

ATLANTA

Created by  
Donald Glover

**"VAN"**

Written by  
Paul Aninyei

Copyright (c) 2018

aninyei\_paul@student.smc.edu

FADE IN:

INT. DPSS - DAY

The place is crowded and noisy with long lines. It's basically the DMV with a different name. **VAN (26)** waits in line with her daughter **LOTTIE (2)** who plays with her doll. Someone finally calls Van and she walks up to the window.

The worker's name is **SHANTAY (40s)**

VAN

Hi, I wanted to um -- Lottie why don't you go sit down over there?

Van watches Lottie as she takes a seat nearby. Moments pass as Van insures Lottie is secure. Shantay coughs. Van turns toward Shantay.

VAN

Hi.

SHANTAY

How can I help you miss?

VAN

(quietly)

Yea. I wanted to apply for--

Van looks at Lottie again. Lottie strokes her doll's hair.

SHANTAY

I'm sorry ma'am. I can barely hear you.

VAN

(quieter)

I wanted to apply for SNAP.

Shantay looks confused.

VAN (cont'd)

(whispers)

I'll--I'll just write it down.

Van writes the words SNAP on a piece of paper and passes it to Shantay.

SHANTAY

(loud)

Oh Food Stamps! Why didn't you just say so?

Van nods and looks around to see if anyone heard. Shantay hands her a clipboard with an application attached to it.

SHANTAY (cont'd)  
Fill this out and make sure you have  
all the required documents.

Van nods.

SHANTAY (cont'd)  
And baby, don't feel ashamed. We need  
*all* the help we can get.

Shantay glances at Lottie.

SHANTAY (cont'd)  
Especially black women.

Van gives her a faint smile. She takes the application and sits next to Lottie.

SHANTAY (cont'd)  
Next person in line!

Van reluctantly fills it out; she sighs heavily and stares at the floor.

TITLE: **ATLANTA**

["FOR REAL" BY AMEL LARRIEUX STARTS AS "ATLANTA" COMES UP]

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Van opens the door to her apartment. She holds Lottie on one arm and a McDonald's Happy Meal in the other.

VAN  
Ugh, Lottie. You're getting so big.

Van puts Lottie in the crib and plays her voicemail messages. She grabs some limp fries and eats them as she listens.

JAYDE  
(voice message)  
Hey girl! I was calling to see how my  
"best friend" is doing, since she  
never calls. Or text me. You cant  
even DM me on Insta?

Van smiles.

JAYDE (cont'd)  
 (voice message)  
 Shit. Even an email would suffice!

Van bursts out laughing.

JAYDE (cont'd)  
 (voice message)  
 Anyways, hit me up. I really wanna see you. We should go out. Have some fun. Lord knows you need it.

Next is **EARN (28)**, the father of her child. Van sips on some watered down soda.

EARN  
 (voice message)  
 Hey Van. Its Earn. Just calling to see how you and Lottie are doing. I was gonna come by but I've been really busy with the whole Paper Boi thing, so um-- uh, well let me know if you need anything important like money. Or diapers. Or milk.

Van bites her bottom lip and grins.

EARN (cont'd)  
 (voice message)  
 Well, um, I lov-- yea. OK.

Van rolls her eyes, disappointed. She throws away the Happy Meal. Finally, a more **SERIOUS MAN** leaves a message.

SERIOUS MAN  
 (voice message)  
 Hello. I'm calling from Winchester High School.

Van rushes over to the answering machine and puts her ear over the audio.

SERIOUS MAN  
 (voice message)  
 We reviewed your application and want to set up an interview with you. Can you come by on Monday around 1 a.m?

VAN  
 Yes!

The message keeps playing.

SERIOUS MAN

(voice message)

If this time doesn't work, just call  
and let us know. Can't wait to see  
you, have a good day.

The voice messages end.

INT. WINCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Van waits patiently. She wears a business suit with gold earrings and black dress shoes. Her hair is styled in a neat Afro. A tall woman sits next to her. She smiles and leans in close to Van.

TALL WOMAN

(whispering)

I am so happy I'm not the only black  
woman here, if you know what I mean?

Van looks around.

VAN

Yea, I hadn't noticed.

TALL WOMAN

Its like being two crows in a sea of  
snow ha ha.

Van looks away for a moment.

TALL WOMAN (cont'd)

Sorry that was a bad simile. Or is it  
metaphor? Shit. Well, google is my  
friend.

