

****WINNER****
****First Prize****
****2015 PEN Prison Writer Drama Award****

The Legend Of John Crow

a play by

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No one outlives their past!

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Scene 1

John Crow's house. An optimistic realtor might call it charming. In fact, the home is old and dated but it is very clean. The furniture is old, dark and strong. A couch, a chair and a coffee table face the audience. An oversized grandfather clock, stage left, does not. The clock faces the front door. Bursting from the corners and creeping across the furniture are tropical plants. The walls are decorated brightly colored Vargas Girl type posters. The house resembles a gone-to-seed men's club and not a house in Terrell, Texas.

JOHN CROW SAVAGE does burpies - a prison exercise that combines squats and push-ups. Sweat drips from his body onto a towel that covers the floor. He is in his mid-thirties and resembles an elite athlete instead of an ex-con. His body, and his shaved head with its sharp features give him a menacing appearance, until...

...SOMSRI SAVAGE peeks in on him from the hallway door. She whistles at him, a catcall more spit than whistle. John Crow smiles. Somsri blushes and darts back down the hallway.

A Loud Door KNOCK.

John Crow scoops up his towel, slings it over his shoulder. He snatches a pair of jeans from the arm of the couch, revealing a bright red toolbox. John Crow yanks on his jeans.

Another Loud Door KNOCK.

John Crow jerks open the front door and turns back to grab his t-shirt from the coffee table.

CHRIS TUCK follows John Crow into his house. Chris Tuck, too, is a recent parolee and looks it. He is a skinny, feral-looking man with a incongruous pot belly. He is in his early thirties. There is

a bit of a whipped dog in Chris Tuck.
With a quick glance at John Crow, Chris
turns to the window.

CHRIS

Saw your car from the road. Man, I've dreamed about a Buick Grand National for years. Since I was a kid. Every day, I drive past that bad boy and say, Chris, if that Grand Nat is still there tomorrow, I'ma stop and ask about it. I've said that shit for two damn weeks and how many tomorrows do you really have? Not too many.

John Crow whips his shirt on in one lightning fast jerk.

JOHN CROW

I'm not the original owner, but I've had it close to twenty years. I have all the maintenance records in a shoe box in the trunk. I keep it up. Wash and wax it twice a week. Change the oil every three months. I even knew the original owner. He drove a hard bargain. I thought it was worth it at the time.

CHRIS

It says its got eighty-four thousand miles.

JOHN CROW

That's actual miles. You know anything about a Buick Grand National?

CHRIS

I know that car's a classic, I know that, and I know I want one.

JOHN CROW

Yeah. V-6. Automatic. A race car in disguise.

CHRIS

I know if it was mine, I'd never get rid of it, that's for sure.

JOHN CROW

Yeah. I never thought I'd get rid of it, but I'm trying to make up for a few things. That means the car goes.

CHRIS

Had a buddy once. He wanted a Buick Grand Nat so bad he traded his girlfriend to a dirty old man for it. I respect that.

Chris plucks his dirty ballcap off his head. His long, greasy hair falls down. He rubs his forehead with his wrist.

CHRIS

So, let's talk business. What you want for it?

JOHN CROW

As much as I can get for it.

CHRIS

Sure. Alright, Mr. Car Salesman, how about this - since you can't have my wife, how much money will you take for it?

JOHN CROW

I'll let it go for seven grand.

CHRIS

(Whistles.)

Will you take fifty-five hundred?

JOHN CROW

Show me fifty-five hundred and find out.

CHRIS

Look. I like it. Maybe not seven grand worth, but I like it. I don't know if my old lady will go for it but we need another car. We get our tax refund this week.

JOHN CROW

I've got a Honda in the garage I'll let you have for twenty-five hundred.

CHRIS

I don't want a damn Honda.

Chris turns to John Crow. He freezes as he finally looks at John Crow. He makes a quarter turn and looks at John Crow directly.

CHRIS

Goddamn! John Crow!

John Crow doesn't recognize Chris. Chris spins his ball cap backwards so that it accents his face.

CHRIS

You don't recognize me with hair or what? Goddamn! You don't recognize your old cellie? It ain't been, what? Five years?

John Crow nods slowly until he recognizes Chris.

JOHN CROW

Crisco.

CHRIS

I don't go by that anymore. I'm Chris.

John Crow and Chris do a three position handshake.

CHRIS

Damn. You don't look no different.

JOHN CROW

You got fat.

Chris pats his paunch.

CHRIS

Living that good life.

JOHN CROW

They kept you skinny in the pen.

CHRIS

Well, this ain't the pen.

(Pause.)

John Crow! Your baby, too! Selling the Grand Nat. Everyone else kept jack-shots over their bunk. John Crow kept that Grand Nat, right there. Hey. What was that story you used to tell? You traded your girlfriend to some dirty old man for it.

JOHN CROW

Yeah. I did a lot of fucked up shit. Can't believe you remember that.

CHRIS

Remember it! Hell, that story alone made you a legend.

JOHN CROW

Yeah. I'm trying to make up for a lot of that shit.

CHRIS

There's a lot of shit I can't forget, that car would make up for a lot of it.

JOHN CROW

That car may be the only thing I never fucked up.

CHRIS

I'd keep it. Well, I'd sell it to me, but if you don't do that, I'd keep it.

JOHN CROW

I'm trying to make up for all that shit. I'm trying. I saw this show about snakes. They shed their skins. They scrape against rocks and shed their skin. There was one and he couldn't shed it and he dragged that skin around, this long skin, catching on sticks and dirt and all these rocks until it got too heavy to drag and he just stopped and laid in the sun and died. Sometimes, I think I'm that snake. You ever feel like that?

CHRIS

Yeah. Those shows show some weird shit. Damn! John Crow! We should

CHRIS (Cont'd)

celebrate or something. Knock back a few beers.

JOHN CROW

I stay pretty quiet anymore. I don't like too much going on.

CHRIS

We need to catch up. Listen. I'm changed, too. I'm a new man. Shit. I got married. You believe that?

JOHN CROW

I don't know. Like I said /

CHRIS

/ I got shit I need to forget, too. Nothing big, huh? Me and Jamie'll come by with some beers. You remember Jamie? My pen pal? Always asked about you? We finally tied the knot. It'll be like old times just instead of hooch and punks, we'll have beers and real girls. You still like girls, huh?

JOHN CROW

Yeah. Maybe some other time, Crisco.

CHRIS

Come on, call me Chris. Hey. You still on parole?

JOHN CROW

No. Just off. This week.

CHRIS

Me, too. Thought I'd never be done with those folks. Shit. You got no excuse, then. There ain't nothing to worry about. I know John Crow ain't scared.

(Pause.)

Man. You look exactly the same. I mean exactly. You haven't changed a lick. Jamie'll say you need a woman to fatten you up. That's what she'll say. Look. We'll stop in for a bit. Drink a couple beers. Man. I can't believe it. John Crow. The legend hisself. Just yesterday at work, I was telling the guys a story about you.

