

THE LAST JITNEY

Inspired By, the play "Jitney" by August Wilson

WGA Registration #: 2102721

EXT. PHILADELPHIA, PA - DAY

From a black screen-- images of a bustling, energetic Philadelphia are shown through montages of its' past and present as the song "Get Up, Get Down, Get Funky" by Teddy Pendergrass plays--

BEGIN MONTAGE

-The Phillies win the 2008 World Series.

-The MOVE fire burns through Osage Avenue in West Philadelphia.

-Allen Iverson gets drafted by the Philadelphia 76ers.

-Donovan McNabb gets drafted by the Philadelphia Eagles.

-Philadelphia police lock-up a black criminal in North Philadelphia.

-A man makes a cheesesteak at Pat's Steaks in South Philadelphia.

-A bunch of teenagers riot in a Philadelphia subway car.

-A bike race around Franklin Square.

END MONTAGE

As the montage fades, a skyline view of city emerges and we zoom into mostly quiet, all-black neighborhood in North Philadelphia.

In this all-black neighborhood, a very important event is taking place on an outside porch where several men are gathered--

CHAUNCEY JOHNSON, 50's, African-American and stubborn as hell and smug grin plays checkers with one his buddies, BOOTSY JONES, 50's, round belly and gray hair around the temples.

Two other friends, EARL THOMAS, 50's and GENE HARRIS, 50's.

Theses guys have been friends for a long time.

CHAUNCEY

Naw, you can't do that, how you gonna take my man?

BOOTSY

I'm gonna jump him, fool.

CHAUNCEY

How you gonna jump him with my man sittin' there. I gotta man sittin' there. Is you blind, man?

BOOTSY

Man, I thought he was on the other square, I didn't see him there.

CHAUNCEY

Didn't you know I was the checker champ in 'Nam?

BOOTSY

I don't care. I gotta few tricks up my sleeve.

CHAUNCEY

I'm like the Joe Frazier of this. You hear me? Joe Frazier. The greatest.

EARL

What about that boy Bernard Hopkins?

GENE

Now he was good.

BOOTSY

The Executioner!

CHAUNCEY

One of the true great Philadelphians, right up there with Will Smith, Bill Cosby and Patti Labelle.

EARL

My girl, Patti Labelle!

BOOTSY

Nobody kicked it liked Teddy Pendergrass, now that's a fact.

CHAUNCEY

Man, come on. Will you pay attention to the board.

BOOTSY

Oh, alright.

Bootsy moves his piece.

Chauncey studies and then makes a move.

CHAUNCEY
Bam! Double jump. Crown my man.

Bootsy surprised, pulls back.

BOOTSY
Aw, man.

CHAUNCEY
I win again, pay me my money.

GENE
Damn it!

Gene reads his paper, folds it then throws it on the porch floor.

BOOTSY
What happened?

GENE
You know the Robinson boy down the street?

EARL
Oh, Loretta and 'dem kid.

CHAUNCEY
Yeah, the boy with square head.

EARL
Yeah, that's the one.

GENE
Well, he got shot yesterday.

BOOTSY
What?

GENE
Well, somebody walked into his home and shot him dead.

EARL
The boy must have been doin' drugs or something.

GENE
They said that the door was left open and somebody just walked in his house and shot him.

BOOTSY

These young boys are crazy out here.

CHAUNCEY

That's why I'm leavin' Philly. It's time to get away from the craziness. I'm saving up my money and as soon as I get it right, I'm moving to Virginia.

GENE

What's down in Virginia?

CHAUNCEY

Horses and cows and grass and no crazy ass brothas shootin' up the place.

BOOTSY

I'm right there with you, sir.

CHAUNCEY

You see, this all a plot of the man tryin' to keep us down.

GENE

Oh, don't start that up.

CHAUNCEY

No that's right. It's all the white man's game and he's using our kids against each other.

EARL

Chauncey, you still on that white man's game kick?

CHAUNCEY

Why shouldn't I be?

GENE

The white man game is played out, man. Look at all those successful brothers out there. You gonna tell me that there ain't no good in the world.

CHAUNCEY

It's all a set up, I tell you. That's why I ain't never workin' for the man. Neva.

GENE

What about Lebron James.

Pictures of famous black celebrities fill the screen while the men have their conversation.

BOOTSY

Will Smith. Kobe Bryant.

Pictures of Will Smith winning the first hip-hop Grammy and Kobe Bryant winning a championship show.

EARL

Barack Obama. John Lewis.

Videos of Barack Obama and John Lewis display.

CHAUNCEY

All I'm sayin' is that things haven't changed...What about Atatiana Jefferson, Brian Taylorm Aura Roser, Stephon Clark. You can't tell me nothin'.

BOOTSY

Chauncey.

CHAUNCEY

What?

EARL

Man, be cool.

CHAUNCEY

You be cool. I tell you one thing, I always live by my rules.

GENE

Here we go again.

CHAUNCEY

Rule number one...I don't work for the man.

BOOTSY

Chauncey.

CHAUNCEY

Rule number two...if you screw me once, you won't get a chance to screw me twice.

EARL

Chauncey's choppin' at the bit.

CHAUNCEY

Rule # three...You either be down
or lay down. If you ain't for me,
you're against me.

BOOTSY

Why in the world did we get
Chauncey started?

(then)

Look Chauncey, you gotta learn to
live life without being so damned
bitter, man.

GENE

Let go of that goddamn slave
mentality.

EARL

And let go of that goddamn jitney
that you still be drivin'.

CHAUNCEY

I ain't ever lettin' my Jitney go.
That's my pride and my power. I'm
gonna ride Betsy 'til she drops.

EARL

Why don't you just drive an Uber or
a Lyft like e'rybody else?

CHAUNCEY

I dun' told you 'bout my rules. I
don't work for the man.

Chauncey's phone rings.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Yeah. North Philly. I'll be there
in fifteen minutes.

Chauncey hangs up the phone.

GENE

Who the heck is callin' you?

CHAUNCEY

One of my loyal customers. I used
to drive his mother from the
supermarket back in the day. He
calls me every once in a while to
take him places.

BOOTSY

Who in da world takes a Hack
nowadays?

EARL

I don't know what's wrong with
these people.

CHAUNCEY

I'll see you guys later.

Chauncey exits the porch, hops into his old Lincoln Town Car.

As more Teddy Pendergrass music plays as Chauncey's car
travels through the streets of Philadelphia.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's a small Philadelphia row home somewhere in Philadelphia
as we see Chauncey sit in a living room filled with military
memorabilia, Philadelphia sports memorabilia and a few
pictures. A closer look at the pictures tells us that
Chauncey had a family as they show him with a beautiful cocoa-
skinned woman and a young man--his wife and son.

Chauncey watches the "The Soul Train Awards" on BET and
begins to nod off.

As Chauncey sleeps, he dreams a dream that is all too
familiar.

BEGIN DREAM

Super: Philadelphia 1964

EXT. YOUNG CHAUNCEY'S HOME - NIGHT

It's Philadelphia during the summer of 1964 and race
relations and crime are just as hot as the city. It's a rough
part of town as fires, pimps, prostitutes and drug dealers
flood the streets looking for the latest hook-up.

A house that sits on the corner is the home to a very
familiar face: YOUNG CHAUNCEY, 10.

Marvin Gaye music plays in the background.

It looks like the family is about to have dinner.

Cooking dinner is his mother VERNA JOHNSON, 30's, looks like
Thelma from "Good Times".

In the living room Young Chauncey plays checkers with his father, BEN JOHNSON, 30's, muscle t-shirt and jeans, works for a package delivery company.

YOUNG CHAUNCEY
I jumped your man, dad.

BEN
You sure did, lil' man.

YOUNG CHAUNCEY
I beat you!

BEN
You didn't beat me yet.

Ben takes one of his checkers and jumps Young Chauncey's man.

YOUNG CHAUNCEY
Awe, man.

BEN
You never underestimate your
opponent, young buck.

Verna enters the room.

VERNA
Baby, we need some cornbread and
some milk. I done forgot we ran
out.

BEN
I guess you want me to go and get
some, huh.

VERNA
You wanna eat cornbread or do you
just want to eat nothin' but pork
chops?

BEN
Alright, I'm movin'.

YOUNG CHAUNCEY
Can I come, pop?

BEN
No, you stay here.

YOUNG CHAUNCEY
Aw, come on pop.

BEN
 Boy, I said stay here. Help your
 momma set the table.

Chauncey sulks then heads to the kitchen.

Ben puts on a shirt, throws on his all-black Carhart jacket,
 black knit cap and heads over to Verna and gives her a light
 kiss on the cheek.

VERNA
 Hurry up.

BEN
 I'll be right back.

Ben jets leaves for the corner store.

MOMENTS LATER

EXT. CORNER STORE - NIGHT

Ben leaves the corner store with groceries in hand.

As Ben walks down the street, a cop car with two POLICEMEN
 pulls up along side him.

Whoo! Whoo!

The car's siren screams, a bright light shines on Ben.

POLICEMAN #1
 Where you on your way to, boy?

BEN
 I don't want any trouble.

POLICEMAN #1
 I said, where you on your way to
 boy!

The police car stops and the officers get out of the car to
 approach Ben.

POLICEMAN #2
 Hold it right there son.

The two officers draw their guns.

POLICEMAN #1
 Stop right there.

BEN
Look, I gotta get home.

POLICEMAN #1
You look like a person reported to
us earlier.

BEN
I don't know what you're talking
about.

Ben turns around and runs away.

POLICEMAN #1
Hold it right there!

Ben continues to run as the two policemen point their guns.

POLICEMAN #2
Freeeeeeze!

Both policemen fire their guns--

Pop. Pop.

SLOW MOTION as two bullets hit Ben in the back--he falls to
the ground.

Screams are heard throughout the neighborhood as one of their
own falls a victim to another act of a senseless police
killing.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Mourners gather for the death of Ben Johnson to pay their
last respects to a loving husband and father.

In the crowd is Verna and Chauncey who looks on with hate in
his heart as a tear streams down his eye.

Chauncey cautiously walks up to his father's casket and
gently touches it, bidding farewell to his father and
checkers companion.

END DREAM

Chauncey wakes up from his dream--

looks around his place for a moment--

Then goes back to sleep.

This time he hope it's a better dream than the last one.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Chauncey visits the grave of someone very dear to him: his wife, BESSY JOHNSON, 50's, who passed away due to cancer a few years ago.

It's cloudy and gloomy, but that doesn't bother Chauncey 'cause he gonna see his baby everyday.

Chauncey stands over her grave, thinks for a moment, then speaks.

CHAUNCEY

It's been two long years since you left. I know I let you down sometimes, but I'm gonna find a way to make things right, as long as the Lord's willing.

Tears start to creep from Chauncey's eyes.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna do right by you, Bess. I'm gonna do right 'til we get back together again.

Chauncey bends down next to the grave.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

I done made my mind up. As soon as I get the money, I'm gettin' outta Philly and movin' my behind to Virginia. You heard me right, I'm gettin' outta here. I see you later, Bess.

Chauncey reminisces for a moment, wipes his tears, then walks away.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA, PA - DAY

A NEWSCASTER makes an announcement concerning a sweeping new, deadly virus: COVID 19. The virus is taking the world by storm and is throwing the world into a panic as deaths quickly mount.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Tom Hanks has just announced that he has contacted the coronavirus and has caught the attention of the entire world.

(MORE)

NEWSCASTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The COVID-19 virus is a deadly virus that has taken the city of Philadelphia and the world by storm. Federal, state and local leadership are on the verge of ordering a "lockdown" ordering people to stay in their homes.

As the newscaster make the announcement, shots of people with face masks and PPE are shown walking the streets of Philadelphia.

A Montage of a once vibrant city, show a city under siege by a virus that will claim the lives of thousands.

BEGIN MONTAGE

--An empty football stadium.

--An empty corporate office park.

