of his gun. Bruno sniffs everywhere. Under seats, on seats, on the brothers. The Black men stare at the cops with looks of rage, hatred and centuries of humiliation. After Bruno sniffs every inch of the bus Mike walks back to Connors.

MIKE

They're clean.

Connors nods and Mike walks off with the dog.

CONNORS

Okay boys. It has been my pleasure.
You have a safe trip and if you ever
find yourself in Knoxville needing the
assistance of law enforcement, don't
hesitate to look us up.

Connors steps off.

FLIP

Motherfucker.

GEORGE

Just be cool till we get out of here.

George calmly starts the engine and drives off. The brothers ride in silence. Not like revolutionaries on their way to the Nation's Capitol. But like Black men who have had their pride, respect and manhood stripped. Just like their father's emasculated by the Klan and like their father's fathers who were emasculated by the slave master. Humiliation is written all over their faces.

There ain't shit to say.

CUT TO

THE MAP OVERTAKES THE SCREEN.

The dot moves from Knoxville up to the outskirts of Virginia.

43 INT. SPOTTED OWL - MORNING

43

George sleeps in a chair. Behind the wheel is Evan.

Junior is uncuffed and sits in his seat with the Walkman earphones over his head. He stares at his father.

EVAN

What's on your brain?

Junior gets up, stands by Evan.

JUNIOR

Mom told me you can drive anything.

EVAN

(nods)

Car, truck, bus, tractor, boat,
motorcycle...

JUNIOR

How 'bout a plane?

EVAN

That's something I haven't got around
to.

JUNIOR

Yeah, well that's what I'm going to
do. I'm gonna be a pilot.

EVAN

A pilot, huh?

JUNIOR

Yep. After high school, I'm going to
join the Air Force. I might even make
a career out of it.

EVAN

Why planes?

JUNIOR

Why not?

EVAN

People get killed in planes.

JUNIOR
People get killed in grocery stores.
Doesn't mean I should stop eating,
does it?

EVAN
(laughing)
You take after your mother.

A comment that doesn't sit well with Junior.

EVAN
Swear to God, you definitely got that
mouth of hers.

JUNIOR
Want to hear something funny?

EVAN
What?

JUNIOR
She thinks I take after you. Can't
wait to tell her she was wrong.

Junior sits back down and escapes into his world of hip-hop
as the headphones consume his ears.

44 INT. SPOTTED OWL BATHROOM - NIGHT

44

Flip sits on the toilet doing his business. Then his CELL-
PHONE RINGS. He answers it.

FLIP
Hello? What's up Barbara, you hear
anything?

Flip FLUSHES THE TOILET.

FLIP
Wait a minute, I can't hear you. Yeah
a truck is going by.

And Flip waits for the FLUSHING TO FINISH.

45 INT. SPOTTED OWL - NIGHT

45

We see Jeremiah THROUGH THE CAMCORDER as he faces the lens.

XAVIER
No way Jeremiah, I'm not letting you
off the hook. What made you want to
go to the March?

JEREMIAH
What made me want to go?

XAVIER
That's the question.

A long pause. Then --

JEREMIAH
I missed the March on Washington.

XAVIER
What do you mean, missed it?

JEREMIAH
I mean, I didn't go. Just got a job working in downtown L.A. An office job at an advertising agency. The only brother on the floor.

Xavier continues to RECORD JEREMIAH as other brothers listen in.

JEREMIAH
Did my best not to remind them that I was Black. If they talked politics, I made sure I left the room. I didn't make the march 'cause I thought my White colleagues would respect me for not going.

XAVIER
Did they?

JEREMIAH
(shrugs)
Doesn't matter. Can't say I respected myself.
(then)
You want to know why I'm going? To say a prayer for all the brothers and sisters that died in the movement. And to say a prayer for all the brothers and sisters being born into the movement. I waited thirty years for a chance to redeem myself.

The brothers take this in. Suddenly Flip burst out of the bathroom.

FLIP
Hot damn!

RANDALL
What? You're not constipated anymore?

FLIP

Very funny fag.

(then to the entire
bus)

But I'd like you all to know, you're
looking at the co-star of Denzel's new
flickity flick. I got the part!

No response.

FLIP

What? Ain't none of you gonna
congratulate me?

GEORGE

Congratulations. Now why don't you
shut up. No one wants to hear your
screaming.

Randall chuckles.

FLIP

Oh so that's funny?

RANDALL

I'm rather amused.

Flip angrily nods, crosses to Kyle.

