

GLENDALE

by

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Last Edit 10-1-03

EXT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Glendale High School Gymnasium is burning. Flames totally engulf the structure raging into the night sky.

FIREFIGHTER BOB is carrying a ELLIE SAMPSON, a five year old girl, in his arms wrapped in a blanket. He sets her on the emergency stretcher which is held in place by EMERGENCY NURSE MARCIE and EMERGENCY DRIVER HARRY. Bob is out of breath.

MARCIE

What about her father? What about Coach Sampson?

Marcie puts an oxygen mask over Ellie and feels her neck for a pulse.

BOB

I don't know. It looks pretty bad in there and the main beams are about to give way.

HARRY

Lets get her to the ER.

Harry and Marcie lift the stretcher into the Ambulance.

Harry enters driver's side and starts the vehicle.

BOB

I'm going to see if I can find him.

Bob walks back into the fire.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

The front door is open to a small house in a working class neighborhood in Jackson, Mississippi. The porch is filled with clutter including old newspapers, beer cans, pop cans, car parts, and some old liquor bottles.

A large whiskey bottle is thrown out the front door by THELMA, a black woman in late 60's. A large vodka bottle is thrown out the front door two seconds later.

THELMA

THAT IS IT! I HAVE HAD ENOUGH!

(CONTINUED)

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A basketball is thrown out the front door followed by a pair of basketball shoes, then some assorted trophies are thrown outside hitting the porch and steps and breaking. GRAVON HATCHER limps outside. GRAVON is hungover and slow to react. He has awakened to the anger of his mother, THELMA. She is in a rage and throws several items at his head including: two books, a pair of dress shoes, a belt and a picture frame. THELMA appears in the doorway.

THELMA

I had one simple rule. One simple rule.

GRAVON

I know mama.

THELMA

One simple rule and you couldn't abide by it.

GRAVON

I know mama. I just. I just got carried away and -

GRAVON'S POV

Thelma walks down the steps to the edge of the walkway where Gravon is cowering. Thelma grips the neck of the bottle like a club.

THELMA

NO! No "I just got carried away."

BACK ON SCENE

Thelma throws the bottle at Gravon bouncing it off his shoulder.

THELMA (CONT'D)

I have had it Gravon. No more drinking. No more hiding from the Police. No more asking me to lie to your parole officer. No more coming home at four in the morning. NO MORE!

Thelma returns to the porch and picks up a Gym bag which was at the doorway.

GRAVON

I know Mama.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THELMA

NO! NO MORE MAMA! No more walking in to my church Sunday morning stinking of liquor. NO MORE!

GRAVON

But Mama. I'll try this time.

Thelma tosses the gym bag at Gravon hitting him in the chest.

THELMA

I never thought I would say it, but I don't even care if you ever step foot in a church again. Your soul is not my responsibility.

GRAVON

But mama, I-

THELMA

As far as I am concerned I don't have a son.....And if you ever step foot on my property again Mister, I will call the police.

Thelma walks angrily back into the house and slams the house door behind her. Gravon looks at the lawn and begins to pick up things and gather them to his chest.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Gravon is hitchhiking on the highway. He has his gym bag around his neck and an old laundry bag he is holding. His hand is out thumbing a ride. A truck stops and pulls to the side. Gravon steps into the cab.

Truck pulls out back onto the highway and passes a

SIGN which reads "Leaving Mississippi."

The Truck drives out of sight.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRUCK STOP - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Gravon waves goodbye to a truck which pulls away from a truck stop. Gravon sets his bags down and retrieves a blue sock cap and puts it on his head. Gravon picks up his bags and begins to walk toward the fire burning in an old barrel which has seven men huddled around it trying to keep warm.

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An old black man, EMMIT nods at Gravon. An old white man, ANDY, passes a liquor bottle to EMMIT.

EMMIT

Hey.

GRAVON

Hey.

EMMIT

Where you headed?

GRAVON

That's a good question. A better question is where am I now?

ANDY

You can't be lost if you don't know where you're supposed to be. You're in Oklahoma, thirty miles from the state line.

GRAVON

Oh.....Which state line?

EMMIT

Kansas. Where you from?

GRAVON

Mississippi. I've been heading north.

Emmit passes the liquor bottle to Gravon. MOVE IN for an EXTREME TIGHT on the bottle in Gravon's hand. He begins to remove the cap to the bottle, then presses it back on.

BACK ON SCENE

Gravon hands the bottle back to Emmit and begins walking again.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Gravon walks past a sign which reads, "Welcome to Kansas, the Sunflower State."

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - ENTRANCE AREA - DAY

EXTREME TIGHT on Sign reading "Emanuel Lutheran Church of Glendale, Kansas." The Letters on the sign state "Visitation for Coach Roy Sampson, 7:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M."

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REVEREND EARL JOHNSMEYER is shaking hands with parishioners as they exit the church. A large cardboard box labeled "Family Items" is in the corner of the room.