JOHN CROW

Speak of the devil.

CHRIS

Those dudes tried to hog us for the table. How many'd you whip that time? Five?

JOHN CROW

Sounds right, I guess.

CHRIS

You beat that big one half-retarded.

JOHN CROW

I always had that special something that keeps you safe in prison.

CHRIS

You mean, hope?

JOHN CROW

No. Hate.

CHRIS

Maybe that was it. Listen. I gotta run. Tonight, alright? Tonight.

Chris pauses at the door, shakes his head. He whoops and shoves out the door.

John Crow turns around and notices Somsri watching him.

LIGHTS.

SCENE 2

John Crow's living room. The bright red toolbox still sits on the arm of the couch. After a moment the toolbox shimmies, wiggles then slides off the arm of the couch before it crashes to the floor, spilling a wrench, a pair of snips and a screwdriver as the couch begins to rock.

Soft, Delicate MOANS accented by Hard GROWLS.

The Doorbell BUZZES.

The couch stops moving. A long pause. The couch slides again.

The Doorbell BUZZES, longer this time.

SOMSRI

(From behind couch.)

You go away!

A Loud, Hard KNOCK.

John Crow and Somsri rise up from behind the couch. They hurry into their clothes and we finally see SOMSRI. She is slender and dark, in her mid-twenties. She clings to the powerful body of John Crow.

Another KNOCK. Urgent.

JOHN CROW

Go get dressed.

Somsri pulls closed her shirt. John Crow grabs her and pulls her to him, taking a big kiss from her. When they separate, Somsri smiles up at him. As she pulls away, John Crow tries to swat her ass but Somsri jumps out of the way. Somsri darts off on tippy-toes and exits.

John Crow buttons his jeans as he moves to the door. He glances out the window and jerks open the door. He strides back to the table to grab his keys.

LIZ CHOUTEAU, recent college grad, is squeezed into a cheap, dark skirt suit.

She bobs in the doorway, her briefcase up like a shield.

JOHN CROW

The Honda's an OH-Six.

John Crow bends to pick up the tin snips and the wrench. He tosses them into the bright red toolbox and sets the toolbox on the table.

JOHN CROW

It has seventy-two thousand miles on it. That's nothing on a Honda /

LIZ

/ Mr. Savage? I'm Ms. Chouteau. I'm from the parole office.

John Crow turns to face Liz.

JOHN CROW

I'm not on parole. I'm off. Last Thursday.

LIZ

John C. Savage. 1414 Pittsburg.

JOHN CROW

Yeah. I know my name and address. I got a letter from you people.

John Crow turns as if to find it.

LIZ

Well, technically /

John Crow whips back around. He steps toward Liz. She lifts her briefcase.

JOHN CROW

/ No! No technically. I have a certificate. You sent me one and don't tell me, "No, I didn't." because yes you did. The Parole Office sent it. I never missed a meeting /

LIZ

/ I understand /

JOHN CROW

/ I never failed a piss test. I followed all your goddamn rules. Paid your nickel and dime fees. I ate your shit for five years and that was after ten years of prison. Is it the computer? Let me tell you about your computer. That idiot that sits at the front desk, ignoring the phone, bitching about how hard his job is? He's the same idiot that types everyting into that computer that you all think is infallible.

John Crow slams shut the red toolbox.
Liz raises her briefcase in self-
defense.

JOHN CROW

Put your briefcase down, Ms...?

LIZ

Chouteau.

JOHN CROW

Ms. Chouteau. I'm not gonna hurt you and I'm not gonna let anyone
else hurt you.

Liz laughs, relieved. She lowers her
briefcase.

LIZ

Infallible?

JOHN CROW

Yeah. It means unable to make a mistake.

LIZ

I know what it means, Mr. Savage. I thought it was a good word. A
college word.

JOHN CROW

Ten years of playing Scrabble.

LIZ

Scrabble? I played Scrabble in college. UT. Hook 'em Horns.

(Makes the "Hook 'em Horns.")

I guess that I'm surprised. I thought that everyone played poker in
prison.

JOHN CROW

Cards are contraband in Texas prisons. No reason for anyone from
Parole to know that, though. Or, they should teach you anything
about prisons in your Criminal Justice classes.

JOHN CROW

I'm not trying to be confrontational, Mr. Savage. The mistake was
ours. It's just not something that we can say, No harm, no foul
about. There's paperwork involved. We updated our software and it
counted leap years. We don't recognize leap years. The problem was
system-wide and has been corrected. Almost. So, outside of a dead
body...ha, ha...there is nothing that I can find that will make me
revoke your parole. So, at least until midnight tonight, and I hope
for the rest of your life, just keep doing what you've been doing.
So, let me ask you a few questions, get this home visit out of the
way, and you can get on with the rest of your life. Is that OK? Are
you ready to put all this behind you.

John Crow snaps his hand at the couch.

Liz smiles and sits on the couch. She glances around the living room.

LIZ

Oh, and for the record, I happen to know that guy that does our data entry and wouldn't trust him to order me a sandwich.

John Crow snatches his shirt from the floor. He scrapes his body with it.

Liz follows the shirt across John Crow's body. He catches her. She looks down.

LIZ

You've stayed in shape. Ten years is a long time.

JOHN CROW

Try it.

John Crow jerks his t-shirt over his head. He punches his arms through the arm holes and stretches it down over his waist. He drops into his chair.

Liz bends for her briefcase and notices the screwdriver. She picks up the tool at John Crow before she sets it on the table. She sits back, takes a deep breath and exhales. After another look around the house, she pulls her briefcase onto her lap, snaps it open and pulls a file from it. Liz opens the file and reads.

LIZ

John C. Savage.

(Looks up.)

Does the C. stand for something? There's nothing in the file.

JOHN CROW

Crow.

LIZ

Like the bird?

JOHN CROW

Just like.

LIZ

I've never seen that name.

It's a family name. JOHN CROW

Crow is a family name? LIZ

I'm named after my dad. JOHN CROW

Oh. LIZ

Yeah. We're both full of caw-caw. JOHN CROW

Liz studies John Crow's expressionless face, confused. When John Crow smiles, Liz does, too.

Hook 'em Horns. JOHN CROW

LIZ
(Laughs.)
I'm the worst. I never get jokes. I always get the punchline wrong and I never know when someone is joking.

JOHN CROW
Just because something's funny doesn't mean you can laugh about it.

Like what? LIZ

This. JOHN CROW

Liz and John Crow study each other for a moment, then Liz clicks her pen.

So, no dead bodies, right? LIZ

Not yet. JOHN CROW

Hook 'em Horns? LIZ

Hook 'em Horns. JOHN CROW

Liz laughs.

Drink?

JOHN CROW

LIZ

Oh, I can't have a drink with you. Believe me, I wish I could /

/ Somsri!

JOHN CROW

Somsri, now dressed, enters the room, eyeing Liz like she's a snake.

John Crow holds up two fingers.

JOHN CROW

Two glasses of water, OK?