The tall woman scrolls through her phone. She glances at Van.

TALL WOMAN (cont'd)

By the way, I love your hair.

Van smiles and touches her dark brown Afro.

VAN

Thank you.

TALL WOMAN

Yea, I've been tyrnna go natural too.

Tall woman runs her fingers threw her long, shiny weave.

VAN

Oh really?

TALL WOMAN

Yea, but you know how these white folks feel about black hair.

(She uses her hands to get her point across)

TALL WOMAN (cont'd)

Either its *too* unprofessional, or *too* unkempt, or *too* exotic.

The Tall woman leans in again.

TALL WOMAN (cont'd)

(whispering)

But what they really trying say is, its *too black*.

The tall woman rolls her eyes.

TALL WOMAN (cont'd)

(louder)

And I'm just like bitch--

VAN

Oh--

TALL WOMAN

(quieter)

Its not my fault I was born with nappy ass hair. I mean do I discriminate against white people for being born with thin ass lips!? No!

A white secretary steps out of her office.

WHITE SECRETARY

Ashley Johnson.

TALL WOMAN

Oooh, that's me. Wish me luck.

The tall woman gets up and steps into the white secretary's office. Van is the only black woman in the room. There's an awkward silence. A white woman sits next to Van and gazes at Van hard. Hard enough to make any human uncomfortable. Without permission, the woman touches Van's hair. Van jerks away like "the fuck?"

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS - DAY

Van washes dishes while Lottie sleeps on the couch. There's a knock at the door. Van opens it. It's Earn.

EARN  
Sup.

VAN  
Hey.

Earn steps in and walks over to Lottie.

EARN  
(baby talk)  
Heyyy sweetie. Look at you with those big fat cheeks. Who'd you inherit those from?

Van comes over.

VAN  
Don't wake her up. It took me forever to get her to sleep!

Earn raises his forehead and steps back.

EARN  
My bad.

Van resumes washing dishes. Earn leans on the counter and stares at Van while she washes.

EARN (cont'd)  
You look tired.

VAN  
(bluntly)  
I am tired.

EARN  
You want me to help you?

Earn leans off the counters and grabs a dish.

VAN  
I got it.

EARN  
Nah, I insist.

VAN  
Earn! I got it.

EARN

Okay.

Earn retreats and opens the fridge. He laughs.

VAN

What?

Earn stands up and holds an empty gallon of milk.

EARN

We're out of milk.

VAN

You said you'd buy some.

Earn nods slowly.

EARN

I did say that didn't I?

Earn searches threw the cabinets and grabs a box of assorted nuts. He leans against the couch across from Van and munches on the kernels.

EARN (cont'd)

How's your job hunting going?

Van stops and turns.

VAN

Not good.

EARN

(mouthful)

Didn't you go on some interview?

VAN

Yea, that was over a week ago. I don't think I got the job.

Earn pops his last cashew in his mouth and walks toward Van.

EARN

If its money you need, I got you.

VAN

Its okay Earn.

Earl pulls out an envelope filled with money.

EARN

You sure?



Van turns around quickly and snatches the envelope. They're really close. Too close.

VAN  
Why are you so close?

EARN  
Your breath is music to my nostrils.

VAN  
Hear you go with your weird ass.

EARN  
What? It smells . . . *Sensational*.

Van giggles.

VAN  
Okay. Stop.

They kiss. Van puts her arms round Earn's neck. They start making out. Earn puts her on top of the counter. Van let's out a moan, then pushes him back. She holds up the envelope.

VAN (cont'd)  
Thanks.

EARN  
Yea.

Earl looks at the fridge and back at Van.

EARN (cont'd)  
You know there's nothing wrong with letting people help you right?

VAN  
I know.

EARN  
But . . . ?

VAN  
I just wanna be self-sufficient. For myself. For Lottie. I need job Earn.

EARN  
Yea.

VAN  
Where are you staying?

Earn hesitates.

EARN

At Al's. I'm still saving up for my a  
place. Those cost an arm and leg  
nowadays, so.

VAN

Well, you can chill here if you want.

EARN

Thanks--

Earn phones buzzes. He checks his pockets.

EARN (cont'd)

I appreciate that--

Earn checks his phone

VAN

Who is it?

EARN

Uh, Al, he needs me for something.

Earn heads for the exit and then comes back to take the can  
of assorted nuts.

EARN (cont'd)

I'm gonna take these, they're pretty  
good.

