

LAST KING OF COMPTON

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GENRE

Horror

FORMAT

Pilot (60 minute)

BUDGET (EST.)

\$150,000

SETTING

Long Beach, CA

LOGLINE

An invalid trashman ascribes to the cleansing of society to return fish to the Los Angeles river. In the vein between DEXTER and YOU!

STORY

ATLAS, 20s, orphaned and schizophrenic, is rehomed from Los Angeles to extended family in Long Beach. A life defined by solitude and neglect. His Aunt's edict: work and take your pills.

The Los Angeles River separates the homeless encampments of Los Angeles and gentrified Long Beach. Plight forces exodus across the treacherous river into Long Beach.

Tempered by medication, Atlas' days consist of absentminded menial jobs and fishing the polluted river. He wishes for the day the fish return.

While fishing and off medicine, Atlas is drawn into conflict. He excessively beats a robber and JAPPY, 50s, rescues Atlas from arrest. Jappy recognizes a learning disability and wrongly believes Atlas is an addict.

A thief steals Atlas' fishing rod. Jappy intervenes before Atlas rages. Jappy believes Atlas has stopped taking "pills" and he offers Atlas a job at the Long Beach Recycling Center.

Atlas' simplicity earns coworker's trust. Inconsistent medicine clouds his memory. He struggles with the machinery but is determined. His Aunt becomes less concerned with monitoring his medicine as he contributes more money to her jar.

Atlas weans from the pills and his violent tendencies return. He believes the trash discarded by the homeless prevents the return of the fish. A bloody assault earns Atlas a place with the night crew "Cleaners" led by YAM, 60s.

Scheduled Los Angeles encampment clean-ups drive the homeless to cross the river into Long Beach. The Cleaners systematically slaughter the unsavory street element. The corpses are incinerated in the recycling center and the Cleaners carefully cover their tracks.

The night crew hunts Atlas's indigent brother Fino. Yam suspects Atlas aided the escape and removes him from the Cleaners.

Atlas catches a small fish which he expects his rat to celebrate. The rat violently attacks the helpless fish. A realization sets in... the necessity of absolute violence. After Atlas hunts and kills Fino, Yam returns him to the Cleaners.

In a series of purges, Atlas rises to a managerial role. His technique and rage are beautiful and poetic.

An injury renders Jappy unable to cleanly operate the winch. Atlas reveals a level of mastery which conceals the evidence of the purge and earns Yam's appreciation.

Yam dispatches Atlas to lead a purge from within the Los Angeles recycling center.

FADE IN

EXT. PLANT - DAY

An industrial wasteland of condemned structures and cracked pavement. The backdrop -- the iconic Los Angeles skyline blanketed in angry orange smog.

The Long Beach recycling and disposal facility.

A towering relic of exposed I-beams, sheet metal and pipes. Swept walkways. Empty and lined trash barrels. A drainage pond with willows and green grass. A razor wire encircled oasis.

Propane gas garbage trucks negotiate the access road.

INT. PLANT - DAY

A truck excretes its load and pulls away.

With clockwork precision, a dozer plows the waste deep inside the cavern. Beyond natural light. Bags rolls, topple and tear.

Rats scatter... then converge on rotted food.

An uneasy chorus of steel cables pulled taut, the low hum of a diesel engine, dull bass of a gearbox.

BANG! An excavator claw gouges the wall. The claw swings, settles, hovers... and drops. Talons dig ... crush... and lift.

Centered high above a sloped vat... the claw opens.

Bags race towards the bottom, settle, churn and disappear.

The sound of an inferno.

A pedestrian jenny with thick steel doors. The rhythmic chorus fades. A new muffled sound joins.

A twisted rhythm of pipes under immense pressure, a winch motor grinds and pitchy whine of pulleys. Soft. Unsettling. A disorienting medley.

A cargo strap net filled with oversized items. A dishwasher, bureau, a mattress, tree branches, cinch close together. Crushed by their own weight as the net slowly rises.

10, 20, 80, 100 feet.

The net crawls laterally through an alcove.

Closer. Through the shadows. Creeping near.

Shadowy shapes of lumps, bulges and branches.

Closer.

A slice of light.

Dozens of corpses... packed like fish in a net.

Shadows.

A sliver of light.

Men, women... near naked, filthy and emaciated. Liquid trickles from protruding limbs and dangling hair.

Shadows.

A flash of light.

The net jolts.

The corpses compact. A strap splits a man's face. Fatty underarm flesh rips off. The muted thud as bone beneath flesh snaps and pierces skin. Another thud. THUD!

A torrent of blood.

Flash.

Eye-catching movement. A finger twitches.

Someone deep inside the bundle is alive.

Muffled screams end as the net jolts.

A crescendo of thuds.

A waterfall of blood.

The vat below. The sound of steam under pressure building.

BLACK SCREEN

ATLAS (V/O)

I must have dreamed about being a garbage man, because I ended up on it. That made sense.

INT. NANNA'S HOUSE - DAY

A teakettle boils. Cup-O-Noodles for dinner in project housing. Discarded chip bags and soda cans. A coat closet with a sleeping bag.

ATLAS (V/O)

On the lower east I remember nanna. She had two rules. Don't run and make your bed. I knew no better.

Nanna yells and swings a broom. A teen's bloody mouth of broken teeth.

ATLAS (V/O)

After my bro went, I got his.

A reclining chair and a blanket.

EXT. WALMART - DAY

A crew huddles and devises a plot. An inept car scam fails as cops descend and ATLAS, 16, evades a canine in a clumsy yet vigorous flight on foot.

ATLAS (V/O)

I ran missions. They liked me. I was clean, so I got point.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

The crew regroups and lays blame. Atlas' excessively violent reaction surprises everyone. Bloody fists and a confused expression, he climbs off a larger boy.

ATLAS (V/O)

I got moved cross the LA River. Out of Compton. Don't know why Long Beach was better. Someone must of said it.