FLIP

You hear that, Mr. In The Closet?
You're girlfriend thinks it's funny.

KYLE

Don't fuck with me, Flip.

FLIP

Are you sure?

KYLE

What?

FLIP

You sure you don't want me to fuck
with you? Oh that's right. That
waitress in Memphis slipped you her
phone number. Now I guess you're
feeling a little butch about
everything. -- Hear that Randall?
You boyfriend might be giving up his
membership.

Kyle instantly stands up.

KYLE

I told you to stop fucking with me.

FLIP

Or what?

KYLE

Or I'm going to bust your fucking ass.

FLIP

Must have had your Wheaties.

KYLE

You better hope that you've had yours, bitch.

"Oohs" and laughs from all the brothers.

FLIP

I know you didn't just call me a bitch.

GARY

Sounded like bitch to me.

EVAN

That's what I heard.

JEREMIAH

Alright everybody just calm down.

JAMAL

Nah Jeremiah. There is no calming down this time. We need to let them settle their differences.

GARY

That's right. Evan, get off at the next exit.

JEREMIAH

Nobody's getting off anywhere!

XAVIER

Then what? We listen to the two of them argue the whole way?

GEORGE

Alright. Alright. Lets put this to a vote. Everyone whose against them fighting say nay.

RANDALL/JEREMIAH

Nay!

GEORGE

All those in favor say aye.

ALL THE OTHER BROTHERS

Aye!

GEORGE

The aye's have it. Evan, take the next fucking exit.

Evan complies.

46 EXT. LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA REST AREA - EDGE OF DAWN 46
The Spotted Owl pulls in.

47 INT. SPOTTED OWL - EDGE OF DAWN 47
Evan parks the bus.

XAVIER
(to Gary)
Where are we?

GARY
Lynchburg, Virginia.

XAVIER
We're in a town called Lynchburg?
Man, we better make this fast.

Flip is in the limelight where he's most comfortable.

FLIP
(rolling up his
sleeves)
Alright fag, you done fucked up now.
(to the other
brothers)
Make sure he gets off the bus.

Flip exits. Some of the other brothers follow him off, making bets on who they predict the winner will be. In the midst of all this chaos, Randall crosses to Kyle.

RANDALL
Be careful.

Kyle throws off his jacket and gets off of the bus.

XAVIER
(as he heads out)
C'mon Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH
I'm not going to be a part of this.

XAVIER
What are you talking about?

JEREMIAH
Black men beating each other up. You should all be ashamed.

XAVIER
You're right. But, I got five bucks riding on this.

Xavier rushes off.

48 EXT. LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA REST AREA - EDGE OF DAWN

48

All the brothers pile off the bus to check out the fight.
Xavier TURNS ON HIS CAMCORDER.

FLIP
(taunting)
C'mon cutie pie. Don't be shy now.

Kyle and Flip square off with each other.

GARY
Fuck him up Kyle!

FLIP
Yeah fag, bring it on.

Then Kyle breaks into a martial arts stance.

FLIP
(not impressed)
Oh, give me a fucking --

Suddenly Kyle sidekicks Flip in the face. Flip hits the ground. The brothers crack up!

JAMAL
(laughing)
How you feeling boy? You don't look too good.

Flip smirks, gets up. The fight resumes. Kyle tries another kick and this time Flip blocks it and clocks Kyle in the gut and then his face. Kyle drops.

FLIP
Counted me out too soon fellas.
(then to Kyle)
C'mon sugar. The dance ain't over.

Kyle gets up from the ground and Flip immediately decks him again. Kyle falls down to one knee.

FLIP
How ya' like that, fag?

GARY
C'mon Kyle, shut him up!

Kyle stands. The fight resumes. It's brutal and intense. Both men deliver and receive their share of punishment.

Then Kyle begins to get the best of Flip.

KYLE
Faggot, huh? Is that what I am?

Then he really starts to kick Flip's ass.

KYLE

Now who's the faggot? Huh? Who's the faggot now?

(then)

Maybe you didn't hear me but I asked you a question.

Bam! He punches Flip in the face.

KYLE

You got something against gays? This is for Langston Hughes!

Bam!

Kyle punches Flip, he goes down. Then Kyle pulls Flip up again.

KYLE

This is for James Baldwin!

Bam! Kyle punches him again and Flip falls. Kyle pulls him up.

KYLE

This is for Dennis Rodman!

Bam! Kyle punches him again and Flip falls again.

Gary whispers to Jamal.

GARY

Dennis Rodman is gay?

Jamal shrugs.