Somsri nods and walks to the kitchen. She lingers in the doorway and watches Liz before she exits.

Immediately, Liz pages through John Crow's file.

LIZ

She's your...Girlfriend?

JOHN CROW

Somsri's my wife.

LIZ

She's a citizen?

JOHN CROW

She will be.

LIZ

So, that's a no.

Liz scribbles something in the file.

LIZ

Where did you meet?

JOHN CROW

Church.

LIZ

Hook 'em Horns?

JOHN CROW

Hook 'em Horns.

LIZ

I suppose she's a rescue.

(Finds page in file.)

OK. See. Right here. This has you as single...

(Flips back a page.)

...even though, even though, you marked...Oh! You did check married.

Somsri returns with two glasses of water. She hands a glass to Liz. She takes a stone coaster from the side table and places it in front of Liz. She places a second coaster on front of John Crow. She places the second glass on the coaster.

John Crow kisses Somsri's hand. Somsri relaxes, a little.

LIZ

Hello.

SOMSRI

Hi.

Somsri looks quickly at John Crow. He nods. Somsri smiles.

JOHN CROW

She's still learning.

LIZ

She's aware that you're a felon?

JOHN CROW

She understands.

LIZ

(To Somsri.)

You. Know. He's. A. Felon.

SOMSRI

Yes. He's good husband, too.

LIZ

You've got her trained, anyway.

JOHN CROW

She knows.

LIZ

It's not fair to her if she doesn't know.

Thanks for helping out. JOHN CROW

Liz and John Crow lock eyes. Separate.

Any contact with the police? LIZ

No. JOHN CROW

Uh-huh. No change of address. Marital status? Same, I guess. Self-employed. That's not allowed, normally, but you stayed current on your restitution. LIZ

I'm the only one that would hire me. JOHN CROW

You sell cars? LIZ

I fix 'em first, then I sell 'em. JOHN CROW

See. Harmless. LIZ
(Clicks pen shut.)

Liz takes up her briefcase and slips the file into it and shuts it. She stands and turns to the door.

Hey. If you decided I had a parole violation... JOHN CROW

You'd go back to prison and finish your sentence. LIZ

And the whole five years that I stayed clean meant nothing. JOHN CROW

I wouldn't say nothing. The thing is that you did the right thing. We owed you a home visit. They sent me. You...passed and at midnight tonight, you become a citizen again. What's eight hours for five years? LIZ

A citizen? JOHN CROW

In eight hours, you become a citizen again. LIZ

JOHN CROW

A citizen that can't vote, use a dating website, own a gun, have sex without telling the woman I've been in prison, or get a traffic ticket without my wife and me being handcuffed, humiliated and bullied by cops.

LIZ

Hook 'em Horns.

Liz opens the door and leaves. Somsri follows and pushes the door shut behind Liz. John Crow sinks back in his chair.

Somsri crosses and places her hands on John Crow's head and pulls him to her. After a moment like that, she kneels in front of him.

SOMSRI

Is OK?

JOHN CROW

Tonight, someone is coming over.

SOMSRI

That white lady?

JOHN CROW

Who? No. Not her. Someone I used to know. A man I was in prison with.

SOMSRI

He a bad man?

JOHN CROW

No. I was the bad man.

Somsri rubs a circle over his chest. John Crow closes his eyes.

JOHN CROW

It makes me happy that you don't care about my past. Maybe you don't understand, maybe you just don't care about it. Or me. Maybe you're just doing your time. It doesn't matter. It makes me feel easy that you are so good.

Somsri sinks back on her heels while she processes the slurry of words.

SOMSRI

I was afraid what the white lady maybe tell you.

John Crow opens his eyes.

JOHN CROW

Tell me what?

SOMSRI

Maybe I no good wife for you. You are good man. Maybe with black spots, but me too have black spots. The marry agent told me, you lie, or no man think I am special. I not special. I was no good girl to help my family. They need me to help. To be wife for the uncle from my village. He had a good house, but I do wrong and marry with boy from my village. he was very pretty eyes and kind.

(Somsri looks away in shame.)

My brother caught me marry him. He told my family. They beat me until I was sick.

John Crow touches Somsri's face.

SOMSRI (Cont'D)

The uncle he still want to keep me to use for house girl because I girlfriend too much and not marry first. Then my son was born.

(Pause.)

He born very fast and too little and too sick. His name Colin but my family never said him by his name. His eyes so beautiful and he died because we had no good house. My family ashame and make me leave. The boy he marry girl in other village. I never was marry and girlfriend too much. I never girlfriend for money even when I was too hungry. Then my friend she give me your letter. I make special prayer that you not be like old village uncle. It was given to me. A gift. So maybe I not so bad. A handsome American to be wife. A good wife. I sorry that I lie, that I told you I am special. I no want to trick you.

Somehow, Somsri sinks lower. John Crow lifts her chin until she looks at him. He leans toward her. He kisses her on the cheek.

JOHN CROW

You are special. I am happy. I am very satisfied.

SOMSRI

You too make me very satisfy.

Somsri pokes him in the belly with her finger. John Crow laughs and pulls Somsri up onto his lap.

SOMSRI

The white lady no tell on me?

JOHN CROW

No. We don't have to worry about anybody ever again.

LIGHTS.

SCENE 3.

Nighttime. John Crow's living room is lit with lamps.

The Clock CHIMES Eight Times.

The Doorbell BUZZES.

John Crow stumbles into the living room, wrestling with his t-shirt. The t-shirt is inside out. John Crow pulls at the t-shirt, stretching it right side out, before sidling along the wall. He pulls out the curtain slightly and glances out the window.

The Doorbell BUZZES angrily.

John Crow inhales and exhales. He whips on his shirt and jerks open the door.

JAMIE TUCK, a faded neighborhood beauty in her early thirties, struts past John Crow and into the house. She spins to face the door and John Crow. She tugs at her short skirt but instead of getting longer, she shortens it another inch. Her eyes touch everything in the house.

Chris Tuck lingers in the doorway, wearing his good t-shirt.

CHRIS

John Crow. Eight o'clock. Time to rock.

JOHN CROW

Crisco. I mean Chris.

John Crow and Chris shake hands, locking hands then fingers.

Jamie stomps her foot.

JAMIE

Chris!

Chris slides into the house.

JAMIE

Are you gonna introduce me or what?

Chris throws his arm around Jamie and jerks her to him.

CHRIS

Don't get your panties crinkled. John Crow, this is my blushing bride, Jamie.

Jamie wiggles away from Chris with a grunt. She smooths her skirt and throws out her arms with a flourish.

JOHN CROW

Hey.

JAMIE

Hey? Hey? I know that John Crow is NOT acting like he doesn't know me.

(Pause. Then Sing-Song.)

Jamie. Jamie Lusk. From Terrell High School. I'd sneak out and meet all you older boys. You called me Daisy. Fresh as a daisy and I was, too until I let you boys get ahold of me.

CHRIS

You never told me that.

