FADE IN

INT. MONTGOMERY ALABAMA - 1955 - PERRY AND ETHEL’S HOME - EARLY MORNING

Montgomery Alabama, a city and state built on the backs of Negro slaves. A state culminating with hatred. Where white politicians see no need to change the law by outlawing racists behavior, no matter how cruel, no matter how deadly. In the state of Alabama, being a Negro in 1955, means death by color.

ETHEL THOMAS prepares to leave for her trip to Chicago, while her husband PERRY THOMAS gives her some sad news.

Phone rings Perry answers.

PERRY THOMAS
Hello.

He listens intently.

PERRY THOMAS (CONT’D)
I’ll be over right after I drop Ethel off at the bus station.

He hangs up.

ETHEL THOMAS
Who was that?

PERRY/ETHEL THOMAS
They found that boy’s body in the river.

ETHEL THOMAS
What boy?

PERRY THOMAS
That boy from Chicago, Emmett Till.

ETHEL THOMAS
Lord have mercy! That poor boy’s mother. Maybe I should stay here.

PERRY THOMAS
Naw. It’s probably for the best that you go to help your sister. Get your mind off all the killings.

ETHEL THOMAS
I’ll make this trip as short as possible.
PERRY THOMAS
No, you take your time.

ETHEL THOMAS
We better leave, or I’ll miss my bus.

PERRY THOMAS
Yeah.

ETHEL THOMAS
I’ll hurry back.

PERRY THOMAS
You better.

He offers her a loving kiss.

PERRY THOMAS (CONT’D)
Come on then, before you’re late.

Perry picks up the suitcase and they leave.

INT. EDNA’S HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

The house is a single family home, three bedroom and a bathroom upstairs. The brick brownstone home is in a semi-well to do black neighborhood. The walls are filled with family portraits. A beautifully hand crafted key table rests against the wall topped by a full mirror encased in chestnut wood. There is a small round table with a potted plant tucked away in a nearby corner of the hall.

Born in 1882, 73 year old Edna Young is Matriarch of her family. She and her husband, William, are the last living of the old plantation South. Edna came into her small fortune when she and William were sharecropping on a former slave owners plantation. The plantation owner’s wife killed her abusive husband and Edna helped her bury the body. The Woman purchased the home Edna lives in and gave it along with $500 dollars to keep Edna silent. Edna took the money and started her own small hair salon. Women, black and white, flocked from everywhere to get their hair done up at Edna’s Place. Edna, now semi-retired, has since turned control over to her youngest child, Helen.

EDNA YOUNG is a short portly woman with grey hair, over dyed and overdone. WILLIAM YOUNG, once handsome in his day, now distinguished with age. Once tall, but short now and round. He and Edna are the only people who know the truth about how Edna came into her small fortune.

They are drinking coffee.
EDNA YOUNG
The war has been over and we haven’t heard word for Charlieboy.

WILLIAM YOUNG
Don’t worry about Charlieboy, he can take care of himself.

EDNA YOUNG
I’m not worried about him taking care of himself; I’m worried about him being way up North.

WILLIAM YOUNG
Look, our son went off to fight a war. I’m sure living up North will be a piece of cake.

Doorbell rings.

EDNA YOUNG
I’ll get it.

INT. EDNA’S HOME - FRONT HALL - CONTINUOUS

Edna opens the door to see a U.S. Postman carrying a Western Union telegram.

EDNA YOUNG
William?

No response.

EDNA YOUNG (CONT’D)
William!

William hurries to his wife.

WILLIAM YOUNG
What is it?

He sees the Postman.

POSTMAN
Mr., and Mrs. William Young?

Shocked to see a Postman at their front door.

WILLIAM YOUNG
That’s us.

He gives William the telegram.
POSTMAN
Have a good day.

He offers a polite nod.

WILLIAM YOUNG
You too, Sir.

The postman walks away.

William closes the door and he and Edna walk into the living room.

INT. EDNA’S HOME – LIVING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Edna clasps her hands together, and anxiously waits for William to get up the nerve to open the letter.

William stare at the telegram, afraid to open it. HELEN YOUNG enters.

HELEN YOUNG
Hey Momma, hey Daddy.

Helen notices the telegram in her father’s hand.

HELEN YOUNG (CONT’D)
What’s that?

EDNA YOUNG
Shh!

HELEN YOUNG
Momma, why is Dad holding a telegram?

Edna ignores her daughter, and urges William to open the telegram.

EDNA YOUNG
William, go ahead and open it.
Staring at it won’t make whatever’s in there change.

William opens the telegram and reads it to himself.

EDNA YOUNG (CONT’D)
What’s it say?

WILLIAM YOUNG
Let me finish reading it.

William offers a broad smile.
HELEN YOUNG
Dad what does it say?

WILLIAM YOUNG
Don’t that beat all.

EDNA YOUNG
What?

WILLIAM YOUNG
Charlieboy’s coming home for Christmas.

HELEN YOUNG
And he sent a telegram to tell ya’ll that.

WILLIAM YOUNG
I don’t believe that boy, sending us a telegram all the way from Detroit.

EDNA YOUNG
Would have been cheaper to call.

EXT. CITIZEN COUNCIL MEETING - GARRETT COLISEUM - LATER

A very large group of well dressed white politicians and highly respected business men gather in the large arena to listen to a speech.

SENATOR LASENBY walks up to the podium and is greeted with a standing ovation and celebratory shouts

SENATOR LASENBY
Thank you everyone for coming.
Please, please take your seats.

The men take their seats.

SENATOR LASENBY (CONT’D)
I strongly believe! When it becomes necessary to abolish the niggers in our state, we must take the necessary steps. Put in place the proper methods. Methods, such as guns, billy clubs and knives; whatever it takes. White people are protected by certain right; equal rights; life, liberty and the pursuit of a dead nigger!

An explosion of applauds rings throughout the arena.
SENATOR LASENBY (CONT’D)
Niggers need to be taught a lesson!
They need to know their place...by
any means necessary!

Another explosion of applause rings throughout the arena.

SENATOR LASENBY (CONT’D)
This business with the bus boycott;
Hell no! We ain’t gonna let no
monkeys take over! Lets put an end
to this money business!

Another explosion of applause rings throughout the arena.

ROSCOE NORRIS turns to his friend SPOONER.

ROSCOE NORRIS
We are gonna have us a hallelujah
good time tonight!

SPOONER
Yes we are!

INT. SMALL OFFICE - LATER

Perry and LEE WALKER and other black men meet in a small room
to talk about organizing against the way black people are
being treated.

LEE WALKER
Look there are too many folks that
don’t have cars! What are they
supposed to do?

PERRY THOMAS
Walk.

REVEREND BLACKMAN
What about the women? Most of them
have jobs that are just too far to
walk. What about them?

LEE WALKER
We’ll just have the find them ride.
I don’t know.

PERRY THOMAS
We need to organize.

REVEREND BLACKMAN
No, we need to join the movement
already in place.
LEE WALKER
What are you talking about? What movement?

REVEREND BLACKMAN
Martin Luther King Junior is already organizing. We need to go and hear him. See what he has to say.

PERRY THOMAS
When is it?

REVEREND BLACKMAN
Monday.

LEE WALKER
I’ll be there.

PERRY THOMAS
Me too.

REVEREND BLACKMAN
I’ll make an announcement in church this Sunday.

INT. CHURCH – SUNDAY MORNING
Reverend Blackman encourages the entire church body to participate in the boycott.

REVEREND BLACKMAN
Before I give the benediction; just a quick announcement about the bus boycott. The ushers will be passing out information on the meeting places for those of you who need rides to and from work. Amen.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

Several church ushers pass out small pamphlets to the congregation.

REVEREND BLACKMAN
For the rest of you; please, when you are walking, be sure you go out in pairs. Amen.

CONGREGATION
Amen.
The ushers return to the back of the church.

REVEREND BLACKMAN
Let us stand for the benediction.

The congregation stands.

INT. EDNA’S HOME - FRONT HALL - DAYS LATER

Doorbell rings

Edna opens door.

EDNA YOUNG
Come on in.

LEE WALKER
Hey Edna. Where’s William?

EDNA YOUNG
In the kitchen.

LEE WALKER
I think you better hear this too.

Edna and Lee go into the kitchen.

INT. EDNA’S HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

A family friend, LEE WALKER, bring some dreaded news.

LEE WALKER
Hey Will, I got some news about the boycott, and one of ya’lls cousin.

WILLIAM YOUNG
Who?

LEE WALKER
Joe.

EDNA YOUNG
What’s wrong?

LEE WALKER
He’s missing.

OTIS YOUNG enters.

OTIS YOUNG
Hey Lee.
EDNA YOUNG
Shh! Something happened to Joe.

Otis fixes himself a cup of coffee and sits down.

WILLIAM YOUNG
What happen to Joe?

LEE WALKER
He went missing last night.

EDNA YOUNG
Missing?

LEE WALKER
Yeah. I stopped by this morning, and Marvella said he hadn’t been home at all.

EDNA YOUNG
My lawd! Do anybody know anything?

Doorbell rings again.

OTIS YOUNG
I’ll get it.

Otis leaves.

EXT. MONTGOMERY ALABAMA - WEEKS LATER - GREYHOUND BUS STATION - MID MORNING

TRUDY NORRIS, an uppity white woman shouts orders at a black bag handler near the front of a Greyhound Bus.

TRUDY NORRIS
No you fool! I’ve already told you, it’s that one!

Trudy points to a brown suitcase that matches the hand bag she’s carrying across her forearm.

Bus driver walks over.

BUS DRIVER
Is everything okay Ma’am?

TRUDY NORRIS
Niggas! They want jobs, but don’t want to do them! God! Hurry up!
Bus driver walks over and whispers to the bag handler.

    BUS DRIVER
    Hurry up before I tie your black
    ass to the back of this bus and
    drag you til they don’t recognize
    your black corpse.

The bag handler looks at the bus driver ready to offer a ‘yes sir,’ but changes his mind. He loads the last of Trudy’s luggage onto the porter’s cart and walks over to her.

    BAG HANDLER
    Ready Miss?

    TRUDY NORRIS
    I’ve been ready!

She leads him over to her shiny white car where he loads her luggage inside the trunk. She gives him a coin, gets into her car, and drives away.

EXT. MONTGOMERY ALABAMA - GREYHOUND BUS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Ethel Thomas returns from her long trip to Chicago, where she went to check up on her older sister, who had broken her leg.” She has come home, because her cousin Helen is getting married and wants her to be a part of the ceremony.

Ethel trails behind Perry as they pass by Trudy Norris, in route to an old pick-up truck.

    PERRY THOMAS
    Good to have you back home, Plute.

    ETHEL THOMAS
    Good to be home.

    PERRY THOMAS
    How’s your sister?

    ETHEL THOMAS
    She’s fine. Still trying to convince me that we should move to Chicago too.

    PERRY THOMAS
    That might not be such a bad idea.

    ETHEL THOMAS
    What do mean?
PERRY THOMAS
Nothing. Come on, we’d better hurry. You know how your Aunt Edna can be.

ETHEL THOMAS
Yes, I do.

Ethel hurries her pace.

They approach the truck Perry sits Ethel’s suitcase next to another suitcase sitting in the back of the truck.

ETHEL THOMAS (CONT’D)
What’s that for?

Perry look other suitcase.

PERRY THOMAS
Edna says we’re staying with her.

ETHEL THOMAS
Why?

PERRY THOMAS
Too much activity out near our place.

Without another word, they get into the truck and drive away.

INT. LOCAL BAR – LATER

The Citizen Council has free reign in the state Alabama. They terrorize through lynchings, body burning complete segregation, brutal and fatal beating, property destruction and even rape. These are everyday occurrences that on most occasions, local authority looks the other way; especially if the crime is against a Negro.

ROSCOE NORRIS is an open and very proud member of the Montgomery Chapter of the Ku Klux Klan.

Roscoe Norris and his friend celebrate the latest violent escapades.

ROSCOE NORRIS
Did you see that coon run! Hey Berthalue bring us another round.

BILLY
Scared shitless! I hope they like the little message I left in their bedroom.
SPOONER
We still going hunting tonight?

Roscoe watches Berthalue with lust in his eyes.

ROSCEO NORRIS
Not tonight, I got other plans.

BERTHALUE approaches carrying drinks.

BERTHALUE
Here you go gentlemen.

ROSCEO NORRIS
You free tonight?

BERTHALUE
Thought your wife was coming home today?