EXT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

A small tract home in a slightly nicer neighborhood.

ATLAS (V/O)

Auntie had two rules. Work. And take my pills.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE -DAY

A couple of non-descript blue pills slapped upon a table.

ATLAS (V.O.)

I always took my pills. Work though...

MONTAGE - A series of hastily and poorly done laborer jobs. Sweeping sidewalks, carrying bricks, plaster work, cleaning gutters.

ATLAS (V/O)

I don't remember getting hired or fired no where. It just was. I had money and was walking, I must have been paid. That made sense.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY - ESTABLISHING

The Los Angeles river. A massive concrete trough carves the land to the horizon.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas walks along the soft edge.

Hot, dry and dusty. A channel of stormwater splits the dry basin.

ATLAS (V/O)

I once heard there was fish.

On the distant edge, antlike figures push shopping carts, erect tents from tarps. A ragged man in soiled jeans lays prone on concrete. He's not dead, merely napping.

FINO, 20s, scavenges the encampment. Matted hair and distinctly broken teeth. Boxer briefs as shorts. From the distance, he's just another ant.

A garbage truck rumbles past.

EXT. FRUIT COMPANY - DAY

Messy and impractical, Atlas power washes crates of fruit. Sopping wet, he sets off with \$20 and an apple.

ATLAS (V/O)

Someone got sick, now fruit got washed. I liked water. When Son not looked, I ate some.

EXT. AQUADUCT - NIGHT

Atlas eats the apple and playfully kicks things in his path. A can. A worn Field & Stream magazine captures his interest. He tucks a page in his shoe where his toe pops out.

Atlas flips some pages. He marvels at an image of a large-mouth bass fighting an angler in a picturesque lake setting.

A clump of garbage plugs the channel. Filthy water streams around the blockage.

A rod and reel advertised sale for \$100. He has \$20.

Cash in his hand gains JACKER'S attention.

He finishes the apple and deposits the core inside a trash can.

He smiles at a rat, unaware of the looming danger.

ATLAS

Hello.

He rummages in the trash can but only finds unpleasantries.

ATLAS

I'm sorry.

The rat understands.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Atlas fights Jackers. It's competitive and violent. The Jackers tire, Atlas' vigor accelerates. He topples and mounts one man. The second man spies a weapon in the darkness.

Atlas blindly pummels his opponent.

The sound of wood dragged on pavement. THUD.

JAPPY, 50s, a linebacker physique with kid sensibility, sets down a club.

JAPPY

Hey! It's okay. It's alright. Hey... stop. You got him. You got him. See?

Atlas returns to the moment. He panics and sobs.

ATLAS

Is he dead?

JAPPY

It's okay. We can fix this. Get off him.

ATLAS

I'm going to jail.

JAPPY

No, no you're not. Give me a hand. It's okay. Just... give me a hand.

Atlas helps drag the corpses. The garbage truck loader scoops up them up and flips inside the basin. Jappy tosses a hand towel which floats past Atlas.

JAPPY

Clean up. Get in.

ATLAS

No. I'm not...

JAPPY

Get in kid. It's gonna be alright.

ATLAS

No.

Atlas runs. The magazine forgotten. The \$20 bill stuck to the bloody street.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Atlas is dressed in the same bloody clothes.

Auntie walks past and gives no notice.

AUNTIE

Take your pills?

ATLAS

I'm out.

AUNTIE

Boy, you don't say nuthin?

ATLAS

Ain't no more.

AUNTIE

Get your ass out that door, don't come back without money and pills!

Atlas hurries out the door.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

The pharmacy opens for business and Atlas rushes in.

ATLAS

Auntie said refills were called in. I... uh.

PHARMACIST

Son, are you alright? What's your name?

Atlas pats his pockets and squirms.

ATLAS

I need to go.

PHARMACIST

Wait. Son. Got your order right here. You sure you okay? Sanitize before you go.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas walks past a crime scene. Disinterested cops loiter and take photos.

COP

Hey. Is that blood?

ATLAS

No sir.

A garbage truck empties city trash barrels.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Atlas stacks pallets. Back-breaking and endless.

BOSS

Come back tomorrow. Ok? Tomorrow. Got it?

ATLAS

Uh... yeah. I got it.

BOSS

Said that last time...

Atlas turns away, he's already forgotten. A crumbled mess of dollar bills in his hand.

EXT. AQUADUCT - NIGHT

The rat watches Atlas check his pockets for food. A splinter in his hand reminds him.

JAPPY

Kid. Hey kid.

ATLAS

Yes sir.

JAPPY

You forgot this.

ATLAS

That's not mine.

JAPPY

That's okay. You can have it anyway.

ATLAS

No thank you sir. I don't take what's not mine.

JAPPY

I like you. You... uh... don't have any other clothes?

ATLAS

I do.

JAPPY

You don't remember me?

Atlas smiles and playfully chases the rat.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Atlas stares as empty tumblers on a window sill.

AUNTIE

You take 'em?

Atlas realizes he forgot and takes a pill.

AUNTIE

You best not forget to put half.

Atlas puts the crumpled bills in the jar.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Atlas awakens, washes, gets dressed and heads out.

EXT. AQUADUCT - NIGHT

Atlas walks the opposite direction.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Atlas stands in front of the closed warehouse.

EXT. FRUIT STAND - NIGHT

Atlas stares at the closed fruit stand.

EXT. AQUADUCT - NIGHT

Atlas sits on the embankment and looks across at the campfires.

A radio blasts music. Voices yell as a shopping cart accelerates down the slope, crashes and possession scatter.

A fight breaks out. Some people flee, some loiter, and some wait for an opportunity. The winner ravages the losers belongings. Scavengers swoop in. Someone takes the loser's underwear.

The winner takes the shopping cart and sets across the river. The wheels get stuck in the channel. DONNY, 30's, a lanky brute with a do-rag, crosses with what he can carry.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

A fruit display outside. Atlas studies the valve over a spicket.

