

HICKTOWN

By

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FADE IN:

INT. JARED'S HOME - DAY

On a beautiful day for traveling in the South, TRENT and TAMIA EPSON (African-American, early 30s) sit together in a everyday blue economy car. They argue like the typical brother and sister they are.

TRENT

Why are we taking Jared with us?  
It's our parent's anniversary party. It's going to be nothing but a bunch of black people there. He gonna stand out like white paint on black paper.

Tamia rolls her eyes at her brother.

TAMIA

He's also my fiance and I want him to be there. He's much better than the men I've had in my past. I barely escaped out of the last one.

TRENT

I know. I should have killed that dude for what he did to you. I still don't get why you didn't tell me he was hurting you.

Tamia looks out the window towards the front door of a plain family home. The outside decorated with tons of potted flower pots and hedges running down the driveway on both sides of the walk way.

TAMIA

Doesn't matter. I'm with Jared now and that's all that matter. I don't want you giving him hell while we're on the road.

TRENT

Fine. But I'm not listening to any of that country crap he listens to. It's bad enough I don't like him and I don't think he's good for you. He's weak and country.

The door opens to the home and out comes a lanky blue-eyed JARED BRAKEFIELD (early 30s) in stiff faded jeans, pure white v-neck t-shirt and sneakers. He carries a medium sized brown real leather luggage bag in one hand and a long black bag in the other.

Tamia snatch on the door handle and push it open . She's pissed.

TAMIA

You'll listen to whatever everyone agrees to and I don't give a hoot whether you like him or not. I love him and if you don't like it, you can go to hell.

Tamia springs from the car. She slams the door hard enough to rock the small car. Trent sighs defeated.

Tamia and Jared kiss.

TAMIA

You ready?

JARED

(light but obvious accent)  
Sure is. Let's go.

Jared waves to Trent. Trent turns away annoyed.

The trunk pops open. Jared place both bags carefully into the trunk before he slams it shut.

TAMIA

Jared, ride in front with my brother. I want to take a nap on the road.

JARED

Sure.

Jared hops in the front seat over excited about the trip. He greets Trent.

JARED

What's up future brother?

Trent stares at Jared.

TRENT

Don't call me brother. Buckle up and shut up.

The smiles fades from Jared face. He does as told.

When everyone is settled, the car takes off down the road.

INT. CAR - DAY

Tamia is fast asleep in the backseat with her headphones plugged into her ears.

The car is silent except for the radio. A country song plays. Jared bobs his head and taps his fingers on the arm rest.

Trent looks over at Jared and frowns. He turns the music all the way down. Jared looks at him confused.

TRENT

What do you want with my sister?

JARED

What do you mean?

TRENT

I mean what do want with her? Why are you trying to marry her?

Jared is still confused.

JARED

Well, I love her.

TRENT

Have you ever been with a black woman?

Now Jared sees where this is going. He hardens.

JARED

No. Never.

TRENT

Then how would you know how to take care of one?

JARED

Women are women, I didn't know there was a different way to take care of them.

TRENT

Black women are strong creatures. The men even stronger. Black men are tough, fearless and resilient. Not country and weak.

JARED  
Is that right?

TRENT  
Damn straight it's right.

JARED  
Well then she must like em country  
and weak.

TRENT  
No she doesn't.

Jared shrugs his shoulders.

JARED  
Why else is she engaged to me then?

TRENT  
Her last relationship was bad.

JARED  
You mean that black guy that beat  
on her?

TRENT  
Not all black men hurt women.

JARED  
Yeah well not all white boys are  
country and weak.

TRENT  
Probably not, but you are.

JARED  
You'd be surprised.

TRENT  
I doubt it.

Jared's had enough.

JARED  
What's this really about Trent? Why  
you hate me so much?

TRENT  
I don't think you're right for my  
sister.

JARED

Why, because I'm white?

TRENT

Because you're weak. Have you ever fought anyone before? Ever took a bullet for somebody? Ever broke a dude's jaw for him talkin' shit about your family or friends?