JAMIE

Well, I have to have some secrets. Am I right?

CHRIS

Maybe. I bet you remember her picture from the cell. Huh, John Crow?

JOHN CROW

Yeah. I remember. Jamie called Daisy.

JAMIE

(Excited.)

Yeah!

Jamie pulls John Crow into a tight hug and holds it a moment too long. When she pulls away, her handlings on his chest.

JAMIE

How could you forget me, right?

JOHN CROW

Been a long time.

JAMIE

Maybe for some things, but not for others, am I right? Some things you hold on to. Like that old car. So, look at all this.

They all look at the house.

CHRIS

Hell of a lot nicer than a cell.

JOHN CROW

Come on. Sit down.

John Crow sits in the arm chair. Chris and Jamie sit on the couch, Jamie the closer to John Crow.

CHRIS

I noticed your place earlier today. Looks like you've done real good. House in Dallas and everything.

JAMIE

Chris does OK, too. We don't live like this. We have a trailer. Not a double wide or anything. His OK is a little less OK.

CHRIS

Come on, Jamie. We do just fine.

JOHN CROW

Yeah? Good. What've you been up to, Crisco?

CHRIS

I don't go by that, anymore. Everyone calls me Chris, now.

JAMIE

They called you Crisco?

CHRIS

Easier to say than Chris. I guess Chris wasn't gangster enough. Don't matter. I go by Chris, now.

JAMIE

What'd they call you, John Crow?

JOHN CROW

My name, mostly. The laws called me dumbass, sometimes.

CHRIS

Shit! They called John Crow "Sir." That's what they called him. If they did call him dumbass, they only did it once. Laws and inmates alike. Believe that.

JAMIE

I knew John Crow'd do all right.

(To Chris.)

You didn't make 'em call you "Sir?"

CHRIS

No. They called me Crisco. John Crow was a legend.

JOHN CROW

Let's not get started on that. Fuck prison.

JAMIE

I'll drink to that.

(Looks around.)

Chris, where's the beer?

~~JOHN~~ CROW

I don't keep any alcohol in the house.

JAMIE

Well, lucky for you we brought some.

CHRIS

I left it on the porch.

Chris jumps up and jogs to the door.
He opens it and slides outside.

~~JOHN~~ CROW

I don't drink anymore.

JAMIE

Or, any less. Am I right?

Chris enters with two cases of beer.
He sets the boxes on the coffee table.

JAMIE

Go put that in the fridge before it gets warm.

CHRIS

It'll be alright for a minute.

JAMIE

It's already been a minute. You know I don't drink warm beer. It's not lady-like.

Chris tears open one of the beer boxes.
He tosses a can to John Crow. John Crow
gives the beer to Jamie.

Chris tosses another can to John Crow.
John Crow seems to study the can.

CHRIS

You don't read it, you drink it!

John Crow smiles, puts the beer on the coaster.

Chris keeps a beer for himself and drops back onto the couch.

CHRIS

Sure beats the hell out of prison, huh? We'd still be in the chow hall, hoping that nobody spat or sweated in our food. Or, we'd be jammed up in the dayroom, waiting for those fat-ass laws to pop the cell doors. Their only job was open the cell doors once an hour and even that was too much for 'em.

Chris pops open his beer and takes a couple big gulps. He smiles and throws his arm over the back of the couch.

Jamie opens her beer. Foam spills. She cackles and slurps the beer from the rim of the can.

JAMIE

Didn't spill a drop. I never do.

Chris smiles proudly and winks at John Crow.

Jamie eases back into the couch and crosses her legs.

CHRIS

Drink up, cellie.

JOHN CROW

Lost my taste for it. You believe that? It tastes like all the bad things I've done.

CHRIS

Yeah. Remember that nasty ass hooch we used to drink? What was in that shit?

JOHN CROW

Bread, fruit, yeast. Anything with alcohol. Surprised we didn't go blind.

CHRIS

That shit'll put hair on your head.

JOHN CROW

(Rubs head.)

Or burn it off.

John Crow shakes his head.

JAMIE

Come on. Drink up. It's a special occasion. You never know what'll happen.

Somsri eases in. She wears a simple, pretty dress with a matching ribbon in her hair. Jamie and Chris stare at her as she picks up two coasters from the stack. She places one of the coasters in front of Chris then she cautiously places the other coaster in front of Jamie. Somsri gathers the closed box of beer and carries it to the kitchen.

JAMIE

There's a Mexican that lives up from us. She cleans houses but she wants fifteen dollars. She really just vacuums and folds clothes. We don't use her, though. It's not the fifteen dollars. I just don't want things to go missing. Chris thinks she's cute, so he's all for it. I just don't want to pay someone to steal from me.

Chris stares at the kitchen door over the back of the couch.

CHRIS

You oughta make her wear an apron and carry a, uh, whatchamacallit.

Chris shakes his imaginary feather duster.

Jamie shakes a cigarette out of her pack and lights it. She leans back and blows smoke at the ceiling.

CHRIS

Hey. Is she legal? You can do anything you want to those illegals and they can't do a damn thing about it. The minute they open their mouth, boom! They get deported. That's one of the things that makes America great. You can make 'em do anything.

JOHN CROW

Remember how bad the laws treated us?

CHRIS

Yeah. Well. I remember how bad everybody treated me. I want a turn.

Somsri re-enters the room.

JAMIE

Sweetie, go get me an ashtray and two more beers.

Somsri looks from Jamie to John Crow.
He nods.

JAMIE

She speaks English, right?

JOHN CROW

She understands some.

JAMIE

They all understand more than they let on.

Jamie wiggles her beer can at Somsri
and holds up two fingers. Jamie flicks
her ash into her empty beer can.

CHRIS

I bet you make her understand the important stuff, huh?

Somsri exits.

CHRIS

I bet you make her understand.

Somsri returns with the beers and an
ashtray. She sets them down, gathers
the empties and takes them to the
kitchen.

JAMIE

I could get used to this. Chris does OK. Don't get me wrong. He just.
Everytime we get ahead, something happens. He gets a ticket, or has
to pay a bill. We never ever get to treat ourselves. A person ought
to be able to treat themselves, am I right? I deserve that.

CHRIS

Shit. Don't look at me. That family violence ticket and the broken
window? That was you. Seven hundred dollars. Who has seven hundred
dollars to just throw away like that? Not Ms. Terrell, Texas here.
I had to pay it.

Jamie pats Chris' knee.

JAMIE

Sure. Not every time. I mean, I have my little moments. But a lot of
the time, most times really, it's you and then when we want to treat
ourselves, we can't. We deserve something a little better. I know I
do. And I was Ms. Terrell, Texas, thank you, and that should mean
something.

Somsri sits on the arm of John Crow's
chair. Jamie notices, watches.

CHRIS

You dirty dog! I knew it.

JAMIE

John Crow isn't like you. Sometimes I think Chris would take just anything that comes his way, if I didn't watch him. John Crow won't take just anything that comes his way.