--An empty schoolyard.

--People walking their dogs and jogging with masks on.

END MONTAGE

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Thousands of people will be forced out of work and the local and national economy will be in a state of turmoil.

Shots of empty factories, skyscrapers, and retail shops are shown.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Chauncey and his Lincoln Town Car sit outside of a supermarket looking for customers.

CHAUNCEY

Hack! Hack!

Chauncey calls out to the people leaving the supermarket.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

Hack! Hack!

People look at Chauncey like he's crazy as nothing but Ubers and Lyfts arrive to pick up customers.

A man, CHARLIE TOWNS, 60's, comes out of nowhere, approached Chauncey.

CHARLIE
Ay, man, I need a hack.

CHAUNCEY
I got one right here.

CHARLIE
You go to Logan?

CHAUNCEY
Yeah.

CHARLIE
A'ight, then take me to this address.

Charlie hands Chauncey a slip of paper.

Chauncey eyes it down.

CHAUNCEY
I know just where this is. Hop in.
It'll be ten dollars.

Charlie and Chauncey hop into the car.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S CAR - TRAVELING

CHARLIE
Man, you're probably the only man
in America driving a Jitney.

CHAUNCEY
Yup. Ain't nothing gonna change
about it either.

CHARLIE
You ain't join the rest of the
folks to drive an Uber or a Lyft?

CHAUNCEY
Man, I ain't ever working for that
man. I got my own small business
right here.

CHARLIE
I hear that. The crackers always
got it in for a brother just to
make a dime.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(then)
How about 'dem Eagles.

CHAUNCEY

I see they got that new wide receiver. Man, that boy is fast.

CHARLIE

That's right. Hey my boy just got recruited to Penn State.

CHAUNCEY

He going to a big, white school, huh. He couldn't get into Grambling?

CHARLIE

I wanted him to play for a black school too, but he said he wanted to play for big school and go pro.

CHAUNCEY

These young guys are all about the money.

CHARLIE

You tellin' me. If they're not playing ball or rapping, they on these streets hustling and trying to kill each other.

CHAUNCEY

Philly is going down the tubes.

CHARLIE

America is going right along with it.

CHAUNCEY

That's why I'm leaving Philly the first chance I get and moving to Virginia.

CHARLIE

Oooh, Virginia. With horses and cows.

CHAUNCEY

That's right.
(then)
Hey, here you go.

Chauncey pulls up to the man's address.

CHARLIE

Hey, it was good talking to you,
man. Take it easy.

CHAUNCEY

You take it easy. Be safe.
(then)
Oh, here's my card. Gimme a call
if you need me to pick you up.

Chauncey hands Charlie his card--Charlie grabs it, looks at it.

Charlie gets out of the car and walks to his house.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PHILADELPHIA - DAY

A line of taxis line up outside of City Hall to wait for the latest group of riders. Among them is Chauncey, the only Jitney there.

CHAUNCEY

Hack! Hack!

Among a long line of yellow taxis, there's one car that stands out: Chauncey's Lincoln Town Car.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

Hack! Hack!

A caucasian man, DARBY KIRK, 30's, khakis and button-up shirt, walks up to Chauncey--

DARBY

Hey there, can you give me a ride?

CHAUNCEY

Where to?

DARBY

I got a flight in a few hours. Can
you get me to the airport?

CHAUNCEY

Hop in.

Chauncey opens the back door for Darby--Darby hops in--
Chauncey gets in the car and pulls off.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S CAR - TRAVELING

Chauncey and Darby speak while traveling to the airport.

DARBY

So, you still driving a hack, huh?

CHAUNCEY

Is there a problem with that?

DARBY

No, no, not at all...it just seems that it may be safer to drive a Lyft or Uber.

CHAUNCEY

I'm personally against them.

DARBY

Why?

CHAUNCEY

I have my reasons, that's all.

DARBY

Look, I drive for Uber down in Washington D.C.. Here's my card. I can get you set up here in Philly if you want.

Chauncey reluctantly accepts the card, then reaches into his pocket and gives Darby his card.

CHAUNCEY

Take this. Next time you're in Philly, call me. I know some good soul food places.

DARBY

Thanks for this.

(then)

Seriously, man, there are a lot of bad people out there that can target guys like you.

Chauncey thinks about this for a moment. Resists.

CHAUNCEY

Nope. It's not for me.

DARBY

Hey, I understand that. It's just an offer.

CHAUNCEY

Thanks, but no thanks.

DARBY

This wouldn't have anything with you working for the man, would it?

CHAUNCEY

Where did you get that?

DARBY

I know your type... The former Black Panther, MOVE type that's still a little ruffled...

Chauncey pulls over to the curb with tires screeching.

CHAUNCEY

Look, man, you wanna a ride or not?

DARBY

Yes.

CHAUNCEY

Then don't patronize me!

DARBY

Alright, alright

Chauncey gets back on the road and drives off.

DARBY (CONT'D)

I see you were in the Army.

CHAUNCEY

I served in 'Nam just before it ended.

DARBY

Thank you for your service.

CHAUNCEY

You're welcome.

DARBY

Sometimes, I wish I could've joined, but I was in college. It was just so brave what you guys do.

CHAUNCEY

No problem.

There is a common bond between the two as a still quietness fills the car's cabin

EXT. PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Chauncey's car pulls up to the departure terminals at the airport.

Darby hops out, leans into the front passenger window--

DARBY

Thank you, sir. You have my card,
call me if you need me.

CHAUNCEY

I will. You take care, now.

Darby slaps the hood and walks away.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chauncey sit alone at his home as he watches a breaking news report.

A NEWSCASTER delivers a very harrowing message.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

A man named George Floyd was killed
by police in Minneapolis, Minnesota
yesterday after police responded to
a call about a man who used a
counterfeit twenty dollar bill to
buy a pack of cigarettes.

Chauncey leans forward to zoom closer into the television screen.

On the television, riots are emerging in the city of Minneapolis and people are all over the place.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

People are turning in droves to
protest the killing of George Floyd
and it turns out that they
gatherings are becoming violent.

Chauncey looks on as the newscast shows protestors turning violent, looting and vandalizing stores and retail shops.

Chauncey looks at the television in a state of shock, fear and anger.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The President has ordered a state of emergency in the state and the Army National Guard troops are expected to deploy to maintain order.

Chauncey looks at the television intently, picks up his phone and dials a phone number--

INTERCUT - CHAUNCEY / BOOTSY / EARL

CHAUNCEY

Hey Bootsy, you see this?

BOOTSY

Damn, they killed that boy.

CHAUNCEY

Hold up, I'mma get Earl on the phone.

Chauncey dials the three-way on his phone.

Earl picks up, Chauncey connects him.

EARL

Y'all see what happened.

BOOTSY

'Dem crackers done beat up and killed another brother.

Chauncey and the guys look at a replay of police men kneeling on the neck of George Floyd.

CHAUNCEY

Man, look at how they're sittin' on his neck.

BOOTSY

Hey, anybody see Gene?

EARL

He went to sleep, man, he ain't feeling to good.

CHAUNCEY

Man, they gonna tear that place up over there.

BOOTSY

He ya'll, I gotta go, my chitlins
burnin'. See ya'll tomorrow at
checkers.

CHAUNCEY

Alright, see you tomorrow.

EARL

See you tomorrow.

The three guys hang up.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PHILADELPHIA - DAY

Chauncey takes a ride through downtown Philadelphia to see protestors and police eye-to-eye in response to the George Floyd murder.

BEGIN MONTAGE

--Chauncey visits City Hall where protestors rally along the front steps with signs that display "Don't Forget George Floyd". They're greeted by riot police.

--Chauncey travels to South Street where the impact of looters has the retail shops shaken.

--Chauncey drives past a Walgreens in North Philadelphia where looters had broke windows and raided the store.

--Chauncey drives down City Line Avenue to see protestors standing outside a busy retail district.

END MONTAGE

Chauncey hops on the Schuylkill Expressway and heads home.

EXT. CHAUNCEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Chauncey, Bootsy, Earl and Gene sit on Chauncey's outside porch as they play checkers. Chauncey plays Earl now.

BOOTSY

The world is on fire!

CHAUNCEY

Dem' cops stayed on that boys' neck
for fifteen minutes!

EARL

That was first degree murder.

GENE

Those cops need to be thrown under the jail for that mess.

CHAUNCEY

That's why I'm moving my narrow behind down to Virginia. Things like this don't happen nowhere but the city.

EARL

That's just the man throwing the Black Man under the bus, again.

BOOTSY

I hope they burn the whole damn country down.

CHAUNCEY

On top of all that, they telling us we gotta wear these goddamn face masks.

BOOTSY

I ain't wearin' no damn face mask.

GENE

Man, I think I got COVID-19, my chest been hurting.

EARL

You betta get on to the hospital, then.

GENE

I was riding the Orange Line the other day and this lady was sitting smack-dab in the center of everybody coughing and sneezing.

BOOTSY

Y'all heard about that bus driver that died in Detroit, right?

CHAUNCEY

That man, was cursing those people out on social media.

The men begin chuckle.

EARL

I hope his family is alright.

GENE

I still think that this virus is one, big hoax.

CHAUNCEY

The virus is a hoax, the riots are a hoax and Trump is the biggest hoax of them all.

EARL

That man need to go ahead with himself and stick to building hotels.

CHAUNCEY

That man wants to use the military to help control the protestors.

BOOTSY

That man is crazy.

EARL

I can't wait 'til the elections when we can get him out of office.

GENE

Yeah, he tryin' to blame the virus on the Chinese knowin' damn well he knew about it when it got over here.

CHAUNCEY

All, I know is that I ain't wearin' no mask.

GENE

Man, I don't see how you can drive that Hack when all this mess is goin' on.

EARL

Virginia can wait.

CHAUNCEY

No it can't. It has my name written all over it. These people are crazy.

BOOTSY

Man, you stubborn.

CHAUNCEY

I ain't stubborn.

GENE
How's that boy of yours doin'?

CHAUNCEY
I don't know, I don't care.

GENE
You gotta let things heal, man.
Your son needs you after all of
that mess.

CHAUNCEY
You know my rules. You mess up
once, I'm done with you. You're
dead to me.

GENE
Come on, Chaunce, your boy needs
you.

Chauncey just focuses on the checkers game.

EARL
Chauncey, you listenin'?

BOOTSY
Chauncey?

Chauncey just ignores all of them.

GENE
That man ain't listening to nobody.

BOOTSY
The man is gone.

EARL
You gonna stop drivin' that damn
Hack.

CHAUNCEY
No.

EARL
The man is gone with the wind.

GENE
You gotta stop being so damn
stubborn man.

Chauncey concentrates on the checkerboard, looks at Earl

CHAUNCEY
Will you move, man.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Chauncey sits on the hood of his car looking for new customers at a shopping mall somewhere in West Oak Lane.

CHAUNCEY

Hack! Hack!

Nobody responds.

Everyone is hopping into their personal vehicles or opt to take Uber and Lyft.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

Hack! Hack!

Three girls with "Black Lives Matter" t-shirts and cardboard signs approach Chauncey.

They are: TASHA, 20's; KEISHA, 20's and MELINDA, 20's.

KEISHA

Excuse me, sir. Could you take us downtown?

CHAUNCEY

Sure. Hop on in.

The three girls and Chauncey hop into the car.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S CAR - TRAVELING

Chauncey drives the girls to their destination.

CHAUNCEY

You girls heading to the demonstration, huh.

TASHA

Yeah, it's the third time this week.

KEISHA

They killing our people out there, man.

CHAUNCEY

You got that right.

MELINDA

Why you still drivin' a Hack.

CHAUNCEY

I like working for myself. It gives me a sense of freedom.

TASHA

You don't wanna work for the man, huh.

Chauncey is caught off guard.

MELINDA

You're a militant type from the 70's who thinks that da Man is out to get the black man.