Earn grabs the can and heads for the exit.

EARN (cont'd)

See ya.

VAN

Bye.

INT. LOCAL LIBRARY - DAY

Van uses a computer to fill out several job applications:  
some teaching positions, a few secretary positions. She  
clicks on the send button. Lottie plays on the floor nearby.

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS - DAY

VAN  
(on the phone)  
Hi I was calling to follow up on an  
application I submitted (a week ago).  
Sure, I'll hold.

Minutes pass.

VAN (cont'd)  
(one the phone)  
Hi. Yea, my name is Vanessa. Oh,  
okay. You already filled the  
position?

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Van walks down a vacant aisle. She puts a boatload of food into the cart: mostly veggies, fruits and grains. She goes to a self-checkout aisle. Stealthily, she pays for her groceries using her SNAP card.

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS - DAY

Van is on the phone again.

VAN  
Yes! This is my fourth time calling  
this week. Can I talk to your  
manager?

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS/BATHROOM - DAY

Van scrubs the bath tub.

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Van vacuums the living room.

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS/BATHROOM - DAY

Van shampoos Lottie's hair.

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Van feeds Lottie.

VAN  
Its good huh?

Lottie nods.

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Van and Lottie sit on the carpet criss-crossed apple sauce. While Lottie plays with her toy, Van brushes her hair.

VAN  
Someone's hair is getting so long.

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Van watches "Two Broke Girls" when her phone rings. She picks it up.

VAN  
(on the phone)  
Hello? Hi. Yes, I'm Vanessa. Yes!  
Yea, that's great. I'll be there.  
Thank you.

Van hangs up the phone and pumps her fists.

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS/LOTTIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Van puts Lottie in her crib and kisses her on the forehead.

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS/BATHROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Van puts on a business suit and flat irons her hair.

EXT. HOTEL CHAIRS - DAY

We pan up on a swanky pool party. There's a white DJ with expensive looking equipment playing R&B and Hip Hop music as well as a fully stocked bar manned by an Alfred wannabe. There's a large pool and several grills cooking meats to perfection.

JAYDE  
Girl, I'm so happy you came out.

Van looks down at important papers.

VAN  
Yea, thanks for inviting me.

JAYDE  
Anything to get you out of that  
suffocating ass apartment of yours.

Van manages a smile.

VAN  
Let's just hope its better than last  
time you invited me out.

Jayde laughs.

JAYDE  
Okay, last time was not my fault--

VAN  
Not your fault? I lost my job because  
of you!

Jayde looks really surprised.

JAYDE  
Bitch, did I force you to smoke weed?  
Besides, you shouldn't smoked with me  
if you had a *drug test* the next day.

VAN  
I forgot!

Jayde looks at her like "Well? It's still not my fault."

VAN (cont'd)  
You know what, your right. Forget it.

Van leans back in her chair and writes something down.

JAYDE  
What are you doing?

Van doesn't look up

VAN  
Filling out this job applications.

Jayde shakes her head.

JAYDE  
Okay. Van. I didn't invite you here  
to fill out job applications.

VAN  
Its important.

Jayde sits up.

JAYDE  
You know what else is important? Fun.  
And relaxation. And enjoying this  
party.

VAN  
Fine!

Van puts her application in her bag.

VAN (cont'd)  
You wanna swim?

Jayde smirks.

JAYDE  
And get my hair wet? I'm good luv,  
enjoy.

Van shakes her head.

VAN  
Do you have a hair net?

JAYDE  
In my bag.

Van grabs a pink hair cap from Jayde's bag and puts it on.

VAN  
(not really thankful)  
Thank you.

Van walks to the pool and puts her legs in. The water's  
warm.

VAN (cont'd)  
You should at least put your feet in  
Jayde.

Van turns to find Jayde talking to a tall and good looking  
man. Probably a basketball player. Van rolls her eyes.

EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

Van holds her breath under the pool as she swims gracefully.  
Under the water she feels free. Free of bills.

Free of being broke. Free of being jobless. Free of problems. That all ends when someone farts in her direction.

Van quickly comes up. The Farting man turns. The two stare at each other for awhile. The man blinks (nervously).

VAN

Really--

FARTING MAN

Aye my fault.

VAN

You're just gonna--

FARTING MAN

My fault fam. My fault.

The Farting man makes "I'm sorry," gestures with his hands.