CHRIS

It's all pink on the inside.

JAMIE

Don't be disgusting.

JOHN CROW

If there's one thing prison taught me, it's that everybody's pink on the inside, Crisco. Even you.

Chris leans forward and points at John Crow.

CHRIS

I told you. I don't go by that anymore and you ain't gonna treat me like I'm some helpless type dude.

Chris takes a big, nervous swig of his beer. He wipes his chin.

JOHN CROW

I knew this was a bad idea. Listen, let's call it a night. A lot of bad stuff happens when you're locked up and nobody's gonna move on if we keep bringing it up. So, let's call it a night.

CHRIS

Some shit you don't forget.

John Crow stands.

JAMIE

Oh, don't take it personal. He's not trying to insult your help. Sit down. Come on. Sit down. Besides, anyone can see she's married.

Jamie leans forward and takes Somsri's hand from her lap and smiles up at her. Somsri smiles back.

JAMIE (Cont'd.)

Pretty ring! Chris is right about one thing, though. They all try to make you fall in love with them. Looks like she's already in love with our John Crow. Probably leave her chinaman husband in a heart-beat.

JOHN CROW

Let's do this some other time.

Jamie wiggles Somsri's hand and lets it go.

JAMIE

Sweetie, go get us two more beers.

JOHN CROW

She just brought you a beer.

JAMIE

Come on, John Crow. Sit and be civil. We just got here and we don't come to Dallas every day.

John Crow sits.

JAMIE

Take these back to the fridge and get us some cold ones.

(Trembles shoulders.)

No reason to drink a warm one when we have perfectly good cold ones. That's what you got her for, am I right?

JOHN CROW

Somsri, two more beers, OK?

SOMSRI

OK.

Somsri exits to the kitchen. Chris jumps up to follow her.

CHRIS

I'll help.

JAMIE

Like a puppy. He always was. I never thought it would be me and him. I always thought I would end up with someone like you.

JOHN CROW

It's hard for me to be around people who know me.

Chris charges back into the room.

CHRIS

Hey! She's not Mexican! She's a, uh, one of them mail-order brides! Right? You wrote those girls letters from prison. I remember. You said you was gonna get one of them girls and you damn sure did! You went and got you one. Damn! She's cute and everything. I told myself that if there's somebody that can make it in the free, It's John Crow Savage. He sets his mind on something and don't let up until he

CHRIS (Cont'd.)

gets it. Didn't matter what it was. Break a man into a punk. Turn a law bad. Get a female dirty. John Crow.

JAMIE

What?

CHRIS

You couldn't order a white one? A Russian or Eye-talian? Somebody that speaks English, at least?

Somsri returns. Confused by Chris, she creeps over to John Crow.

Jamie really sees Somsri now. Jamie looks at the house and everything in it, then turns back to John Crow.

Somsri sets the beers in front of Chris and Jamie.

Jamie snatches her pack of cigarettes and angrily snaps out a cigarette and crumples the empty pack and tosses the ball on the coffee table. She snatches the lighter and fires her cigarette. She sucks down a huge drag, crosses her legs neatly, and jiggles her foot before exhaling a dragon's plume of smoke.

Chris pops open his beer, all smiles.

CHRIS

Damn! You said you'd do it. Said you'd turn your whole life around. I always wondered how you'd do. You were too good at prison. Five minutes alone in a cell and John Crow would steal everything that made a man a man. His pride. His self-respect. Everything that a man has that let's him look at himself in the mirror. Make a man beg you to take what means most to him.

(To Jamie.)

That's some shit you women never have to worry about. Besides, you know how everybody talks in the pen. All that, "When I get out," bullshit. The bullshit promises, the bullshit dreams, the bullshit lies, but you know what? We did it, you and me. I said, I'd marry Jamie. You said you'd quit drinking, sell cars and get you a mail-order bride. We did it, you and me.

Chris flops down next to Jamie and throws his arm around her. Jamie wiggles away.

JAMIE

Well, I know how fast John Crow gets tired of people.

CHRIS

Come on. That ain't no way to talk. I never did think you'd get married, though.

Suddenly, Chris jumps up and barrels at Somsri, banging the table and bumping Jamie.

JAMIE

Chris! Jesus!

Somsri cowers as Chris lumbers toward her. When he reaches her, Chris slows himself and gently takes her hand. He circles her around the chair and poses her on John Crow's lap. Satisfied that they are perfect, Chris flops back onto the couch and throws his arm back around Jamie.

Somsri smiles at John Crow. For a moment, they are almost a picture of two happy couples, then Jamie jerks away from Chris.

CHRIS

I didn't know about this. Driving home, I thought that maybe coming here wasn't such a good idea. You know, that meeting up again was a bad idea. We had some rough times at the end there. Hell, the only reason we was buddies is 'cause we was from the same hometown. You gotta admit that. Those were some rough times there at the end, but Jamie saidit might be nice to see someone from the old days. People don't change, see, not really. After I thought about it, I thought it might be better to just move on. Those days are gone. Forgive and forget, they say. Forget, mostly. Try to forget. Forgive, that's not so easy, but maybe everybody wants the same things in the end.

JAMIE

You're drunk.

CHRIS

(Smiles.)

Not yet, but I'm getting there.

JAMIE

Well, I'm not!

(To John Crow.)

You don't have any vodka or something?

JOHN CROW

I don't keep any in the house.

JAMIE

Not even a teeny bit of vodka you've tucked away for a rainy day.

JOHN CROW

No. They don't make that much vodka.

JAMIE

Uh-huh. Chris, why don't you run and get us some vodka or something. We need to celebrate. You let her drink, don't you? Tell me, you're not one of those, are you?

JOHN CROW

It's just that we don't keep any.

JAMIE

Yeah. That's what you keep saying. Chris, go to the liquor store before you get too drunk to drive. You can take Somsri.

CHRIS

I'd rather take that Grand Nat. You still want to sell it, right?

JAMIE

Just take our car.

CHRIS

We talked about buying a car. I told you I wanted that Grand Nat.

JAMIE

We talked about this. I told you, I don't want anything to do with that ugly-ass car.

CHRIS

Me and Jamie have a love/hate relationship. I love her and she hates me.

Jamie stubs out her cigarette.

JAMIE

Uh-huh.

Chris nudges Jamie.

CHRIS

I reached for the stars and dragged her through the mud.

JAMIE

Fine. I'll go, then. Maybe on the way, I'll find somebody wants to pay attention to me.

CHRIS

I'll go. Keep your panties on, woman.

JAMIE

If I wore any, I'd strangle you with them.

CHRIS

I love it when you talk dirty.

(To John Crow.)

You wanna sell that Buick?

JOHN CROW

Let's check it out.

Chris stands. John Crow pats Somsri aside. He strides to the table and he scoops out a set of keys from the bowl.

Chris follows John Crow to the door.

JAMIE

Ya'll are not gonna leave me by myself!

JOHN CROW

This won't take long.

CHRIS

I won't let him screw me.