ROSCEO NORRIS
She is, but what’s that got to do with tonight?

Berthalue does not respond; she offers him an approving smile and walks away.

SPOONER
You damn dog!

ROSCEO NORRIS
Yes I am!

He holds his glass up in a silent toast to himself; his friend does the same.

EXT. AUNT EDNA’S HOUSE - LATER

Doorbell rings

The house is filled with family as the sound of laughter and chatter meets their ears.

EDNA YOUNG
Plute! It’s about time. I thought you might not make it.

ETHEL THOMAS
Hi Aunt Edna.

She extends her arms and offers Edna a hug.
EDNA YOUNG
Well come on in.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Perry sits their bags on the floor by the front door.

EDNA YOUNG
Ronny come and take their bags upstairs.

A teenage boy rushes over, picks up their bag, and without a word, starts upstairs.

EDNA YOUNG (CONT’D)
Put them in Charlieboy’s old room.

The boy hurries upstairs with their bags.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Ethel and Perry walk in to be greeted by family and friends. The furniture is a traditional but stylish floral print. The oak coffee table has a huge family photo album for all to enjoy. The chairs are out of place, due to the large amount of family visiting. Edna likes her plants, as twin house tree plants sit in opposite corners while other plants dress different areas of the house. A picture of a white Jesus is on the wall between the twin house plants. The other walls have pictures of various family members, some who have passed away, and others more recent. Six grandkids have a wall of their own.

Edna’s husband Otis Young rushes over with a drink in hand.

OTIS YOUNG
Hey, look who finally made it.

ETHEL THOMAS
Hey Uncle Otis.

PERRY THOMAS
Bus was late.

OTIS YOUNG
How’s my niece? She coming to the wedding?

ETHEL THOMAS
She’s good. She sends her love, and she said if she can rig up the money, she’ll be here.
OTIS YOUNG
Been a while since I seen her.

ETHEL THOMAS
I know.

OTIS YOUNG
Perry we got something we need to
discuss.

William Young and Lee Walker join Otis who leads Perry away
from Edna and Ethel.

Talking to Otis

ETHEL THOMAS
What’s wrong?

Edna injects before Otis can respond.

EDNA YOUNG
We got a letter from Charlieboy;
he’s coming home for Christmas.

ETHEL THOMAS
That’s good news. He can’t come for
the wedding?

EDNA YOUNG
Naw. Do you know he sent a
telegram. Scared us to death.
Helen’s in the kitchen.

The men are now in a private corner, but Otis response to
Ethel’s question as though Perry has asked it.

OTIS YOUNG
Not much. You all heard about the
boycott?

PERRY THOMAS
Yes.

WILLIAM YOUNG
Joe still ain’t turned up. Marvella
say he went to get some milk, she
ain’t seen him since.

PERRY THOMAS
When was this?

LEE WALKER
About two weeks now.
PERRY THOMAS
How come I’m just hearing about this? Anybody searching?

WILLIAM YOUNG
Folks too scared. I would have told you, but I felt you had enough on your plate with Plute gone; and them fools skulkin’ out at your place.

PERRY THOMAS
I know. It’s all I can do to sleep at night. I don’t know, maybe Plute should have stayed in Chicago.

OTIS YOUNG
It’s been bad. Found two bodies in the river just yesterday.

PERRY THOMAS
Who are they?

LEE WALKER
I heard one of ‘em was Mavis’ husband Willie. I don’t know who the other one was.

OTIS YOUNG
What are we going to do about Joe?

PERRY THOMAS
I don’t know.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ethel helps some her female relatives, HELEN, MAY FRANCIS, BESSIE, AND CLARA, with the dinner preparations.

HELEN YOUNG
Good to have you back home cousin.

ETHEL THOMAS
Good to be home. So you getting yourself married. It’s about time Oscar proposed. Where is he?

HELEN YOUNG
I know. He had to work, but he said he’ll be by later.

MAY FRANCIS
You heard about Marvella’s husband?
ETHEL THOMAS
No, what’s wrong?

CLARA THOMAS
Plute, Joe’s missing.

ETHEL THOMAS
What!

BESSIE YOUNG
It’s been two week now.

ETHEL THOMAS
How? What happened?

CLARA THOMAS
They say he went to get some milk, and never came home.

ETHEL THOMAS
What happen to him?

MAY FRANCIS
If you ask me, I believe the Klan got em’.

ETHEL THOMAS
My Lord! Are they sure?

BESSIE YOUNG
No, but the signs are there.

ETHEL THOMAS
What about the boycott?

EDNA YOUNG
It’s going strong. And these white folks are not happy.

EXT. EDNA’S HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER
A long table is covered with southern cooking: fried catfish, fried chicken, collard greens, fried okra, sweet potatoes, baked cornbread, corn on the cob, and other delicious foods. Other tables are set with mix-matched dinnerware.

The family enjoys dinner.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE - CHARLIE’S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT
Ethel and Perry get ready for bed.
She climbs into bed.

ETHEL THOMAS
I think we should go by and see Marvella tomorrow.

PERRY THOMAS
Plute it ain’t safe crossing the lines. Been too many folk gone missing.

ETHEL THOMAS
But that’s my cousin.

PERRY THOMAS
Marvella’s house is too far. The Klan been killing and lynching like they done lost their minds.

ETHEL THOMAS
Has anybody been out to see her?

PERRY THOMAS
I don’t think so. Folks is scared; me included.

ETHEL THOMAS
Is it that bad?

PERRY THOMAS
So bad, I’m thinking about selling our place. It’s bad Plute. It’s really bad.

ETHEL THOMAS
Perry, we still ought to go; it’s only right.

PERRY THOMAS
Maybe if we go real early.

ETHEL THOMAS
That’s fine. And I want to stop by our house.

PERRY THOMAS
We’ll see.

She offers him a kiss and turns over to sleep.
INT. EDNA’S HOME – KITCHEN – EARLY MORNING

Dressed in pajamas and house robes Edna and her daughter Helen are sitting at the kitchen table drinking coffee.

Perry and Ethel prepare to leave to visit their home and Marvella.

ETHEL THOMAS
Good morning Aunt Edna. Morning Helen.

HELEN YOUNG
Morning cousin. Where ya’ll going this early in the morning?

ETHEL THOMAS
We were going over to our place and then over to see Marvella.

EDNA YOUNG
Plute I don’t think you ought to. Did you tell her what’s going on?

PERRY THOMAS
Yes Ma’am, but you know how stubborn your niece is.

EDNA YOUNG
Plute, it ain’t safe. We been trying to get a hold of her on the phone.

ETHEL THOMAS
Have you gotten a hold of her?

HELEN YOUNG
Haven’t been able to.

ETHEL THOMAS
All the more reason we need to go. And I haven’t seen my own home in three months.

The back door swings open. MARIAN FLOYD, a boisterous short haired round woman waddles over and pours herself a cup of coffee and joins the conversation.

MARIAN FLOYD
Hey Ed. You two need to hurry up I ain’t got all day. I do have other folks that want their hair done.

Edna looks at the kitchen clock.
EDNA YOUNG
Drink your coffee. You ain’t in that big a hurry.

She sips from her glass and so does Marian.

MARIAN FLOYD
So, when did you get back?

ETHEL THOMAS
Yesterday. How are you Miss Floyd?

MARIAN FLOYD
As good as these old bones will allow me to be. How’s your sister?

ETHEL THOMAS
She’s much better, thank you for asking.

She takes a last sip from her cup. Gets up waddles over to the sink, places the cup inside and walks over to the back door.

Opens the door.

MARIAN FLOYD
Okay you two, hurry up. I ain’t got all day.

She leaves before anyone speaks.

ETHEL THOMAS
Come Perry, we’d better get going.

HELEN YOUNG
By the way, Barbara’s there with her.

ETHEL THOMAS
That’s good.

PERRY THOMAS
I thought Barbara was in the Asylum.

EDNA YOUNG
Doctors said she was well enough to come home.

PERRY THOMAS
Is she?
EDNA YOUNG
(Sarcastic)
That’s what the doctor said.

PERRY THOMAS
What do you say?

EDNA YOUNG
I say, they should have kept her.

Perry offers Ethel a raised eye-brow glance as he hands her the sweater he’s been holding.

PERRY THOMAS
Come on, we should get going, got a long ride.

Ethel takes the sweater and throws it across her arm.

ETHEL THOMAS
Thanks. We’ll be back in time for supper.

INT. THE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

They leave the house, climb in their old pick-up truck and drive away.

The truck rattles noisily.

ETHEL THOMAS
Can this truck make it all the way to Marvella’s house?

PERRY THOMAS
I don’t see why not.

ETHEL THOMAS
It’s a couple hours ride; are you sure?

PERRY THOMAS
This truck is sound. It’ll make it. Better stop and get some gas first. I’m glad you back, I missed me some Plute.

He reach across and kisses her.

ETHEL THOMAS
Me too.

They drive away.
PERRY THOMAS
I’m serious, I think we need to think about moving.

ETHEL THOMAS
Is it really that bad?

PERRY THOMAS
Would I leave our home if it wasn’t?

Ethel looks down at her hands as if looking for the answer.

PERRY THOMAS (CONT’D)
What’s wrong?

Takes a deep breath, and swallows hard.

ETHEL THOMAS
I went to the doctor while I was in Chicago, he says I can’t have children.

PERRY THOMAS
I know. Are you okay?

ETHEL THOMAS
Yes, but did you find out?

PERRY THOMAS
Doctor Sheridan called while you were gone.

ETHEL THOMAS
I asked him not to say anything. I wanted a second opinion.

PERRY THOMAS
He was only concerned for you; for both of us.

ETHEL THOMAS
I didn’t want you to find out like that.

PERRY THOMAS
Listen, I didn’t marry you because you could or could not have children.

ETHEL THOMAS
I know, but I…
She changes her mind and doesn’t finish her sentence, as though he’s heard her unspoken words.

PERRY THOMAS
I know, and it’s just fine. I love you. I hope you believe that.

ETHEL THOMAS
I do. And I love you too.

PERRY THOMAS
Then we won’t talk no more about it.

She drops her head and stares at her folded hands.

He looks at her as though trying to read her thoughts.

PERRY THOMAS (CONT’D)
What?

ETHEL THOMAS
Nothing.

PERRY THOMAS
Are you sure?

ETHEL THOMAS
Yes.

Perry isn’t convinced.

PERRY THOMAS
You know you can tell me anything, don’t you?

ETHEL THOMAS
Yes.

EXT. PERRY AND ETHEL’S HOUSE – LATER

She stops as she looks up to see that all the windows to their single level, modest, two bedroom home have been broken out.

ETHEL THOMAS
Perry. Oh my Lord!

PERRY THOMAS
I ran for my life. But I didn’t know they was going to do this to our home.
They get out of the car, and as they get closer, they see just how severe the damage really is. It’s as though a small tornado touched down. It didn’t completely destroy it, but there is too much damage to repair.

They know there is no saving their house.

ETHEL THOMAS
I don’t recognize my own home. It looks like a tornado came through here.

INT. PERRY AND ETHEL’S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

They carefully enter to see the rest of the damage.

ETHEL THOMAS
My home! Look what those bastards did to our home.

PERRY THOMAS
Oh my Lord! I didn’t know, Plute!

Ethel and Perry see the word NIGGER and swastikas have been painted on the walls that are still standing. Their belonging have been completely destroyed; nothing is salvageable. Ethel sees their wedding photo on the floor in a broken picture frame; she picks it up.

ETHEL THOMAS
What are we going to do?

INT. PERRY AND ETHEL’S HOME - GUEST BED ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Perry and Ethel inspect the rest of their house. They enter the guest bedroom to see that everything in this room has also been destroyed.

PERRY THOMAS
Damn!

ETHEL THOMAS
How can human beings be this cruel!

PERRY THOMAS
They ain’t human!

INT. PERRY AND ETHEL’S HOME - MASTER BED ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Perry and Ethel inspect master bedroom to see that everything in this room has also been destroyed.
Ethel covers her nose.

ETHEL THOMAS
What is that smell!

They look around the room with their heads. Perry looks at the bed to see feces all over it.

PERRY THOMAS
Look what them bastards did to the damn bed!

Ethel finds a box and gathers what few things that have not been destroyed.

PERRY THOMAS (CONT’D)
Come on, let’s go.

EXT. PERRY AND ETHER’S HOME – CONTINUOUS

They walk back to the car, Ethel clings to the box. They take one last look back. They get in the car and drive away.