JARED

I didn't know I had to be a savage in order to be good enough to marry your sister.

TRENT

That didn't answer my question.

JARED

I only been in a couple of fights. Nobody seriously hurt. Just some misunderstandings.

Trent points a harsh finger at Jared.

TRENT

Weak!

Jared gives up. He turns his attention to the world outside his window.

JARED

One day I'll show you.

Trent smirks.

TRENT

I doubt it.

The car falls silent again.

Tamia is wide awake and she looks very hurt by the conversation. She says nothing.

INT. CAR - SUNSET

Everyone is wide awake in the car when Trent notice the car's gas needle is above "empty."

TRENT

We got to get off the next exit and get some gas. We're almost out.

The car pulls off the exit to a heavily wooded area. The sun is fading into the horizon. The dark comes quickly through the thick trees.

A long lonely stretch of road is all that awaits them when they pull off the exit. The road seem to go for miles in both directions.

TAMIA

Where are we?

TRENT

No idea. Where is the gas station?

JARED

The sign said a mile to the left.

TRENT

Are you sure?

JARED

I dunno, why don't you go back and check if I'm sure.

TAMIA

Alright boys stop it. Let's just go and get some gas so we can get the hell out of here.

Trent keeps left and heads down the road.

Halfway down, the car begins to sputter.

TRENT

Oh hell no!

The car shuts off completely, clean out of gas.

Trent slams his hand on the steering wheel.

TAMIA

What should we do?

TRENT

Call the police in this area. They have to help us.

Tamia looks at her phone. She frowns.

TAMIA

No signal.

Jared looks around at the area. He looks uneasy.

JARED  
Good. Probably best.

TRENT  
Why?

Jared looks at Trent in all seriousness.

JARED  
Do you know where you are?

TRENT  
I don't know, country boy, why  
don't you tell me.

JARED  
We're in a jump off town in the  
South. The police idea of justice  
here is hanging someone from a tree  
depending on the color of your  
skin. Does that answer your  
question?

Jared hops out of the car and heads to the trunk.

TRENT  
I'ma hang him by a tree.

TAMIA  
Shut up and help him.

Trent gets out of the car.

Jared pulls a red gas can from the trunk.

JARED  
Okay, the gas station is only a  
half mile out. We'll go and get  
enough to make it to the next city.

TRENT  
Tamia you stay here in case someone  
comes.

JARED  
Lay low and don't address anyone  
unless they address you first. Just  
tell them you ran out of gas and  
that we're coming right back. Got  
it.

Tamia nods. She's scared.

JARED  
Come on Trent, let's go and come  
back.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Trent and Jared power walk down the road.

JARED  
I really think we shouldn't have  
left her there alone.

TRENT  
We'll only be gone a minute. She'll  
be fine.

JARED  
She better be or I'll kick your  
ass.

TRENT  
What did you say?

JARED  
Who the hell waits until the car is  
almost out of gas before realizing  
it's time to fill up?

TRENT  
I wasn't paying attention to the  
needle.

JARED  
Obviously! Your mistake put all of  
our lives in danger.

TRENT  
Nobody's out here.

Jared huffs a laugh. He shakes his head.

JARED  
That's what you think. You  
obviously don't know the South.  
Come on, we gotta hurry.

The two break into a jog.

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Jared and Trent walk into a lonely gas station. An old white MAN stands behind the counter. He's full blown country with the attire to match. He looks upset in a bad way.

Jared walks up to the counter while Trent look around at all the products on the shelves.

The old man watch Trent's every step.

JARED

Can I get four dollars on pump one please?

The old man look at Jared with disgust and disappointment because of his friendship with a black man.

Jared knows the look all too well but doesn't stir.

The man gives him change and returns to watch Trent.

JARED

Trent let's go.

TRENT

Alright one minute.

Jared leaves the store.

Trent grabs a can of vienna sausages off the shelf and walks to the counter.

The man stare hard at Trent. Trent holds out a dollar to the man. The man doesn't budge.

MAN

Ten dollars.

Trent's eyes pop.

