

"COTTON AND CORN"
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Rows of one-story houses flank both sides of the dark street, cars parked along the curb.

The odd cricket chirps in an otherwise silent night.

Among the parked cars rests a dodgy Lincoln Continental. The driver's side window rolls down and the driver spits out a piece of gum.

INT./EXT. LINCOLN

BOBBY (late 40s), his pale white skin eclipsed by an arrogant attitude, rolls the window back up and pops a stick of Juicy Fruit in his mouth.

He hands the pack to the man sitting next to him. TOM (early 20s), also white but with a healthier complexion, shakes his head.

Bobby gives him a disapproving stare.

TOM

It's just, um, you know, after a while my jaw starts to hurt when I chew...

Bobby doesn't flinch, his eyes bare down on Tom with pure discontent. Tom squirms.

TOM

Sure, I'll have one.

He grabs the pack and puts a stick in his mouth. Satisfied, Bobby leans back comfortably in his seat. Tom does the same.

TOM

So, when he comes out, then what? We, like, take his picture or something?

BOBBY

I'm gonna take a picture of a black guy...at night? The fuck's the picture gonna show? Eyes and teeth?

TOM
Come on, Bobby, that's kinda racist.

BOBBY
I'm just bullshitting.

TOM
That's cool and all but...

BOBBY
What?

TOM
It's just...my sister's married to a black guy. They've got a kid, my niece.

BOBBY
(holds up a hand)
Say no more, Tom, say no more. Really, I have nothing against black people. I really don't. As a matter of fact, I think we have a black guy in the family tree.

TOM
Really?

BOBBY
Yeah. And if I'm not mistaken --
(scratches his chin)
-- he's still hanging there.

Bobby burst out into laughter. Tom doesn't. Bobby notices.

BOBBY
(can't stop laughing)
It's a joke for Christ's sake.

Tom tries to placate the older man with a contrived smile but fails miserably.

BOBBY
(waves him off)
Forgetaboutit.

Bobby grabs a pack of cigarettes from the dash.

BOBBY
You want one?

TOM
No thanks, don't smoke.

BOBBY
You don't smoke, don't chew gum,
don't make fun of minorities. Shit,
you remind me of my son.

Tom motions to speak.

BOBBY
That wasn't a compliment, Tom.

He leans back in his seat and sucks the cancer stick. A moment of silence follows.

BOBBY
(turns serious)
I kid around a lot, I know that but
being a P.I. doesn't leave much
room for a conscience. We pretty
much feast off other peoples
misfortune, you know?

TOM
What do you mean?

BOBBY
Well, take this case for example.

He taps the ashes off the cigarette. Tom waves away the smoke.

BOBBY
Mrs. Jackson suspects her husband
is cheating on her. Now, if she's
right and we catch Mr. Jackson
doing the hokey pokey, then it's
game over on Mr. Jackson.

He eyes Tom intensely

BOBBY
And if you wanna work at the firm,
Tom, your ass better get on board
with that.

TOM
(swallows)
Doesn't that, like, get to you
sometime? I mean, destroying
people's lives.

BOBBY
Sure it does.
(smiles)
But then I cash the check.

Bobby looks up.

BOBBY
Here we go.

EXT. HOUSE

The door to a neat little yellow house glides open, light seeps out onto the lawn.

DARRYL JACKSON (40's), black and impeccably groomed, closes the door behind him and tiptoes across the driveway towards his Toyota.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Damn. That is one black fella.
Shit, he's so black I'll bet he
bleeds coffee.

TOM (O.S.)
Bobby, about the black jokes --

BOBBY (O.S.)
What are you, my ex-wife? Always
with the nagging.

Darryl gets to his car, slides inside and backs out of the driveway.

TOM (O.S.)
Did you divorce her or was it the
other way --

BOBBY (O.S.)
Shut the fuck up.

The Toyota gently rolls forward and disappears down the street.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Where you going, Mr. Jackson?

The Lincoln coughs to life and pulls out into the street.

INT./EXT. LINCOLN

Bobby closes a bit of the distance between the Toyota and the Lincoln, while still maintaining a healthy gap.

BOBBY

You gotta figure that's why they
made aspirins white and not black,
right?

TOM

Why?

BOBBY

Cos' they work.

Tom shakes his head.

TOM

But he does work, the file says
he's on the graveyard shift.

BOBBY

Nah, got canned a couple of weeks
ago.

TOM

But his wife said --

BOBBY

Secrets. Gotta love 'em.

