

DEBRIS

EXT. LOUISIANA GULF COAST - SHORELINE - DAY

Seagulls pick through storm debris and garbage littering the battered coastline. A young African American boy throws a rock into the murky gulf water.

EXT. RURAL COASTAL LOUISIANA - DAY

The sun sizzles hot over desolate countryside. An aging municipal bus sputters down a dusty dirt road. In the distance, African American voices sing a GOSPEL hymn.

CLOSE ON a white man's weathered hands as they uproot a stubborn weed from dry patchy earth. On the ground nearby lies a pair of hedge shears. The sun glints off its sharp blades.

INT./EXT. OLD MUNICIPAL BUS/RURAL LOUISIANA - DAY

DORY ROCQUE (30), a pensive African American woman, wearing jeans and a t-shirt, sits alone staring out the window. Her eyes narrow as she takes in the devastated landscape of a poor, storm-ravaged, coastal town.

The bus slows to a stop. Dory looks up as the doors open.

MATCH CUT:

INT. CELL BLOCK - LOUISIANA WOMEN'S PRISON - DAY

KLANG! Dory stands inside a cell as a guard slides open a heavy door. She steps out and walks down a hallway.

INT. PRISON - HOLDING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

The same guard hands Dory a small knapsack. She waits as an exterior security door opens.

KA-KLANG. She steps outside into blinding sunlight.

MATCH CUT:

EXT. OLD MUNICIPAL BUS - DIRT ROAD - DAY

Dory steps down into bright sunshine as the bus shuts its doors behind her. She looks left, then right -- a blanket of devastation in all directions.

Confused, she turns back to the bus, but it lunges forward leaving her behind in a thick cloud of exhaust.

As the dust clears, Dory sees a disheveled, down-and-out woman, late 40s, staring at her from across the road. The woman mumbles to herself. Dory calls out,

DORY

Excuse me!

The haggard woman's dark eyes flash with life as she lifts a crooked finger in Dory's direction.

STREET WOMAN

Can't sail away wit him. Winds blow a'fierce. Blow you right back whence you came!

Shaken, Dory watches as the crazy lady gathers in her ratty robe-like clothing and walks away.

A young boy cycles up to Dory now on a rusty bike. He stops right in front of her, balancing a sack of groceries on the handle bars.

YOUNG BOY

You lost, miss?

DORY

Which way's Rangely Street?

Turning around to get his bearings, the boy points left. Dory watches as he remounts the bicycle and pedals off.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - A LITTLE LATER

Dory walks past concrete slabs and mounds of splintered rubble where houses once stood. Homes that remain standing are mostly boarded shut. One such abandoned house is spray-painted on the front with the words:

DEAD BODY INSIDE.

Across the street, a woman is seated on a crooked front porch. She fixes her gaze on Dory, who lowers her eyes and continues on.

Turning a corner Dory's eyes light up -- up ahead, stands a small house on a corner lot. She crosses the empty intersection then runs through the side yard. She climbs over mounds of earth and a broken tree then stops just short of the front porch.

Her eyes narrow as she takes in a battered shell of a house -- the cracked front porch littered with debris... plywood nailed tightly over the front door... wooden boards cover holes that were once windows.

Dory mounts the steps with trepidation. She tries to peer between boards, but can not see inside.

Hopping down from the porch, she walks around to the side of the house, looking for a way to see in. She finds a loose board and yanks hard until--

CLICK. She freezes at the sound of a rifle behind her.

OLD MAN LAWRENCE

Better get, or I'ma blow your god damn head off.

Ten feet away stands OLD MAN LAWRENCE (60s), a black man with weary eyes and a large shotgun.

Dory raises her arms and slowly turns around.

OLD MAN LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I said Get!

DORY

It's me, Mr. Lawrence. Dory. Izzy's daughter...

The old man gives her a stern once over, then shakes his head and lowers the rifle.

OLD MAN LAWRENCE

Thought you was one of them souvenir hunters. That or a damn junkie.