MANAGER

Kid, I done told you. You don't work here.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Atlas eats a Cup-O-Noodles. Auntie walks past and he takes a pill.

EXT. FRUIT STAND - DAY

Rain falls as Atlas washes fruit. He slips an apple in his pocket.

EXT. AQUADUCT - NIGHT

Atlas tosses pieces of apple to the rat. There's kinship.

The channel crests. The overflow quickly makes the river appear wide and seemingly impassible.

A couple of people leave the crowded encampment and set across the shallows. They stumble through the channel.

Atlas and the rat are entertained as a Man is swept downstream and manages to climb out.

EXT. FRUIT STAND - DAY

Jappy sees Atlas washing fruit.

ATLAS

Hello!

JAPPY

You remember me?

ATLAS

Yes. That night...

JAPPY

This is where you work. You off that shit?

ATLAS

Uh... yeah.

JAPPY

How much they pay you?

SON (O.S.)

You get back! I call police!

A SHOPLIFTER takes off running. Atlas gives chase and quickly overtakes and tackles the man. The beaten man has given up but Atlas continues to thrash him.

A chunk of concrete.

Atlas grabs it and winds up.

Jappy grabs his hand.

JAPPY

No! No! Stop! Being enraged is good, rage,
not so. You know the different?

ATLAS

No.

INT. FRUIT STAND - DAY

A storage closet doubles as an office. SON, 40s, curt and frugal, wipes blood from the bag of carrots. Atlas stares at an old fishing rod.

SON

They learn, they no steal and get away. Here
extra money.

ATLAS

Can I have that?

SON

That? Oh that... that very, very expensive. I
like you. Instead I give you and I keep half
pay? Good deal, yes?

Atlas takes the fishing pole and leaves all the money.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas sits on a milk crate and fishes the channel.

He happily hooks a variety of plastic bags, a toy doll, a
condom.

Day turns to dusk, then night.

Donny inches from the shadows.

DONNY

Fool, what you doing?

ATLAS

Fishing.

DONNY

Ain't no fish in there. Catch anything?

ATLAS

No.

DONNY

You catch something, it's mine?

ATLAS

No.

DONNY

Half. Just something.

ATLAS

No.

DONNY

You ain't got no bait box?

ATLAS

No.

DONNY

Something bites, set the hook. Know. Snap your wrist up so the hook sets.

Some time passes. Donny scavenges nearby.

The rod jerks. Atlas sets the hook. With child-like zeal, Atlas secures a large carp.

DONNY

Man, got a big one! Get a bag, I'll hold him for you.

Atlas runs up the slope. Donny gills the fish and disappears into the darkness.

Atlas returns. It takes a moment to realize what happened. Enthusiasm replaced with muted anger.

The incident forgotten.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Atlas stares at the empty jar and eats Cup-O-Noodles.

AUNTIE

You a working monger? Pill. Jar. There ain't
no other way.

Atlas takes a pill. He checks his pockets and feels remorse.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

BOSS

Close in an hour. You can work but I ain't
paying.

Atlas throws pallets.

EXT. AQUADUCT - NIGHT

Atlas fishes from the crate. He stares at the stormwater. A
plastic bag stuck to the hook.

Footsteps creep near.

JAPPY

Hey? Hey, hey. What you doing out here? You
should be at home.

ATLAS

I wanted to bring back a fish.

JAPPY

Ain't no fish here. You need to go the bay.
You know, the bay right? No.

ATLAS

I caught a carp here.

JAPPY

Long before this shit was poured. Now ain't
nothing. Go home. Your family gonna worry.

ATLAS

I got nothing to put in the jar. I got no fish. I... uh...

JAPPY

You need stop taking them pills. If you go the bay, catch something big I'll gaff it. Use it pull trash from my truck.

A thick stick with a hook, soiled and worn. His truck in the distance.

Yelling and commotion from the encampment. Tarps torn down. A nomadic dispersal. Shopping cart exodus. Jappy takes particular concern as some venture down the slope.

JAPPY

City gave notice, clean out time. Pack their shit. You should get home.

ATLAS

Yes.

JAPPY

Stop taking that dope, I'll get you a job.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

A WOMAN rummages a backpack filled with soiled clothes. A MAN cinches a tarp between dumpsters.

WOMAN

You ain't complain before. Better than that hand you getting.

MAN

Shut your face.

WOMAN

For real. You got any left? You best let me hit it.

MAN (O/S)

I...

He gurgles.

WOMAN

You ain't be holding out.

A strange silence.

A quick second.

She barely notices something is wrong.

It's violent. Fast. Electric.

A gaff hooks her throat and rips her out.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

It's noon. Atlas awakens. With some urgency, he leaves.

AUNTIE

Wash is tonight. You change those...

EXT. FRUIT STAND - DAY

Atlas works. Son pays him \$10.

SON

Here. Good work.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas settles into fish.

The encampment is gone.

JAPPY

I told you the bay. Go where they is. This ain't that. Look pretty though... Kind of forget where we is. You getting off those pills?

ATLAS

Yes.

Atlas make a little eye contact.

JAPPY

Good for you, son. You gotta be strong.
Ain't easy. Still at the stand?

ATLAS

I toss pallets.

JAPPY

Two jobs... I like that. Shows worth. How much
they paying you?

ATLAS

\$20

JAPPY

Ain't too shabby. You working every day?

ATLAS

No.

JAPPY

Well we got work for you every day. Even
Sunday. Day and night. You can work always.
How's that sound?

ATLAS

Good.

JAPPY

Well, good then. Come by tomorrow. Tell them
I sent you.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Atlas wakes up and sees it dark. He puts on fresh clothes and
hurries. There's \$5 in the jar. He grabs a container of Cup-O-
Noodles and dashes.

EXT. FRUIT STAND - NIGHT

Atlas stops his flat-footed run and gags on a handful of dry
noodles. The storefront is dark. The lights turn on and Son
opens the door.