EXT. TOWN GAS STATION – CONTINUOUS

Perry pulls into the gas station and HANK, the black gas attendant approaches the truck. He talks loud enough for the sake of the white man watching him closely from inside the store window.

HANK
Hey Mr. Perry how you doing?

PERRY THOMAS
Good Hank, and you?

The white man disappears inside the store to tend to a white customer.

The HANK pumps gas into Perry’s truck.

HANK
Good. Good to see you Miss Thomas.

From inside the truck.

ETHEL THOMAS
You too Hank.

HANK
How much?
PERRY THOMAS
Fill it up, please.

HANK
Okay.

The Attendant looks back toward the door of the store. No one is there.

He places pump back on hook and walks over to collect the money.

HANK (CONT’D)
That’s two dollars.

He leans in to whispers a warning.

HANK (CONT’D)
Better take the long way around.

Perry doesn’t need an explanation. He nods his head and gives him the two dollars plus a coin tip and drives off.

INT. THE CAR - CONTINUOUS

ETHEL THOMAS
What was that about?

PERRY THOMAS
The Klan.

Ethel does not need farther explanation.

EXT: LONELY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The rest of the ride is quiet until they come across a black man leaning over his smoking engine. Perry pulls over.

ETHEL THOMAS
Just ask him if he’s okay; don’t get out, might not be safe.

PERRY THOMAS
He needs my help.

ETHEL THOMAS
Just be careful.

PERRY THOMAS
I will.
He gets out of the truck and walks over the man. He leans over the hood of the man’s car. A long white car appears out of nowhere and speeds to a stop right beside them. Six white men some carrying bully-clubs, other broken bottles in their hands jump out.

ROSCOE NORRIS
Well look-a-what we got here. We got ourselves some fresh Nigger meat.

SPOONER
Look like their car dun broke down. Maybe they need a ride. What ya’ll think?

PERRY THOMAS
No thank you, we’re fine.

MARCUS
We got us a uppity one, right here.

Not wanting to draw attention to his own car, Perry forces himself not to look in the direction of where Ethel sits watching helplessly, paralyzed by fear.

INT. THE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ethel realizes that she needs to disappear. She slowly and very silently lowers herself so that she is now sitting on the floor of the truck. She can still hear their conversation.

O.S. JEFF
They ain’t that uppity. They don’t even know they in the wrong place, or they wouldn’t have let the car break down. They damn stupid if you ask me.

O.S. ROSCOE NORRIS
Well didn’t nobody ask you, did they?

SPOONER holds up his bully-club to strike Perry.

O.S. SPOONER
You know what I think? I think we should help them remember where they at. That’s what I think.

Severe pain and anguish sweeps over Ethel because she believes her worst fear is about to come true.
Prays aloud.

ETHEL THOMAS
My God! No! Please God don’t let them do this!

She hears a police siren give a warning sound, as the police car comes to a stop. She hears a car door open and close. A man voice can be heard as he approaches the group.

O.S. SHERIFF
What are you boys doing?

O.S. ROSCOE NORRIS
Just havin’ a little fun, that’s all Sheriff.

O.S. SHERIFF
Well that’s enough. From what I hear you boys have been have a little too much fun. Get out of here and leave them be.

O.S. ROSCOE NORRIS
What are talking about! It’s NIGGERS! What are you doing siding with them?

O.S. SHERIFF
I am not siding with them. But there have been too many reports of trouble lately; I don’t want to see you boys get into any trouble with the law; that’s all.

The Sheriff waves Perry and the other black man away.

O.S. SHERIFF (CONT’D)
You two, get going.

Without waiting to be told again, Perry and the other black man abandon the car and rushed over to Perry’s truck and climbs inside.

Ethel sits back up and moved in the middle to allow CLAYTON inside.

ETHEL THOMAS
Thank you, Jesus.

Perry, without a word, drives slowly, pasting the sheriff and the six white on-lookers.

They drive until they reach to a fork in the road.
CLAYTON
    Right here will be fine.

Clayton gets out of the truck.

CLAYTON (CONT’D)
    Thank you so much.

Perry looks around for another car, but there isn’t one.

PERRY THOMAS
    You sure you’ll be okay? Anybody picking you up?

CLAYTON
    Yeah, my brother told me to meet him right here.

PERRY THOMAS
    Want us to wait?

CLAYTON
    Naw, I’ll be okay. My brother should be here, not long now.

ETHEL THOMAS
    We don’t mind. We’ll wait.

Clayton leans against truck door.

ETHEL THOMAS (CONT’D)
    Maybe you should wait inside, you know just in case.

Clayton climbs back into the truck.

CLAYTON
    You might be right about that.

From a distance, they hear the sound of a car approaching. Their heads turn in the direction of the approaching car. They sit nervously waiting.

ETHEL THOMAS
    Perry?

PERRY THOMAS
    What?

ETHEL THOMAS
    Turn the truck back on.

Thinking they might have to speed away, Perry starts the engine.
The light blue car finally reaches them and slows down. Perry inadvertently presses on the gas pedal even though the truck is in park. The engine roars.

The car comes to stop and car door opens. DONALD (BROTHA), a bald black man climbs out.

Clayton gets out of the truck.

CLAYTON
It’s okay, that’s my brother.

Perry and Ethel let out a slight sigh of relief as they watch Clayton’s brother approaches him.

BROTHA
Man where you been? I been here twice already.

CLAYTON
My car broke down a ways back. These nice people picked me up.

BROTHA
You scared the shit out of us.

CLAYTON
I know, I’m sorry.

Clayton and his brother approach Perry’s truck.

CLAYTON (CONT’D)
I want ya’ll to meet my brother. This is Donald, but we call him Brotha. By the way I’m Clayton.

PERRY THOMAS
Nice to might you both. I’m Perry Thomas, this is my wife Ethel.

BROTHA
Thanks for picking up my brother. It ain’t safe out here; even at this time of the day.

PERRY THOMAS
Yeah, we just had a run-in back there.

BROTHA
What?
CLAYTON
Yeah, I’ll tell you about it on the way. We’d better go. It was nice to meet ya’ll.

ETHEL THOMAS
You too.

The Clayton and his brother turn and walk back to their car.

CLAYTON
Thanks again.

He waves.

Perry and Ethel wave and drive away.

INT. EDNA’S HOME – LATER

Helen and OSCAR BROWN snuggle on the couch watching the news getting the latest update about the bus boycott.

O.S. NEWS REPORTER
ADD AUTHENTIC NEWS REEL VIDEO.

Helen walks over and turns off the television.

HELEN YOUNG
I know it’s important in our fight, but I’m sick of this boycott.

OSCAR BROWN
Unfortunately, it’s not ending anytime soon. And if we want thing to change, we’ve got stick with it.

EXT. MARVELLA’S HOUSE – LATER

Perry pulls up in front of the house, parks the truck and jump out. He hurries to the other side to open the door for Ethel.

Ethel can see that Perry is still visibly shaken as he holds her arm to usher her up to the front door.

ETHEL THOMAS
You okay?

He lies.
PERRY THOMAS
Yeah, I’m okay. You?
She lies too.

ETHEL THOMAS
I’m okay.

Perry knocks on the door. A beautifully plump coffee bean colored woman, with her hair in twin buns at the back of her head, and dark rimmed glasses opens the front door.

MARVELLA JONES
Oh. Ethel! Perry! It’s so good to see ya’ll. It’s been a long time.

ETHEL THOMAS
I know; I’ve been in Chicago with my sister.

MARVELLA JONES
Ya’ll come on in.

INT. MARVELLA’S HOUSE - ENTRY WAY - CONTINUOUS
They enter to the same small entry and white trimmed staircase that greeted them at Aunt Edna’s. Ethel remembers how alike Marvella’s home is to her Aunt Edna’s with the exception of the décor. Edna is fond of plants and family portraits, while Marvella treasures her students. She, being a third grade teacher, never had children of her own. She has every photo she’s ever taken with a student or class of students on the walls and small knick-knack tables throughout the house.

INT. MARVELLA’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
She leads them into the living room; they sit on a love seat with its back facing the oversized bay window.

MARVELLA JONES
Ya’ll sit down. Let me get ya’ll something to drink. After that long ride, ya’ll must tired.

Marvella leaves. They can hear her tinkering around in the kitchen.

Yells.

ETHEL THOMAS
You need some help, cousin Marvella?
Yells back.

O.S. MARVELLA JONES
No, I’m doing okay.

She returns carrying a tray with three empty glasses and a pitcher of iced sweet-tea. She places the tray on the center table and takes a seat in the chair opposite them.

MARVELLA JONES
Suppose ya’ll heard about Joe?

She pours each of them a glass of tea and hands them out, taking one for herself.

ETHEL THOMAS
Yes, that’s why we came. Wanted to see if you need anything?

MARVELLA JONES
Not right now. You know my sister’s here with me.

She yells in the direction of the upstairs.

MARVELLA JONES (CONT’D)
Barbie Doll, we got company. Come on down here and say hi.

No response.

Marvella yells again.

MARVELLA JONES (CONT’D)
Barbie Doll you hear me. I say we got company. It’s Perry and Ethel. Come on down.

BARBARA creeps around the corner carrying a dead white and gray stuffed cat. Her hair is covered by a spotted do-rag and the front house-dress she has on is covered with dark splotches from where she has constantly wiped her hands.

She stands in the doorway staring kid like at everyone one in the room stroking the stuffed cat.

ETHEL THOMAS
Hey Barbie Doll, how are you?

She offers a wide childish grin, but doesn’t speak.

MARVELLA JONES
Go on over there and sit down.
Barbara walks over and sits in what appears to be her favorite chair by the window. She strokes her dead stuffed cat once more. She raises a single finger to the lace split curtains, and pulls it back just enough to see clearly outside.

PERRY THOMAS
How is she doing?

MARVELLA JONES
Doctors say she fine, but she don’t act fine to me. Look at her, holdin’ on and stroking that dead cat just like it’s alive. That ain’t fine; not to me.

ETHEL THOMAS
Too me either.

PERRY THOMAS
Did they ever tell you what happened to her?

MARVELLA JONES
Raped and beaten by some of them white boys. Almost killed her. Ain’t been right since.

ETHEL THOMAS
My Lord!

PERRY THOMAS
They know who did?

MARVELLA JONES
That Sheriff say he don’t know, but I know he do.

PERRY THOMAS
How do you know?

MARVELLA JONES
The night he found her, and brought her home, I heard him telling that little one; you know em’. The fat round one, be in the car with em’...

PERRY THOMAS
Wallace?
MARVELLA JONES  
Yeah that’s him. I heard him tellin’ him that the ones who did it better hope she dies, otherwise he’d have to pick em’ up.

ETHEL THOMAS  
What?

PERRY THOMAS  
Did he pick them up then?

MARVELLA JONES  
Hell naw. Look at her! She cain’t tell them what happened to her...so you and I both know they ain’t looking for them boys no more.

ETHEL THOMAS  
That’s a shame. There ought to be something we can do.

MARVELLA JONES  
I think he knows what happened to my Joe too. You don’t just disappear without a trace. Its them damn Klan boys.

PERRY THOMAS  
Is the Sheriff doing anything to try to find Joe?

MARVELLA JONES  
Same thing he did to get them what did that to Barbie Doll.

ETHEL THOMAS  
And she won’t say?

MARVELLA JONES  
Not one word.

PERRY THOMAS  
You want us to look for Joe?

MARVELLA JONES  
Naw. It’s been two months now, and not one word. But I still got my faith. God’ll bring him home safe, if it’s His will.

ETHEL THOMAS  
Two months? We thought it was only a couple of weeks.
MARVELLA JONES
No, folks just got word two weeks ago.

PERRY THOMAS
Why didn’t you say something, Marvella?

MARVELLA JONES
What could anybody do?

PERRY THOMAS
I don’t know, but we would have tried to do something!

MARVELLA JONES
To get yourselves hurt out there! It’s in God’s hands, to bring him home or not.

Turns to Barbara.

MARVELLA JONES (CONT’D)
Barbie Doll you hungry?

Barbara turns from the window and offers the same childish smile she greeted them with.

MARVELLA JONES (CONT’D)
Ya’ll stay won’t you?

ETHEL THOMAS
We’d love to, but we told Edna that we’d be home in time for supper.

MARVELLA JONES
I understand, and that’s a long ride too.

PERRY THOMAS
Yeah, we’d better get going.

They stand and walk to the front door.