A long pause, then John Crow leads Chris out the door.

Jamie digs a fresh pack of cigarettes out of her purse. She strips the pack and pulls a cigarette from the pack and lights it. She leans back to exhale then fixes her gaze on Somsri.

Somsri wiggles under Jamie's gaze and plucks at her dress.

JAMIE

So. No speaky English, huh?

SOMSRI

I speak a little.

JAMIE

Oh, good.

SOMSRI

Yes.

Jamie's eyes travel roughshod over Somsri.

JAMIE

Yeah. I know it. You know a lot more than they think, huh? Play maid. Play slut. That's all any of them want, anyway, from the best to the worst. Get them to marry you before they lose interest. Guess that all that shit's international.

SOMSRI

I not understand everything.

JAMIE

I guess you do.

SOMSRI

He good man to me. Very handsome American, like Bruce Willis.

JAMIE

That shit works, too. That...That...

Jamie does a dead-on wide-eyed Somsri impression, mimic-ing her struggle to understand and her eagerness and spins it into a Marilyn Monroe-esque wonder. When she's through, she slumps back into the jaded, opium-den cool Jamie.

JAMIE

God, I know that shit works. I was using it before I even knew what it was.

Jamie reaches across and takes the ends of Somsri's silky, black hair in fingers. She cups Somsri's cheek. The cigarette smolders dangerously close.

Somsri leans her face into Jamie's hand, absorbing a moment of female companionship, but wary of Jamie's smoldering cigarette.

JAMIE

Just like those girls that run around the neighborhood, you don't understand that it's just the newness. That's all it is. The newness that makes you special. It doesn't last. It's like the cheap toys from the grocery store. Or, flowers from the yard. They don't keep. Not even in a vase. Then, it's over and it's nothing you did to ruin it. You're just not new anymore. You're just regular, like everybody else and all you have left is a few memories from when you have to settle for somebody like Chris. Somebody that remembers you from when you were somebody. Somebody who digs you from a box

JAMIE (Cont'd.)

in the garage and thinks you're still trophy enough to put up on the shelf. John Crow is the man I should have had.

Jamie lets go of Somsri and slowly grinds out the cigarette. She sinks back into the couch.

John Crow stomps back into the house and wipes his feet.

JAMIE

He's crazy about that hillbilly hot rod.

JOHN CROW

I miss it already.

JAMIE

Well, it's official. Girls don't even have to speak the same language to gossip about men.

JOHN CROW

Just speak of the devil and there he is.

JAMIE

If it only was that easy. So give me the grand tour.

Jamie stands. John Crow rubs his head.

JOHN CROW

There's not much to it. This is pretty much it.

JAMIE

Somsri, go get me a beer.

Somsri stands and walks to the kitchen. She squeezes John Crow's finger as she walks past him.

Jamie reaches over to the end of the couch and grabs the same finger. She guides John Crow beside her on the couch.

JAMIE

How long has it been since we were in the same room together?

JOHN CROW

All that was a long time ago. Even if I could remember, I haven't thought about you like that in years. Listen, I know I owe you and Chris a kind of apology, but you both seem to be OK. Right? No harm no foul?

JAMIE

I can't believe you. You know it was more special than that. Every time you get in that old car, you should remember me. I'm the only reason you even have that old car and you know it.

JOHN CROW

Jamie.

JAMIE

Yeah. Jamie. You big dum-dum. You know how to make a girl sure feel special. But, you know what? I forgive you.

JOHN CROW

I'm not the same guy. I don't...It's not you. I can't really remember anything before prison. It's like my brain pushed out anything that wasn't survival. Does that make sense?

JAMIE

You've changed but you're not different. Maybe more beautiful.

Jamie kneels in front of John Crow.

Somsri glides into the room. She stops when she sees Jamie in front of John Crow. She eases back to the clock. The clock chimes.

Jamie pushes her palms up over John Crow's thighs, up his chest and around his neck. She kisses him. John Crow absorbs the kiss, but doesn't kiss her back. When Jamie realizes this, she sinks back on her heels.

JAMIE

Tell me you remember all those times? I used to think about you every day. I used to pretend you would come home to me.

JOHN CROW

It's like I remember what I want to forget and forget what I should remember. It's like I made a legend out of my own life and now I don't even know which parts were real and which parts were not, even though I know that it all was.

JAMIE

I remember enough for both of us. That's enough for now.

JOHN CROW

You can't remember the past like you're seeing the future.

JAMIE

I can.

JOHN CROW

You were the first thing I forgot.

JAMIE

You're teasing me. You're just being mean.

JOHN CROW

I forgot the world almost as fast as ya'll forgot me.

JAMIE

That's not fair and you know it.

JOHN CROW

Get up.

JAMIE

You and her aren't right. Anyone can see that.

JOHN CROW

She understands.

JAMIE

I can do all this. I can keep your house for you. I can bring you... water. I can do anything she can. You know I can. If you want to save somebody, save me.

JOHN CROW

Get up.

Jamie tugs at John Crow's belt.

JAMIE

I remember everything you made me do. I don't do any of that with Chris.

John Crow stands, snatching Jamie by the wrists and jerks her to her feet. Jamie struggles against him with her wrists trapped in his fist. She kisses at him everywhere she can reach. John Crow pushes his free hand up her side. He pushes her shirt up over her bra, her bra up over her breast. Jamie kisses his neck as he caresses her.

JAMIE

I was your daisy.

John Crow lifts her breast, pushes Jamie away. Jamie turns away to fix her shirt and bra. She tugs her skirt down over her thighs.

JAMIE

You don't want to save anybody. You just want to hurt them when they have nothing left.

Somsri strides in and sets the beers down in front of Jamie. She glares at Jamie.

JAMIE

Thanks, sweetie.

Jamie sits, shakes out a cigarette and lights it.

John Crow sits and Somsri climbs into his lap.

SOMSRI

My husband a good husband. Very handsome.

JAMIE

Yeah. Lucky you.

Suddenly, Chris kicks open the door with a loud bang. He holds a bottle-shaped paper bag in each hand. Chris kicks the door shut with his heel. He notices the hole that the doorknob punched in the wall.

CHRIS

Damn! Sorry about your door, John Crow. Hey! Call it the cost of doing business, 'cause I sure like that Grand Nat. I ran every light there and back.

JAMIE

You ever get tired of everyone's hand-me-downs?

CHRIS

It's new to me.

JAMIE

Well, that's all that counts then. You get the vodka?

CHRIS

You know it! I was tempted to let that nice man at the liquor store pay you for that Grand Nat.

JAMIE

jesus! That car'll send more people to jail than a judge. Somsri, go get us some glasses.

No. SOMSRI

I'm up. I got 'em. CHRIS

No. That's what he got her for. JAMIE

Ooh! Is she acting sassy? Relax. I got it. CHRIS

Chris drops the bags on the coffee table and bounds off to the kitchen.

Glasses RATTLE. Cabinets BANG.