TRENT

Ten dollars! The can says a dollar.

MAN

I don't give a damn what it says. I said ten dollars.

TRENT

Ten dollars for some sausage in a can? Man you crazy, you better take this dollar.

The man snaps.

MAN

I said ten!

TRENT

I ain't paying ten dollars for no meat in a can. You can have that. I see why ain't nobody in here.

Trent walks away and out of the store.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Trent goes over to a bush to take a piss.

Jared finish pumping gas. He looks through the window at the old man.

The man is on the phone. He's obviously pissed about something. The man's eyes are focused on Trent.

JARED

Trent! We gotta go.

Trent finishes up.

TRENT

Alright give me a minute.

JARED

We gotta go now!

Trent zips up his pants and the two start for the road.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Trent and Jared walk as fast as they can down the road when they spot the car in the distance. But something is wrong.

The inside car light is on and the backseat door is opened.

TRENT

What the hell?

JARED

I told her to lay low.

The two take off like cheetahs in a Safari as fast as they can to the car.

They arrive at the car breathless. The car is empty of Tamia. Her phone and headphones are sprawled on the floor.

JARED  
Oh my God...

Trent calls out.

TRENT  
Tamia! Tamia!

Jared grabs him.

JARED  
Be quiet. Someone might here you.

Trent snatch away.

TRENT  
I'm not leaving without her.

JARED  
Neither will I, but we don't need  
to give ourselves away until we  
find her.

Suddenly a scream is heard.

Trent and Jared turn to the direction it came from.

JARED  
Come on.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Jared and Trent follow the screams through a pitch dark forest until they come to a clearing.

A pack of eight WHITE SUPREMACIST MEN (18-late 40s) dressed in camo with shotguns in their hands.

Tamia is bound to a pole with her hands tied behind her back. Her clothes are torn. She's been terrorized and it clearly show on her horrified face.

Trent and Jared look on with horror. Trent tries to go to the men but Jared pulls him back.

JARED  
We can't take on eight men with  
guns. We need a plan.

TRENT  
Forget that.

Trent push through the woods toward the pack.

The men see Trent coming towards them, they all aim their shotguns at him.

Trent halts.

The LEADER of the pack is an overweight bearded man.

LEADER

Well, well boys. Look like we caught us here another one. Like a buy one, get one special.

The men laugh.

Trent is nervous now probably for the first time in his life. His eyes are on Tamia who is sobbing.

LEADER

What y'all think we should do with these two?

The teen of the pack calls out.

TEEN

Hang the girl Sheriff and let the other watch and then hang him too.

The others cheer in agreement.

SHERIFF

Sounds good to me. As the sheriff of this town, I promised these people I'd clean the filth from our streets and I meant business. Bring out the noose!

Tamia screams.

Jared knows he must act quickly. He comes out of hiding.

Guns aim at Jared.

Jared approach slowly with both hands up.

SHERIFF

Who are you boy?

JARED

My name is Jared Brakefield.

SHERIFF

What you doing out here?

JARED

I came to reason to you for my  
friend's life. If you'll let me.

SHERIFF

These here your friends?

Jared nods.

The Sheriff shakes his head disappointed.

SHERIFF

What is a strong country boy like  
you doin' lovin' these black filthy  
beasts?

JARED

Look, we broke down on the way  
through. We had to stop for gas. If  
you let them go, I'll take them  
back to the car and we'll leave and  
you'll never see us again. I  
promise. What about it?

Trent is scared for his life but you can tell he's impressed  
with Jared's bravery.

The Sheriff stares at Jared almost considering his offer but  
his ego gets the best of him. He shakes his head.

SHERIFF

Nope. No deal boy. The people of  
this town rely on me for justice in  
this town, that's what they'll get.

JARED

They haven't done anything wrong.

SHERIFF

They came in my town, that's good  
enough for me.

(to his pack)

Hang the girl.

Tamia screams.

TRENT

No! Stop. Please. Hang me instead.  
Just let my sister go. Just take  
me.