INT. MARVELLA’S HOUSE – FRONT HALL

Marvella open’s the front door.

PERRY THOMAS
Where’d she get the cat?
MARVELLA JONES
Don’t ask me; been had it ever
since she came home from that damn
hospital.

They chuckle.

ETHEL THOMAS
Call me if you need me.

Perry and Ethel offer her a kiss on the cheek.

MARVELLA JONES
Barbie Doll come on and say bye to
Ethel and Perry.

Barbara peers around the corner, and offers her childlike
smile.

Ethel walks over and tries to kiss Barbara, but she runs over
to Marvella for protection.

MARVELLA JONES (CONT’D)
Girl, stop being silly. Ethel only
trying to say bye to you.

EXT. MARVELLA’S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

As they walk to the truck, Ethel turns and waves at Barbara.
She throws up a quick wave and disappears back inside the
house. Marvella stands and watches as they drive away.

INT. PERRY’S TRUCK – CONTINUOUS

Perry and Ethel drive away.

ETHEL THOMAS
It was good to see Marvella.

PERRY THOMAS
Yeah, Barbara too. The cat?

ETHEL THOMAS
I know. You think Marvella’s going
to let her keep it?

PERRY THOMAS
Don’t see how she’s gonna get it
away from her.
ETHEL THOMAS
You think the Sheriff will look for the men who did that to her?

PERRY THOMAS
It’s been too long, doubt it.

ETHEL THOMAS
You think Joe’s still alive.

PERRY THOMAS
He would’ve turned up by now. Probably put him in the river.

ETHEL THOMAS
Lord have mercy!

EXT. FORK IN THE ROAD - LATER

After for miles, they reach that same fork in the road where they dropped Clayton off earlier.

ETHEL THOMAS
What’s wrong, why are you stopping?

PERRY THOMAS
Look, if them boys are down there, and I’m sure they are. I know they’ll remember my truck.

ETHEL THOMAS
So what do you want to do?

PERRY THOMAS
We might not get a second chance.

ETHEL THOMAS
I understand.

Ethel and Perry decide to take the other road.

PERRY THOMAS
Let’s go this way.

Ethel looks at the near empty gas gauge.

ETHEL THOMAS
You think we go got enough gas?

PERRY THOMAS
We should make it to next gas station.
Ethel glances out the back window as if looking for someone.

ETHEL THOMAS
I hope so, cause 30 miles is a long way on foot.

After nearly an hour of driving the truck sputters as a sign that it’s running out of gas.

ETHEL THOMAS (CONT’D)
What’s wrong?

Perry spots an off-the-beat gas station in the distance.

PERRY THOMAS
It’s okay. Look.

Ethel sees the gas station.

ETHEL THOMAS
Good.

EXT. LONELY GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

They approach the gas station. A small group of black people are waiting for rides.

WILLIE, dressed in oil covered overalls approaches the truck.

WILLIE
Can I help y’all?

See that Ethel and Perry are black.

WILLIE (CONT’D)
Y’all need to go round back.

Perry thinks that’s where the gas pumps for colored people are located.

PERRY THOMAS
Okay, thanks.

EXT. LONELY GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Perry pulls his truck around to the back of the store. He and Ethel are shocked to see Trudy, woman from the train station.

Trudy Norris waves them over.
TRUDY NORRIS
Y’all late. Hurry up, we ain’t got much time.

Perry and Ethel cautiously get out of their truck and walks over to Trudy. Perry puts the car key into his pants pocket

PERRY THOMAS
What’s this all about?

TRUDY NORRIS
Just get on the bus.

ETHEL THOMAS
Why?

TRUDY NORRIS
I don’t have time to argue. I heard my husband, say they’ll be hittin’ y’all hard tonight.

Brotha and Clayton walks over. Trudy walks away and waves protestors onto the bus.

CLAYTON
I’m glad y’all all made it. We helping with the protest.

BROTHA
Reverend Martin Luther King Junior is organizing.

PERRY THOMAS
Yeah, he’s speaking on Monday.

Brotha tips his hat to Ethel.

BROTHA
Miss Trudy been helping too. She heard her husband and his friend say they’d be waiting for your truck.

ETHEL THOMAS
Oh my God! What are we going to do? How are we going to get home?

Turns to Perry.

BROTHA
We was hoping you had to stop for gas. They already got four boys tonight.
ETHEL THOMAS
Oh my Lord!

CLAYTON
Miss Trudy helping us get out.

ETHEL THOMAS
What about our truck?

Trudy walks back over and joins the conversation.

TRUDY NORRIS
You have to leave it, and come back for it later. Roscoe, my husband; I heard him talking with some of the others. The best thing we got right now is this protest. You all can take the bus back into town.

PERRY THOMAS
I can’t just leave my truck. They already tore up my house. They not gonna get my truck.

TRUDY NORRIS
You don’t have a choice. I heard him say they was looking for the uppity niggas that go away today. Clayton told me about you and your wife.

Ethel does not hide her fear.

ETHEL THOMAS
I don’t care about your husband! I want to know what we are going to do?

TRUDY NORRIS
Get the hell out of here while you still can.

ETHEL THOMAS
Why are you helping us?

TRUDY NORRIS
Because I don’t like what’s been happenin’ any more than you do.

ETHEL THOMAS
But why are you risking your life to help us? Me and my husband saw you at the Bus station...
TRUDY NORRIS
...Oh, you mean the way I was actin’?

ETHEL THOMAS
Yes, I do. You wasn’t actin’ like this?

TRUDY NORRIS
No, I wasn’t. So how did you expect me to act?

ETHEL THOMAS
Not the way I saw you act.

TRUDY NORRIS
I understand what you mean. Listen, no one can know about me. No one can know what I do.

ETHEL THOMAS
I understand, and thank you.

TRUDY NORRIS
You’re welcome.

Ethel smiles as Trudy turns her conversation to the others.

TRUDY NORRIS (CONT’D)
If y’all coming, better get a move on.

ETHEL THOMAS
I’ll be right back.

TRUDY NORRIS
Two minutes, and then we’re leaving.

ETHEL THOMAS
I won’t be long.

EXT. GAS STATION – COLORED WOMEN REST ROOM – CONTINUOUS
Ethel hurries over and pushes open the door. The pungent smell is overwhelming, but she goes inside.

INT. GAS STATION – COLORED WOMEN REST ROOM – CONTINUOUS
A short time later, Ethel hears several screams and gunshots. She peaks out the bathroom window to sees Clayton and Brotha being forced into back of a nearby truck.
INT. GAS STATION – COLORED WOMEN REST ROOM – CONTINUOUS

The same fear she felt in the truck when she and Perry were driving to Marvella’s, is the same fear that is coursing through her veins right now. She continues to watch. She can see Perry looking for her, hoping that she doesn’t come out. Her eyes search for Trudy. They find her. Ethel can hear Trudy being congratulated for her capture.

Holding Trudy’s hand up in the air.


ROSCOE NORRIS
This is why we want our wives taking up the fight. They stand by our side!

INT. GAS STATION – COLORED WOMEN REST ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Ethel catches a glimpse of a white man coming toward the women’s rest room. Ethel quickly clears away all evidence of her existence.

EXT. CONTINUOUS

GEORGE, who is still watching as Roscoe speaks, walks toward the door where a black and white sign that read “Colored Rest Room,” hung off to the side.

INT. GAS STATION – COLORED WOMEN REST ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Ethel closes the door and hurries to the only other door in the bathroom, a utility room. She goes inside and pulls the door closed tight.

She hears the man’s voice as the door opens.

O.S. GEORGE
Damn it stinks in here.

He kicks the stall door open. He walks over and yells out the door.

O.S GEORGE
Ain’t nobody in here.

In the distance.

O.S ROSCOE NORRIS
Make sure. Dammit!
GEORGE allows the door to close and looks around. He spots the door that leads to where Ethel is hiding. He walks over and puts his hand on the knob, ready to twist it. But something moving in the corner catches his eye.

A rat is scampering in the corner trying to escape through a hole in the floor.

GEORGE
This is bullshit! Ain’t nobody in here.

He pulls his gun out and shoots the rat, open exit door and leaves.

INT. GAS STATION – COLORED WOMEN REST ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Ethel comes out of the utility closet. She is visibly shaken. She lowers the cover on the toilet, sits down, and sobs.

INT. GAS STATION – COLORED WOMEN REST ROOM – LATER

Ethel pulls herself together, gets up and slowly approaches the exit door. She can hear something, but she’s not sure what the sound is. She opens the door ever so slightly. A stray dog is rummaging in the nearby trash.

EXT. GAS STATION – CONTINUOUS

There is a blood trails on the street as though someone or something very large had been dragged from the back of a vehicle driving away.

ETHEL THOMAS
Oh my God!

Overwhelmed, Ethel can hardly breathe. She looks around for Perry but he is nowhere in sight.

Ethel sees that the bus and everyone waiting are gone. There is a large amount of broken glass where the bus was parked.

There are three dead people, one woman and two men laying on the ground covered in their own blood.

ETHEL THOMAS (CONT’D)
Oh my Lord!

Fearing the men might be nearby, Ethel is afraid to call out to her husband, so she wanders aimlessly around the area looking for Perry.
INT. EDNA YOUNG’S HOME – LATER

The family has gather together fearing that something has happened to Perry and Ethel who are well overdue.

EDNA YOUNG
Did anybody call Marvella to see if they are still there?

HELEN YOUNG
Yes, she said they left about four hours ago.

OTIS YOUNG
Better go and see if we can find them.

EDNA YOUNG
No, they’ll be okay.

WILLIAM YOUNG
They could’ve had trouble with that old truck. You know it was standing on it last leg. I think we ought to go and look for them.

OTIS YOUNG
If we not back in one hour, you call the sheriff.

EDNA YOUNG
One hour. I mean it! Ya’ll better be back here in one hour.

William and Otis leave.

EXT. GAS STATION STORE – SIDE – LATER

Ethel walks toward the gas station store front hoping to find the black attendant who sent them to the back of the station. As she approached the building she hears some men talking.

Barely peeks around the corner.

EXT. GAS STATION STORE FRONT – CONTINUOUS

The white STORE KEEPER and CHESTER stand talking about the today’s events.

STORE KEEPER
Who’s gonna clean that shit up!
CHESTER
We’ll be back tonight; gotta wait
'til night fall. You know that.

STORE KEEPER
I don’t want no more trouble.

CHESTER
Ain’t gon be no trouble.

Willie comes outside carrying a broom, trash can, and dust
pan. He starts to sweep nearby trash into a pile

Addressing the black WILLIE

CHESTER (CONT’D)
Ain’t that right?

WILLIE
Yes sir, Mista Crawley.

EXT. GAS STATION – SIDE – CONTINUOUS

Ethel looks around for a telephone booth.

The well-lit, free standing telephone booth is 25 feet away
and sits in the direct line of sight to the front door of the
gas station.

Ethel, knowing that she will not be able to count on the
Willie, turns and quietly walks back toward bloody sight. She
goes back into the women’s rest room.

INT. GAS STATION – COLORED WOMEN REST ROOM – LATER

Ethel tries to figure out what her next move is going to be.

ETHEL THOMAS
Lord, what am I going to do? I have
'to get out of here. I need to get
to that phone.

After overhearing the two men, Ethel knows she will have to
leave the gas station before night fall.

She searches through her purse for loose change and pulls out
a nickel.
EXT. GAS STATION – PHONE BOOTH – CONTINUOUS

Ethel knows time is against her. She makes her way to the phone booth. She sneaks inside and crouches down as low as she can. She takes the phone off the hook.

Very quiet voice

ETHEL THOMAS
Hello Operator, I need to make a call.

O.S. PHONE OPERATOR
Number please?

Ethel is crouched down and her mouth is too far away from the mouth piece for the operator to hear her speaking.

Ethel speaks in a very hushed tone.

ETHEL THOMAS
Yes, I need to make a call.

O.S. PHONE OPERATOR
Hello. Number please?

ETHEL THOMAS
Can you hear me? I need to make a telephone call please.

O.S PHONE OPERATOR
Is anyone there? Number please?

ETHEL THOMAS
I need to make a call. It’s very important. Please! Can you hear me?

O.S. PHONE OPERATOR
I am sorry, but I can not hear you. You will need to speak up.

ETHEL THOMAS
I can’t speak up. I need help. Please, I need help.

O.S. PHONE OPERATOR
You will need to speak up or hang up and try your call again.