KYLE

Had enough? Huh?

Kyle prepares to punch him again, then --

FLIP

I...I had enough.

Kyle throws Flip down and the brothers cheer. Doesn't matter that he's a homosexual, right now he's the heavyweight champion of the world. Randall gives Kyle a hug.

As everyone celebrates, Evan begins to look around. Calmly at first, then he panics.

EVAN

Anybody seen Junior?

(to one of the brothers)

You seen my son?

The brother shakes his head no.

EVAN
George, where's Junior?

GEORGE
I don't know.

EVAN
Junior! Junior! No one's seen him?

People begin to look around. Then --

XAVIER
Evan, over there!

Xavier points. Thirty yards away, we can make out Junior in the darkness. He runs across the field to a wooded area.

EVAN
Junior!

Evan, Jamal and Gary sprint across the field chasing after Junior.

XAVIER
(handing his camera
to George)
Hold this!

Xavier joins the men.

49 EXT. WOODED AREA - CONTINUOUS

49

They look around for Junior unable to find him.

EVAN
Junior!

XAVIER
Yo, Junior!

GARY
Let's split up.

The four men split up searching for Junior. We stay with Evan as he looks through the brush. No luck.

Gary does the same. He sees nada.

Then Jamal.

JAMAL
Junior. C'mon man where are you?

No luck either.

Xavier searches and something catches his eye.

A pair of sneakers are hidden behind a tree. Xavier looks closer.

XAVIER
Junior is that you?

Suddenly, Junior jets.

XAVIER
Wait a minute!
(calling out to the
other men)
Over here! He's over here!

Junior cuts through the woods as Xavier gives chase. The other men run in the direction of Xavier's voice.

Junior checks over his shoulder. Xavier is a few yards behind. Suddenly, Junior is grabbed. Startled, Junior looks up to see that he's in the grasp of his father.

EVAN
What the hell is wrong with you?

JUNIOR
Get off me!

EVAN
(demanding an
answers)
What is wrong with you? You think I
got time for this your shit?

JUNIOR
No!

EVAN
Then where were you going?

JUNIOR
Nowhere!

EVAN
Then why the hell were you running
away?

JUNIOR
Maybe I take after you more than you
know.

Evan takes this in.

GARY
We'll meet you back at the bus.

Gary, Xavier and Jamal leave.

EVAN

I'm...I'm not saying you don't have the right to be mad. Matter of fact, you're right about me. After you were born I broke out as fast as I could.

JUNIOR

You don't think I know that?

EVAN

But I wasn't rejecting you. I want you to understand that.

JUNIOR

Whatever.

EVAN

See, I got scared. Twenty years old, I had no job and a brand new baby from a woman I kind of liked. But it wasn't love. Guess I figured if I left, the problem would go away.

JUNIOR

Well I'm not your problem anymore.

EVAN

Listen to me Junior. Listen to me. Last three years, I've been trying. Swear to God, I've been trying to be your father. And whether you know it or not, your mother's right. You need a man in your life.

JUNIOR

What, is you mad? You think I need you? Look at me. I'm practically grown. What could you do for me? Huh? My mother is the one who taught me how to rap to girls. She even told me how to use a condom so I wouldn't be some brother with an unwanted baby like you. She was my mother and father. Now you want to step in the picture? Talking about I need you?

EVAN

You're hanging out all kinds of hours, running with thugs, robbing. I don't want you to go to jail.

JUNIOR

If I do it'll be none of your damn business!

EVAN

Then I'm making it my business! Look -- Junior, I don't expect things to be great with us over night. It may even take a few years. But, you're my son. My son. I never told you this but...I love you. I'm not running away again. You hear me. I want to be your father. Junior...I want to be your father.

Junior tears up.

JUNIOR

Whatever.

EVAN

No son, not whatever. Not whatever.

Junior tries to move away but Evan stops him. He forces a hug, then Junior breaks down, sobbing in his father's arms.

50 INT. SPOTTED OWL - NIGHT

50

The brothers on the bus wait for Evan and Junior to return. Gary crosses to Flip, gives him some money.

GARY

Here man. Three dollars.

FLIP

What's this for?

GARY

In case you want to buy a box of Wheaties.

The brothers in ear shot crack up. Then Kyle approaches.

KYLE

By the way, congrats.

FLIP

On letting you kick my ass?

KYLE

No. On your acting job.

Flip is taken aback as Kyle crosses away. He's more of a man than Flip gave him credit for.