The old man bites his tongue. His face full of regret, he averts his eyes and stares out into the wasteland.

DORY

It's okay, Mr. Lawrence.

OLD MAN LAWRENCE

Thought you was gone for good, Miss Dory.

He turns back to her.

OLD MAN LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Heard your mama and sis took up near Houston somewheres.

DORY

They'll be back. I'm gonna fix it up.

Mr. Lawrence's eyes drift. He shakes his head.

OLD MAN LAWRENCE

They don't want no one to come back.
This a ghost town.

(beat)

Them waters came and it just went.
Washed away. And there ain't nobody
gonna do a damn thing about it.

Dory looks down the block at a white trailer on blocks
next to an uprooted shack on it's side.

OLD MAN LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

That's all I got now. Ain't even a
double-wide. You one the lucky ones.

Dory takes a look at her shabby house.

OLD MAN LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Don't reckon you got no gun...

Dory looks at him hard, then shakes her head no.

OLD MAN LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Just holler. We come running, lickety
split.

DORY

I won't be no bother to no one.

OLD MAN LAWRENCE

No bother. We family now.

He gives a wave then tramps off through the weeds.

Dory turns back to her house with a look of resolve.

EXT. DORY'S HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

Dory kicks the side of the house with all her might. A
rotting board suddenly gives way. She crouches down to
see inside.

INT. DORIAN'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

She crawls inside the dark and musty interior. The
stench of rot overwhelming, she covers her mouth as she
stands and scans the room -- a refrigerator on its side
in the living room, water marks inches below the ceiling.

A shiny metal object catches her eye. She kicks at a coffee table in her way and it crumbles under foot. Bending down, she picks up a child-size harmonica. Her hands tremble as she wipes it clean. Suddenly feeling weak, she runs through the kitchen to the back door. She shoves it hard but it's stuck. Desperate to escape, she kicks and shoves until it swings free.

EXT. DORY'S HOME - BACK PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Dory runs to the edge of the rickety porch then bends over to catch her breath.

EXT. MR. LAWRENCE'S PROPERTY - SAME

Mr. Lawrence rests in an old chair against his trailer whittling a piece of wood with a pocket knife. He looks up as SEAN (30s), a tall lanky white man appears at the edge of his property. The young man's eyes are trained on Dory up the street.

SEAN

What's she doing here?

MR. LAWRENCE

I got half a mind to ask you the same.

Sean looks at the old man a moment, then retreats next door to his own property.

EXT. DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL BLOCK - EARLY EVENING

Sweaty and tired, Dory makes her way down a deserted street. She climbs the front steps of the only store open for business.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE

Walking an aisle, she pulls items from a sparse shelf -- crackers, canned fruit, a flashlight and batteries. She glances up to find two young women whispering to one another behind the register.

Dory steels herself and walks to the counter. She avoids eye contact with TANYA (20s), who smiles at her from behind the cash machine.

TANYA

Well, hi, Dory! So nice to see you. You in for a visit?

DORY

You know where I been, Tanya. They don't let you visit.

Embarrassed, Tanya smiles. Her co-worker stares at Dory.

TANYA

You out. Blessed be the baby Jesus. That's good news. Real good news, Dory. Ain't it?

She elbows her co-worker in the arm, who nods in agreement. Tanya places her hand gently on Dory's arm.

TANYA (CONT'D)

You know who had a hand in this.

Dory removes her arm.

DORY

Is there a pay phone here?

TANYA

Ours ain't worked since the hurricane. It hit right after you left... Two years ago, right?

DORY

One year. Eleven months. Six days.

Tanya blushes.

TANYA

I'd say you didn't miss much, but you missed the big one.

Dory locks eyes with Tanya a moment, takes her bags and turns to exit.

TANYA (CONT'D)

We get more supplies next Tuesday.

Dory continues walking without looking back.

Tanya steps out from behind the counter and hurries after her.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Here. You can use my phone.

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For the complete script (for production or representation consideration only)
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