ETHEL THOMAS
I need help!
O.S. PHONE OPERATOR
I’m sorry, but you will need to hang up and try your call again.

The line goes dead.

Ethel is devastated. She lingers in the telephone booth contemplating if she should try her call again. Just as she makes up her mind to try again, a car pulls up to the gas pump. Two white passengers climb out and go inside the gas station store. Ethel is very scared. She makes herself as small as she can inside the telephone booth. After a few minutes the two people climb back inside their and drive away.

INT. GAS STATION – COLORED WOMEN REST ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Ethel decides it is too risky for her to try the call again; instead she sneaks back to the lady’s rest room and gathers everything she has left behind.

EXT. BACK OF GAS STATION – CONTINUOUS

Ethel makes her way over to her husband’s truck which is still parked out back.

INT. PERRY’S TRUCK – CONTINUOUS

Ethel opens the passenger side door and climbs inside. She searches for the car key, but remembers that Perry put them inside his pants pocket.

ETHEL THOMAS
Dammit! Why didn’t I take the keys?

She searches for useful items. She discovers a flash light, some matches, and a pocket knife in the glove compartment. There is a small hand gun under the driver’s seat.

EXT. PERRY’S TRUCK – CONTINUOUS

Ethel gets out of the car and goes to search the rear of the truck. She finds a small cloth sack. She hurries to put everything that she has collected inside. She puts on her sweater and stuffs her husband’s jacket inside the sack. She spots her wedding picture; she takes it out of the broken frame, folds it and stuffs it inside her purse. She closes the door to the truck and make her way up the road.
INT. OLD BARN - LATER

Roscoe and his friend torture Perry and Brotha.

Spooner walks over to the dead body of Clayton who is strung by the feet to the truck after being dragged.

SPOONER
Want me to unchain that one?

ROScoe Norris
Yeah, and get them two niggas out of my truck.

Brotha sheds a tear after seeing his brother Clayton’s dead body tossed as though it were trash.

ROScoe Norris (CONT’D)
So you niggas wanna protest something?

Perry Thomas
We haven’t done anything to you boys. Just let us go.

ROScoe Norris
You uppidy nigga!

Roscoe punches Perry in the stomach causing him to bend in pain.

SPOONER
Looks like we need to teach this one a lesson.

Roscoe, Spooner and several other white men beat Perry until he is unconscious.

SPOONER (CONT’D)
What about that one?

Referring to Brotha.

ROScoe Norris
Got something better in mind for him. Tie him up.

Spooner ties Brotha to a nearby wooden post, while Perry lays unconscious on the barn floor.

ROScoe Norris (CONT’D)
Let’s get something to eat.
Roscoe and Spooner return to finish what they started. Perry still lays unconscious on the barn floor, while Brotha has nodded off to sleep.

SPOONER
Hey nigga, wake up.

Brotha does not respond.

SPOONER (CONT'D)
I said wake you black ass up!

Brotha stirs.

SPOONER (CONT'D)
I know you hear me! Now wake you coon ass up.

Brotha opens his eyes.

ROSCOE NORRIS
We killed that one...now it’s yoe turn. Let’s go; I got something you gonna really like.

They untie Brotha and start to leave.

SPOONER
What about that one?

Referring to Perry

ROSCOE NORRIS
Toss him with the other one. Let the dogs eat them both.

Spooner drags Perry unconscious body and tosses it next to the dead body of Clayton.

They get in Roscoe’s car and drive a way.

EXT. AUNT EDNA’S HOUSE – VERY LATE NIGHT

A strange car pulls up. Edna, Helen and other family members come outside to greet the strangers.

The driver’s side car door opens, Trudy climbs out; she hurries to the passenger side of the call and snatches open the car door. As she helps Perry Thomas out of the car he falls out onto the ground. He is severely beaten and barely alive.
TRUDY NORRIS
Edna, I have another one for you!

Everyone rushes over. Edna bends down over Perry.

EDNA YOUNG
Who is he?

Trudy takes out his wallet of her purse.

TRUDY NORRIS
I don’t know. But I found a wallet in his back pocket. He called out your name...

Lee interrupts.

LEE WALKER
...Looks like Perry.

Trudy gives the wallet to OTIS Young, who opens it.

OTIS YOUNG
It is Perry.

Gives wallet to Edna.

EDNA YOUNG
Get him inside.

Several men gently pick up Perry and take him inside the house.

HELEN YOUNG
Where’s Ethel?

TRUDY NORRIS
Who?

HELEN YOUNG
Ethel! She’s his wife! She was with him. Where’s she?

TRUDY NORRIS
I know. I couldn’t find her. I’ll go back to the gas station, to see if I see her.

Believing that Ethel is dead, Helen burst into tears.
TRUDY NORRIS (CONT’D)

(She lies.)
I found him lying on the side of
the road, and that’s when he called
your name.

EDNA YOUNG
And we appreciate it, Trudy. I
think you’d better go, before
somebody sees you.

TRUDY NORRIS
Okay.

EDNA YOUNG
Please, if you see my niece, his
wife, bring her home safe.

TRUDY NORRIS
I will.

Trudy climbs in her car and drives away.

INT. TRUDY’S CAR – LATER

Trudy reaches the turn off that leads to her home, instead of
taking it, she keep driving. She reaches the fork in the road
and turns left, the same direction towards the gas station
where she last saw Ethel.

INT. GAS STATION – CONTINUOUS

Trudy arrives at the gas station. She pulls up to one of the
gas pumps.

The Willie approaches her car.

WILLIE
Hello Ma’am. Fill it up?

Trudy is distracted.

WILLIE (CONT’D)
Ma’am? Are you okay?

Referring to blood trail on the ground.

TRUDY NORRIS
It’s all gone.
WILLIE
Oh, yes Ma’am. The owner cleaned that up.

TRUDY NORRIS
Thank you. What happened? How did you get it cleaned up so fast?

WILLIE
Don’t know Ma’am.

TRUDY NORRIS
I’ll be right back. I have to go to the lady’s room.

Trudy hurries to the lady’s room, while the Willie fills up her gas tank.

She walks over the rest room designated for white people, but her eyes search for the colored rest room. She looks back to see the WILLIE filling her the gas tank. She sneaks over to the colored women’s bathroom and goes inside.

INT. COLORED WOMEN’S REST ROOM – CONTINUOUS

It’s empty.

TRUDY NORRIS
Damn!

She leaves.

EXT. GAS STATION – CONTINUOUS

Trudy reaches in her purse for money to pay the Willie.

WILLIE
Thank you, Ma’am.

Trudy gets in her car and drives away.

EXT. WOOD AREA – LATER

Ethel is walking in a nearby wood area; trying not to panic, but can’t help but be scared to death. She has decided to stay away from the road until she can get back to safer territory.
EXT. LONELY ROAD – LATER

Trudy looks to see that she is at half a tank of gas. She decides to go home, and get a fresh start in the morning.

    TRUDY NORRIS
    Where are you?

EXT. LONELY ROAD – CONTINUOUS

Trudy slows her car down when she thinks she sees something moving in the tall brush. Unbeknownst to Ethel, that Trudy is looking for her, she ducks out of sight when she hears Trudy’s car slowly pass by.

EXT. LONELY ROAD – CONTINUOUS

Ethel comes out of hiding and walks down the lonely road in the direction of she believes is her Aunt Edna’s home.

EXT. OLD BARN – LATE NIGHT

Ethel finds herself in the same barn that her husband was beat and left for dead. She sees the dead body of Clayton laying on the side of the road; there is no sign of Perry or Brotha.

INT. OLD BARN - CONTINUOUS

She enters and is caught off guard by the smell of death. She sees dried blood on the dirt floor and barn walls. She thinks it’s a slaughter house for animals; what she doesn’t know is that it is a slaughter house for her own people by the Klan.

INT. OLD BARN - LATER

Ethel’s stomach ache from hunger. She looks around for any sign of food, and finds none. She starts to leave the barn, but she hears a car approach. She quickly climbs into the hay filled loft and buries herself under the dirty pile. She hears and sees rats nearby and lets out a gasp. She quiets herself, as the rats seem safer then what’s approaching.

The barn doors stretch open and Roscoe and several of his friends enter pulling behind them two black men whose hands are bound behind their backs. Ethel sees a small black boy being restrained by one of the men.
ROSCOE NORRIS
Bring that little Nigger over here
so he can see.

Ethel knows she can’t move. If she is found, she will surely
die.

She peeks through the hay and recognizes one of the black
men. It’s Brotha.

She wanted desperately to speak out. She does not know the
other man, but she thought the young boy must be his son;
because she can hear him murmuring under a sea of tears
something that sounds like ‘daddy’.

GEORGE
Roscoe, you want me to get the
blade? You said I could do it this
time.

ROSCOE NORRIS
What have I told you about using
name! We refer to each other as
brother.

SPOONER
He’s young. He don’t know no
better. Get the blade son.

The eager young Klansman hurries and picks up a large double
bladed axe and gives it to Spooner.

SPOONER (CONT’D)
Say your prayer Niggas! Not that
anybody’s listening!

Ethel can see the eyes of the young boy close as the sound of
the blade comes in contact with the man’s head.

YOUNG BOY
(Screams).

Ethel bites down on the sleeve of her folded arm, forcing
herself to remain completely still and as silent as she can be.

INT. OLD BARN – NEXT DAY – EARLY MORNING

Ethel opens her tired eyes. Though she didn’t sleep much she
was able to rest for a few moments.
Ethel listens for sounds of the men from outside, but the only sound she can hear is a dog barking in the distance. She climbs out of the loft.

INT. BARN FLOOR – CONTINUOUS

Ethel sees the horrific sight of the dead black man lying on the floor and the bloody axe next to his body. She wants to scream but no sound will leave her mouth. She hurries over to the barn door.

EXT. BARN – CONTINUOUS

Scared that Roscoe and his friends will return, Ethel knows that she can’t stay here. She is so turned around and has no idea where she is. She is hoping that the daylight will bring her new direction.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE – PERRY AND ETHEL’S BEDROOM – LATER

Aunt Edna and the rest of the family wait patiently while the doctor checks Perry’s injuries.

Perry lay severely injured.

EDNA YOUNG
How is he Doctor?

DOCTOR
He’s going to be fine. Couple of broken ribs, and a lot of bruises; but he’ll make it.

CLARA THOMAS
You sure? He looks worse than a few broken ribs and some bruises.

DOCTOR
Yes, I’m sure.

The doctor puts his medical utensils inside his medical bag.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE – HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

Edna escorts him downstairs to the front door.

EDNA YOUNG
Thank you for coming Doctor.
DOCTOR
Yes. If he needs anything be sure
to call me.

EDNA YOUNG
I will.

She opens the door and the doctor leaves.

Edna closes the front door and returns upstairs.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE - PERRY AND ETHEL’S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

EDNA YOUNG
Come on y’all; ain’t sence in
standing around watching him.

INT. AUNT EDNA’S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The family gathers to talk.

HELEN YOUNG
Has anybody heard anything about
Ethel?

EDNA YOUNG
Not yet.

Helen burst into tears. Aunt Edna goes to her side.

EDNA YOUNG (CONT’D)
I’m sure she’s fine.

Edna tries to convince herself more than Helen.

EDNA YOUNG (CONT’D)
I’ll get supper started. Clara,
Helen y’all wanna help?

CLARA THOMAS
Sure.

Still in tears.

HELEN YOUNG
Yes Ma’am.

The women go into the kitchen.
EXT. TRUDY’S HOME – LATER

Trudy Norris comes out of her house to get into her car.

Her angry husband screams from the doorway.

    ROSCOE NORRIS
    Where you think you goin’!

    TRUDY NORRIS
    I told you last night that I had some errands to run.

    ROSCOE NORRIS
    I’m gettin’ sick of you leavin’ early and comin’ back late. It don’t look right!

    TRUDY NORRIS
    What don’t look right?

    ROSCOE NORRIS
    Look Trudy, folks is talkin’; you already missed too many damn meetins’! With my position! It don’t look right! And I ain’t gonna put with it no more!

    TRUDY NORRIS
    Fine Roscoe! I’ll be there! Now I’m late. I gotta go.

Trudy climbs in her car and drives away in a hurry.

    ROSCOE NORRIS
    You better be!

EXT. LONE ROAD – CONTINUOUS

Trudy drives throughout this small town hitting as many back roads as she can in an effort to find Ethel.

EXT. MARVELLA’S HOUSE – LATER

With no luck, Trudy pulls up in front of Marvella’s home. She gets out of her car, walks up to the door and rings the doorbell.