51 EXT. LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA SERVICE AREA - NIGHT

51

Jamal finishes a prayer on his prayer mat and boards the bus. Then Evan and Junior walk up.

52 INT. SPOTTED OWL - NIGHT

52

George is behind the wheel as Junior and Evan board.

GEORGE
Everything okay?

EVAN
Yeah.

Evan and Junior take their seats. George wheels the bus out of there.

The brothers have become more reflective and pensive as they get closer to D.C. Then the bus makes it's way onto the freeway.

53 EXT. THE 81 FREEWAY - DAWN

53

It's packed. Bumper-to-bumper but the traffic is moving. Really moving. It's too fucking amazing. Just about everyone on the freeway is a Black man. Written on the back window of one car are the words: "ONE MILLION STRONG." On another back window: "ONE IN A MILLION." On the license plate holder of another brother's car: "RESPECT AND PROTECT THE BLACK WOMAN."

54 INT. SPOTTED OWL - DAWN

54

The Black men look out of the windows in amazement.

XAVIER
Damn. You ever see anything like this?

FLIP
Hell no.

55 EXT. 81 FREEWAY - DAWN

55

In one ride, brothers bob their heads to music just like the ride behind them and the ride behind them.

There are license plates from, Texas, Atlanta, North Carolina, Virginia, etc. Black men from all over. Cars honk giving each other love.

56 INT. SPOTTED OWL - NIGHT

56

The brothers throw peace signs to the brothers on the freeway.

Xavier scoots next to Jeremiah.

XAVIER

Jeremiah, you ever see anything like this? Bet when this whole thing is over, they'll try to say not that many brothers showed up.

No response. Jeremiah's head leans up against the window. His eyes are open.

XAVIER

Jeremiah, you still angry?

As Xavier taps Jeremiah on the shoulder, Jeremiah slumps back in his seat. His eyes look glazed over, it looks like he's having a stroke.

XAVIER

Jeremiah. Hey! Hey something's wrong with Jeremiah.

The brothers huddle around Jeremiah as Xavier lightly taps on his face. Jeremiah looks like he's on his last breath.

JAMAL

Take the next exit! We gotta find a hospital!

George wheels the bus off of the freeway.

57 INT. RICHMOND HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAWN

57

Jamal, Gary, Evan, Junior, Flip, George, Xavier, Randall and Kyle nervously wait. A woman, Doctor Floyd, talks to them.

RANDALL

What did he have, a heart attack?

DOCTOR FLOYD

It was a stroke.

KYLE

Think this trip was too much for him?

DOCTOR FLOYD

It was bound to happen anyway. He has prostate cancer. Looks like it spread throughout his body.

XAVIER

So what are you saying?

DOCTOR FLOYD

We're doing everything we can.

The doctor walks off. Silence as the brothers take this in.

FLIP

So now what?

JAMAL

We wait.

FLIP

We wait much longer we're going to miss the March.

GARY

Is that all you fucking care about?

FLIP

I'm just bringing it up.

XAVIER

You guys go ahead, I'll stay with him.

RANDALL

Me too.

KYLE

Me too.

EVAN

(to Junior)

What do you want to do?

JUNIOR

I don't think we should leave him.

EVAN

Me neither.

(then)

We're staying. George, all those other brothers came too far to miss the March. Why don't you get them there?

GEORGE

I don't want to leave the old guy either.

JAMAL

We got it covered.

FLIP

He's right, man.

George nods.

GEORGE

Okay. I'll wait for you guys at The Mall.

GARY

We'll find you.

George walks out and the brothers slump down in their chairs...waiting.

58 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

58

Doctors work nervously and rapidly to save Jeremiah's life.

59 INT. RICHMOND HOSPITAL - DAY

59

Several hours later. The brothers in the waiting room have fallen asleep, except for Jamal and Gary. They stare at the television set.

Maya Angelou is reciting a poem to all the brothers at The Million Man March.

MAYA ANGELOU

(on T.V.)

My brothers and sons, and grandsons,
and cousins and nephews. The night
has been long. The wound has been
deep. The pit has been dark. And the
walls have been steep. Under a dead
blue sky, on a distant beach, I was
dragged by my braids just beyond your
reach....

The audience of Black men listen in awe.

GARY

That sister is alright.

JAMAL

Yeah.

A beat.

JAMAL

By the way man, about before, I didn't
want you to think I was rationalizing
smoking brothers, you know? What
happened to your father was messed up.
The way I lived was messed up. All I
can do is try to keep other kids from
doing the same.