FARTING MAN

See what had happened was I had ate a big ass burrito and that shit had mad beans in it. And now. Now its taking its toll . . .

Silence.

FARTING MAN

Aye what's that over there?

Farting man points behind Van and she looks. The Farting man swims away. Van gasps as he watches him swim away.

Van sits on the edge of the pool and readjusts her bikini. Some random black dude comes over. He rubs his hands and licks his lips, Birdman style.

RANDOM BLACK DUDE

Aye wassup ma?

Van looks around like "Who is this nigga talking to?"

RANDOM BLACK DUDE (cont'd)

Yea, I'm talking to you shortie.  
DAMN! You are one fine red bone.

VAN

I have a name.

RANDOM BLACK DUDE

Oh no doubt. But you finsta have a new name: Mrs. Mackey.

Van gets up.

RANDOM BLACK DUDE (cont'd)  
That's my last name by the way.

VAN  
I'm not interested. Thank you.

Random Black Guy puts his hand in the air, shocked. Then he says what every rejected guy feels obligated to say.

RANDOM BLACK DUDE  
Its all good. You wasn't that cute anyways!

(Van keeps walking.)

RANDOM BLACK DUDE (cont'd)  
I wasn't even tryna holla. I just needed directions to the nearest bathroom!

(Van keeps walking.)

RANDOM BLACK DUDE (cont'd)  
I prefer white women anyways!

Van stops and flicks him off.

EXT. HOTEL CHAIRS - DAY

Jayde laughs as her and the tall, probably a basketball player guy converse. Jayde rubs his shoulders.

JAYDE  
Ha ha, you are so funny.

The Basketball player guy smiles as Van walks up and packs her stuff.

JAYDE (cont'd)  
Van? Where you going?

VAN  
I need a drink. Can we get a drink?

JAYDE  
Okay. But, did something happen--

VAN  
No. I just wanna get drunk.



Jayde puts her hands up.

JAYDE

Okay.

Jayde starts to pack up.

BASKETBALL GUY

So can I call you sometime?

JAYDE

How much did you say you make again?

Basketball guy laughs.

BASKETBALL GUY

Seven figures.

JAYDE

You can call me *anytime*.

Jayde gives the guy her number. Van shakes her head.

JAYDE (cont'd)

Come on Van.

The two friends head for the bar.

EXT. HOTEL BAR - DAY

An over-dressed bartender hands Van two shots of vodka. Van gulps one down as Jayde watches her, shocked.

JAYDE

Van. Sweetie. You okay?

VAN

I'm fine.

Van gulps down another. Jayde smirks and sips her Bloody Mary.

JAYDE

You need a man.

Van exhales.

VAN

Why is everything always have to be about a man with you?

JAYDE  
It's obvious your not getting any  
action. You're too uptight.

VAN  
I'm not uptight! Okay, I cam--

Jayde laughs.

VAN (cont'd)  
I came out with you to turn up. And  
that's what I'm gonna do.

Jayde lifts her fists up, Black Panther style.

JAYDE  
Yass girl, that's what I like to  
hear!

Jayde takes a large sip of her Bloody Mary.

JAYDE (cont'd)  
Let me go use the restroom, I'll be  
right back.

Jayde leaves. Van twirls her drink with her finger. A tall,  
dark man dressed in African attire sits next to her.

RANDOM BLACK DUDE 2  
Hi, let me get a Hennessy with ice.

Van glances at him. RBD 2 examines her.

RANDOM BLACK DUDE 2 (cont'd)  
May I just say that you look like a  
beautiful Eritrean princess.

Van ignores him. The bartender hands him his drink; he sips  
it and He continues . . .

RANDOM BLACK DUDE 2 (cont'd)  
You know, I believe that the black  
woman is the supreme being. The first  
human on this Earth was a black  
woman. We all come from a black  
woman. Did you know that? I bet you  
didn't.

Van looks around for Jayde.

RANDOM BLACK DUDE 2 (cont'd)  
Do you believe in love at first  
sight? I do.

(MORE)

RANDOM BLACK DUDE 2 (cont'd)  
 I mean when I saw your midnight  
 black, gravity defying hair, your  
 smooth vanilla skin, your full lips--

Random Black Dude 2 sucks his lip, startling Van.

VAN  
 Nigga, you barely know me. Talking  
 about black women this and black  
 women that, your probably thinking of  
 how you wanna get in my panties with  
 your I'm so woke, Afro-centric ass!