GEORGE FREEMAN and LILY FREEMAN greet the Reverend.

LILY

I think I have a couple of dresses that will fit

Mrs. Sampson.

REVEREND

I am sure anything would be much appreciated Lily.

Other parishioners continue to exit. MARGE sets a blanket into the box.

MARGE

How is the little ELLIE doing? I heard it was mostly smoke in her lungs.

REVEREND

Much better I am told. Keep praying for her.

GEORGE

What time is the funeral tomorrow morning, Reverend?

REVEREND

Nine Thirty, George.

GEORGE

Still hard to believe we lost our school gym and Mr. Sampson.

Parishioners MELVA and DOC MAXWELL pass by and waive quietly.

REVEREND

He coached a lot of young men.

GEORGE

You're not coming out of retirement to coach again are you Reverend. Ha Ha.

REVEREND

No George. I'm happy just teaching at the school. My whistle is officially in storage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILY

It all burned so quickly.

REVEREND

A lot of wood in that old gym.

GEORGE

Heck of a shame. Coach Sampson coached both our boys you know.

REVERAND

Tough on the boys he was coaching this year.

GEORGE

Did they officially cancel the season yet?

REVEREND

Yes. Evabell is on the School board and she called me last night.

LILY

I'll bring those dresses around tomorrow morning before the funeral.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The dawn is breaking. A rooster is heard.

Gravon walks past a sign which reads "Glendale, Kansas Population 1,293."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRAVESIDE - DAY

REVEREND EARL is finishing the graveside service. The family of Roy Sampson, WIFE BETTY SAMPSON, BROTHER HAROLD SAMPSON and MOTHER IMOGENE SAMPSON are hugging and crying. Friends GEORGE, MARGE, MELVIN, ELVIRA, SAM and Reverand Earl are huddled around the casket. All persons begin to walk to their cars. Reverend Earl shakes hands with the atendees.

GRAVON is cutting through a field which is next to the cemetery.

Gravon walks toward the ceremony. He is curious for some reason. He watches from a distance for a second, then walks toward the corner where the church is.

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The ceremony is over. All persons in attendance begin to leave. Reverend Earl spots Gravon walking. They meet up at the door to the church basement. Gravon removes his hat.

GRAVON  
Afternoon Reverend.

REVEREND  
Afternoon. Who might you be?

GRAVON  
Just traveling through town, Reverend.

REVEREND  
Oh? Visiting someone?

GRAVON  
Yeah. Visiting.

REVEREND  
And who might that be? The person you're visiting?

GRAVON  
You wouldn't know them Reverend.

REVEREND  
I wouldn't bet on that. I've lived here for 68 years. I've taught religion and ethics classes at our high school for 47 years, and still do. I like to think I know everyone in town.

a beat

Gravon looks nervously away from Reverend Earl.

Reverend Earl notices Gravon's nervousness and tries to comfort him.

REVEREND (CONT.)  
It's not important I suppose. My name is Reverend Earl Johnsmeyer. Yours?

Reverend Earl extends his hand to shake.

Gravon shakes his hand.

GRAVON  
Gravon. Gravon Hatcher.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

REVEREND

Welcome to Glendale Gravon. Are you hungry? The church auxiliary put on a snack for the family of.....one of our members and I need to clean up the basement.

Gravon is starving hungry. He has not eaten in 3 days, but is too proud to show his hunger to the Reverend.

GRAVON

No thanks Reverend. I had a big breakfast.

REVEREND

You sure? There's plenty of extra pie and punch and cookies. Actually, I was needing a little extra help cleaning up....so if you are so inclined, that is.

GRAVON

That's quite nice of you Reverend, but-

Reverend Earl steps closer to Gravon.

REVEREND EARL

(interrupting)

There's Rhubarb Pie from Mrs. Ferguson. If you've never had it, she has won four state fairs with that pie.

GRAVON

Four state fairs?

Reverend nods.

GRAVON (CONT.)

When you put it like that. Sure I'll try a piece.....I mean lend a hand.

DISSOLVE:

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

The kitchen serving counter has several pieces of pie on little paper plates and a tray of cookies and punchbowl of punch.

The Reverend is pushing a broom. Gravon is wearing an apron and sitting at a table.

TIGHT ON Gravon's face savoring the flavor of the pie.

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PULL BACK to reveal 7 empty small plates in a semi-circle around GRAVON. Gravon is a very large man sitting in a very small chair at a very small table. Gravon takes a sip of punch and returns to the pie.

REVEREND

I'd hate to see you when you've had a small breakfast.

GRAVON

Oh. I'm Sorry Reverend.

Gravon begins to stand up.

REVEREND

No no. I'm just teasing. Please sit down, sit down.

EDDIE enters into the basement.

REVEREND

Eddie Carson.

EDDIE

Yes sir.