Chauncey is embarrassed that the girls know so much about him.

KEISHA

My dad is the same way, Mr. Chauncey.

Chauncey becomes alert at the comment from Keisha.

CHAUNCEY

How did you know my name?

KEISHA

My mom used to take your Hack when I was little.

CHAUNCEY

Who's your mom?

KEISHA

Irena...Irene Carter.

Chauncey thinks for a moment.

KEISHA (CONT'D)

Irene from the old Thriftway in West Oak Lane.

Chauncey thinks, then remembers--

CHAUNCEY

Oh, I remember you now. You have a little brother, right?

KEISHA

Yeah, he's bad as hell as usual so we had to throw him in the Marines.

CHAUNCEY

That's good. That's real good.

KEISHA

Everybody's proud of him.

CHAUNCEY

I'm sure they are. So you guys gonna loot with the rest of those hoodlums?

TASHA

You're damned right! We gonna tear this mothafucka' up!

CHAUNCEY

You betta watch your mouth.

TASHA

I don't care. They shouldn't have killed my man George Floyd.

KEISHA

We gonna make some noise about this.

CHAUNCEY

As long as there are cops, there's gonna be black boys getting killed.

MELINDA

My cousin got killed last year at the playground down the street from his house by some guys.

CHAUNCEY

I heard about that. That was your cousin?

MELINDA

It was all over the news. The police barely investigated it. The killers are still on the lose.

CHAUNCEY

The cops don't car about us.

KEISHA

That's why we have to care about us.

Chauncey pulls up to City Hall downtown.

The girls get out of the car. Wave to Chauncey.

TASHA/MELINDA/KEISHA
Bye, Mr. Chauncey.

Chauncey rolls down his window.

CHAUNCEY
Bye, girls.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Chauncey visits the grave of his wife again.

It's cloudy again as Chauncey strolls up to the location of his wife's grave.

He lays a rose on her tombstone.

CHAUNCEY
They went and killed a guy over in Minnesota the other week and everybody is losing their minds. I hope nobody else gets hurt.

Chauncey looks up into the sky. Thinks.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
I hope they burn this damned city down. There's nothin' but crime and corruption goin' on anyway.

It's starts to drizzle.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
They tell me that Meek is getting outta jail sometime soon. I know you miss him. I just hope the boy's alright.

Chauncey looks around the cemetery.

Chauncey starts to tear up.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
Look, baby I gotta go. I'm still trying to get to Virginia still. I'm gonna make thing right again. You'll be sure of that.

Chauncey kneels and kisses the tombstone of his wife.

Chauncey gets up, dusts himself off and walks to his car.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PHILADELPHIA - DAY

Chauncey sits on the hood of his car waiting for customers.

Chauncey, however, still refuses to wear a face mask.

Chauncey engages in his usual chant.

CHAUNCEY

Hack! Hack!

People walk by and stare at Chauncey as some of them don't even know what a Hack is.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

Hack! Hack!

A couple walks up to Chauncey.

They are Michael, 20's, African-American and Kelly, 20's, Caucasian, pregnant.

MICHAEL

Hey, sir. Could you give us a ride to Manayunk?

CHAUNCEY

Sure, hop in.

Michael and Kelly hop in the back seat.

Chauncey hops off the hood in gets in the driver seat.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S CAR - TRAVELING

Michael and Kelly sit in the back seat of Chauncey's, hugging, with the glow of a newly wed couple.

MICHAEL

Thanks for the lift, sir. Why are you still driving a Hack and not an Uber or a Lyft?

CHAUNCEY

I like my freedom, that's all.

MICHAEL

You remind me of my dad.

CHAUNCEY

How so?

MICHAEL
My dad's an old school bigot--

KELLY
Mike.

MICHAEL
He thinks that the system is out to get him and that the world is against the black man.

CHAUNCEY
Well, it's true. You see how they just killed a black man.

MICHAEL
That type of thing is gonna happen, but it doesn't mean all whites are evil.

CHAUNCEY
I take it you're not close with your father.

MICHAEL
He thinks I'm a sellout because I married Kelly. He won't even speak to me.

CHAUNCEY
The man's entitled to his opinion.

MICHAEL
I just wish he was there for me, especially now. I wanted him to be there for the birth of his grandson.

CHAUNCEY
A man needs a father. Ya' know, some people don't have fathers.

MICHAEL
Even guys with fathers don't have fathers.

CHAUNCEY
Everything will work itself out.

MICHAEL
How about you? You gotta son?

Chauncey pause for a moment.

CHAUNCEY

My son's in prison for armed robbery. I haven't spoken to him in years.

MICHAEL

Armed robbery. It must've been tough to see him go.

CHAUNCEY

Yeah, he played football at Villanova then lost it all after he got locked up.

MICHAEL

Damn.

CHAUNCEY

I know...damn.

All of a sudden, Kelly starts to sweat.

MICHAEL

Are you alright, babe?

KELLY

I think my water just broke.

CHAUNCEY

What water?

MICHAEL

What water do you think? Man, get us to a hospital.

KELLY

Get us to a hospital...now!

Chauncey steps on the gas and gets the hell outta there.

Chauncey changes directions on the freeway and bolts to the nearest hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Chauncey sits in the waiting room for the maternity ward at the hospital.

Michael comes out from behind the double doors.

MICHAEL

Sir, I want you to see my son.

Chauncey gets up and follows Michael down the hall to the room where new born babies are being held.

Michael points to a brown-skinned baby in the center of the room.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

That's my boy.

Chauncey looks on at Michael's new born son.

CHAUNCEY

There's nothing like bringing a
life into the world,
congratulations.

Michael looks at his son, then turns to Chauncey.

MICHAEL

Your son needs you, Chauncey.

Chauncey pauses and looks at Michael.

CHAUNCEY

I'll think about it.

MICHAEL

Well, think about it. Your boy
needs his father.

Chauncey just looks at Michael, he straightens his ball cap, then walks away.

CHAUNCEY

Here's my card, young man.
Congratulations on having your
baby. Call me if you need
anything.

Michael take the card. Looks at Chauncey.

MICHAEL

Thank you, sir for getting us here
to the hospital.

CHAUNCEY

Not a problem.

Michael takes the card.

Chauncey straightens up and walks away.

Michael looks at Chauncey as he walks away.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S CAR - TRAVELING

Chauncey listens to the radio station as it plays Luther Vandross' "A house is not a home".

Chauncey pulls into a Checkers drive-thru.

A CASHIER comes onto the speakerphone.

CASHIER

Welcome to Checkers, can I take your order.

CHAUNCEY

Yeah, let me have a number one...supersize it.

Chauncey takes a moment to look at his stash--there's only two hundred dollars there.

Chauncey thinks for a moment--

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

Make that a small. Thanks.

CASHIER

That'll be ten dollars and fifty-eight cents, please pull up to the first window.

Chauncey pulls his car up to the first window.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Chauncey sits at his dining room table counting the money he earned for the day.

As Chauncey counts his money, he sees that he only earned \$250.

Chauncey opens his notebook and writes down \$250 towards a goal of \$10,000.

Chauncey is way off of his goal and thinks of a plan to get the money.

Chauncey gets up, walks to his bedroom opens the top drawer of his dresser.

He takes out an old box, opens it--it's his wife's old wedding ring.

Chauncey observes it, tucks it into his shirt pocket.

He takes off his wedding band and tucks it into his shirt pocket.

INT. PAWN SHOP - NIGHT

It's a drab shop with guitars, keyboards and other instruments on the wall, a glass showcase with binoculars, watches and other memorabilia that some poor, old chap sold to pay their electric bill.

A new poor, old chap enters the store about an hour before it's set to close--his name is Chauncey Johnson.

Chauncey is reluctant as he gently strolls into the shop.

The SHOP OWNER greets Chauncey.

SHOP OWNER
Hey there, how can I help you?

Chauncey pauses, looks around for a moment.

CHAUNCEY
Nope, just looking around.

Chauncey know he's there on a mission, but he just can't bring himself to do the unthinkable.

SHOP OWNER
Let me know if you need anything.

The owner closes the glass case and begins to head to the back room.

MOMENTS LATER

Chauncey pushes the buzzer to signal the shop owner.

The shop owner comes out.

SHOP OWNER (CONT'D)
You're still here?

Chauncey hesitates--

CHAUNCEY
I wanna see what I can get for these.

Chauncey pulls out a silk handkerchief--it has two rings--his wedding band and his wife's wedding ring.

Chauncey gently places them on the counter.

The shop owner picks up the rings, observes them closely.

SHOP OWNER
I'll give you three thousand.

CHAUNCEY
Three thousand? That's all.

Chauncey grabs his rings then starts to walk out.

SHOP OWNER
Thirty five hundred. That's my
final offer...

Chauncey thinks about it for a moment, swallows his pride,
turns around and surrenders the rings.

CHAUNCEY
I'll take it.

The shop owner goes to the back room, gets a stack of cash,
comes back out to Chauncey.

SHOP OWNER
Three
thousand...one...two...three...four
...five...three thousand five
hundred dollars.

Chauncey studies the money on the counter, hesitates, then
grabs the money, puts it in his coat pocket--

CHAUNCEY
It was nice doing business with
you.

SHOP OWNER
You take care.

Chauncey stares down the shop owner then walks out.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chauncey sits at his dining room table and counts the money
from the pawn sale.

Chauncey records his earnings in his notebook--

"Six Thousand dollars to Ten Thousand Dollars."

Chauncey thinks for a moment--

He walks to his bedroom--

Digs into his drawer again and pulls out an old photo--

It's a picture of him in an Army uniform with his wife--it's their wedding day.

CHAUNCEY

Even when you're gone, you find out
a way to help me be a better man.

Chauncey looks at the picture--

Caresses it--puts it away into his drawer.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Chauncey stands by his car looking for more customers.

CHAUNCEY

Hack! Hack!

Again, nothing but stares as people look at "The Last American Jitney" or Hack as they say in Philly.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

Hack! Hack!

A young man in a blue business suit, TONY MORRIS, 20's approaches Chauncey.

TONY

Hey there, you mind giving me a
ride to my interview.

CHAUNCEY

You're looking sharp. Where are
you on your way to?

TONY

King of Prussia. Is that too far?

CHAUNCEY

Naw. Come on.

Tony hops in the back seat.

Chauncey gets in the front and pulls off.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S CAR - TRAVELING

Chauncey listens a few old school classics while taking Tony to his interview.

TONY
Oh, The O'Jays!

CHAUNCEY
What you know about that, boy?

TONY
My grandparents used to make me
listen to that stuff.

CHAUNCEY
This is when music was good. Those
new kids don't know how to do it
like this.

TONY
I don't know about that.

CHAUNCEY
So, you going to an interview, eh.

TONY
Yeah, you know how it is.

CHAUNCEY
No I don't. I have never worked
for the man. Don't want to either.
Haven't worked for the man since I
was in the military. Once I was
done with that, I was done.

TONY
A brotha has to make a name for
himself in this country, man.

CHAUNCEY
I made my way in Vietnam.

TONY
I mean you gotta go their schools,
serve in their armies, even date
their women.

CHAUNCEY
White women? Damn, you gonna get
in all kinds of trouble.

TONY
Look, I'm trying to be in the game.
I gotta an Ivy League education
from Penn, I played a little
football and now I'm trying to get
into money management.

CHAUNCEY
Money management, huh.

TONY
That's right. I'm trying to bag
this one. It's the fourth
interview this week.

CHAUNCEY
You know you gotta work twice as
hard ass the white man to make it
in this world.

TONY
There goes that same ol' slave
mentality.

CHAUNCEY
Slave mentality.

TONY
Look, this is a new day, man.
Brothers are gonna work it out, we
working it out.

CHAUNCEY
It ain't ever gonna be worked out.
The man is gonna keep killing our
young men until we take a stand.