Jayde comes back, with her makeup (done better). Van gets  
 off her seat, taking her drink.

VAN (cont'd)  
 Let's go.

JAYDE  
 Damn, alright.

RANDOM BLACK DUDE 2  
 I just want you to know I would never  
 treat black woman like that. I love  
 my black queens!

Van and Jayde ignore him and head for the dance floor.  
 Random Black Dude 2 gives up and sips his drink. A dark  
 skinned black woman seats next to him and he smiles.

RANDOM BLACK DUDE 2 (cont'd)  
 (Excuse me beautiful) as anyone ever  
 told you that you look like a Nubian  
 queen with blessed the warmth of the  
 Sun and the strength of a thousand  
 moons?

The woman smiles.

EXT. HOTEL DANCE FLOOR - DAY

A mixture of African and Caribbean music plays in the  
 background. Jayde leads Van to the center.

A man carrying a tray of shots slithers through the crowd.  
 Van takes two and (gulps) it down.

She then grabs slabs of seasoned jerk chicken and tears into  
 it.

Jayde comes behind her (shimming, dancing with her shoulders, hands and hips). Van twerks on Jayde as a group of people gathering around them yelling "Aye" and cheering them on.

After dancing for awhile, Van enters a drinking contest with a white guy who looks like a frat boy.

She loses.

EXT. OUTSIDE EASTLAKE APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Van gets out of an Uber and waves goodbye. She walks, clumsily towards the door. She stops and holds onto the door knob. Something comes up in her throat. She pushes it back down and opens the door.

INT. EASTLAKE APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Van enters her apartment and stumbles. She looks up at Earn whose sitting on the couch with Lottie asleep in his lap.

EARN

You okay?

Van nods.

VAN

Yea. I just need to sit down.

Van collapse on the couch next to Earn. She rubs Lottie's forehead affectionately.

VAN (cont'd)

When she sleep?

EARN

Like twenty minutes ago.

Earn gets up and puts Lottie in her crib.

EARN (cont'd)

So I'm guessing you had a good time?

VAN

Uh, yea. It was fun.

EARN

Word?

Van nods her head.

VAN  
I got hit on. By a wanna be playa and  
a hotep nigga.

Earn squints his eyebrows.

EARN  
Oh no. Not a hotep nigga. They're  
like . . . the worse.

VAN  
Right?

EARN  
Oh yea, I bought you something.

Earn steps into the kitchen and opens the fridge. He brings  
a gallon of milk. She smiles.

Earl sips all the milk out of his bowl.

VAN  
Ugh, I feel bloated.

He puts his bowl on the coffee table.

EARN  
Just relax.

Earn faces Van with a white line above his lips.

EARN (cont'd)  
Like my mustache?

Van giggles.

VAN  
Its ight.

Earn looks hurt.

EARN  
Ight?

Van rubs some of the milk off with her finger. Earl leans in  
for a kiss.

VAN  
I like your kisses though.

EARN  
Yea?

Van nods and smiles. They kiss, passionately. Phone rings.

VAN  
I'll get it.

Van answers it.

VAN (cont'd)  
(on the phone)  
Hello? Yea this is Vanessa.

Van grins and Earn signs "What?"

VAN (cont'd)  
Of course, yea. No. Thank you. Okay  
bye.

Van hangs up.

EARN  
So?

Van dances in place, ecstatic.

VAN  
I got the job!

EARN  
Whaaaaat? That's . . . Awesome.

A seductive look glimmers in Van's eyes.

VAN  
We should celebrate.

Van gets atop on Earn and they resume their make out session  
kiss. She stops.

EARN  
Um?

Van puts her hand over her mouth. She throws up on Earn's  
chest.

EARN (cont'd)  
Awe, what the fuck!?! Really Van?

Van's just as shocked as him. She gets up.

VAN  
I'm sorry. I'll get some paper  
towels.

Earn sits there in silence. Van comes back with some wet paper towels.

EARN  
You know this is like my favorite shirt right?

Van tries to wipe it off Earn's shirt.

EARN (cont'd)  
I--I got it. Thanks.

Van smirks. Earn wipes this shirt and Van goes into the kitchen to get more paper towels.

VAN  
You should probably take a shower ha ha.

Van goes into the kitchen to rinse the towels.

EARN  
Yo that's fucked up Van. Can't believe you find this shit funny. You owe me a new shirt!

CUT TO BLACK.

**END.**