SON

Early. Fruit no out for hour. You go fish.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

The sun rises as Atlas watches his line in the stormwater.

EXT. FRUIT STAND - DAY

Atlas arranges the fruit display.

JAPPY

Hey! You didn't show. Where were you?

ATLAS

I... uh.

JAPPY

I ain't begging. There's plenty of people who want this job. But if you like it here.

ATLAS

I like it here.

JAPPY

Well then.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas puts on a colorful lure and lets out his line.

DONNY

You catch anything?

ATLAS

No.

DONNY

Whatever you catch.

Donny steps closer.

DONNY

Feel me.

Atlas hooks a branch and goes to untangle the lure.

Donny grabs the rod and runs.

An odd pursuit with intermittent scuffles. Atlas maintains composure as he scuffles for the rod. Donny prefers to abscond.

ATLAS

Give it back!

DONNY

Mine now. Don't know how to use it. Fool.

ATLAS

Give it back!

DONNY

You gonna get hurt.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Atlas gains a slight advantage. As Donny tires, Atlas' energy rises and composure flails.

Donny seeks flight as Atlas grows violent... powerful.

Donny is cornered and swings the damaged rod.

Atlas advances. Donny is within reach..

Suddenly, Donny cowers and weeps. Pee runs down his leg.

Gaff in hand, Jappy gestures. Donny returns the rod.

JAPPY

Go home, kid. You off those pills?

ATLAS

Yes, sir.

INT. PLANT - DAY

A TV plays in the breakroom.

INSERT - Orientation video - The City of Long Beach set in motion a comprehensive solid waste management strategy. A source reduction and recycling program was developed to reduce the amount of waste to be managed and to reduce the consumption of natural resources. Solid waste that is sent to the Southeast Resource Recovery Facility where it is processed through one of three boilers. In addition, SERRF performs "front-end" and "back-end" recycling by recovering such items as white goods prior to incineration and collection metals removed from the boilers after incineration. Each month, an average 825 tons of metal are recycled rather than sent to a landfill.

Atlas looks at blank paperwork. YAM, 60s, a keen thug, spins the direct deposit form around.

YAM

You the fishing kid, right.

ATLAS

Yes, sir.

YAM

Ain't no fish in the LA River. Fill those out.

ATLAS

I ain't got one.

YAM

That's the damn truth. I'll do them. You all set. Be back at 8.

The training video ends and the orientees begin to depart.

TRISH, 20s, notices Atlas remain seated.

TRISH

Yeah, put me to sleep too. Not a bad first day. Least they fed us.

ATLAS

That was good!

TRISH

Whoa! PB and J ain't that exciting. You getting the bus?

ATLAS

I... uh.

TRISH

You got a ride. You think I can...

ATLAS

I start at 8.

TRISH

Tonight? That's in four hours. You gonna wait here for four hours?

ATLAS

My rod broke.

TRISH

I hate when that happens. Bad enough working here. I can't imagine working here... at night. Well, see ya.

Hours pass as Atlas watches the training video loop. An exodus of COLLECTION DRIVERS in presentable fluorescent yellow vests.

The sunlight beyond the window fades. The lights and TV turn off.

Atlas stares at the blank TV. The distant hypnotic hum of industrial machinery at work.

The lights turn on. KNACKERED MEN in soiled vests arrive for the night shift.

JAPPY

Hey, I heard you showed. Come on! I'll get you a vest and hard hat and show you where you work.

Jappy gives him the tour.

He drags a chair into the jenny.

JAPPY

Sit here. Make sure only one door open at a time. Got it?

ATLAS

Yes.

JAPPY

You sure do. I like you.

Atlas sits. The chair's peg leg slips between the mesh floor. It takes several attempts. Atlas sits precariously.

There is very little activity.

Noise creeps as a door opens. The distinct uneasy chorus. The door closes. The other door opens, the twisted rhythm.

A Worker carefully closes the door behind.

Some time passes.

Atlas shifts his weight. The peg leg slips.

A Worker in the opposite direction.

Some time passes.

Atlas gets tired. He slouches. The peg leg slips.

JAPPY

Shift over. Be back tomorrow, same time.
What?

ATLAS

Money?

YAM

I got his card. How much you need?

ATLAS

\$20

YAM

How's this? You come back tomorrow, now.

ATLAS

Thank you.

Yam sends him off with \$40 and punches a time card with another's name.

YAM
Everyone pay up. He happy.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Atlas eats a Cup-O-Noodles.

AUNTIE
You take your pills?

ATLAS
I... uh.

She taps the jar. He take a pill and puts all his money in.
He lays down.

INT. PLANT - DAY

Atlas sits in the break room.

TRISH
You still here.

ATLAS
I just got here.

TRISH
Missed your shift? If you ain't fired, you
should get a watch. Ain't you tired of
watching that?

Atlas waits several hours while the training video loops.

JAPPY
You on those pills?

ATLAS
Am I fired?

JAPPY
Stop crying. You not fired. But you gotta be
here. Clock in. You know where to be. One
door always closed. Safety vest. Helmet.

Atlas punches in with Yam's timecard.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas looks for the rat.

A growing encampment. A thrown rock splashes in the channel.

Atlas thinks it was a fish.

INT. PLANT - DAY

Atlas sits in the breakroom while the video loops. He makes eye contact as Trish smiles.

TRISH

You early, or late?

ATLAS

Both.

TRISH

How right you are! Have my watch. It was my sisters. It's all girly but it works.

ATLAS

Thank you.

TRISH

How is night crew treating you? I heard they inbred. You're the first new hire in like forever.

ATLAS

I keep one door closed.

Yam wanders in. People go quiet, pick up their meals and leave.

TRISH

I... gotta go.

YAM

Stay with your own.

ATLAS

Own what?

YAM

Punch in, head up.

Atlas searches but can't find his vest. He wanders back to the breakroom and sees Yam, Jappy and others watch the TV.