TONY
We take a stand by making a change.
(then)
Look, man why are you still driving
this beat-up Lincoln? You need to
get on one of those ride-share and
upgrade this thing to a Scion.

CHAUNCEY
Look, my father was killed by the
cops. Ain't nothin' you can tell
me about things gonna work it out.

Tony is quiet for a while.

TONY
Damn.

CHAUNCEY
That's what they all say.

Tony leans back in his seat and takes this in.

MOMENTS LATER

EXT. OFFICE PARK - DAY

Chauncey arrives to an office park somewhere in King of Prussia. The place is brand new with lush green lawns with a pond in the middle of the place--ducks too.

Chauncey's car slowly creeps up to the biggest building in the park.

CHAUNCEY

Here you go, my man.

TONY

Thanks. It was nice talking to you.

Chauncey dips into his breast pocket and pulls out a card.

CHAUNCEY

Here's my card. Call me when you're done. I want to know how things went.

TONY

I'll give you a call.

Tony opens the door gets out, wave good-bye to Chauncey.

Chauncey pulls off.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Chauncey sits outside of a subway station hub in Philadelphia--he's finishing off a cheesesteak.

Chauncey wipes the ketchup off his mouth with his last napkin then proceeds to do what he does best--

CHAUNCEY

Hack! Hack!

The subway is flooded with people as the sounds of the inner city fill the warm, spring air.

A cop car and a fire engine blaze by--

A homeless man gets into an argument with a hot dog stand owner--

A group of Black Lives Matter Protestors hold a rally in front of the station handing pamphlets out to bystanders--

None of this bothers Chauncey as this is just another day at the office.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

Hack! Hack!

A young man, MARCUS, 20's walks over to Chauncey with a limp. Chauncey notices.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

Hey there, fella.

MARCUS

Can you get me down to the V.A.?

CHAUNCEY

Sure, get in.

The two guys get into Chauncey's car.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S CAR - TRAVELING

Chauncey drives along the Schuylkill as he listens to a little bit of Miles Davis.

MARCUS

Oooh, Miles Davis.

CHAUNCEY

Don't even try it.

MARCUS

Try what?

CHAUNCEY

You don't anything about Miles Davis. He was before your time.

MARCUS

Just because he was before my time, doesn't mean I don't love the man. We used to listen to him at my old unit.

CHAUNCEY

You were in the military?

MARCUS

I know you saw me limping. I was in the Army for a few years. Served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

CHAUNCEY

Thanks for your service. I did a little time myself. Seen a lot of bad things.

MARCUS

Everyone that served has seen a lot of bad things.

CHAUNCEY

I noticed you had a bit of limp when you came up to me.

MARCUS

I lost my legs in Afghanistan. We were on a patrol and some asshole Taliban planted a land mine along our route.

(then)

Bang! My life changed forever.

CHAUNCEY

It must've been hard for you and your family.

MARCUS

It was. But I don't regret one minute of it.

CHAUNCEY

After all that you gave for this country?

MARCUS

We were ambushed by the Taliban in Afghanistan at my outpost. Seven of my guys got killed.

CHAUNCEY

I know the feeling. I served in 'Nam when we had napalm falling on our heads.

MARCUS

I wished I could of saved my guys, but I know that the sacrifice was for a good cause, our country. I still have a hard time dealing with it.

CHAUNCEY

A country that doesn't care about the black man.

MARCUS

We gotta make 'em care about us!

CHAUNCEY

How are we gonna do that, huh? A black man can't get no job. We killin' us. The goddamn virus killin' us. What the hell are we gonna do?

MARCUS

We served in his military.

CHAUNCEY

I served in his military. He put a gun to my head and drafted me.

MARCUS

He drafted you to give your life for freedom.

CHAUNCEY

Well, I served and we still ain't free. How 'bout that.

MARCUS

I don't care what anyone says, this is the greatest country on the face of the Earth. What about Barak Obama? What about Jay-Z...the man went from selling his tapes from the back of his car to owning the Brooklyn Nets. The man is worth a billion dollars now!

CHAUNCEY

What about our people getting killed on the streets, in their own homes, shot in the back?

MARCUS

We gotta rise above the negativity and seize the positivity, sir.

Chauncey gets quiet. Doesn't say a word.

The car is filled with a numbing silence.

CHAUNCEY

Life is short.

MARCUS

You got that right, one of my old battle buddies committed suicide a week ago.

CHAUNCEY

You guys are going through it out there.

MARCUS

The PTSD makes everything a hell of a lot worse. Sometimes I can't even sleep at night, keep a job, walk down the street.

CHAUNCEY

I'm praying for you, man.

MOMENTS LATER

Chauncey pulls up to the V.A. hospital--gives Marcus his card.

MARCUS

Thank you, sir.

CHAUNCEY

You stay strong out there.

The two make eye contact.

MARCUS

I'll do what I can.

CHAUNCEY

Call me if you need a ride back home.

MARCUS

Will do.

Marcus slips out of the back seat--closes the door.

As Marcus struggles to get into a wheelchair, Chauncey hops out of his car, walks over to Marcus, helps him sit get into the wheelchair and wheels him into the hospital.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

You're a savior. Thanks.

CHAUNCEY

No, thank you.

Chauncey pushes Marcus into the hospital.

EXT. CHAUNCEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Chauncey, Bootsy and Earl sit on the porch at Chauncey's house as they engage in another intelligent discussion about culture.

Bootsy and Earl wear face masks, Chauncey doesn't.

BOOTSY
It's your move, man.

EARL
I know it's my move.

Earl slides his checker.

Bootsy makes his move.

BOOTSY
Double jump!

Earl studies the board, makes another move.

Bootsy moves again.

BOOTSY (CONT'D)
Crown my man, fool.

EARL
Man, I think you cheated somewhere.

BOOTSY
You always say that when it's time to pay up.

EARL
Can I pay you next Tuesday, I need to pay my cable bill.

CHAUNCEY
You still owe him from last Tuesday.

BOOTSY
I'm gonna have to charge you interest, then.

CHAUNCEY
Man, you ain't gonna ever see that money.

Earl changes the subject.

EARL
Where's your mask, man?

CHAUNCEY
I'm too cool for school.

BOOTSY
Don't see people dieing out here?

CHAUNCEY
I see it, don't believe it, don't care about what they saying.

EARL
Hey, where's Gene?

BOOTSY
He said his chest hurt, and he was coughing all night, so he checked into the hospital.

CHAUNCEY
That man gonna be alright.

BOOTSY
He wasn't soundin' too good over the phone. I'mma check in on him tomorrow. Y'all comin'?

EARL
I'll go.

CHAUNCEY
I'm gonna be on the road all day tomorrow. I'll just wait 'til he gets out.

EARL
Doesn't look like they're gettin' a vaccine anytime soon.

BOOTSY
They're talking about sometime at the end of the year.

CHAUNCEY
End of the year?

EARL
Those pharmaceutical companies are draggin' their feet.

BOOTSY

They gonna drag their feet 'til a million people are dead.

CHAUNCEY

First Kobe Bryant died, then the virus and now they're rioting. Can things get any worse for 2020?

EARL

We shall see. We shall see.

BOOTSY

I don't know of anything else that could tear up this year.

CHAUNCEY

It's just the first half of the year, gang. This thing'll be over soon enough.

BOOTSY

The last time the city was like this was when MOVE was going down.

EARL

Now that was a damn shame what they did to all those people.

CHAUNCEY

Whenever they get a chance to make black people suffer, the man just don't care.

EARL

As long as they keep killing black folks, black folks gonna keep looting their shops and burning down their cities.

BOOTSY

Burn, baby, burn!

CHAUNCEY

Now that's what I'm talking about.
(then, noticing his cell phone)
Damn. I got a pick-up in Germantown.

Chauncey puts on his ball cap--

Grabs his car keys--and leaves the other two guys to play checkers.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Earl and Bootsy play set-up a checkers board to start a new game. Chauncey isn't there yet, but they're going to start without him.

Joining them is a young man, MEEK JOHNSON, 30's, in a prison-issued suit with a white shirt and no tie.

If his last name seems familiar, it is--he's Chauncey's prodigal son.

EARL

Yeah, I know your daddy real good. I used to drive Jitneys with a few years ago but stopped when they started the ride shares.

BOOTSY

You look like you need a smoke.

Bootsy offers Meek a cigarette.

Meek refuses.

MEEK

No thanks. You said that he's gonna be here in a few minutes?

EARL

Yeah. He's probably just snatching him up a breakfast sandwich.

(then)

I guess things done changed since the last time you seen him, huh.

MEEK

Yeah, pretty much.

BOOTSY

Yeah, they're tearing everything down around here. All along Spring Garden Street. You see, they done tore everything down. They gonna tear this block down and build lofts and condos for professional white people. We're gonna have to move.

EARL

We can't stay here no more.

BOOTSY

BOOTSY (CONT'D)

You gotta have somebody you can count on, you know. Now my wife, we been separated for twenty-two years now, but I ain't never loved nobody the way I loved that woman. You know what I mean?

MEEK

Yeah, I know.

BOOTSY

She the only thing in the world I ever loved. I had a dream that I was climbing this ladder. It was a gold ladder and I was climbing up to heaven. I get to the top of the ladder and saw all of the famous Saints sitting in a circle, I could see her too. She was so beautiful, glowing and all. When I reached the top, I slipped and fell down the ladder. I called out for help and the saints just sat there, St. John and everybody. She was the only one who left her seat in glory to help me from falling down the ladder. I ain't never forgot that. I woke up with tears all over my face and just sat up in my room and cried for the rest of the night and into the morning. She meant so much to me.

MEEK

That's some deep stuff.

BOOTSY

She been gone for twenty-two years, but I know she loved me.

Chauncey's car pulls up, parks--Chauncey gets out with a breakfast sandwich and orange juice in hand.

Chauncey walks up to the porch--

CHAUNCEY

Alright, I'm here ready to show you all who's still the champ.

Chauncey notices this strange adult, Meek, and quickly realizes that this is his son.

Meek stands to greet Chauncey.

MEEK

Pop.

CHAUNCEY

Meek.

Earl and Bootsy recognize that this is an awkward moment and collaborate to lave the scene--

EARL

Man, I'm hungry. I'm gonna get me one of those bacon and egg sandwiches.

BOOTSY

Hey man, I'll go with you.

CHAUNCEY

Oh, you two don't want any of this pain, huh.

The two men get up and leave.

Chauncey and Meek just look at each other--size each other up.

MEEK

How you doin'?

CHAUNCEY

I'm doin' fine, jus' fine.
(then)
You look good, Meek.

MEEK

I was working out and reading while I was in.

CHAUNCEY

So you doin' alright, then?

MEEK

Everything is crazy, all up and down, people everywhere. Last time I was out, Jodeci was making albums. Now, everybody got iPhones.

CHAUNCEY

So what do you have planned for your life now that you messed it up?

MEEK

Hey, pop, I jus' wanted to stop by
to see how you're doin'--

CHAUNCEY

You gotta a record now, can't get a
job. They got your number, boy.
You just threw away your life like
it wasn't worth a dime!

MEEK

Look, pop, I gotta look at myself
in the mirror everyday. I know
what I did. I paid my debt to
society and I'm ready to move on.

CHAUNCEY

You don't even know where your debt
begins, because you're too selfish
to even think about the people you
hurt.

MEEK

The pain and the hurt ended after I
did my ten years. It's over now.
I...we need to move forward. They
wanted to put me on parole after
five years and I turned it down
because I didn't want to owe
nobody.

CHAUNCEY

You owe everybody!

MEEK

I don't owe anybody anything. I'm
done. I don't know how I'm gonna
get a job. I don't even know where
I'm gonna live. All I know is that
I'm done. I'm healthy and ain't
got no complaints...ain't got no
grudges. Whatever was between us
is gone now. I'm done.

CHAUNCEY

Who the hell care about your
grudge? I'm the one that got to
walk around and explain why my boy
shootin' at people...robbing liquor
stores.