EXT. STREET

The Toyota cruises along the nearly deserted streets with the Lincoln making up a distant rear.

Nearing a park, the Toyota slows down and finally comes to a stop.

The Lincoln moves by just as a white blonde girl emerges from the shadows and jumps into the Toyota.

BOBBY (O.S.)

Well, well.

INT. LINCOLN

Tom looks over his shoulder through the rear window. Bobby yanks him back around.

BOBBY
Use the mirrors, kid.

TOM
Did you see that?

Bobby's grip around the steering wheel tightens. He stops the car at a red light and checks the mirror.

The Toyota pulls up next to them. Bobby steals a glance out of the corner of his eye.

Blonde hair moves up and down around Darryl's crotch area.

TOM
(laughs)
Whoa, she's doing him right now, man. Look.

BOBBY
Motherfucker.

Bobby's teeth grind against each other.

TOM
What's the matter? We got him.

BOBBY
What's the matter? Not only is this Jiggaboo cocksucker fucking around, he's fucking around with a white broad.

TOM
I thought you weren't a racist, Bobby.

BOBBY
Like I said, I don't mind black people, you know? As long as they keep their hands outta the cookie jar we're fucking...homies.

Darryl spots them through the window, sends them a canny smile.

BOBBY
Yeah, smile while you can, sunshine.

He throws Darryl a thumbs up and a fake smile.

BOBBY
Tomorrow I'll be playing a game
cowboys and black folk on your
sorry ass. I bet you'll enjoy it as
much as the Indians did.

TOM
Native Americans.

BOBBY
Fuck off.

EXT. STREET

The lights turn green and the Toyota peels left. The Lincoln swerves across lanes to keep up.

TOM (O.S.)
Don't get too close.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Hey, who's the trainee here?

The Toyota takes a right and proceeds down a narrow alley toward a small harbor.

The Lincoln stops by a fence leading down to a deserted harbor. The lights turn off.

INT. LINCOLN

The two men watch in silence as the Toyota proceeds along the harbor. It circles the small enclosure before coming to a halt about a hundred or so yards from the entrance.

Lights from the opposite side of the harbor silhouette the two figures inside the Toyota. The obscured figures reach out for each other, embrace.

TOM
Round two.

Bobby reaches over, opens the glove compartment and pulls out a camera with a heavy lens.

BOBBY
You're up.

He hands the camera to Tom. Tom stares at it.

TOM
What? You want me --

BOBBY
Final exam, kid. Make me proud.

TOM
What? I mean...I don't...how?

BOBBY
Nothing to it, sport. Lights,
camera, action.

Bobby lights a cigarette.

BOBBY
Lights...
(nods toward the frontlit
Toyota)
...yeah, the lighting's pretty
good. Camera...
(looks at the camera in
Tom's hands)
...check. And action.

Tom gives Bobby a perplexed look.

BOBBY
And action!

Tom jolts in his seat. Swallows. He grabs the door handle.
Hesitates.

TOM
You mean...?

Bobby leans over and opens the door for Tom.

TOM
Where you gonna be?

BOBBY
I'm gonna check in to a Four
Seasons and await your phone call.
(shakes his head)
Where the fuck you think I'm gonna
be? I'm gonna wait here for you,
stupid.

TOM
Christ, have a heart attack why
don't you?

BOBBY
Way ahead of you, kid.

Tom exits the car.

EXT. HARBOR

Tom sneaks around the fence and tiptoes his way behind a stack of crates.

He snaps a peek above the crates and ducks back down immediately.

Tom gulps down a couple of quick breaths, darts toward another stack of crates and finishes off the move with a roll across the pavement.

His body slams against the crates. They vibrate and threaten to keel over. Tom quickly puts a hand up and steadies them.

INT. LINCOLN

Bobby shakes his head.

BOBBY
Fuckin' James Bond.

EXT. HARBOR

Tom looks back at Bobby in the Lincoln. Bobby claps at him with fake admiration.

Tom throws his hands up in a "what?" gesture.

Bobby points to somewhere near Tom.

The camera lies in plain view on the ground between the two stacks of crates.

Tom's mouth forms the word "oh". He leans around the crate and has a glimpse at the Toyota.

The vehicle wobbles on its tires, the figures inside wrapped around each other.

Tom seizes the moment and bolts across the ground. He snaps up the camera and moves in a wide circle around the Toyota, using various loading equipment as cover.

Satisfied with his position, Tom steadies the camera and adjusts the lens.

A sweeping light from a nearby tanker rolls across the harbor and illuminates the Toyota's interior.

Tom takes a picture. And another. And another.