INSERT - TV- City encampment cleanup, locations marked on a map.

Yam hashes out a plan.

JAPPY

Doors!

Atlas sobs. Jappy shuffles over.

JAPPY

Hey, hey, what's a matter? You can't find your vest? Grab him a vest. See, you good. Get up there.

ATLAS

Thank you.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Atlas sleeps. There's a few \$20s in the jar. His watch beeps and he gets up. He puts on clean clothes, eats a Cup-O-Noodles and leaves.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

Atlas exits the bathroom.

JAPPY

Hey! What you doing?

ATLAS

I had to...

JAPPY

You stay in the jenny! It's important you stay in there. Specially tonight. I ain't mad. You okay. Gotta stay in there. Got it?

The crew absconds.

A few hours pass.

There's commotion outside. A rumble as the furnace ignites. A door opens. The twisted rhythm.

The door closes.

The other door opens.

JAPPY

Grab a mop.

A channel of splattered blood cakes the mesh grate. Droplets lessen on each lower level. Three levels down, there's nothing.

Atlas gives the mop a final rinse.

JAPPY

Get the washer and clean these out.

Atlas and the crew spray out truck basins in a hurried but thorough clean-up.

Atlas clocks out with Yam's timecard.

YAM

We good?

JAPPY

See we all good. Kid, you did good today.

Yam pays Atlas. Atlas makes some eye contact, loiters, and starts to leave. The first of the day crew arrive.

JAPPY

You gonna fish today?

ATLAS

I'm gonna buy a rod. I saw a fish.

JAPPY

I told you he work. See?

YAM

Ha. The kids gonna buy a rod...

DAY CREW GUY

Still here? You guys are something. Really
milk the OT...

YAM

Shut your damn mouth! Best shut the fuck up!
Don't know who you're talking to son. I make
the rain.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

The sun is out. The air is warm. Atlas fishes with a new rod.
Submerged shoes kick in the shallows. It may as well be the
Maldives.

The encampment has grown.

People explore the bank for a way to cross.

MAN

Yo! You catch anything?

ATLAS

No.

MAN

Let me see. I'll show you how to fish.

ATLAS

I know to set.

MAN

Give it here.

ATLAS

No!

MAN

Fucker.

The Man wanders upstream and continues his search. He kicks garbage into the channel.

Atlas watches as some trash bump against his lure.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

Atlas sits in the jenny.

A door opens. The uneasy chorus spills in.

The door closes.

JAPPY

Hey. You sleep today? You fish all day. You need to sleep too. Catch anything? You gots to go to the bay. That's where the fish be.

ATLAS

Ok.

JAPPY

Good work. Someday fish will be back.

ATLAS

When?

JAPPY

I... uh... don't know. Keep the river clean. Stop all that shit. The fish come back.

The door opens. The twisted rhythm pours in. The door closes.

Atlas stares at the floor.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas sits on the embankment and counts money. He scans for jackers and sees none.

The encampment has grown. Some people test the shallow water. A few discard flotsam and manage to cross.

Atlas decides not to fish.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Atlas eats a Cup-O-Noodles.

AUNTIE

Pill. Jar.

Atlas slurps noodles as she traverses the room. He puts a few \$20s in the jar. He undresses, showers and goes to sleep.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

Atlas sits in the jenny. The peg leg slips.

He finds two sheet metal squares, places them beneath the rear legs and leans back.

The twisted rhythm as Yam pops his head in.

Atlas falls to the ground.

YAM

Go mop.

Atlas finishes spraying out the trucks and punches out.

Yam and Jappy speak nearby.

JAPPY

We good?

YAM

Hey, you. You live with your grand mama?

ATLAS

My aunt.

YAM

She don't mind you working nights and all?

ATLAS

No.

YAM

You drive?

ATLAS

No.

JAPPY

He means you know how to drive?

ATLAS

No.

YAM

Can you sit inside and keep watch?

ATLAS

Yes.

JAPPY

That we can work with. Good work today.

YAM

Here your money. When you gonna catch me something I can eat? Huh?

JAPPY

You getting fed, right?

ATLAS

Cup-O-Noodles.

JAPPY

Man, I love those. Try 'em dry. They better.

ATLAS

Dry?

JAPPY

Dry. No water. Dry. Put 'em on bread. Member when the water shut for like six days? Schools closed and all...

Atlas takes his money and leaves.

JAPPY

We getting old.

YAM

He still on you.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Windy and raining. Atlas stands in the shallows and fishes.
Flotsam rushes past.

Two WOMEN try to cross the channel. One stumbles and falls in.
She flails and is pulled under.

Atlas watches her bob past. The lure snags her hair and the line
breaks. She disappears downstream.

WOMAN

Why you not help her?

The Woman gathers the other's possession and absconds.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

Atlas shadows the claw operator in a room near the motor. The
uneasy chorus permeates.

ATLAS

How much does it weight?

OPERATOR

What?

ATLAS

How much does it weight!

OPERATOR

What? Speak up!

ATLAS

HOW MUCH DOES IT WEIGH!

OPERATOR

A lot.

The claw cycles refuse.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

AUNTIE

Wake up, dammit! You ain't been taking these? Dammit to hell. I ain't signing you out. Take your damn pill! Take it. I'm waiting.

She notices the jar half filled with money.

INT. PLANT - DAY

Atlas sits in the break room.

TRISH
Watch broke?

ATLAS
No.

TRISH
Way early or way late?

ATLAS
Neither.

TRISH
Oh... you fired. They mail your last check.

ATLAS
I get paid money each day.

TRISH
Huh?

A WOMAN pops in.

WOMAN
Hey. You were sick, right? Jappy say just say you was, it will be okay.

ATLAS
I was sick.

WOMAN
Be back at 8. I like you. Need more people like you around.

TRISH

You gonna wait?

ATLAS
I'm going to go fish.

TRISH
It's raining.

ATLAS
Yes.