GARY

I just wish I could have one week, one
week 'cause if I asked for more I'd be
too greedy. But if just for those
seven days I don't come across the
homicide of a young Black boy or girl
or little brown baby, man, I wouldn't
know what to do with myself.

Jamal takes this in.

JAMAL

It took all of us to lift that bus out
of the ditch, you know.

Gary gets the implication.

GARY

I hear you.

Doctor Floyd approaches.

JAMAL

Fellas.

Jamal nudges Xavier and Gary. Then everyone else opens their eyes.

KYLE

How's he doing?

DOCTOR FLOYD

I'm very sorry. We did everything we could. We lost him.

Xavier slumps down in his chair.

XAVIER

He's dead?

DOCTOR FLOYD

I'm afraid so.

Flip walks to the wall and out of frustration punches it.

DOCTOR FLOYD

Do you have any idea who his next of kin was?

JAMAL

He...He didn't have anybody.

60 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

60

Feeling sad and dejected, they walk out of the hospital. Tears fill Xavier's eyes. Jamal does his best not to break down.

JUNIOR

Look.

The brothers look up and see the Spotted Owl parked outside. They approach pile the bus and pile in.

61 INT. SPOTTED OWL - CONTINUOUS

61

As Gary walks on the bus --

GARY

Thought ya'll were leaving.

GEORGE
Everybody wanted to wait. How is he?

GARY
He didn't make it.

The other brothers take their seats. Everyone is sullen.
George starts the engine and drives off.

GEORGE
Damn.

62 EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - DUSK

62

A few buses and cars are still pulling out of the city.

The Spotted Owl drives on Independence Avenue and parks.
Junior looks out the window.

JUNIOR
Everybody's leaving.

GARY
We missed it. We came all this way
and fucking missed it.

RANDALL
Now what are we suppose to do?

EVAN
Ain't nothing we can do.

FLIP
Came this far, might as well go to The
Mall anyway.

JAMAL
What for? Everything got screwed up.
We've been on this bus for three damn
days and it's all screwed up.

KYLE
Guess you were right George. Devil
didn't want us to make it and we
didn't.

GEORGE
The devil can kiss my ass! Doesn't
matter if we missed the fucking March,
as long as we didn't miss the point!
You hear what I'm saying? It doesn't
matter.

The brothers pause and take it in.

Xavier finds Jeremiah's prayer on the seat.

XAVIER

He wanted to come to the March and read this prayer. I...I think we should do it for him.

Everybody contemplates.

JUNIOR

I'm with it.

EVAN

Yeah, me too.

And all brothers nod in agreement.

KYLE

Let's do it.

63 EXT. THE MALL - DUSK

63

The twenty brothers huddle together on the steps. Xavier unfolds the sheet of paper.

XAVIER

Um...I think he'd want us to bow our heads.

The brothers do so. Xavier reads from Jeremiah's paper.

XAVIER

It says,
(then reading)
Lord, will I ever be worthy of your blessings? No. Will I ever be all that you intended of me? I doubt it. But I, like my ancestors before me, and their ancestors before them, have come this far by faith. Many times I thought you had forsaken me.
(tears falling)
Many times I thought you had forsaken Black people.

Then Jeremiah's voice begins to overlap Xavier's.

DISSOLVE TO:

64 INT. SPOTTED OWL - NIGHT

64

George drives the bus and pulls onto the freeway. The brothers are reflective. Randall and Kyle talk. Junior and Evan talk. Gary, Flip and Jamal laugh as they play cards. Xavier lightly taps on the djembe.

JEREMIAH (V.O.)

But I know, as I stand here now, that victory is upon us. Victory is upon us 'cause we chose to have it so. Because you chose to have it so. And I know you have not forsaken the Black man or the Black woman. Or the Black boy or the Black girl. You have not forsaken our people in Universities or our people in jail, nor our people anywhere. You have lifted us up. And as I atone my transgressions I commit to no longer being a spectator. I commit to no longer complaining. I commit to being involved. And with this day brings hope of a better today, a better tomorrow and a better world for us to live in. If we choose to do thy will...Amen.

XAVIER (V.O.)

Amen.

GARY (V.O.)

Amen.

FLIP (V.O.)

Amen.

JAMAL (V.O.)

Amen.

ALL THE BROTHERS (V.O.)

Amen.

65 EXT. ROUTE 40 - DAWN

65

As the Spotted Owl makes it's way down the freeway, Junior and Evan's shackles come flying out the window. We hear A STRONG AFRICAN BEAT FROM THE DJEMBE.

FADE OUT

THE END