Marvella opens the door.
Trudy enters and Marvella leads her to the sitting room.

MARVELLA JONES
Have a seat.

Trudy and Marvella sit down simultaneously.

MARVELLA JONES (CONT’D)
You bringing me word about my husband.

TRUDY NORRIS
I wish I was, but I still ain’t seen or heard anything about Joe. I’m here on a totally different matter.

MARVELLA JONES
What is it?

TRUDY NORRIS
I’m looking for someone.

MARVELLA JONES
Who is it? You want something to drink?

TRUDY NORRIS
No thank you. I can’t stay. I’m trying to find a lady.

MARVELLA JONES
Do you know what her name is?

TRUDY NORRIS
Yes, Ethel.

MARVELLA JONES
Ethel! Ethel Thomas?
TRUDY NORRIS
Yes, I believe so.

MARVELLA JONES
Yes, I know them. Ethel is my cousin. Why are you looking for her?

TRUDY NORRIS
Have you seen her?

MARVELLA JONES
Been a couple days. They came out to pay their respects for Joe. But they left going back to Edna’s house.

TRUDY NORRIS
Yes, I know, but they never made it.

MARVELLA JONES
My Lord!

TRUDY NORRIS
I found Perry. He was severely beaten. I got him back to Edna’s but his wife, Ethel, I haven’t been able to find her. The last place I saw her was at the gas station.

Barbara peeks around the corner.

MARVELLA JONES
Come on round and say hi.

Barbara doesn’t move.

MARVELLA JONES (CONT’D)
Barbi Doll I know you hear me. Come round here and say hello to Miss Trudy.

Barbara remains on the other side of the wall.

TRUDY NORRIS
It’s okay. I have to be leaving anyway. If you see or hear from Ethel, please let me know.

They stand and walk to the front door. Marvilla pulls the door open. Barbara pulls her stuff cat up to her mouth as if trying to prevent herself from speaking or trying to hide herself.
MARVELLA JONES
I’m sorry I couldn’t help.

TRUDY NORRIS
Thank you anyway. I talk to you soon; and I’ll keep my ears and eyes open for Joe.

Marvella warmly touches her and nods appropriately. Trudy leaves and Marvella closes the door.

EXT. MARVELLA’S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

Trudy walks over to her car, climbs inside, and drives away.

EXT. THE DEN MEETING – LATE NIGHT

Roscoe and several other Klansmen lead the young boy and Brotha over to a hanging tree. They are all dressed in their Klan attire with the hoods pulled up to reveal their faces.

Ethel has wanders very near to the “Den” meeting. The light from burning sticks held in the hands of several men is the only light in the area so Ethel is well hidden in the darkness. She quickly retreats into the tall brush as not to be seen. She is so scared, urine runs down her leg. She gathers her thoughts and takes the gun out of her purse just in case she needs to use it.

She snatches at some grass to wipe her wet leg. She can hear hound dogs that are tied to a nearby tree howling noisily.

Suddenly she hears a familiar voice, and peeks through the brush.

Begging

BROTHA
Please Mista! The boy ain’t done nothin’. Let him go! He ain’t gonna say nothin’. Please Mista let em’ go.

She whispers.

ETHEL THOMAS
My Lord! Brotha.

She searches for more familiar faces and sees the young boy from the barn. She also sees another familiar face, Trudy Norris.
ETHEL THOMAS (CONT'D)

My Lord!

SPOONER
You right! He ain’t gonna say nothing!

Cheers and jeers amongst the men.

Startled, Ethel pulls herself back into the brush.

BROTHA
Please Mista! Please!

ROSCOE NORRIS
Yoe daddy got axed cause he raped a white woman!

The young boy replies with both sincere fear and courage in his whispered voice.

YOUNG BOY
My daddy didn’t rape nobody!

ROSCOE NORRIS
You one brave lil’ coon; speaking to me like that. Wanna join your daddy, hum boy!

One of the Klansmen picks up a hot poke iron and sticks Brotha in his side. The sound of Brotha’s tortured screams reach Ethel’s ear, as the hot metal comes in contact with his body.

Ethel covers her mouth hard to keep from screaming as tears flow down her cheeks.

ROSCOE NORRIS (CONT’D)
When is you niggas gone learn we ain’t bullshittin’. When we tell y’all we gonna get rid of all you monkeys, we mean it!

HENRY
Send y’all black asses back to hell!

GEORGE
Give me a piece of that tie.

He ties Brotha’s hands behind his back.
A fellow Klansman tosses the loose end of a rope over the tree and the looped end is pulled over Brotha’s head by yet another.

BROTHA
The Lord is my Sheperd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteous for his name’s sake...

GRAND CYCLOPS
...That’s right boy say yoe prayers. Not that anybody’s gonna hear you; where you goin!

Ethel is saying the same prayer along with Brotha.

ETHEL THOMAS
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me...

ETHEL THOMAS/BROTHA
...Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over...

Brotha is hoisted in the air by his neck. His voice fades away and Ethel completes the prayer alone.

ETHEL THOMAS
...Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

GRAND CYCLOPS
Light em’ up boys!

The young boy screams out.

ETHEL THOMAS
Amen.

Ethel peeks out of the brush to as the young boy horrific screams invades her ears and she sees Brotha’s body set ablaze.
This time she can’t hold back. She covers her mouth as tightly as she can to muffle her scream as best as she can; thankfully her muffled voice is drowned out by the howling dogs and the cheering crowds.

A Klansman addresses his young son who is also dressed in Klan attire.

**WYATT**

Don’t close your eyes son; I want you to see what a monkey looks like when it’s cooked up good.

The boy opens his eyes and stares between the burning body and the young black boy whose eyes are shut tight.

**ROSCOE NORRIS**

Don’t worry (half) breed! We got somethin’ better in mind for you!

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**EXT. THE DEN – NEXT DAY – EARLY MORNING**

The smell of the charred body of Brotha, still smoldering, swings from a nearby tree and the stench of his burning flesh is so potent, Ethel vomits.

**EXT. THE DEN – CONTINUOUS**

Ethel forces herself to look at the body hanging from the tree. She’s looks to see if there is more than one. She’s looks to see if the young boy’s body is there; he is not. Ethel is not sure to be relieved or more frighten. She knows that the young boy will not live, what she doesn’t know is what the Klan will do to him or where the Klan has taken him.

Ethel walks in the direction of the road. She takes one last look back at Brotha’s charred body swinging from the tree. Her mind can’t help but wonder what they will do to her if she is caught.

**EXT. TALL GRASS FIELD – NEXT DAY**

Ethel makes her way through a field of tall grass. Hunger drives her towards the only house with a light shining from the window. Ethel knows danger, even death may be waiting.

**INT. EDNA’S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – LATER**

Perry Thomas comes down stairs.
EDNA YOUNG
Perry, you’re up?

PERRY THOMAS
Yeah; for a minute I didn’t know where I was.

WILLIAM YOUNG
How you feeling?

Perry rubs the bruised side of his face.

PERRY THOMAS
Better than I look.

EDNA YOUNG
Do you remember what happened?

PERRY THOMAS
All I remember is - Plute and I were on our way back here. We stop for gas; and that’s when all hell broke loose.

WILLIAM YOUNG
All hell broke loose?

PERRY THOMAS
Yeah.

Scans the room for Ethel.

PERRY THOMAS (CONT’D)
Where’s Plute?

HELEN YOUNG
She’s not here.

PERRY THOMAS
What do you mean, she’s not here? Where is she? Where’s Plute?

EDNA YOUNG
We don’t know. She’s been missing ever since you two went to see Marvella.

Finishes her mother’s unspoken words.

HELEN YOUNG
...Been three days.

PERRY THOMAS
Oh my God! We gotta find her.
EDNA YOUNG
Wait! We already have somebody looking for Plute.

PERRY THOMAS
Who?

EDNA YOUNG
The same woman you brought you here.

PERRY THOMAS
What do you mean? What woman?

LEE WALKER
Miss Trudy Norris.

OTIS YOUNG
If anybody can find Plute, Miss Trudy can.

HELEN YOUNG
I hope so.

EDNA YOUNG
Me too.

EXT. TRUDY’S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

Ethel silently tips up the porch steps and peaks through the window to see Trudy rubbing her hands together with worry.

Trudy is alone. She believes that Trudy has led her husband and Brotha to their deaths. Hunger, however, will not allow her to turn away. Ethel walks over to the door. She is about to knock when the roar of a car engine in the distance sends her silently scurrying into the nearby bushes.

Ethel waits for a chance to escape as the car approaches and parks in front of the house.

Roscoe and his three of his friends get out of the car carrying bats and clubs. Roscoe casually tosses his bat on the seat cushion of porch swing. The other three men do the same.

They enter the house.

Ethel is frozen with fear, but she listens intently to their conversation.
O.S. ROSCOE NORRIS
Damn! Ain’t no gawd-damn food in this house!

O.S. TRUDY NORRIS
I made meatloaf. It’s on the stove.

O.S. SPOONER
Ain’t shit to do. Coons all hidin’ inside.

O.S GEORGE
I’m going to get me a piece of ass at Shorty’s.

O.S. SPOONER
A piece of nasty ass. Cause you know Robbie ain’t the cleanest bitch.

O.S GEORGE
Yeah, but at least she’ll put out, unlike the rest.

O.S ROSCOE NORRIS
Dammit, assholes watch ya’lls mouths in front of my wife.

O.S GEORGE
We sorry, Miss Trudy.

O.S. TRUDY NORRIS
I think it’s time for you boys to leave.

O.S. SPOONER
Yes Ma’am Miss Trudy. We sorry for our behavior. Come on ya’ll, it’s time to go.

O.S ROSCOE NORRIS
I’ll be back, I’m gonna drop the boys off at Shorty’s.

TRUDY NORRIS
That’s fine.

They leave. Each man picks up his own weapon, files into the truck, and drives away.

Ethel waits until the car is clearly out of sight. She comes out of the bushes and hurries away from Trudy’s house and back the way she came.
EXT. LONELY ROAD – CONTINUOUS

Ethel makes it back to the road and walks a fast as her legs would carry her. She comforts herself by singing an old Negro spiritual as she walks along the road.

EXT. TRUDY’S HOUSE – NEXT DAY – EARLY MORNING

Trudy walks to her car.

Roscoe hurries to the door.

    ROSCOE NORRIS
    Damn baby?

    TRUDY NORRIS
    What do you want?

    ROSCOE NORRIS
    Where you going this early?

Trudy turns to face her husband. She pretends to be angry to prevent him from probing.

    TRUDY NORRIS
    Did I question you last night when you stumbled in here at three o’clock this morning smelling like cheap perfume?

Roscoe stumbles to find his words

    ROSCOE NORRIS
    Awe babe, you know that wasn’t me.

    TRUDY NORRIS
    Well I hope to hell it was you crawling in my bed last night.

    ROSCOE NORRIS
    You know what I mean. I didn’t do nothing but have a couple of beers; that all. I swear, just a couple of beers.

    TRUDY NORRIS
    A couple of beers my ass.

She gets in the car and drives away before he can say anything else.
EXT. LONE ROAD - TRUDY’S CAR - CONTINUOUS
Trudy drive everywhere she can think of, searching for Ethel.

EXT. GAS STATION – FOUR HOURS LATER
Trudy pulls into the gas station to get gas.

    WILLIE
    Would you like me to fill it Ma’am?

    TRUDY NORRIS
    Yes, please.

The HANK fills up her gas tank. She pays him.

    TRUDY NORRIS (CONT’D)
    Keep the change.

She drives away.

EXT. LONELY ROAD – LATER
Just as Trudy is about to give up her search, she sees a dark figure move in the brushes.
She stops her car and jumps out.
She calls out.

    TRUDY NORRIS
    Who’s there? Who’s there?

No response.

    TRUDY NORRIS (CONT’D)
    Ethel, is that you?

Ethel is afraid to move.

    TRUDY NORRIS (CONT’D)
    Ethel Thomas, I only want to help you. I took your husband back to Edna, your people’s house.

Ethel finds courage to speak.

    ETHEL THOMAS
    Perry, he isn’t dead?
TRUDY NORRIS
Lawk, no. Your husband is very much
alive. I took him to Edna. Look
you’d better come on, before
somebody sees me and you.

Ethel looked around and wondered who could possibly see them
out here in the middle of nowhere.

Ethel comes out of hiding and slowly approaches Trudy.