TRISH
Be safe. Least put your vest on so you don't
get run over.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas fishes from the edge of the slope. The water rages.

The wind and rain collapses tents. The encampment in disarray.
The indifferent people wander about. Some marvel at the deluge
and dare one another to cross. There are no takers.

Atlas checks his watch. He reaches the top of the slope. WARDEN,
50s, looks him top to bottom, a citation at the ready.

WARDEN
Son, you gotta a fishing license?

ATLAS
No, sir.

Warden notices the vest logo.

WARDEN
You supposed to be working?

ATLAS
I work nights.

Concern sets in. Warden averts gaze and wanders away.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

Atlas runs the claw. The claw jumps and jerks. Half loads.
Careens into the wall.

YAM

You no good at this.

JAPPY

Give him a little.

YAM

He go back.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Atlas eats dry Cup-O-Noodles. Auntie empties a hundred dollars
from the jar and leaves.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

The stormwater spans across the banks.

Atlas casts the line. The surface appears smooth, brown and
milky. The lure quickly moves downstream.

The muddy encampment rebuild.

A group tests the water. A MAN underestimates the current and is
dragged downstream. After a struggle, he stumbles ashore to a
chorus of hoots. A helping hand boosts his possessions.

The rat searches for food.

ATLAS

Sorry.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

Atlas sits in the jenny.

One square piece of sheet metal doesn't help.

A door opens. A Man carefully closes it, walks past, opens the
other door, exits, and carefully closes that door.

Jappy enters the jenny. Atlas waits for him to speak. He's disappointed when Jappy nods and continues past and opens the second door. The twisted rhythm creeps in.

The door left open. The noise persists.

Atlas waits a moment.

Did Jappy forget?

He creeps near. The noise grows.

Atlas reaches the door. He considers opening it. He pushes the door shut.

He spots another square of sheet metal, props the rear peg legs and sits.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

The receded banks expose a litany of debris, tires, tree trunks, a body wrapped in carpet. Under a sunny sky, Atlas sits and fishes in the shallows.

The line jerks.

He stands.

The line jerks again.

He whips the rod. The line breaks.

He smiles and sets off.

ATLAS

Set it.

Several people slog knee deep water, lay planks across the channel and push carts across.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

Atlas clocks in. Jappy leaves Yam's side. A decisive tone.

JAPPY

Head over to #13. Lose the vest.

ATLAS

Uh...

JAPPY

Truck 13. No vest. What?

ATLAS

I got a bite. A fish. I almost caught a fish. I was...

Atlas recognized bad timing.

ATLAS

13.

JAPPY

Hey son. Stay off that dope.

INT./EXT. GARBAGE TRUCK - STREET - NIGHT

Jappy races the garbage truck out the plant and negotiates the parking lot maze.

A series of trucks disappear into the night.

A cheap handheld radio.

Jappy checks his watch.

JAPPY

22 this is 21, 5 minutes out.

YAM (V.O.)

Copy.

A series of voices over the radio check in.

Atlas stares out the window at the empty alleys and parks.

ATLAS

It's peaceful.

JAPPY

Yes, it is. We gonna keep it that way. You stay here. Lights off.

ATLAS

That's all?

JAPPY

22 this is 21, on site.

YAM (V.O.)

Stand by.

Jappy grabs his gaff and a balaclava.

JAPPY

That's all. Make sure no one taking my truck. Got it?

ATLAS

Yes, sir.

JAPPY

22, 21, moving.

YAM (V.O.)

Net 'em.

Atlas doesn't watch as Jappy sets off into the darkness. He stares out the window.

Some minutes pass.

Atlas stares.

An emphatic eruption.

ATLAS

Set!

Shadows scramble into view. PEOPLE creep along a wall and hide behind some crates. One carries a gaff.

Atlas opens the door.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Defensively huddled, gaff at the ready, a MAN gasps and clenches a wound. His FRIEND groans and holds intestines in place.

MAN

Shut up, fool! You gonna get me killed.

FRIEND

My stomach spilling out.

MAN

Got to ditch. Shut the fuck up! Shush!

Creeping sounds approach.

The Man advances toward the shadows. He peeks around a corner.

From behind, a brick to the Man's head. Atlas swings several times.

Yam and a crew member emerges. Injured Jappy limps onward.

Atlas gets off the Man. Now focused on the Friend.

FRIEND

No. No. Please.

The Friend's futile resistance. Atlas pushes his hand aside and raises the brick.

BAM!

The Friend releases his organs to defend.

Another swing.

A grunt. Organs spill out.

Atlas wrestles. His shoe crushes the intestines.

It's painful to watch.

Yam watches the technical prowess as Atlas overlaps the Friend's arms, rendering helpless.

The brick raised.

The Friend's final plea.

A series of thuds. The crack of the skull gives way to splattering of mush.

Yam gives pause to the level of aggression.

JAPPY

Hey, it's okay. It's okay. We good.

Atlas rises.

ATLAS

Yes?

JAPPY

Yes.

ATLAS

You okay?

JAPPY

Yes, I'm fine. I'm gonna be fine.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Atlas puts blood smeared money in the jar. He puts his bloody clothes in the wash, eats and goes to sleep.

The watch alarm goes off.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas sits on a log and fishes the channel.

The encampment is gone.

Atlas tosses the rat some dry Cup-O-Noodles. The rat sniffs, disregards, and wanders away.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

Atlas operates the crane better.

JAPPY

He better.

YAM

Can't get worse.

The claw smashes the walls. Atlas starts crying and stands to leave. Jappy puts a hand on his shoulder.

JAPPY

It's okay. You good. Sit. Gotta be smooth...
Think of how you reel. Smooth... like that.

INT. PLANT - DAY

Atlas arrives early. Trish is bruised and wears a sling. A DAY MANAGER pleads to Yam. Jappy exits the discussion and shuffles past.

JAPPY

This is why we do.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jappy drives Atlas to a remote street.

JAPPY

22, 21 set.