MEEK

Pop...

CHAUNCEY

People looking at me out of the corner of their eyes and they see everything that's wrong with me...a man that could raise a cold-blooded killer. I'm a marked man and you walk in here talkin' 'bout you done.

MEEK

I'm jus' sayin' I don't have no hard feelings that you didn't even come to see me while I was in the joint, pop. Not even a letter. But I still thought about all of the things you did for me...all the things you gave me... all the things you taught me.

CHAUNCEY

Everything I taught you, you threw in the trash. You worth less than the day you were born, son. At least then you were innocent, guiltless...you ain't got a damned thing now. You lost everything. You're thirty-three now and you ain't got nothin'.

MEEK

Naw, pop. Jus' because a lost a lot of things, don't mean I ain't got nothin'. I got dreams and aspirations, which means I still got something.

CHAUNCEY

You got nothin', son.

MEEK

Well, since we talkin' 'bout what I ain't got, what you got, pop? You still driving a Jitney.

CHAUNCEY

You damn right I drive a Jitney. I'm my own boss. I'm a deacon at the church. I had a wife. I had respect. I can go anywhere in this city and get respect. What I don't have is a son who gave me honor. That's what I ain't got. A son who gave me honor and grandkids.

(MORE)

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

I ain't got none of that...a son I can be proud of. All I got is a son who people point and say: "That's Chauncey's boy", the one that robbed that store. "That's Chauncey's boy" the one who got thrown in jail.

MEEK

I did what I did and I paid the price for it.

CHAUNCEY

You did what you had to do? What you had to do? What law is there that says you have to hold a gun to a man's head because he called you a bad name. Where does it say that you have to kill a man because he called you a bad name? It was a lie. That man lied on you and you fell for it. You fell for a lie. You threw your life away for a lie. You could've come to me. We could've fought the lie.

MEEK

It didn't make a difference. What was done, was done.

CHAUNCEY

Two wrongs don't make a right.

MEEK

Sometimes they do. Sometimes it's an eye for an eye. That's how it adds up. Otherwise, it's just wrong after wrong and people are just gonna keep screwin' each other over.

CHAUNCEY

So you just gonna be o.k. with being a murderer?

MEEK

That fool calling me a "Nigger" ain't right either. You taught me that.

CHAUNCEY

I taught you to respect life.

MEEK

You taught me a lot of things, pop. How about the time Mr. Ray came to the house to collect rent when we was two months behind. I think it was Christmas, but all I know is that you were behind...

Becker sits down on one of his porch chairs.

MEEK (CONT'D)

You were the big man, pop. Everywhere you went, people new you. You used to take me to the barbershop and everybody knew who I was. I would just look at you and admire you. I would go to school and try to imitate you to make myself feel big, but I never could. I would tell myself that's o.k. when I grow up, I'm gonna be alright. I'm gonna have everybody look at me when I walk into the barbershop.

CHAUNCEY

What are you talkin' about?

MEEK

That day when Mr. Ray came to the house...it was snowing. You came out onto the porch and he was cursing and calling you names and threatening to put us out on the streets. I was waiting for you to tell him to shut-up and tell him to get off of your porch. But you just looked at him and told him you would have the money at the end of the month.

Meek take out a handkerchief--wipes his brow.

MEEK (CONT'D)

Then when I was playing ball and got with Jessica Long that white girl and found out her father owned a liquor store, it just made me feel big.

CHAUNCEY

You were fucking her.

MEEK

Hell yeah. It made me feel accepted, like a big man. I felt like I could walk into the barbershop like you did. Then, when the store owner called me a Nigger, I realized that I wasn't a big man, I wasn't big on the inside...I was small. I thought about you and Mr. Ray and saw how small you were and thought that I need to be big. I needed to make them remember my name, that I was a Johnson. Pointing that gun at that store clerk was a way to make them respect the Johnson family name.

Chauncey just stares at Meek.

MEEK (CONT'D)

All I could think about is you and Mr. Ray, how you were so small when he made you get his money. Me robbing that store and shoving that gun in his mouth, was my chance to redeem the family name. I thought you would understand that. I thought you would be proud of me.

CHAUNCEY

Proud of you for robbing and killing somebody!

MEEK

No, pop, for being a man and not letting anyone tell me I'm less than one.

CHAUNCEY

So you're trying to say I had something to do with you killing that man. You sayin' that it was my fault that I didn't knock Mr. Ray on his butt so you wouldn't have to live on the street?

MEEK

No, pop.

CHAUNCEY

You think robbing that store put Mr. Ray in his place?

MEEK

Pop, I did it for me, but it just didn't turn out the way I wanted it to. I was wrong and I know that now.

CHAUNCEY

You had a football scholarship at Villanova. You had everything. I made it so you didn't have to follow behind me...so you can be a better man. I did without so you could have a life.

MEEK

Look, pop, I made my decisions, you made yours. I took the road that I thought was right and paid the consequences. It's all over and done, that's it. I jus' wanted to stop by and say hi.

CHAUNCEY

You wanna know why I never came by to see you?

MEEK

I don't need to know. I ain't holding a grudge.

Meek heads to the door--opens it--Chauncey walks up behind him and slams it shut.

CHAUNCEY

All I could see was your face during your mother's funeral. All I could see was an evil, crazy man who never thought about anyone but his own, damned self. And now you wanna chastise me for not standing up to Mr. Ray? I provided a roof over your head, clothes on your back and food for your belly--that's why. I had responsibilities--a family. If I would've knocked Mr. Ray on his ass, you would've went hungry and homeless. I swallowed my pride for my family. I kept saying to myself "You better watch out for Chauncey's boy", "You'll not gonna mess over him" "Chauncey's boy is gonna be somebody"--

Chauncey begins to work himself into a rage and then into tears.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

And this is the thanks I get, huh?
Tell me what I get. What I get,
huh?

MEEK

Pop...

Meek moves towards Chauncey.

CHAUNCEY

Don't touch me! What I get, huh?
What I got to show for all of my
efforts? I tell you what I get, I
get a thief and a killer.

MEEK

Pop, look--

CHAUNCEY

And the way your momma loved you.
You killed her, boy. You a double
murderer, you know that.

MEEK

I didn't kill her, pop--

CHAUNCEY

The day you stood trial, your
mother got sick. When you went
away, she didn't eat, walk or said
anything--she just stayed in her
room until she died. Now tell me
that you didn't kill her.

MEEK

Everyday momma came to the
courtroom by herself and you were
nowhere to be found. Where were
you when she needed support? You
couldn't even get up the courage to
walk to the courtroom. You didn't
have to show up for me, but for
her. Where were you? When she
fell out in the courtroom, I tried
to catch her, but the deputies
didn't let me--I was in chains.
Where were you then, huh?

CHAUNCEY

I was trying to maintain our house.
Trying to keep things together.

MEEK

Pop, that's not what she needed.
She needed to know that you were
there for us. She needed to know
that you were there during trying
times. But you turned on us--
standing by your stubborn rules.

CHAUNCEY

How you gonna tell me I turned on
you?

MEEK

That's what it's called.

CHAUNCEY

I was there. I was holding her
hand when she passed away. Where
were you, huh? You were locked up!
You killed her the moment the judge
said you were a threat to society.
When the judge sentenced you, that
was the moment that your mother
began to fade away. When you went
away, that was when everything
changed. She didn't want to live
anymore after that. So don't you
come in here and tell me I killed
her. You did that. That was all
you! Where were you Mr. Killerman?
Where were you when your mama was
dying? You're unfit for society.

MEEK

That's how you feel about it?

CHAUNCEY

I brought you into this world,
you're my son, but from now on
you're nothing to me. You're a
killer, an ex-con, nothing to me.
You just another nigga on the
street.

MEEK

Alright then, pop. I'm gone.

Meek opens the door and exits.

CHAUNCEY
And don't come back.

Meek leaves, Chauncey slams the door behind him.

Chauncey walks to the center of his living room and just stands there. Alone.

EXT. FAIRMOUNT PARK - DAY

There's an outdoor party going on sponsored by the local radio station, WDAS, as they play all of the old school favorites.

The party turns into a dance as everyone hooks up to dance to the Temptations' "My Girl".

In the thick of it all is Chauncey cutting it up with a woman a lot younger than he is--but he doesn't care.

An ANNOUNCER, gets on the microphone--

ANNOUNCER
That was the Temptations with "My Girl", next up we got Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes with, you know it, "If you don't know me by now"...

Chauncey breaks away from his partner, heads to his car.

On the way there he sees a familiar face: Meek.

Meek walks over to Chauncey--

MEEK
I thought you'd be here.

Chauncey doesn't answer, doesn't even look at Meek in the eye--he just walks to his car, gets in and drives away.

INT. SOUL FOOD RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Chauncey sits in a soul food restaurant by himself listening to the news play over an old t.v. placed above the register as he reads a paper.

A WAITRESS walks up to him--

WAITRESS
Hey Chauncey, what can I get you?

CHAUNCEY

I'll take the pork chops and gravy platter with a side of candied yams and a side of collard greens. Oh, give me a sweet tea too.

WAITRESS

That's all?

CHAUNCEY

Yeah, for now.

WAITRESS

You know, Martha just made a few sweet potato pies this morning.

Chauncey thinks for a while.

CHAUNCEY

I'll take a slice of that. Martha can make a sweet potato pie, you know that.

WAITRESS

I'll bring out after your dinner.

CHAUNCEY

Thank you.

The waitress walks away--Chauncey gets a quick glimpse of her ass.

MOMENTS LATER

Chauncey digs into his pork chops and gravy platter with all the trimmings.

As Chauncey digs into his plate of food, he watches the latest newscast--

NEWSCASTER

Donald Trump has issued a state of emergency across the country while groups protesting the death of George Floyd.

Chauncey eyes the newscast and talks to himself--

CHAUNCEY

Damn fools. Tearin' up the place.

As Chauncey slops that last bit of gravy onto a piece of white bread, something strange starts to happen--

Bump-Bump-Bump-Bump-Bump-Bump.

Chauncey's heart begins to pound, getting heavier by the minute.

Chauncey grabs his chest, then--

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
Hey, hey...

The waitress comes from the back room.

WAITRESS
You done, Chauncey.

Chauncey grips his chest.

CHAUNCEY
Check, please.

Chauncey feels a sharp pain in his arm--

WAITRESS
Are you o.k.?

CHAUNCEY
Yeah, I'm...I'm...

Chauncey falls over--

The waitress is frantic, screams--

WAITRESS
Somebody call an ambulance!

CHAUNCEY
I'm...I'm

Chauncey tries to keep his bearings, but he can't-- he's having every man's worst nightmare--a heart attack.

WAITRESS
Somebody please call an ambulance.

Several workers from the backroom emerge--they look at Chauncey as he struggles to grab his chest.

The workers run back to the kitchen to call the ambulance.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
Help!!!

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Chauncey speaks to a doctor, DR. WILLIAMS, 50's, African-American.

Chauncey sits on the edge of a hospital bed, fully dressed with a look of concern.

DR. WILLIAMS

I just got your labs back and...

Dr. Williams pauses for a moment. He doesn't want to deliver the news.

CHAUNCEY

Just give it to me straight.

DR. WILLIAMS

Your labs indicate that you have heart disease.

CHAUNCEY

Heart disease?

DR. WILLIAMS

Yes.

CHAUNCEY

Damn...

DR. WILLIAMS

You're going to have to be careful from now on. No more chittlins' cheesesteaks, fast food liquor cigarettes or any of that bad stuff.

Chauncey is reluctant.

CHAUNCEY

Alright.

DR. WILLIAMS

Chauncey...I'm serious. You have to cut back on your foods and even think about not driving that Jitney for a while.

Chauncey gets defensive.

CHAUNCEY

No way. I'm not gonna cut back on my routine...