TRUDY NORRIS (CONT’D)
Lawk, you a sight for sore eyes.
I’ve been looking for you for days.
Come on let’s get you home.

ETHEL THOMAS
You sure my husband is alive?

TRUDY NORRIS
Yes, I’m very sure. Your family is
worried to death about you, and
frankly so was I.

Ethel get in the car and they drive away.

Ethel’s stomach growls loudly. Trudy points to a small bag on
the back seat.

TRUDY NORRIS (CONT’D)
There’s some fruit in the bag.

Ethel reaches for the bag and pulls an apple out and quickly
scarfs it down. She eats a second one.

INT. TRUDY’S CAR – CONTINUOUS

Ethel and Trudy drive in the direction of Edna’s home; in
route Trudy spots Roscoe’s car coming in the opposite
direction.

TRUDY NORRIS
Oh lawd!

ETHEL THOMAS
What’s wrong?

TRUDY NORRIS
Look.

Ethel looks up to see the car coming.
ETHEL THOMAS
Who is that?

TRUDY NORRIS
My husband.

ETHEL THOMAS
What do we?

TRUDY NORRIS
Climb in the back, get down and cover up.

Ethel obeys. She lays on the floor of the car and covers up with the blanket.

Trudy bring her car to a stop, and gets out.

ROSCOE NORRIS
What you doing out here?

TRUDY NORRIS
Coming from getting gas.

ROSCOE NORRIS
Where you going now?

TRUDY NORRIS
In town. Going to pick up a few groceries. I might stop off at Edna’s to get my hair done. You?

ROSCOE NORRIS
Nothing. I was going to hang out with the boys. Want me to come with you?

TRUDY NORRIS
Sure if you don’t mind watching me get my hair done.

ROSCOE NORRIS
Naw. I see you later.

TRUDY NORRIS
Okay, I’ll see you at home.

INT. TRUDY’S CAR – CONTINUOUS

Ethel hears Roscoe’s car door close and him drive away.
EXT. TRUDY’S CAR – CONTINUOUS

Trudy climbs back inside her car and drives away.

Ethel calls from under the blanket.

    ETHEL THOMAS
    Can I come out?

    TRUDY NORRIS
    Not yet. Let’s give him time to get out of sight.

After a little while longer of driving.

    TRUDY NORRIS (CONT’D)
    You can come out.

Trudy pull off to the side of the road to allow Ethel comes out of hiding and climb in the front seat.

She drives away.

They in silence. Trudy turns on the car radio new about the War.

    TRUDY NORRIS (CONT’D)
    I hope you don’t mind, I’d like to hear the news.

    ETHEL THOMAS
    No, I don’t mind.

    O.S. RADIO ANNOUNCER
    Tense relations continues between the Negro community and many of the local businesses. Business owners are concerned that the issue with the bus boycott could spread; And the aftermath could gravely affect their business. Many feel that separation is good for the entire state, and should remain in place.

Feeling embarrassed, by the radio announcer’s comments, Trudy turns off the radio.

    TRUDY NORRIS
    Sorry.

    ETHEL THOMAS
    Don’t be.
TRUDY NORRIS
I’ve been looking for you for days.

Skeptical of why Trudy is helping her, Ethel confesses what she witnessed at the Klan Den.

ETHEL THOMAS
I saw you.

TRUDY NORRIS
You saw me what?

ETHEL THOMAS
I saw you hang and burn and man.

TRUDY NORRIS
What you saw was me not being able to save a man’s life. I didn’t have a choice.

Takes a good look a Trudy.

ETHEL THOMAS
Why are you doing this?

TRUDY NORRIS
What?

ETHEL THOMAS
Helping me?

TRUDY NORRIS
Because you need it, and because I made a promise to your aunt.

ETHEL THOMAS
Why are you risking your life to help the colored?

TRUDY NORRIS
Truth?

ETHEL THOMAS
Yes.

TRUDY NORRIS
Because a colored man save my father’s life.

ETHEL THOMAS
What do you mean? How?
TRUDY NORRIS
My father was in the Klan. He’d hang a Negro at the drop of hat. One day while he was out fishing, his boat flipped and my father got caught up in his line. It was a Negro who cut him free and got him out of the water. Before he passed away my father secretly helped many coloreds, and so have I.

A flood of memories fill Ethel’s head.

ETHEL THOMAS
I saw what they did to that boy’s father! I saw what they did to Brotha too! I saw Clayton; they just left his body on the side of the road like he was some kind of dead animal! I saw what they did! We’re human beings! We are human beings!

TRUDY NORRIS
I know.

ETHEL THOMAS
Where’s that little boy?

TRUDY NORRIS
Who’s Brotha?

ETHEL THOMAS
The man your husband hung and burned to death.

TRUDY NORRIS
I’m sorry.

ETHEL THOMAS
What happened to the little boy?

TRUDY NORRIS
I don’t know.

ETHEL THOMAS
Do you know what happened to my cousin Joe?

TRUDY NORRIS
Marvella’s husband?

ETHEL THOMAS
Yes.
Trudy lies

TRUDY NORRIS
I don’t know.

ETHEL THOMAS
Is he dead?

TRUDY NORRIS
I think so.

ETHEL THOMAS
Thank you for that. I’ll tell Marvella.

Trudy turns the radio back on.

EXT. EDNA’S HOME – LATER

Trudy pulls up in front of Edna home.

ETHEL THOMAS
Thank you so much. I don’t know how I could ever repay you.

TRUDY NORRIS
I was happy to do it.

Ethel gets out of the car and runs to the front door.

Trudy watches as she rings the doorbell. The door opens and she see Ethel pulled into a tight hug by Edna.

EDNA YOUNG
My lawd; she’s home. Perry Ethel’s home.

Ethel and Edna wave to Trudy and close the door.

Trudy drives away.

INT. EDNA’S HOME – CONTINUOUS

Screams of joy.

The family rush to greet Ethel. Perry’s injuries prevent him from hurrying. He approaches Ethel and pulls her into a passionate kiss and tight hug.

Ethel catches a glimpse of her reflection in a wall mirror. For the first time she sees how dirty she is. She is instantly embarrassed by her personal appearance.
PERRY THOMAS
You okay?

ETHEL THOMAS
I could use a bath; and some food.

EDNA YOUNG
Perry take her upstairs and let her get a bath. I’ll get some food on the table.

101 INT. EDNA’S HOUSE - BATHROOM - LATER

Ethel sits in the bath tub and attempts to take a soothing bath. Her feelings overwhelm her and she breaks down, crying uncontrollably.

102 INT. EDNA’S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Perry hears Ethel and approaches the bathroom door. He starts to enter, but changes his mind. Instead he just listens to her sobbing.

Edna comes upstairs to check on Ethel.

Perry raises a finger to his lips indicating for Edna to keep silent.

Edna tip toes over to Perry.

Whispered conversation

EDNA YOUNG
Is she okay?

PERRY THOMAS
Naw, but she will be. I’ll see to that.

EDNA YOUNG
Want me to go in to her?

PERRY THOMAS
No, let her cry it out.

EDNA YOUNG
Okay. I’ll go and finish getting the food ready. Call me if you need me.

PERRY THOMAS
Okay.
He leans in and kisses her on the cheek.

Edna goes back downstairs.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE – BATHROOM – SHORT TIME LATER

Ethel offers a very tearful prayer.

ETHEL THOMAS
Lord, God Almighty I thank you for bringing me home to my family. I praise you God for keeping me safe. I know that you will heal my heart and my mind. Please bless and keep the families of those who lost their lives to senseless killing. Please bless my own family, and thank your keeping my husband safe. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE – HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

Perry listens to Ethel’s prayer.

PERRY THOMAS
Amen.

Confident that Ethel will be fine, he goes into their bedroom to wait for her.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE – BEDROOM – SHORT TIME LATER

Ethel enters to see Perry sitting on the bed. She can’t help but break into tears again.

Perry stand to his feet and limps over to embrace her.

PERRY THOMAS
Awe, sweetie it’s okay. You’re safe now. Don’t cry.

ETHEL THOMAS
I’m just so happy that you’re alive.

PERRY THOMAS
No happier than I am. I was scared to death that I had lost you.

ETHEL THOMAS
They killed Brotha.
PERRY THOMAS
I figured as much. They killed
Clayton too. Left me for dead.

Dramatic Pause

PERRY THOMAS (CONT’D)
Them boys beat me until they got
tire. I just knew they was going to
kill us. I laid there and pretended
to be dead. They tossed me on the
side of the road with Clayton’s
body. I waited until they left and
I tried to make it home. Miss Trudy
found me, put me pin her car and
brought me home.

ETHEL THOMAS
Thank God for Trudy. I believe Joe
is dead too.

PERRY THOMAS
Wow, are you sure?

ETHEL THOMAS
No, but I could tell when I asked
Trudy; that she didn’t want to tell
me.

PERRY THOMAS
I thought I was going to die, and I
just wanted you to stay in that
bathroom.

ETHEL THOMAS
I didn’t know what to do; and when
I couldn’t find you. I didn’t know
what to do.

PERRY THOMAS
You’re safe. You’re home. Thank
God; that’s all I can say, is thank
God, He brought you back to me.

Embrace

ETHEL THOMAS
The family is waiting. Why don’t
you go down and tell them that I
will be down in a minute.

Perry stands to his feet.
ETHEL THOMAS (CONT’D)
I love you.

PERRY THOMAS
I love you too.

He leaves.

INT. TRUDY’S HOME – LIVING ROOM – LATER
Trudy returns to her home to find her husband in the arms of Berthalue.
Berthalue is sitting in ROSCOE NORRIS’s lap passionately kissing him.

TRUDY NORRIS
Hey honey, I’m finally home.

In shock.
Roscoe jumps up, Berthalue almost falls to the floor.

TRUDY NORRIS (CONT’D)
What in the hell is going on here?

ROSCE NORRIS
Awe, babe...it’s not what you think!

TRUDY NORRIS
No?

ROSCE NORRIS
No, I was giving...

He can’t remember Berthalue’s name.
Berthalue interjects.

BERTHALUE
Hi, I’m Berthalue. You must be Roscoe’s...

TRUDY NORRIS
...Wife. I must be Roscoe’s wife. And I believe this is where you leave my house.

BERTHALUE
Roscoe, you never told me you was married. I thought you was his sister.
TRUDY NORRIS
Sister? That’s one I haven’t heard before. I would appreciate if you leave. You can wait on Roscoe outside. Thank you.

Trudy picks up Berthalue’s purse and gives it to her and abruptly escorts her out the front door.

She turns to face Roscoe who act as though this situation does not faze him.

TRUDY NORRIS (CONT’D)
Roscoe I want you out!

ROSCOE NORRIS
Out! This is my house, and I’m not going nowhere.

TRUDY NORRIS
How dare you bring another woman into my home!

ROSCOE NORRIS
How dare you force me to.

TRUDY NORRIS
What! You are full of shit! Get out of my house!

ROSCOE NORRIS
I told you, this is my house and I ain’t going nowhere.

TRUDY NORRIS
You know what, you are absolutely right; this is your house. I’ll leave.

INT. TRUDY’S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Trudy goes into the bedroom to pack her belongings.

Roscoe follows close behind.

ROSCOE NORRIS
What are you doing? I didn’t mean nothing by it! This is much your house as it is mine.

Trudy continues to pack her belongings and does not respond.
ROSCOE NORRIS (CONT’D)
Come on Trudy! I didn’t mean nothing by it. You know that.

She does not respond.

ROSCOE NORRIS (CONT’D)
You know I didn’t mean it.

He approaches her and tries to pull her into his arms, but she snatches away very abruptly.

TRUDY NORRIS
The comment? Or the woman?

Roscoe is kind of taken aback.

ROSCOE NORRIS
Come on Trudy.

TRUDY NORRIS
Roscoe, you hear me, and hear me good; I’m tired, and I am not putting up with your cheating shit anymore.

INT. TRUDY’S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Carrying two big suitcases, Trudy make her way back to the living room; followed by Roscoe.

ROSCOE NORRIS
Come on, Trudy; it won’t happen no more; I promise. I just missed you.

TRUDY NORRIS
Missed me? You mean to tell me that you missed me so much, you went out and got another woman. Now that’s original. You haven’t used that one before.

ROSCOE NORRIS
Come on Trudy, you can’t leave.

TRUDY NORRIS
I can. This is the last time. I’m leaving you, for good!