Atlas follows Jappy's lead. They negotiate a few blocks and set up behind a corner and look down the street.

A WAIFY COUPLE sit beneath a shelter-half.

JAPPY

We wait. You just gotta hook em. Then hit
em.

Some distant bangs of wood on brick alert the Waifs. The echoes of a ruckus. The Waifs snatch everything and scamper towards the corner.

WAIF

Wait up.

WAIF 2

Hurry!

The Waifs reaches the corner. It's pitiful. Jappy gaffs her waist and torques. She falls. He parries and jabs her head with the butt.

Waif 2 stares.

Atlas swings for the fences. A powerful stroke that gaffs Waif 2's jaw and knocks him out.

JAPPY

My boy!

A spotlight.

Men with clubs stand over two unconscious bodies.

Jappy waves.

The spotlight turns off.

A cop car drives away.

The garbage truck hydraulics whine as Atlas errantly runs controls.

JAPPY

The black knob. The other one. The left one.
Far left. Push down.

The fork lifts the two bodies and flips them into the basin.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

A series of garbage trucks in queue.

Atlas drags bodies from the basin into the cargo strap net.

YAM

21, you good?

JAPPY (V.O.)

Copy

The net lifts. The straps taut. Bodies pull tight.

Atlas watches the bundle rise. 10 feet, 20 feet, 80 feet.

A trickle of blood begins. A small puddle grows. Sprinkling Atlas' shoes and pants.

The net jerks. A rumble from the bundle as the as bodies settle. A spout of blood pours down and splatters.

The puddle triples in size.

YAM

Mop.

Atlas snaps back. He hurries away.

Atlas mops the upper level. A few splatters when the bodies settled.

JAPPY

Gots to hurry up. I weren't so smooth.

Atlas sprays the last of the blood from the basin as the Day Crew arrives. Trish's face is still puffy, her arm in a soft sling.

TRISH

You still here?

ATLAS

Yes.

TRISH

Man. I hope you getting overtime. You gonna fish today?

ATLAS

Maybe.

TRISH

Best get changed. You make the fish smell good. See ya!

ATLAS

Are you okay?

TRISH

I'm okay. Everyone here real concerned. I'll be fine.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

Atlas operates the claw.

JAPPY

We going out.

INT./EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jappy drives side streets and searches.

JAPPY

22, 21, moving on.

A chorus of radio traffic.

JAPPY

Thirsty fool with bad wheel. He's out here.
Be hard, cuz he know it coming.

An ongoing search.

YAM (V.O.)

Calling it.

Jappy slams the wheel. He spies something, parks and gets out. A FIGURE flashes past. Jappy swing the gaff and misses. The Figure bolts through an alley.

JAPPY

That him!

Atlas gives chase. He gains on the limping Figure. He throws the gaff and trips the Figure.

FINO

No. It's me. It's me.

Atlas gives pause at the Figure. The familiar broken teeth.

Distant calls of men assembling. The air brakes of big trucks. Radios.

FINO

It's me. You bro. Let me go... Please... I
didn't hurt no body. Please.

Atlas loosens his grip. Fino rises and dashes into the night.
Footsteps approach.

JAPPY

Where he go?

Atlas blank stare. Yam suspects.

JAPPY

Shoot. We gotta get gone.

The group disperses.

Cops drive past. One shakes his watch. Jappy stares them down.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas fishes the channel. The less angry color of settling stormwater.

The encampment is peaceful. The occupants seem to get along. A Woman prepares a meal for others. Some hang wash and work together to raise a tent.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Atlas wears clean clothes and eats a sandwich as Auntie traverses.

AUNTIE

I see you found the cold cuts. Ain't eating noodles no more, I ain't buying.

ATLAS

What happened to Fino?

AUNTIE

I wasn't asked to take him in. You enough.

She empties a full jar.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

A note on the timecard "jenny."

Atlas reclines in the seat. The doors work. The uneasy chorus.
The twisted rhythm.

Dried blood between the grates.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas fishes the channel.

There's some trouble in the encampment. Atlas watches the new arrivals show force.

The rod jerks. He sets and reels in a small bass.

He grins as the tiny fish flop. He looks for jackers and sees none. He lets the fish go.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

Atlas is excited to share his news. He sees the break room is empty. He searches empty hallways and rooms.

He returns to the break room and sees Jappy and Yam finish a conversation.

Yam silently walks past.

ATLAS

I caught a fish. I caught fish. At the
river. The fish are back.

Jappy considers his words.

JAPPY

That's good, son. That's real good. You
know, we keep a lid on this. We do. Cops
everywhere in LA, they no better?

Atlas awaits instruction.

JAPPY

Go.. run the crane. Think about it.

Dozers push excrement mounds.

Atlas runs the crane.

The claw smoothly glides across the bay. Centered above the largest mound, the claw drops. A full load. The claw rises and traverses the bay, hovers above the vat, and dumps.

Atlas pull levers and toggles buttons in synch with the uneasy chorus.

The claw hovers above a mound. Atlas hits release.

A glimpse of a *corpse* among refuse.

Atlas reverses the claw but sees nothing.

He picks up a load.

The claw hovers above the vat. Atlas presses the button. Among the falling debris, a pirouetting corpse. He scans the vat but sees nothing.

Something catches his eye. Just beyond his vision.

He scans the mounds and vat.

Flashes of body parts. Faces. Limbs. Torn and bloody clothing.

Everywhere and nowhere.

When he focuses, he only sees refuse.

He focuses on his work and ignores the flashes.

The claw glides across the room and drops on target. Lifts and sweeps across to the vat.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Atlas layers dry Cup-O-Noodles in a cold cut sandwich. The sound is familiar. He enjoys his meal.

He considers taking a pill.

He puts money in the jar and leaves.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas watches aggressive men dominate the encampment. The weak are pushed out. Some move down the slope and cross.

Atlas looks at the city behind him. It's noticeably cleaner than the city across the river.