Chris hustles back with the glasses. He hoists one bottle-shaped bag by the neck and the bag falls away like a curtain.

Ta-dah! CHRIS

Chris slides the glasses across the coffee-table as if dealing cards. Then, with the bottle in his hand, he circles the table in little waddle steps, like a geisha. When he's done, he sits on the edge of the couch next to Jamie.

The group stares at each other; Chris excited, Jamie sullen, Somsri confused, and John Crow bored.

After a few moments, Jamie grabs her glass and drains it.

Whoo-hoo! CHRIS

Chris points at Somsri and then the glass. She looks at John Crow. He nods. Somsri drinks the vodka slowly, wincing as she does. She wipes her lips and sets the glass down.

Ouch! SOMSRI

Chris and Jamie laugh. John Crow smiles

and squeezes Somsri. Chris throws back his drink and bangs the table like a frat boy. He points at John Crow's full glass.

CHRIS

You gonna join the party or sit there like an asshole?

John Crow pets Somsri's hair and pulls her forehead to his. Finally, he scoops up the glass and dumps the liquor into his mouth. He sets the empty glass on the table. A long pause.

JOHN CROW

Again.

CHRIS

That's what I'm talking about!

JAMIE

The beast is loose.

The clock chimes Ten Times.

LIGHTS.

SCENE 4.

John Crow's living room. The coffee table is crowded with empty beer cans. An empty vodka bottle lays on its side in the middle of the table.

Jamie sits deep in the couch, feet up on the edge of the coffee table. She holds the other vodka bottle up to her eye like a telescope. A cigarette burns in her other hand.

Chris dances behind the couch with a screwdriver balanced in the palm of his hand.

Somsri sits on John Crow's lap, moving to the same imaginary music that Chris is dancing to. She stands, wobbles. John Crow grabs her wrist and pulls Somsri into a kiss. When he lets her go, Somsri smiles, touches her hair and eases around the table collecting a few beer cans.

Chris watches Somsri. She teeters as she passes him. He catches her. After he sets her right, Somsri teeters off to the kitchen.

CHRIS

Ha! I think she's drunk. I think I'm drunk.
(Squints at the clock.)
Damn! It's only eleven-thirty.

JAMIE

You were born drunk.

CHRIS

I should help her.

JAMIE

You can't even help yourself.

Jamie drops the empty bottle on the floor.

JOHN CROW

Pour us another shot.

CHRIS

Of what? Ya'll drank it all.

JAMIE

You heard the man. Pour us a shot.

CHRIS

Believe me. I would, sugar-pussy. Just, there ain't nothing to pour.

JAMIE

Well, run go find some.

CHRIS

I already said, there ain't nothing to pour.

JOHN CROW

You heard me. Run go find something.

CHRIS

You ain't runnin' nothin' out here, John Crow, and I ain't no help-
less type dude.

(Leans across the table.)

You remember that.

JOHN CROW

Yeah? You got something you been saving up?

The two men stare at each other. The room fills with a kind of violent expectation. Between them, on the couch, Jamie savors it.

Chris looks away first.

CHRIS

I'll help with the beers.

JOHN CROW

You do that, Crisco. Take those empties with you, too.

Chris sulks as he gathers up empty the empty beer cans and carries them to the kitchen.

JAMIE

(Laughs.)

My John Crow.

JOHN CROW

I forgot how clean I feel with alcohol. Like there's nothing between me and everyone else. Like someone cleaned my distributor cap. Know what I mean?

Jamie reaches across the couch and caresses John Crow's bicep.

JAMIE

You need some help with the pipe?

As Jamie caresses John Crow, Chris strides in from the kitchen. He shoves his fingers through his hair, a smug grin on his face.

Somsri walks in from the kitchen, slowly, her hands across her chest. She pauses in front of Jamie, who, finally, lifts her arm like a tollgate. Chris leers at Somsri. She hides behind John Crow.

JAMIE

So, no baby?

Somsri jerks her head up and looks at Jamie then John Crow. She smiles and touches her stomach.

SOMSRI

Maybe, someday.

JAMIE

Or, did John Crow come home from prison with some new tastes.

SOMSRI

I no understand everything.

Chris flops down on the couch.

JAMIE

I just thought of something. Maybe it's not me. Maybe, it's you.

(Turns to Chris.)

And you. Maybe that's why you'd wanna spend all night watching porn.

JOHN CROW

Quit being ugly.

CHRIS

What?

JAMIE

I was Ms. Terrell, Texas. That's not something they just give away. There's plenty that think I still got it.

CHRIS

What are you talking about, Jamie. Who you talking about? Did John Crow say something?

Chris stands.

Sit down. JOHN CROW

CHRIS
What did you tell her? You told her, didn't you?

JOHN CROW
What are you talking about?

CHRIS
(To Jamie.)
Tell me what he said!

JAMIE
You're drunk. Sit down.

CHRIS
You don't understand. I wasn't no punk. They just caught me when John Crow wasn't around. Tell her, John Crow. Tell her! What was I supposed to do? I was scared. They told me it'd be worse if I fought. I ain't no big dude. I was just a scared kid. A dumb kid. Scared. You don't know what it was like.

A pause. Then Jamie cackles.

JAMIE
No, he didn't. He sold you. He traded your ass off the same way he did me for that stupid, fucking car.

CHRIS
That was you?

JAMIE
Yeah. That was me. How do you think we know each other. Jesus, Chris! You're so simple, sometimes.

CHRIS
No.

JAMIE
I was scared, too, at first. John Crow just sat there until Mr. Miner was finished. Made me tell him thank you, too. Every day. Sometimes I still go over there. Funny, what you get used to, right, Chris?

CHRIS
No. We were homeboys. You were supposed to look out for me. We were friends. You let them /

John Crow crumples a beer can in his fist. As it explodes he throws it at Chris.

JOHN CROW

Goddamn it! You didn't have to do it. You were just too damn scared to stand up for yourself. I got tired of fighting your fights. I got tired of fighting mine. Goddamn it! It was prison and you ran around like it was fucking summer camp. Every time you got in trouble you ran to me to save you. I thought it might give you a chance to grow up.

CHRIS

You were supposed to look out for me. We were homeboys.

JOHN CROW

I was too busy looking out for me. Every day. Every fucking day there was somebody new thought they had something for me.

JAMIE

What do you think he sold you for? He got a car for me. What were you worth? A bag of coffee? A couple honey buns?

JOHN CROW

I'm not proud of it. There's a lot of shit I can never make up for. I know that, but you need to remember I'm the only reason there's any of you left.

CHRIS

You're a no-good dude.

Jamie leans forward and scoops the vodka bottle from the table. She holds the bottle up to the light and pours the dregs into her glass. She dangles the glass between her thumb and forefinger.

JAMIE

What was the name of the man that sold you the car?

JOHN CROW

It wasn't like that.

JAMIE

You don't remember, do you?

JOHN CROW

I remember.

JAMIE

What was it? Say it.

JOHN CROW

Miner. Mr. Miner.