DR. WILLIAMS
Chauncey, this is for your
health...you family.

CHAUNCEY
Don't have much of a family.

DR. WILLIAMS
Whoever it is that counts on you.
You have to cut back on the
cholesterol and the stress.

CHAUNCEY
The car is all that I have. I
don't drive, I don't eat.

DR. WILLIAMS
Just try to cut back on the long
hours.

Chauncey gets up, puts on his ball cap.

CHAUNCEY
I'll see what I can do.

DR. WILLIAMS
If you keep it up, Chauncey, next
time may not be a test run.

CHAUNCEY
Anything else.

DR. WILLIAMS
Try incorporating a little exercise
into your daily routine, maybe a
little walk around the block once a
day could help.

CHAUNCEY
Once a day, huh.

DR. WILLIAMS
Once a day.

The two look at each other for a moment.

CHAUNCEY
Thanks for your time, doctor.

DR. WILLIAMS
Call me if you need me.

Chauncey gets up and walks out.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY

A familiar face takes part in a very important job interview-- his name is Meek Johnson.

The INTERVIEWER, 50's, salt and pepper is skeptical as he eyes Meek's resume--

INTERVIEWER
You played football for
Villanova...

MEEK
Yessir.

INTERVIEWER
You don't seem to have much
experience in sales.

MEEK
I can learn...fast. I'm a quick
study.

INTERVIEWER
That's...good to know.
(then)
Look, Mr. Johnson, thanks for your
time--

MEEK
I took a few business courses while
I played football--

INTERVIEWER
Mr. Johnson--

MEEK
I can work long hours--

INTERVIEWER
Mr. Johnson--

Meek is silent.

MEEK
You don't need to say another word.
A man with a jail record knows when
he's getting the treatment.

INTERVIEWER
Mr. Johnson, thank you for coming.
We'll notify you when we make our
decision.

MEEK

So, in other words, I didn't get
the position.

INTERVIEWER

An armed robbery--

MEEK

I did my time!

Meek begins to raise his voice.

INTERVIEWER

Mr. Johnson, this interview is
over! We'll contact you when we
make our decision.

Meek stands--

The interviewer stands--

MEEK

You can have your goddamn job.

Meek storms out of the interview.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Chauncey leans on his car as travelers emerge from the subway
station.

CHAUNCEY

Hack! Hack!

Riders continue to go their own way, until a man, 20's,
approaches Chauncey--let's just call him CARL.

CARL

Hey, man. Can you take me to North
Philly?

Chauncey looks at Carl for a moment--something doesn't feel
right--

CHAUNCEY

Yeah. Which part?

CARL

Girard and Broad Street.

Chauncey thinks for a moment, then--

CHAUNCEY

Alright.

Carl hops in the backseat, Chauncey hops in the front seat.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S CAR - TRAVELING

Chauncey drives Carl to his destination while he listens to the latest old school jam: Earth Wind and Fire's "After the Love Has Gone".

Chauncey nods his head.

CHAUNCEY

This used to be the jam back in the day.

Carl is defiant, reluctant and in a bad mood--

CARL

I don't listen to that ol' bullshit.

Chauncey is taken by surprise--

CHAUNCEY

You don't like Earth, Wind and Fire?!?

Carl is silent.

Then...

CARL

Just take me to my fuckin' destination, man.

Chauncey is silent, confused.

CHAUNCEY

Are you alright, man?

Carl hesitates, thinks for a moment--

CARL

Yeah, I'm alright.

Chauncey turns off the radio.

CHAUNCEY

'You from North Philly?

CARL
Naw, man. My cousin lives down
there.
(then)
You know what, just take me down to
the airport.

Chauncey ponders for a moment--something's up.

CHAUNCEY
Sure. Which part?

CARL
Just take me to the first parking
lot past the airport. I'll point
it out to you.

CHAUNCEY
Alrighty, then.

Chauncey pulls onto the freeway.

MOMENTS LATER

Chauncey pulls up to the airport.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
Here we go.

CARL
Drive down the road a little bit
more.

Chauncey pulls onto a back street where a bunch of old
warehouses and loading docks sit alongside the road.

CHAUNCEY
You work down here, huh?

CARL
You can say that.

Chauncey drives down the road for a moment.

CHAUNCEY
You got a long commute.

CARL
Yeah.
(then)
Hey, pull over into that parking
lot.

Chauncey guides his car into an empty parking lot with an old abandoned-looking warehouse sitting at the far end.

Chauncey pulls up to the far end of the parking lot.

CHAUNCEY
Here ya' go young fella.

CARL
Thanks old man.

Carl gets out of the car and starts to trot to the warehouse.

CHAUNCEY
Hey...hey...that's ten dollars,
man.
(then, to himself)
This muthafucka...

Chauncey gets out of his car and chases Carl.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
Hey...hey...you betta have my
goddamn money or I'm gonna bust
your ass--

Chauncey catches up to Carl--

Carl reaches into his waist, pulls out a pistol, turns around--
-points the gun in Chauncey's face--

CARL
What nigga?

Chauncey is scared as hell...

CHAUNCEY
Easy now...easy. I don't want no
damn problems.

CARL
I'll blow your muthafuckin' head
off!

Chauncey throws up both of his hands.

CHAUNCEY
Easy! Easy! I'll give you whatever
you want.

CARL
Yeah! Yeah, you ol' ass nigga.
Take me to your shit.

CHAUNCEY
Alright. Alright!

Carl punches Chauncey in the face, he falls to the ground.

Carl grabs Chauncey, picks him up and takes him to his car--
the pistol is to Chauncey's head.

CARL
Where's you shit?!?

CHAUNCEY
What shit?

CARL
Your goddamn stash.

CHAUNCEY
I ain't got no stash.

CARL
What?

Carl pistol whips Chauncey three times--Chauncey falls to the
ground bleeding. Defeated.

CHAUNCEY
It's in the glove compartment.

Chauncey drags Chauncey over to the passenger side of his car--
-opens the door--dips into the glove compartment and takes
the stash of money that's left.

Carl's disappointed.

CARL
This all you got from drivin' this
piece of shit around?

Carl jumps over Chauncey--punches him in the face, kicks and
stomps him.

Chauncey winces and scowls in pain and humiliation--he just
wants it to be over.

CHAUNCEY
Stop! Stop!

Carl kicks Chauncey one more time, stuffs the cash into his
pocket then runs away.

Chauncey lies next to his car, beaten and alone.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Chauncey lies in a hospital bed. Beaten. Vulnerable.

Wires, nodes, tubes and all types of medical paraphernalia hang from Chauncey's feeble body.

Chauncey flickers his eyes open as a NURSE, 30's, checks his vitals--

NURSE

Looks like you had a long day.

CHAUNCEY

Where am I?

NURSE

You're in the hospital, sir.
Someone called the ambulance when
they saw you unconscious in the
parking lot.

CHAUNCEY

That fool got the best of me.

NURSE

He sure did.

Chauncey tries to get up.

CHAUNCEY

I need to get out of here.

NURSE

Easy. You need to rest before you
can go back out there.

CHAUNCEY

I need to get back to my route.

NURSE

Your route can wait.

CHAUNCEY

Alright. Whatever you say.

Chauncey lays back down in his bed.

NURSE

I'll be back in a few minutes to
check your vital signs.

The nurse leaves.

Chauncey gently closes his eyes for a few minutes, then--

MEEK

Pop.

Chauncey opens his eyes to see Meek and another person, a little boy, RASHAD, 10.

CHAUNCEY

What are you doin' here?

MEEK

I came to check in on you. I heard you almost got killed.

CHAUNCEY

(RE: Rashad)

Who's that?

MEEK

It's your grandson. His name is Rashad.

CHAUNCEY

Why didn't you tell me about him earlier?

MEEK

I didn't have much of a chance after you threw me out of your house and all.

CHAUNCEY

I gotta a grandbaby, huh?

MEEK

That's right, and he's getting big too.

Meek picks up Rashad to bring him closer to Chauncey.

MEEK (CONT'D)

(to Rashad)

Say hi to your grandpop.

RASHAD

Hi, grandpop.

CHAUNCEY

Hey, Rashad.

Chauncey gently shakes Rashad's hand.

MEEK

How does it feel?

CHAUNCEY

It feels real good.

(then)

This doesn't change our relationship, though.

MEEK

Pop.

CHAUNCEY

Meek.

MEEK

Loo, I see not even your grandson can change a man as stubborn as you.

CHAUNCEY

You just make sure you raise him right. He needs a father.

MEEK

He needs his grandfather.

CHAUNCEY

I'll be there for my grandson, when you learn how to take responsibility as a man.

MEEK

You're not going to be there if you keep getting the crap beat out of you driving that Jitney.

CHAUNCEY

I ain't giving up my route. It's how I eat and pay the bills.

MEEK

Pop...

CHAUNCEY

What?

MEEK

You gotta take it easy, man.

CHAUNCEY

I guess you gonna come in here and tell me how to live my life, right?

(MORE)

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

You got all of the right answers,
huh?

Meek is quiet.

MEEK

Look, pop, Rashad needs you...I
need you.

CHAUNCEY

You just make sure you take care of
my grandbaby. I'm gonna take care
of me until I raise enough money to
move out of this damned city.

MEEK

Where you gonna go.

CHAUNCEY

Virginia.

MEEK

Virginia?

CHAUNCEY

That's right, I'm getting away from
all of these crazy-ass people.

MEEK

Pop...

CHAUNCEY

Meek...

The two pause for a moment, look at each other.

MEEK

Pop, I gotta go to another
interview. I see you later.

Chauncey is silent.

Meek grabs Rashad and walks out of the room.

Chauncey closes his eyes.

MOMENTS LATER

The nurse that we saw earlier returns to check on Chauncey.

NURSE

Alright, Mr. Chauncey, I'm here to
check in on you.

As the nurse pulls back the curtain, she is surprised at what she sees--an empty bed.

Chauncey left against doctor's orders.

There's no getting through to Chauncey.

INT. GERMANTOWN HOSPITAL - DAY

Chauncey arrives at another hospital across town to visit and old friend, Gene, who has the coronavirus.

Chauncey manages to sneak his way past security to see Gene who is hooked to machines, tubes and all types of medical devices.

Chauncey walks over to Gene who has his eyes closed.

CHAUNCEY

How you doin', Gene?

Gene blinks his eyes open.

GENE

Chauncey? How'd you get in here, man.

CHAUNCEY

I'm just to slick.

GENE

How've you been?

CHAUNCEY

I've been real good.

GENE

If you doin' real good, why do you have a bandage on your head?

CHAUNCEY

I got robbed.

GENE

Damn, man. I told you about drivin' that Jitney.

CHAUNCEY

I know.

(then)

You hangin' in there?

GENE

Yeah. They said I have the
Coronavirus.

CHAUNCEY

That thing is a joke, man. You
gonna beat it.

GENE

One of the guys down the hall
passed away from it the other day.

CHAUNCEY

Damn.

GENE

Hey, I heard your boy came home the
other day.

CHAUNCEY

Yeah, he home. I had to tell him
about himself, though. You know
how I am.

GENE

Yeah, I know how you are with those
rules.

CHAUNCEY

You got that right.

GENE

Meek's been through a lot. He
needs his father now.

CHAUNCEY

He should have thought about that
before he robbed that store and
lost his scholarship.

GENE

He paid his debt, Chauncey. That's
all gone and done with. The boy
needs his dad.

CHAUNCEY

Well, I just found out that I have
a grandson too. Ain't that a trip?

GENE

They're going to want to be with
you Chauncey. You can't just turn
your back on them.

(MORE)

GENE (CONT'D)

You gonna be no better than Meek
was when he pulled that gun.

CHAUNCEY

Ain't nobody perfect, Gene.

GENE

I know that, but you turnin' your
back on that boy when he needs you
the most.

Chauncey thinks about this for a while.

CHAUNCEY

You know I don't break my rules.