Flotsam discarded in the channel.

He hides his fishing pole, picks up a cobblestone and sets off.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Atlas walks past a cop car. The cops notice the cobblestone and resume reading their newspaper.

Atlas walks past the fruit stand and the warehouse.

Atlas searches some alleys.

Tents between dumpsters and cardboard shelter-halves in bushes.

Atlas peeks in.

The sounds of people in skirmish.

FINO (V.O.)

No! No!

MAN (V.O.)

I said they mine!

A struggle. A Man kicks as Fino tugs at his shoe.

Atlas' brisk walk doesn't miss a beat. Fino has no time to react. The cobblestone indents Fino's head.

MAN

Thank you, thank you! God bless you. He
crazy. The shoes...

Atlas smashes the Man's face.

Atlas rolls a waste bin into the alley. Clunky and laborious, Atlas puts both bodies into the bin.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas fishes but doesn't catch anything. He's more interested in the encampment. People stand across the channel and consider a play. They change their mind and wander away.

Atlas watches as some make their way across the channel.

A garbage truck empties a bin.

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

Atlas can't find Yam's time card but finds one in his own name.

YAM

Got enough for a bank to open you an account. You get a check now. You got enough, right?

ATLAS

Yes.

YAM

Good. That's good. Get up to the crane. You gotta be smooth. Can't have messes too big to clean up.

Atlas runs the claw. Smooth and sweeping. Like poetry aligned to the uneasy chorus.

A garbage truck dumps excrement. The dozer plows mounds.

Atlas hovers the claw. Beneath, intertwined with a rocking horse and fish heads, are two familiar corpses.

It may only be garbage settling, but Fino's body appears to twitch.

Atlas drops the claw. The teeth close. An arm pokes out. The elbow jerks and fingers stretch wide.

Above the vat. The claw opens.

Fino rolls a ways down the slope and settle. He snaps awake. Disoriented, he writhes and pulls refuse from his face. He spots Atlas!

FINO

Help. No! Help. Please help! No!

Eyes locked. Atlas pivots the crane and swoops back with a load of refuse.

YAM

See you found him.

JAPPY

Told you, he ain't no pawn.

The claw begins to open. Light items seep between the teeth. Small heavier items pound Fino. He disappears under a dense mass of debris. An avalanche to the bottom.

EXT. AQUADUCT - DAY

Atlas sits on the crate and fishes the channel as a torrential rain begins. The channel overflows and the banks quickly expand. The current shakes the crate.

The line jerks. Atlas sets. A small crappie jumps.

Atlas walks the hooked fish to the bank. He squats over the fish and is about to let it go. The rat watches.

ATLAS

Look. A friend.

Atlas slides the fish near.

The rat pounces and bites the fish's face.

ATLAS

No! No!

Atlas tries to rescue the fish but the rat quickly drags its meal into the shadows.

People stuck in the deluge turn back. They holler to a new encampment on his side of the bank.

INT. AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Atlas eats a dry noodle sandwich.

AUNTIE

What you eatin?

ATLAS

A sandwich. Noodles and mayonnaise. I got an account at a bank and a check. I still get you half to put in.

Auntie sits and studies Atlas.

He makes eye contact.

ATLAS

What you doing?

INT. STREET - NIGHT

Jappy parks the truck. Atlas stares into the darkness. The look of a determination. A gaff at his side.

JAPPY

22, 21, set.

A cop car drives past.

A moment passes. A garbage truck front loaded with an oversized dumpster, functioning as a plow, rolls past.

Followed by another.

Radio traffic confirms the crew is set.

The distant sounds of a hydraulics at work. The hollow bang and echo of dumpster battering. People scream.

JAPPY

They coming.

Jappy and Atlas prepare ambush behind some shrubs.

A dozen people flee and zig-zag chased by swerving garbage trucks. Some stand their ground. Some give up. Both are run over.

Fleet footed survivalist run on.

JAPPY

No one gets by.

ATLAS

No one.

Flanked by crew members, Atlas charges. Jappy struggles to keep up.

Atlas is brutal, focused and ruthless.

Yam takes notice from a nearby rooftop.

Atlas gaffs a Woman's calf and yanks. He spins and butt strikes her skull. A Man wields a cane. Atlas makes quick work and leaves his intestines airborne.

The graphic violence escalates until the audience is squeamish and we cling to our R Rating and values.

INT. PLANT - DAY

The crew loads the net. A man writhes a little. Atlas finishes him off with a butt-stroke.

ATLAS

Less mess.

The net loaded.

Jappy's twitching hand hovers near the controls.

JAPPY

I... can't. You'd be better. Think..

ATLAS

Smooth. I can do it.

Atlas runs the winch. The cargo straps lift and pull the corpses together. The gently sound of meat settling. A few droplets of blood fall.

The load jerks a little. More blood spills.

Atlas focuses.

JAPPY

There's no need for dope. Shits all in your mind. That feeling of power. Focus. You belong to something now. Important.

The cargo net crawls laterally. Blood trickles. Not a single splatter.

Yam is impressed.

YAM

When my dad was born, Los Angeles was magical. He fished that river, I'm sure. I think he would have stayed.

The cargo net above the vat. The furnace door opens.

Intense heat and blinding white flames.

The hook releases.

A Clinger entwined with a strap.

Atlas jolts the lever and the Clinger falls.

EXT. AQUADUCT - NIGHT

Atlas fishes as Yam wanders near.

YAM

The fish will return, if you do your part. I from there too. I ran. Boy I ran. Part my fault it like that. I mean to go back, got too old. You can. We sending you home a king.

INT. LA PLANT - DAY

Atlas sits in the break room. A little more grungy. An older TV plays a similar orientation video.

WOMAN

You funny. I like you. Of course we have rats! Here, fill out the application. Mark that box for nights.

A MAN, 60s, enters with humble expectations.

MAN

I got it honey.

He watches her departure.

MAN

We been expecting you.