She leaves.
EXT. TRUDY’S CAR – CONTINUOUS

Trudy loads her suitcases
She turns to face Roscoe.

TRUDY NORRIS
I’ll be back to get the rest of my things. Goodbye Roscoe.

Trudy climbs into her car and drives away.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE – DINING ROOM – LATER

Family and friend have gathered to celebrate Ethel’s safe return.
Perry checks his watch.

PERRY THOMAS
I’ll go and see what’s taking so long.

EDNA YOUNG
I’ll go, you hobbling as it is.

Edna hurries up the stairs.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE – OUTSIDE BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Edna knocks on the door.
No response.
Edna knocks on the door once more
Ethel calls from inside the room.

O.S. ETHEL THOMAS
Yes?

EDNA YOUNG
It’s me, Plute. Can I come in?

O.S. ETHEL THOMAS
Yes, Auntie.

INT. EDNA’S HOUSE – BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Edna enters.
EDNA YOUNG
How come you’re not downstairs?
Everyone’s waiting.

ETHEL THOMAS
I know.

EDNA YOUNG
Well come on.

ETHEL THOMAS
I can’t.

Edna walks over and sits down on the bed besides Ethel.

EDNA YOUNG
Why not?

ETHEL THOMAS
To be honest, I’m scared.

EDNA YOUNG
After what you’ve been through, you have every right to be afraid. But not of your family.

ETHEL THOMAS
I’m afraid of what they want to know, and what I can’t tell them.

EDNA YOUNG
What they want to know? Baby, what everyone wants to know is that you’re okay. Everything else is between you and God. Let them take it up with Him if they’re that nosey.

Edna offer her smile, and Ethel smiles back.

EDNA YOUNG (CONT’D)
Now come on, everyone’s waiting.

Edna and Ethel leave the room.

INT. EDNA’S HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Perry and Helen hurry to greet Ethel.

HELEN YOUNG
Now maybe we can get back to planning my wedding.
ETHEL THOMAS
I thought you would be married by now.

HELEN YOUNG
Very funny. Cousin it’s so good to have you back home.

ETHEL THOMAS
It’s good to be home.

EDNA YOUNG
Food’s ready.

Everyone walks into the dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The family welcomes Ethel back home.

WILLIAM YOUNG
Plute, you had us worried to death.

ETHEL THOMAS
I had myself worried too, Uncle.

WILLIAM YOUNG
You okay niece?

ETHEL THOMAS
I am now, Uncle. Perry what about our truck?

PERRY THOMAS
Girl, you worried about a truck?

ETHEL THOMAS
What little we had is still in that truck.

PERRY THOMAS
Well I’m not going back for any of it. They can have it.

Everyone laughs, including Ethel.

INT. LOCAL COMMUNITY HALL - HELEN’S WEDDING RECEPTION - WEEKS LATER

The family and friends celebrate Helen and Oscar’s wedding in the community hall next door to the local church.
ETHEL THOMAS
I’m so happy for you and Oscar.

WILLIAM YOUNG
Oscar, you taking my baby. And I know you’ll make her happy.

OSCAR BROWN
Yes Sir, I will.

116 EXT. LOCAL CHURCH - CONTINUOUS
A homemade bomb is thrown through the stain glass window.

117 INT. LOCAL COMMUNITY HALL - CONTINUOUS
The loud screech from car speeding away is heard.
The men hurry to the window, but the car is long gone. They return to the party.

118 INT. LOCAL CHURCH - CONTINUOUS
Smoke and fire quickly spread through the church.

   PERRY THOMAS
   Hey, there’s smoke coming from the church.

   WILLIAM YOUNG
   Get everybody out of here!

119 EXT. LOCAL COMMUNITY HALL - CHURCH - CONTINUOUS
Chaotic scene as people help each other escape the burning building.

   EDNA YOUNG
   Come on, ya’ll get those people out of there!

Ethel helps a lady who is coughing from the smoke.

   ETHEL THOMAS
   You’ll be okay.

120 EXT. LOCAL COMMUNITY HALL - CHURCH - CONTINUOUS
Ethel helps the wounded; she spots Perry who is also helping the wounded. Seeing he is safe, Ethel continues what she is doing.

INT. EDNA’S HOME – LATE EVENING

The family has gathered back at the house.

EDNA YOUNG
Helen, I don’t think it’s a good idea for you an Oscar to be leaving. I know it’s your wedding night, but...

WILLIAM YOUNG
...But after what we just been through, I believe it’s good idea if everyone stays close to home.

OSCAR BROWN
With all due respect. I thank ya’ll for wanting to look after us and all, but that’s my job now. Helen and I will be okay.

WILLIAM YOUNG
With all due respect, that’s my daughter. And with these fools running round here crazy as hell; blowing up churches; we need to stay close together.

OSCAR BROWN
I’ll tell you what, we’ll go to the hotel and come back in the morning. We’ll wait go on our honeymoon.

WILLIAM YOUNG
No...

EDNA YOUNG
...That’s just fine.

Edna turns to face her husband.

EDNA YOUNG (CONT’D)
They’re newlyweds.

Edna turns back to her daughter.

EDNA YOUNG (CONT’D)
Go on, we’ll see ya’ll when you get back.
Helen and Oscar leave.

INT. EDNA’S HOME – PERRY AND ETHEL’S ROOM – LATER

Perry and Ethel retire after a long hard day.

ETHEL THOMAS
Perry, I love my family, but I’m ready to leave.

PERRY THOMAS
Yeah, I wanted to talk you about that.

He sits on the bed next to Ethel.

PERRY THOMAS (CONT’D)
It’s not safe here. To be honest, I don’t know if it will ever be safe here again.

ETHEL THOMAS
What are you saying?

PERRY THOMAS
I think we should think about leaving Montgomery.

ETHEL THOMAS
Where do you want to go?

He takes a letter out of his pants pocket.

PERRY THOMAS
Well, while you was gone, I did look into getting a job in Chicago. I got a letter from your sister.

ETHEL THOMAS
My sister?

PERRY THOMAS
Yeah. I asked her to look into finding us a place; and look...

He gives her the letter and points to a particular passage.

PERRY THOMAS (CONT’D)
She says there is plenty of work.

ETHEL THOMAS
Are you sure, I know how you feel about the big city.
PERRY THOMAS
Yeah, well I’ve had my fill with the Klan.

ETHEL THOMAS
For a life time. Yes, let go.

PERRY THOMAS
You sure?

ETHEL THOMAS
I’m sure.

Their share a passionate kiss.

INT. HOTEL – HONEYMOOD SUITE – LATER

Oscar gives Helen some devastating news.

HELEN YOUNG
I’m so happy; we’re finally married. And we’re finally alone.

OSCAR BROWN
I know; I thought this day would never come.

HELEN YOUNG
I can’t wait to start our lives together.

She throws her arms around his neck and he puts his arms around her waist.

OSCAR BROWN
Me too, but it might have to wait for a little while.

HELEN YOUNG
What are you talking about?

OSCAR BROWN
I enlisted.

Helen drops her arms from around his neck and steps away.

HELEN YOUNG
You what?

OSCAR BROWN
I enlisted. I leave in two days.
HELEN YOUNG
You enlisted! Why would you do this?

OSCAR BROWN
I enlisted because it’s something I have to do. I want to serve our country.

HELEN YOUNG
Serve our country? My brother Charlieboy is somewhere across the water serving our country. Our country! Hell! Our country don’t give a damn about us. And both you fools want to serve our country!

Tries to pull her into his arms.

HELEN YOUNG (CONT’D)
Don’t touch me.

OSCAR BROWN
Look, maybe if we help win this war; maybe our country will think twice about the Negroes.

HELEN YOUNG
I can’t believe you; they just bombed our church, and on our wedding day; and you want to go and fight for a country who wants you dead?

OSCAR BROWN
I have to. And this country does not want me dead; it’s just these fools in the Klan.

HELEN YOUNG
The Klan; might as well be the whole damn country. Don’t go.

OSCAR BROWN
I have to go.

INT. EDNA’S HOME – KITCHEN – MID DAY
The family is gathered together to talk about the bombing.
It’s ridiculous that the police aren’t trying to find the ones that blew up the church.

EDNA YOUNG
I can’t believe that someone would stoop that low; to bomb the house of God. What is this world coming to?

The back door opens Helen and Oscar enter.

EDNA YOUNG (CONT’D)
Helen; what’s wrong with you?

HELEN YOUNG
Ask my husband; he seems to think he got go and fight for a country that don’t give a damn about us.

OSCAR BROWN
She’s mad because I joined up. I’m leaving tomorrow.

EDNA YOUNG
You what?

HELEN YOUNG
Momma, he joined the service.

EDNA YOUNG
Did you know about this?

HELEN YOUNG
I found out last night.

ETHEL THOMAS
On your wedding night?

HELEN YOUNG
Yes, on my wedding night.

OSCAR BROWN
She doesn’t understand, this is something I have to do.

HELEN YOUNG
Is dying something you have to do? Because that’s what’s going to happen!

OSCAR BROWN
No, it’s not.
HELEN YOUNG
You don’t know that!

OSCAR BROWN
I do. I’m not going to die. Hell I have a better chance of being killed by one of these crazy ass fools with sheets on their head, than I do in the war.

OTIS YOUNG
He’s got a point.

HELEN YOUNG
Otis, I didn’t ask you.

OSCAR BROWN
You can be mad all you want; I joined, I leave in the morning, and there is nothing you can do; so drop it.

HELEN YOUNG
Drop it! I’ll drop it aright! I want an annulment.

EDNA YOUNG
I know you’re angry, but no one’s getting an annulment.

WILLIAM YOUNG
So your husband joined the service; he’s not the only one; if he hadn’t joined, he would have gotten drafted. You don’t want to send your husband into battle with this.

HELEN YOUNG
But dad...

WILLIAM YOUNG
...Leave your husband with something better than this. You two go on upstairs and talk this out.

Perry interrupts.

PERRY THOMAS
...Before you go, Ethel and I have something we’d like to say.

Everyone turns there attention toward Perry and Ethel, who gets up out of her chair and walks over to her husband.
They hold hands.

PERRY THOMAS (CONT’D)
We’re moving.

EDNA YOUNG
Moving?

PERRY THOMAS
We’re actually not just moving; we’re leaving Alabama.

ETHEL THOMAS
We decided last night. With everything going on; our house is gone. I’m tired of putting up with all this mess. I want to feel safe; and right now I don’t feel safe. I’m scared everyday, and I’m tired.

EDNA YOUNG
Where are you moving to?

PERRY THOMAS
Chicago.

OTIS YOUNG
Chicago?

ETHEL THOMAS
Yeah.

PERRY THOMAS
I got a job waiting for me.

ETHEL THOMAS
We’re gonna live with my sister until we get a place.

EDNA YOUNG
When are you leaving?

PERRY THOMAS
In a few weeks.

WILLIAM YOUNG
We’re sorry to see you go, but I understand.

EDNA YOUNG
Me too.
EXT. GREYHOUND BUS STATION – FEW WEEKS LATER – MID DAY

Perry and Ethel prepare to board the bus.

CLARA THOMAS
Little brother, you take care; do you hear me?

PERRY THOMAS
I hear, and I will.

EDNA YOUNG
You call me if you need anything. I mean it; call me.

ETHEL THOMAS
I will. Auntie, I love you.

EDNA YOUNG
I love you too.

They hug

William approaches Perry gives him a white envelope.

PERRY THOMAS
What’s this?

WILLIAM YOUNG
Just a little something to get you started.

PERRY THOMAS
I’ll pay you back.

WILLIAM YOUNG
No you won’t. Ya’ll just be safe. That’s how you pay me back.

They also hug

Ethel turns to Helen.

ETHEL THOMAS
I love you cousin. I’ll miss you.

HELEN YOUNG
I love you, and I’ll miss you too. Maybe when Oscar comes home, we can come for a visit.

ETHEL THOMAS
I hope so.
Overhead announcement rings out.

O.S. ANNOUNCER
The buses leaving for Chicago, Philadelphia, and Maine are now boarding.

Perry walks over to his wife.

PERRY THOMAS
Come on, we gotta go.

As Perry and Ethel get ready to board the bus; a familiar voice catches their attention, they look in its direction.

TRUDY NORRIS
Please be careful with my bags; thank you.

Trudy looks over at Perry and Ethel. They give each other a slight nod and half smile. Perry and Ethel board their bus; and Trudy boards her own.

The buses drive away leaving Ethel’s family waving goodbye.

FADE TO BLACK.