The Sheriff thinks. An evil smile springs on his face.

SHERIFF

I love when they volunteer.  
Alright, take him.

A couple of the other men grab Trent. Trent turns to Jared.

TRENT

Take care of my sister.

Jared's in shock but he nods.

The men release Tamia. Tamia runs to Trent pleading. Jared takes her away.

SHERIFF

Get out of here nigger lover before  
I hang all three of you.

Jared looks at Trent one last time. Trent nods.

INT. ROAD - NIGHT

Jared and Tamia run back to the car.

TAMIA

We can't just leave him.

JARED

We're not. Listen to me. I need you  
to hide in the woods. Don't come  
out unless you here me call for  
you.

TAMIA

What are you going to do?

JARED

Get your brother. Now go.

Tamia runs for the woods.

Jared waits until she's completely out of sight. He goes to the trunk of the car and uncovers the long black bag he loaded earlier. He takes a deep breath before he unzips the bag.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Trent is badly beaten. His jaw shows signs of swelling. Blood ooze from his lip and face. Deep bruises polka dot his chest and stomach. His hands are bound behind his back. A noose fits loose around his neck.

The Sheriff watch with pride.

SHERIFF

Alright boys. Let's get this show  
on the road. I'd like to make it  
home in time for sup--

Suddenly the Sheriff is shot. He falls to the ground. The men ignore Trent and arm themselves.

Jared runs out of the forest into the clearing shooting the men one by one with what looks like a shotgun. Even while running his aim is unbeatable.

Trent watch amazed.

The teen tries to take Jared on with his bare hands.

Jared flips the long gun in his hands and holds it like a baseball bat. He swings the gun clocking the teen square in the head. The teen is out cold.

Jared flips the gun back into its normal position he carefully scope the bodies to see if any are still moving. When it's clear, he runs to Trent and frees him.

TRENT

(barely audible)  
You were suppose to leave.

JARED

Not without my strong, tough and  
resilient brother.

Trent tries to laugh but he wince in pain. He leans onto Jared for support. They hurry back into the forest.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Jared helps Trent into the passenger seat of the car.

JARED

Tamia!

Tamia suddenly springs from the woods. She runs to Jared to embrace him.

She then goes to her wounded brother. Her eyes swell at the state of his body.

TAMIA  
You're gonna be okay?

Trent nods with a weak smile.

Jared finishes putting gas into the tank.

JARED  
Okay let's go.

INT. CAR - SUNRISE

Trent awakes from his sleep. He looks over at Jared who's singing whatever is playing on the radio.

Jared looks over randomly to find Trent awake. He smiles.

JARED  
Good morning.

TRENT  
Morning.

A lot has happened to them both. No one speaks first about it.

TRENT  
Look, what you did for me and my sister--

JARED  
Don't worry about it. You would have done the same for me.

Trent looks guilty. He remembers his attitude toward Jared from before. He silent for only a moment.

TRENT  
How did you learn to shoot like that?

JARED  
My dad and I went hunting all the time. I suppose practice really does make perfect.

Trent smirks.

TRENT

So those guys you killed... You're not afraid the town will come after you?

JARED

Who said I killed them?

TRENT

You had a shotgun.

JARED

That was a tranquilizing dart gun. I thought I was gonna do some hunting while I was down here. That's why I brought it. So no worries. Those guys will be awake by the afternoon.

Trent shakes his head further impressed.

He turns in his seat to find his sister sleeping soundly with her headphones in.

TRENT

Take care of her Jared.

JARED

Am I good enough?

TRENT

You always were. You're not as weak as I thought you were.

JARED

I told you I'd surprise you.

Trent nods. He accepts him. Nothing more need to be said.

JARED

Thank you Trent.

TRENT

No problem. Wake me up when we get there.

JARED

Sure thing.

Trent snuggles comfortably back into the seat. He falls back to sleep.

A victorious smiles shines on Trent's face. He finally won Trent's trust and acceptance. He happily taps his fingers on the steering wheel to the beat of whatever song playing on the radio.

FADE OUT.

THE END.