JAMIE

That's right. Noel Miner. It wasn't so bad, really. I was just so happy to do something for you. I probably would have done anything for you. I guess I did. Mr. Miner made sure he got his money's worth.

CHRIS

You were supposed to look out for me. For us.

JOHN CROW

And who was supposed to look out for me? Huh? I never got to take a day off. I gave and I gave and now there's nothing left of me. I get pushed around in a million different ways that I don't understand. Now, I just want to be left alone.

JAMIE

I wish you would have told me, Crisco. We could have been girlfriends. You could have told me your little secrets and I could have told you mine. In mine, I'm sixteen again. I'm always sixteen. John Crow's mowing the grass with his shirt off, the sweat rolling off his chest in big old drops and me hot from all the things I read about in my daddy's magazines. Maybe I could have helped with yours. Huh? Let me guess, you're locked in a cage with a bunch of big, sweaty men? Am I right? If you don't take care of them, they're gonna hurt you? Wait. Is that why they call you Crisco?

JOHN CROW

Get out. Both of you get out of my house.

CHRIS

You told me you were seventeen.

JAMIE

Oh, baby. I was seventeen with you. John Crow was through with me. He had his car and summer was over and I thought I was pregnant. I knew you would be so grateful that you'd take me. You were supposed to go to college.

(Snorts.)

College. You.

CHRIS

I went to prison for you.

JAMIE

No. You went to prison for you. You went to prison because you just knew two-hundred dollars from a liquor store was enough to start a life.

CHRIS

I loved you.

Jamie picks up her purse, gathers her

cigarettes and walks to the door.

JAMIE

What a waste. All of it. There should have been so much more than this. I was Ms. Teen Terrell. Am I right?

Jamie leaves. As she walks out, Chris throws his glass at the closed door. The glass shatters.

CHRIS

You believe that bitch.

A pause, then Chris darts to the door and jerks it open.

John Crow stands.

An Engine ROARS. Tires SQUEAL.

John Crow touches Chris' arm.

JOHN CROW

Don't worry. She'll be back

CHRIS

What do you know?

JOHN CROW

I know that when you live in the past, you need people with good memories.

CHRIS

You don't know shit.

Chris shoves John Crow.

CHRIS

She's the only good thing's ever happened to me.

JOHN CROW

She's not worth /

CHRIS

/ What? Since you know what everybody's worth.

JOHN CROW

Listen.

CHRIS

She was worth that car. She was worth that.

CHRIS

Wasn't that what we used to say in the PEN? That we have worth. That we have value. We're not just some number. The whole time everybody you saw had a price tag. The laws. The inmates. The staff. That's why you got a mail-order bride. How much did she cost? What are you gonna do with her when you're done? Sell her to a massage parlor?

(To Somsri.)

He's bad.

SOMSRI

No.

JOHN CROW

You brought all this on yourself.

CHRIS

You're no good, John Crow. That's why you were so good at prison. You were just born bad.

JOHN CROW

Prison changes people.

CHRIS

Prison is an evil place, but it's not just prison. It's you. All cool on the outside, but on the inside you're just bad. You leave a black spot on everything you touch. You never ever not once made anything better. You could have protected me. So what if I wasn't a gangster. So what if I wasn't prison tough. You let them rape me. What did you tell yourself? And Jamie? Jesus! She was a kid and you let some asshole get his, so he would sell you a car.

JOHN CROW

I just played the game.

CHRIS

It's not a game for the rest of us.

JOHN CROW

Keep the car. You and Jamie do what you want with it.

CHRIS

It's not about a car, John Crow. Or, a candy bar, a bag of coffee, or a plane ticket out of some third world shithole.

Chris looks around. He notices the screwdriver on the table. He picks up the tool.

Somsri puts herself between John Crow and Chris.

SOMSRI

Is OK. You just go home. Everything OK.

CHRIS

What if I took something from you. How about a little prison justice. Something that you understand.

SOMSRI

No. No. Everything OK. You go home.

JOHN CROW

You called it, Chris. What can you take? I don't care about shit. Just leave. Huh? You got the car.

Somsri pushes Chris.

SOMSRI

Everything OK. You go home.

Chris shoves Somsri. She tumbles back on the couch.

CHRIS

Goddamn it! It ain't right that the assholes always come out on top.

Somsri clambers back to her feet and puts herself in front of Chris.

JOHN CROW

Somsri. Go to the room.

SOMSRI

No. Everything OK.

John Crow shoves Somsri out of the way. She sprawls across the couch.

Chris whips the screwdriver, slashing at John Crow.

John Crow hunches into a wrestler's crouch and eases towards Chris.

Again, Chris slashes wildly at John Crow.

John Crow kicks the coffee table out of the way.

Somsri scrambles up from the floor. She runs at Chris.

John Crow charges Chris.

Chris swings the screwdriver.

Chris, John Crow, and Somsri collide.

No!

SOMSRI

Chris, John Crow, and Somsri hold together for a long moment. Chris, finally, backs away.

Somsri looks down at her stomach. A black spot blooms over the front of her dress. She looks at John Crow.

No.

SOMSRI

No.

JOHN CROW

Chris charges John Crow and shanks him three times before John Crow can grip Chris in a crushing bear hug. John Crow twists and squeezes Chris until the screwdriver clatters to the floor. John Crow headbutts Chris and lets him go.

Somsri staggers to the couch and sits on the edge.

John Crow pulls his blood-stained t-shirt out away from his body and seems mesmerized by the dark spot. John Crow marches toward Chris. John Crow hits Chris with a hard open hand slap. Then another. Then a third slap, each one more blistering than the last.

Chris, dazed, tries to defend himself, but all his fight is gone.

John Crow jerks open Chris' belt, then slaps him.

John Crow jerks open Chris' baggy jeans then slaps him again.

No!

CHRIS

Chris struggles to protect himself and hold on to his falling jeans.

A Loud, BUZZING NOISE begins.

John Crow punches Chris in the chest and Chris stumbles back over his jeans and hits the floor. As Chris crawls away, John Crow steps on the jeans and Chris slithers out of them.

John Crow, zombie-like, follows him.

SOMSRI

Husband. Help me.

The Loud, BUZZING NOISE stops.

John Crow stops. He limps to the couch where Somsri's body is slumped. John Crow's face contorts in silent pain. No tears. No noise. Mute spasms rip through him as he drags Somsri onto his lap.

Chris clambers up from behind the couch. he fumbles for his pants. He clumsily pulls on his jeans. Chris fumbles for his belt and buckles his jeans. He wipes the tears from his face flat-handed.

John Crow rocks Somsri in his lap.

Chris notices the screwdriver on the floor and grabs it.

JOHN CROW

Just go.

Chris moves behind John Crow and he raises the screwdriver.

JOHN CROW

I'm sorry.

Chris drives the screwdriver down into John Crow's neck. John Crow crumples back into the couch.

The grandfather clock begins the COUNT TO TWELVE

Chris grabs the keys to the Buick and limps out the door.