GENE

You gonna die livin' by those
crazy, stubborn rules. You gonna
die a lonely, broken man.

CHAUNCEY

Look, man. I just wanted to stop
by and check in on my old friend.
I gotta get back to my route.

GENE

That route's gonna kill you.

CHAUNCEY

Well, at least I'll die happy.

GENE

Just think about what I said.

CHAUNCEY

I'll think about.
(then)
You take care now.

GENE

You take care too.

Chauncey gives Gene a fist bump, then leaves.

Gene gently lies back and closes his eyes.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Chauncey and the guys are playing checkers again.

CHAUNCEY

How many times do I have to tell
you that I'm the man at this
checkers game.

BOOTSY

Look at this one.

Bootsy jumps Chauncey's man.

EARL

Ooh, he got you again, Chauncey

Chauncey looks at the checker board, stunned.

CHAUNCEY

If I didn't know any better, I
would think that you cheated.

BOOTSY

Pay up, my man.

Chauncey continues to look at the checker board.

All of sudden, Earl's phone rings--

EARL

Hello, this is Earl...yeah...what?

There is a long pause as Earl is shocked at the news given to
him over the phone.

Chauncey and Bootsy look at Earl as Earl's face sags.

EARL (CONT'D)

Oh...alright, then.

Earl slowly hangs up the phone.

CHAUNCEY

Earl...everything alright?

Earl, shocked, takes a moment to speak--

EARL

It's Gene...

BOOTSY

When's he getting out?

Earl takes a moment to respond.

EARL

Gene passed away this morning.

Chauncey and Bootsy look at each other, then look at Earl.
Everybody's quiet.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Chauncey, Earl, Bootsy and a host of friends and family attend a funeral service for their dear friend, Gene.

It's raining as we focus on the faces of Chauncey, Bootsy and Earl as they wear their face masks for the first time.

A MINISTER performs the ceremony.

MINISTER

And as we bid farewell to our dear
friend, Gene...ashes to
ashes...dust to dust.

Since Gene was a Navy veteran, a folded flag is presented to his daughter.

As the funeral service ends, each of Gene's family members lays a rose on his coffin.

Chauncey, Bootsy and Earl each lay a rose on Gene's coffin.

Chauncey lays his rose on Gene's casket, whispers a few words-

-

CHAUNCEY

I'll see you on the other side, my
friend.

MOMENTS LATER

A reception takes place in the main lounge of the funeral home in celebration of Gene's life.

Family members eat cheese and crackers while they joke about the crazy things Gene did when he was alive.

Chauncey, Bootsy and Earl stand in the corner and just stare at the crowd.

Chauncey stares out of the window to see a bunch of kids playing on the lawn--young, old, white, black.

Chauncey begins to think about his own kid, Meek and his grandson Rashad.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Chauncey arrives at his wife's grave to have another conversation.

CHAUNCEY

My buddy Gene is gone. Everybody's trying to make sense of it all. I don't know what to do.

Chauncey begins to tear up.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

I just wanted to let you know that you gotta grandson now. His name is Rashad.

Chauncey looks around.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

I think I failed Meek. I don't know if I can get him back after the argument we had the other week. I wanna be a better man...a better father...a better grandfather.

Chauncey kneels down to kiss the tombstone of his wife.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

Babe, I just want you to hope for me to change things around.

Chauncey gives the tombstone another kiss, gets up and walks away.

EXT. TEMPLE UNIVERSITY - DAY

Chauncey sits on the hood of his car outside of the Liacouras Center at Temple University.

Streams of students in Black Lives Matters t-shirts, hats and other memorabilia flood the sidewalks.

CHAUNCEY

Hack! Hack!

A CROWD of students surround a SPEAKER, a few steps away on the corner--

SPEAKER

We gotta come together and unite
against the bullshit institution,
the bullshit government and that
bullshit President feeding us lies
about this virus and getting our
brothers and sisters killed!!

The crowd cheers.

CROWD

That's right!

SPEAKER

If we don't fight for ours, they're
gonna take everything from us! We
gotta fight for what's ours.

CROWD

That's right! We gotta fight!

Then gun shots are heard and the crowd scatters in a frenzy.

Chauncey hears the gun shots--

CHAUNCEY

Hack! Hack!

Two guys, ROGER, 20's and GREG, 20's emerge from the crowd.

ROGER

Hey, sir.

CHAUNCEY

How can I help you?

GREG

We need to get downtown.

Chauncey straightens his ball cap--

CHAUNCEY

Hop on in.

The two guys get in--

Chauncey gets in--

INT. CHAUNCEY'S CAR - DAY

Chauncey turns on the radio and plays "Brand New Funk" by
D.J. Jazzy Jeff and The Fresh Prince.

GREG

This is my jam from back in the day.

CHAUNCEY

What day are you talking about?
This was before your time.

ROGER

My mom and dad used to listen to this when I was little.

CHAUNCEY

You cats are makin' me feel old.
(then)
Why are guys heading downtown?

GREG

Why do you think? The man is killing our people.

ROGER

What the hell would you do?
(then)
You were born in the '60s right?

CHAUNCEY

Hell, yeah.

ROGER

Well, then you know we gonna go down there and tear the place apart.

CHAUNCEY

I hope you ain't going to go down there to loot.

GREG

They killed one of ours, man. We gotta express ourselves.

ROGER

Sometimes violence is the best voice of the people.

CHAUNCEY

You guys can't go tearin' up the place every time there's a problem.

GREG

We gotta do something, man. They don't respect us.

ROGER

We gonna make them pay.

Chauncey thinks about this for a moment.

MOMENTS LATER

Chauncey pulls up to a park in Olde City, stops his vehicle.

CHAUNCEY

You guys be careful.

Greg and Roger get out of the car.

As the two men get out of the car, Chauncey notices a crowd-- they're getting rowdy.

The speaker pumps-up the crowd--

SPEAKER

We're gonna burn this goddamn place
down...

Chauncey takes note, parks his car.

Chauncey gets out and strolls over to the crowd where several different speakers take the stand.

Chauncey listens to the protests for a moment then makes his way to the front of the crowd.

Chauncey looks at the speaker.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

And now I wold like to introduce
you to Ms. Sheila Thomson, co-chair
of the Philadelphia Black Lives
Matter.

SHEILA THOMSON, 40's, African-American grabs the microphone.

SHEILA THOMSON

Hi everybody. I just want to let
y'all know that today is the day we
let the world know that law
enforcement can't keep on doin'
wrong to our people the way they've
been doin' for the past two
centuries. Today the nonsense, the
abuse, the terrorism has to stop.

The crowd cheers.

CROWD
That's right, Sheila!

As Sheila continues to speak a fight breaks out but is quickly broken up by other spectators.

The gathering begins to get rowdy--it's only a matter of time before violence and looting begin.

Chauncey continues to look on, thinks, then approaches the speaker.

CHAUNCEY
Excuse me... 'xcuse me.

The speaker takes notices.

SPEAKER
Yeah sir, what can I do for you.

CHAUNCEY
I wanna say a few words to the people...

SPEAKER
Who are you?

CHAUNCEY
Chauncey Johnson. I drive the hack in town. I need to say a few words to the people before things get out of hand here.

SPEAKER
We don't have you slate to speak...

CHAUNCEY
It'll just take a moment.

The speaker thinks for a moment.

SPEAKER
Alright, now--
(then, to the crowd)
Listen up...

The crowd settles and turns their attention to the speaker.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)
I want to turn your attention to a man who's been a valued part of the community and who has a few words for all of us today--Chauncey Johnson.

The speaker hands the microphone to Chauncey.

Chauncey grabs the microphone and steps into the center of the podium.

CHAUNCEY
E'rybody listen up!

The crowd silences.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
My name is Chauncey Johnson and I drive a Hack, some of you call it a Jitney. I just gotta few words to tell y'all before you go out into the streets and start tearin' up people's businesses and setting things on fire...

As Chauncey speaks, a few familiar faces push themselves to the front of the crowd: Keisha, Tasha and Melinda from earlier in the story.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
My dad was killed by the police when I was ten years old in cold blood. No charges were even brought and they got away with cold murder. I got every reason to be angry. Every reason... I hated the cops, the system, everybody you can think of, I held a grudge against 'em.

The crowd is silent.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)
A very good friend of mine just died from the COVID-19 and it stabbed me in the heart like no other pain that I could imagine, other than the death of my wife. I had every reason to hold a grudge...and I did. I've been holdin' grudges against everybody for my whole life, even my own family, and thought that it didn't make a difference because if someone does wrong to you they don't deserve to live. If they do wrong, they did wrong. An eye for an eye is what I said...

The crowd continues to look on.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

The other day I found out that I had a grandson and a new world opened up to me. Imma be a granddaddy. That's when I realized that I didn't want him to see the things I saw and experience the things that I experienced and I wanted him to live in a new world where we all live together without beating the hell out of each other because we hold a grudge. We gotta learn to put the grudges aside and learn to love each other...

Out of the crowd emerge Greg and Roger, they cheer.

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

The violence stops today! Put away your grudges, your prejudices, your hatred and stop the killing, the stealing and holding a grudge. Lets learn to love each other, today! I mean it. Put away the grudge and show the love.

The crowd begins to applaud.

GREG/ROGER

Chauncey! Chauncey!

CHAUNCEY

The violence stops today!

The crowd cheers and applauds louder.

KEISHA/MELINDS/TASHA

That's right, Chauncey.

Chauncey continues to chant--

CHAUNCEY

Stop the violence today! I don't hold no grudge anymore.

The speaker approaches Chauncey to grab the microphone.

SPEAKER

Thank you, Mr. Johnson.

Chauncey hands over the microphone.

Chauncey straightens his hat, then walks away.

Then out of nowhere, another fight breaks out the crowd disperses and the looters starting breaking the windows of the businesses across the street.

As Chauncey leaves a stream of protestors and looters run past him into the business district across the street to start looting.

Disappointed, Chauncey stands and looks at the crowd as they break into stores, remove merchandise and set things on fire.

As the looters take over the streets, RIOT POLICE arrive.

Cop cars and foot police arrive to try to settle the looters.

The protestors begin to clash with the police the turbulence boils over to all-out violence.

Foot police use rubber bullets to contain violent protestors.

The speaker that we saw earlier gets hit by a rubber bullet and falls to the ground.

A cop car is swarmed by a crowd of protestors who kick the doors and creep onto the front hood.

As the crowd gets more violent the police car pulls off taking several protestors with it.

Chauncey stands across the street as he sees the police car dragging people without care and sees it heading for one his former customers, Keisha, who doesn't see the police car darting in her direction.

Chauncey bolts across the street--but can he beat the police car...

CHAUNCEY

Keisha, watch out...

Chauncey darts towards Keisha and football tackles her out of the way of the oncoming police car.

Chauncey looks down at Keisha--

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

You alright?

Keisha is shocked, hesitates.

KEISHA

Yeah.

The two look at each for a while.

INT. CHAUNCEY'S CAR - TRAVELING

Chauncey drives along the streets of downtown Philly observing the mayhem of a riotous city and its' citizens pushed to the brink of a racial civil war.

As Chauncey drives through the streets, "What's Going On" by Marvin Gaye plays on the radio.

A ANNOUNCER comes on the radio--

ANNOUNCER

The was Marvin Gaye on your favorite radio station. We've been hearing that there has been more rioting in looting resulting in businesses being vandalized and burned down with several people being hurt.

(then)

Now, I wanna take you to another time period when things weren't so happy with Edwin Starr and "War".

Chauncey turns up the music as he sees stores burning, people running in the streets with clothing, televisions and everything else you could imagine.

As Chauncey drives down the street a little bit more, he sees a familiar face standing in front of storefront with a brick in his hand--

Meek.

Meek, dressed in jeans and a t-shirt stands in front of the storefront, contemplating a move that'll change his life.