A big smile forms on his face.

He snaps a final picture and retreats the same way back.

INT. LINCOLN

Bobby makes smoke rings with his mouth and taps the dashboard while humming a tune.

He looks up as Tom approaches, the big smile even bigger now.

Tom slips into the car.

TOM
Let's get out of here.

BOBBY
You' got it?

TOM
(giggles)
Oh, man, did I ever.

Bobby turns the key and pulls the car back onto the street.

TOM
You're not gonna believe this, man.

BOBBY
What?

TOM
Mr. Jackson isn't banging a white broad.

BOBBY
The fuck he isn't.

TOM
Naw, man, he's a cornholer.

BOBBY
What? He's from Nebraska? A cotton picker, sure, but corn?

TOM
What?

BOBBY
Nebraska. Corn, you know?

TOM
What?!

BOBBY
Alright, back the fuck up. What the
hell are you saying?

Tom funnels his hands in front of his mouth.

TOM
He's a fag-got!

Bobby's eyes go wide.

BOBBY
Get the fuck outta here.

Tom nods and taps the camera.

TOM
I'm not kidding. Got the pictures
to back it up.

BOBBY
Kid, your stock just went sky high.

Bobby's expression turns suspicious.

BOBBY
You're sure it wasn't just a really
ugly woman?

Tom nods. The big smile is back.

TOM
Trust me. It was a guy.

BOBBY
A transvestite?

TOM
Oh, yeah. We own his dick-stinking
ass.

BOBBY

Whoa, mister human rights over here. You've got a problem with homosexuals?

TOM

You don't?

Somewhat puzzled, Bobby weighs the question.

BOBBY

Strangely...no. Don't get me wrong, I don't want them poking their dicks at me but, hey, at least they ain't hawking all the women.

TOM

Man, I don't get you at all.

BOBBY

Fuck you.

TOM

It's wrong. It's just plain wrong.

BOBBY

Who gives a shit? Some guys likes it up the ass, some don't. What's the big deal?

TOM

It's fucking disgusting.

BOBBY

Whatever, kid.

Bobby concentrates on the road. For a bit.

BOBBY

Latent homosexual fears. Doctor Phil would probably have a field day with you.

Tom snaps around.

TOM

You're calling me a fag?

Bobby chuckles.

BOBBY

If the shoe fits.

TOM

What?!

BOBBY

I'm breaking your balls here. Calm
the fuck down.

Tom folds his arms and mopes in his seat. Bobby eyes him out
of the corner of his eye, then spots the camera.

BOBBY

Oh, shit.

TOM

What?

Bobby pulls the car over to the curb.

BOBBY

I gotta see the photos.

Tom hands him the camera.

Bobby switches it on, the small LED screen glows to life. He
cycles through images, squints.

BOBBY

What's that in his mouth?

TOM

What do you think, genius?

Bobby pulls his head back.

BOBBY

Wooaaaah! You weren't kidding.

He cycles to another image. Bobby brings the camera closer to
his face.

BOBBY

You didn't get a headshot of the,
um, guy, um, transvestite?

TOM

Sorry, man, they were kinda all
over the place, you know?

Bobby sighs.

TOM

What? You want me to go back and
get it?

Just then, the Toyota speeds past them.

BOBBY

Too late.

He drops the camera.

TOM

Goddammit.

Bobby starts the car back up.

BOBBY

This shit ain't over.

EXT. STREET

The Lincoln revs onto the road with screeching tires. The Toyota has a good head start though and quickly dwindles in the horizon.

The Lincoln speeds up and manages to close a little gap before being stopped by a red light.

BOBBY (O.S.)

Motherfucker.

But as luck would have it, the Toyota comes to a stop further up ahead and the transvestite gets out.

BOBBY (O.S.)

I guess today is my lucky day after all.

The light turns green and the Lincoln bolts ahead just as the Toyota pulls away from the curb.

The young "Lady" lights a cigarette and strolls toward a nearby gas station, a small duffle bag in his hand.

TOM (O.S.)

We stay on him?

BOBBY (O.S.)

No, let's get that shot of her.

TOM (O.S.)

You mean him.

BOBBY (O.S.)

Who?

EXT. GAS STATION

The Lincoln creeps into a deserted lot as the transvestite slips into the restroom.

Bobby exits the car, the camera cocked like a gun in his hand.

He sneaks closer, aims the lens at the door.

The door knob turns.

Bobby presses a finger against the button.

Freezes.

SHANE (20s) exits the bathroom, looking very butch. He looks up at Bobby.

SHANE

Dad?

Bobby lowers the camera.

BOBBY

Shane?

SHANE

What are you --

Bobby blows past him, yanks the door to the restroom open and sticks his head inside. He turns back to Shane.

BOBBY

Where's the, um...
 (points a thumb at the
 restroom)
 ...other person.

SHANE

Who?

BOBBY

The other one who went in there?

SHANE

Dad, there's no one --

BOBBY

Shut up! Another...guy went in there. Maybe you missed her -- him.

Shane shoots his dad a questioning look.

SHANE

It's like four feet by four feet in there, dad. I'm pretty sure I was alone.

BOBBY

What the hell kinda answer is that?

SHANE

What?

Bobby's shoulders sag. He stares at his son and shakes his head. Bobby massages his chest and lowers his eyes to the bag in Shane's hand.

BOBBY

What's in the bag?

SHANE

Why?

BOBBY

What's in the fucking bag, Shane?

The outburst hits Shane like a fist.

SHANE

Just...stuff.

BOBBY

Like what? Jock stuff? Your football? Some extremely heterosexual porn mags?

SHANE

(embarrassed)
Dad...

BOBBY

What then?

SHANE

Just, you know, my private stuff.

BOBBY

So it's nothing like a wig, right?

Shane's eyes go wide.

BOBBY
There's not like a bra or lingerie
in there, right?

The young man swallows.

BOBBY
Right?!

Shane blinks tears away, wipes his nose.

BOBBY
Are you fucking crying?

Not able to hold it back any longer, Shane burst into tears,
sobbing profusely.

BOBBY
Jesus Christ.

SHANE
You knew?

BOBBY
Not until a couple of minutes ago.

Tom laughs (O.S.).

Bobby spins around.

BOBBY
You better knock that shit off
right the fuck now.

But Tom can't. He keels over, rolls around on the ground
holding his stomach while laughing out loud.

BOBBY
Tom, I swear to --

Bobby grimaces in pain and grabs his chest.

BOBBY
Shit.

SHANE
Dad?

BOBBY
I'm okay, just give me a second
here.

But another sharp pang crumbles him to his knees. Tom doesn't see this, he continues laughing with tears running down his cheeks.

Just then, O'SHEA (30s), big and black, exits the store. His t-shirt looks like it was spray painted over his muscular body.

He spots Bobby, keeled over in pain, and the laughing Tom.

O'SHEA
What the hell is wrong with you?
The man's in pain.

TOM
(laughing)
I know. It's hilarious.

O'Shea quickly runs to Bobby's aid. He and Shane manage to get Bobby back on his feet.

BOBBY
I'll be okay.

TOM
Sure you will, once you get over
the fact you're son just took a
shot of monkey-boy cum up his ass.

O'Shea freezes.

O'SHEA
What you fucking say, boy?

Tom opens his eyes and only now does he realize that O'Shea is actually black and...fucking huge.

A laugh chokes in Tom's neck. He springs to his feet.

TOM
Um, that wasn't...I mean --

O'Shea charges towards Tom with his fists clenched, Mike Tyson style.

O'SHEA
You motherfucking racist bigot.
Come here!

Tom throws his arms up like a scared school kid.

TOM
No no no no no, I didn't mean --

WHACK

O'Shea's right fist jerks Tom's jaw around, short circuiting the impulses to his brain.

Tom manages to let out a weird moan just before his eyes go vacant and his legs disappear underneath him.

Like a sack of potatoes, Tom flops to the ground, the back of his head smashes against the concrete.

O'SHEA

Bitch.

Bobby smiles but grabs his chest and grimaces. Shane puts an arm around his father.

SHANE

I'm sorry you had to find out this way, dad.

Bobby coughs and sucks in a large gulp of air.

BOBBY

What are you gonna do, huh?

SHANE

Are you mad at me?

BOBBY

Hey, you're my son. No matter what.

Shane gives his father a teary smile.

SHANE

You're not gonna tell anybody, right?

BOBBY

No.

SHANE

Especially not mom.

BOBBY

Of course I won't tell --
(looks up)
Why especially not mom?

SHANE

'Cause if she finds out I've been sneaking around with her boyfriend she'll kill me.

Bobby cringes.

BOBBY

Her --
(grabs his chest)
-- boyfriend?

SHANE

Yeah, they've been --

Bobby slams head first to the ground.

SHANE

Dad!

He rolls his father's lifeless body onto its back. Bobby's eyes stare up at the starlit sky as everything

FADES TO BLACK

THE END