Chauncey pulls up, stops his car, gets out--

CHAUNCEY

Meek!

Meek turns and looks at Chauncey.

MEEK

What the hell do you want?

CHAUNCEY

Who do you think you're talking to like that?

MEEK

You!

CHAUNCEY
I'm your father, boy.

MEEK
My father left me a long time ago
when I got thrown in the joint and
needed somebody to lean on.

Chauncey thinks about this for a while.

CHAUNCEY
Meek, put that goddamn brick down.

MEEK
Why the hell should I listen to
you, huh?

Chauncey hesitates--

CHAUNCEY
'Cause you're my son...and I wanna
be a good father to you...a good
grandfather to Rashad.

MEEK
You expect me to believe that?

CHAUNCEY
I mean it.
(then)
If you throw that brick, they gonna
know it was you, they gonna catch
you, they gonna throw you back in
jail like last time and we gonna
have to start all over again.

Meek thinks this over.

MEEK
Ain't no place for a black man like
me out here. The man is shutting
me down. Ain't turnin' it around
for a man with a record.

CHAUNCEY
What the hell is lootin' gonna do?

MEEK
It's gonna prove a point--

CHAUNCEY
What point is that?

MEEK

That we gotta voice. That we live here too. That if they kill us, we gonna burn their shit down. That's what.

CHAUNCEY

Meek, get your ass in this car. If you throw that brick, you turnin' your back on everybody who loves you: your son, your mother...me.

Meek hesitates--

MEEK

I can't. I can't go back after I failed my family...everybody. I can't go back.

CHAUNCEY

Yes you can, Meek. Come back home. Come back to your family.

Chauncey extends his hand to Meek.

MEEK

I can't...

CHAUNCEY

Come on home, son.

MEEK

Come home to what?.

CHAUNCEY

You need a father, Meek, Rashad needs a grandfather...

Chauncey inches closer to Meek--

MEEK

Ain't no hope for me.

CHAUNCEY

Yes, there is. Just give it a chance.

Meek humps over and begins to cry--

Chauncey grabs Meek, hugs him--

CHAUNCEY (CONT'D)

I'm there for you. I'm here.

Meek hugs Chauncey--they embrace for a while.

Meek throws the brick in another direction.

Chauncey and Meek walk back to the car arm-in-arm, get in and drive away.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Chauncey visits the grave of his wife again. This time it's sunny outside and the birds are chirping and the flowers are blooming.

CHAUNCEY

Hey, baby. Things are better now that the riots are starting to calm down. Those people are crazy. I just want to let you know that everything is alright and--

Out of nowhere another person enters the scene--Meek.

MEEK

Hey pop, everything alright?

Chauncey looks at his wife's grave for a moment, then--

CHAUNCEY

Yeah. I was just talking to your mother.

MEEK

(to the tombstone)

Hey, mom. Thanks for taking care of pops while I was gone. I can take it from here.

Meek bends down and kisses his mother's tombstone, gets up--

MEEK (CONT'D)

I'll wait for you in the car.

Meek begins to walk away.

CHAUNCEY

Meek.

MEEK

What?

Chauncey pulls out a stash from his inner coat pocket.

Meek looks at it--it's ten grand.

CHAUNCEY
It's for you.

Meek doesn't understand.

MEEK
What's this?

CHAUNCEY
I was drivin' that Hack to save up
enough money to move to Virginia to
get out of this hellhole.

MEEK
Pop.

CHAUNCEY
I slaved and sweated and toiled,
but...I want you to have it. I
need you to take care of my
grandbaby.

MEEK
Pop, I gotta new job. I'm gonna be
alright.

Chauncey shoves the money wrapped in a paper bag into Meek's chest.

CHAUNCEY
Take it. I want you to take care
of your son. There's gonna be
plenty of more routes. I'm strong.
I'm gonna be around for a while.

Meek hesitates.

MEEK
Pop.

CHAUNCEY
Here.

Meek hesitates, then takes the money.

MEEK
Thanks, pop.

CHAUNCEY
Make sure you use this right.

Meek nods his head yes, gives Chauncey a hug.

Meek leaves.

INT. MEEKS' HOME - DAY

Meek takes place in another interview for a position with a small manufacturing company over Zoom.

The INTERVIEWER, 50's, glasses, eyes Meeks' resume.

INTERVIEWER

You have no sales experience...

MEEK

No, but I have leadership experience and am a team player from being the captain of my football team.

The Interviewer, skeptical, continues to look at Meek's resume.

INTERVIEWER

I see that you spent time for an armed robbery.

Meek is stunned, he doesn't know how to respond.

MEEK

I paid my debts, and am looking to start a new life. I have a kid and am looking forward to being a good father to him.

The interviewer thinks for a while--

INTERVIEWER

You know Mr. Johnson, we all need a break sometime, when will you be able to begin training?

Meek is shocked, elated--

MEEK

I can begin whenever you want me to.

INTERVIEWER

Great. We'll have our first training class in the beginning of the month. Congratulations.

MEEK

Thank you, sir. You won't regret this.

INTERVIEWER

Talk to you soon.

The two sign off from the Zoom meeting.

Meek gets up from his desk and dances with joy.

MEEK

Yes!

EXT. CHAUNCEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Chauncey, Earl and Bootsy play checkers on the front porch--
this time they wear face masks.

CHAUNCEY

You know, you still owe me money
from the last few games.

BOOTSY

Just subtract it from the money you
owed me from the last few months.

CHAUNCEY

Look, I told my settlement is
coming in any day now.

BOOTSY

You've been sayin' that for the
past two years.

Earl reads the paper.

EARL

Damn, Andre Harell passed away the
other day!

CHAUNCEY

You mean that guy that founded that
rap label?

EARL

Yeah, that guy.

BOOTSY

What'd he die of?

EARL

Heart failure.

CHAUNCEY

Ooh.

EARL
Snuck right up on him killed him.

BOOTSY
Damn!

EARL
Ain't that a shame?

The men think in silence for a moment.

BOOTSY
Hey Chaunce, how much more you
gotta go to get to Virginia.

CHAUNCEY
A long way.

EARL
I thought you were almost there.

CHAUNCEY
I was...but something happened.

BOOTSY
Don't tell me you got robbed again.
Man, you need to stop going on
those shady routes.

CHAUNCEY
Naw...

EARL
Then what happened?

Chauncey pauses for a moment.

CHAUNCEY
I gave it away.

EARL/BOOTSY
You did what?

CHAUNCEY
I gave it away.

EARL
How you gonna give yo' money away
like that?

CHAUNCEY
'Cause it's my money and I can fo
with it what I want to.

BOOTSY
Who'd you give it to?

CHAUNCEY
I gave it to my boy so he could
take care of my grandbaby.

EARL
You mean, Meek?

CHAUNCEY
What other boy do I got?

EARL
Damn Chaunce, you ain't gonna ever
get to Virginia.

BOOTSY
You gonna die in Philly.

CHAUNCEY
At least I'll die happy.

EARL
You somethin' else, Chaunce.

The guys laugh.

CHAUNCEY
Well, I'm gonna make my money a new
way...I joined Uber.

BOOTSY
There you go, man. I'm tired of
seeing you get robbed every other
day.

CHAUNCEY
Ain't gonna be no more of that.
The app shows me who I'm pickin' up
and everything. I even get health
benefits.

EARL
You cookin' with gas now, man.

CHAUNCEY
That's right. I am eatin' lobster
for dinner now, no more
cheesesteaks.

BOOTSY
You gotta watch your cholesterol
anyway.

CHAUNCEY

That's what my doctor tells me. I gotta be there for my grandbaby.

EARL

You gonna spoil that boy.

CHAUNCEY

I sure am.
(then, to Bootsy)
Will you move, man!?!)

EXT. FAIRMOUNT PARK - DAY

Chauncey sits on a park bench at Fairmount Park where there is a playground with children and families.

Chauncey gazes at the children and families at the playground and sees black kids playing with white kids, asian kids, hispanic kids.

Chauncey sees white yuppies jogging along a path with black, asian and hispanic yuppies.

Chauncey sees people wearing face masks walking their dogs, playing frisbee and hanging out with their loved ones.

The images of racial unity are a far cry from the days of old when Chauncey grew up.

Chauncey just gazes at the scenery, reminisces about the times of old, the times of new--his grandson.

Out of nowhere a young KID approaches Chauncey--

KID

Sir, would you buy a candy bar for my school band?

Chauncey thinks for a moment, then--

CHAUNCEY

Sure, here you go.

Chauncey hands the kid two dollars.

KID

Thank you, sir.

The kid runs off.

Chauncey unwraps the candy bar and starts eating it, looks at it, then throws it in the trash can.

Chauncey continues to look at the people in the park, then his phone buzzes, he looks at it--

INSERT - UBER Text Message

"You have a new customer request. Please press "Yes" to accept."

Chauncey presses the "Yes" button, gets up to go to his car, then--

BUMP-BUMP-BUMP-BUMP--

His heart begins to pound ferociously--

BUMP-BUMP-BUMP-BUMP--

Chauncey grabs his chest...

BUMP. BUMP. BUMP. BUMP.

Chauncey struggles to breathe, clenches his chest even tighter--

BUMP. BUMP. BUMP. BUMP.

Chauncey continues to struggles, falls, knocks over the trash can and tumbles to the ground.

Chauncey lies on the ground, unconscious as the children continue to play in the playground not noticing a helpless Chauncey in trouble.

EXT. CHAUNCEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Bootsy and Earl play checkers on Chauncey's front porch.

BOOTSY

Man, you cheated me again.

EARL

No I didn't. You just blind. I tripled jumped you, fool.

BOOTSY

Man how you gonna triple jump me like that. Your man is all the way over there.

Earl takes his man back.

EARL

Now, here, I double-jumped you.

Earl makes his move.

EARL (CONT'D)
Crown my man, fool.

Bootsy just stares at the board.

Out of nowhere, Meek, approaches the porch--

MEEK
Hey ya'll, you seen my ol' man?

Earl and Bootsy stop what they're doing and just look at Meek.

MEEK (CONT'D)
What's the matter? Ya'll seen my
pop?

Earl and Bootsy are silent, Earl approaches Meek--

EARL
Meek...

MEEK
What?

BOOTSY
Meek, Chauncey passed away this
morning...

Earl moves toward Meek and tries to hug him--Meek slaps his arm away--

MEEK
Man, get your goddamned hands off
of me.

Earl continues to move toward Meek, hugs him--

Meek continues to resist.

MEEK (CONT'D)
What you talkin' 'bout, nigga. Let
me go!

Earl continues to hug Meek, Bootsy joins in--

Meek cries.

The three stand on the porch, embraced.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A crowd of people gather to pay last respects to one of the staples of the Philadelphia community--Chauncey Johnson.

It's sunny outside.

A MINISTER, 60's, gray hair, conducts the eulogy.

The crowd is filled with familiar faces: Meek, Rashad, Earl, Bootsy, the girls (Keisha, Melinda, Tasha) from the protests, Greg and Roger and even Darby.

The crowd is filled with blacks, whites, asians, hispanics and every other race under the sun.

Chauncey truly left an impression with his customers and the entire city of Philadelphia.

MINISTER

And so we say farewell to our
brother, our father, our son and
our friend. We're going to miss
you Chauncey.

The minister pours dirt on Chauncey's casket.

Friends and family place roses on Chauncey's casket.

Meek stays behind as the rest of the crowd leaves.

The funeral help lowers Chauncey's casket into the ground as Meek just stares.

MEEK

(to the casket)
Thanks pop.

Meek pulls out Chauncey's old ball cap, bends the rim just like Chauncey used to do, puts it on and walks away.

Music plays.

As the song "It's So Hard to Say Goodbye to Yesterday" by Boyz II Men plays, we see a montage of a new Philadelphia.

It's a Philadelphia where people of all ethnicities and backgrounds are united in one country.

FADE TO BLACK.