REVEREND

Can I help you with something Eddie?

EDDIE

My daddy.....

Eddie stares at Gravon.

EDDIE (CONT.)

My daddy saw this fella here come with you to the church .....and he just wanted me to make sure everything was okay.

REVEREND

Everything is just fine Eddie.

Eddie can't help but stare at the last piece of untouched rhubarb pie on a plate in front of Gravon.

Gravon notices Eddie's attention.

GRAVON

Here have a piece of pie young fella.

EDDIE

No thanks. I don't want to spoil my appetite.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRAVON

I spoiled mine and it tasted might good.  
Here. Go on. It's the last piece.

REVEREND

Mrs. Ferguson's rhubarb pie.

EDDIE

Alright then. I can't resist rhubarb  
pie.

Gravon stands and wipes his mouth and collects the empty  
plates on the table.

EDDIE

How tall are you mister?

REVEREND

Wouldn't a nicer greeting be "Hi my name  
is Eddie, what's your name?"

EDDIE

Oh. I'm sorry.

Eddie stands and extends his hand.

EDDIE (CONT.)

My name's Eddie. What's yours?

GRAVON

Gravon.

Gravon shakes hands with Eddie.

GRAVON (CONT.)

Gravon Hatcher. Nice to meet you Eddie.

Eddie sits down and returns to his pie.

EDDIE

So how tall are you Mister?

GRAVON

Six nine. And you?

EDDIE

Six six. Me and Tony Lopez are the  
tallest guys in town. I mean except for  
old man Traske.

Gravon walks to the corner of the basement where the  
KITCHEN is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

REVEREND

There are some containers in that upper cabinet to put those leftovers in.

BACK ON SCENE

Eddie collects the leftovers and begins to put the items into containers and then to the refrigerator in the basement.

EDDIE

I guess we were the tallest guys in town. Now you're the tallest guy.

REVEREND

Eddie here was anxious for his junior year to be on the varsity basketball team.

GRAVON

Was? What happened?

EDDIE

Gym burned down. Is that punch for everybody?

Gravon takes a paper cup and fills it with punch for Eddie.

Eddie walks over and hands Gravon his empty plate and takes the cup of punch. Eddie stares at the cookies on the tray on the counter.

Gravon and the Reverend notice Eddie's attention. Gravon extends the tray to Eddie.

REVEREND

Would you like to take some cookies with you on your way out Eddie?

EDDIE

Sure. Don't mind if I do.

Eddie takes two cookies and shoves them into his mouth. Eddie then takes two more and put them in his pocket. Eddie then takes two more and holds them in his left hand while drinking the last of his punch in one gulp.

EDDIE (CONT.)

I need to get going. See you around Reverend. Nice to meet you Mr. Gravon.

Eddie exits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

The Reverend is leaning on a broom. He has swept dirt into a pile. Gravon sees this and picks up the large trash can and takes it to the pile.

GRAVON

Let me get that Reverend.

Gravon removes the dust pan from the can and holds it for the Reverend to sweep into.

REVEREND

Thank you Gravon. I'm not as nimble as I used to be.

GRAVON

If you've got a mop, I'd be glad to get started on this floor.

REVEREND

I do. It's in that closet to the left over there.

Gravon walks to the closet and opens the door. The Reverend takes a seat at one of the tables.

Several Hymn books tumble out of the closet when Gravon opens the door.

TIGHT ON the closet which shows several stacks of hymn books and a mop, bucket and other cleaning items.

BACK ON SCENE

Gravon picks up and precariously re-stacks the books.

REVEREND (CONT.)

Oh. I should have told you about that. I've been meaning to work on those.

Gravon maneuvers the bucket and mop out of the closet.

GRAVON

What do you need done with them Reverend?

REVEREND

Well.....it's a long story. We had a donation of new hymnals and I know that the Lutheran Church in Farris is needing some books.....new congregation.....so I had planned on repairing those and taking them over there one day. Just one on those projects that never quite-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

GRAVON

Fix them? What's wrong with them?

REVEREND

They're pretty old and several of the pages are ripped or the binding torn. I wanted to glue the covers back and tape the pages. Make them a bit more presentable.

GRAVON

I'd be glad to do that for you Reverend.

REVEREND

Actually, that's not the first on the list of projects. First on the list is to fix the leak in the pipe to the septic tank.

GRAVON

Septic Tank?

REVEREND

One of our parishioners gave me the pipe and the gasket. I just haven't had the time.

GRAVON

He didn't fix it for you?

REVEREND

He would have. But I didn't want to impose. He's donated so much already.

GRAVON

Do you have some tools?

REVEREND

Yes, they're in the back closet in the back bedroom over there.

GRAVON

I'd be happy to take a look at it for you.

REVEREND

I wouldn't want to keep you from your visitation with family here?

GRAVON

You. You won't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Gravon stops mopping and stares at the ground. He is humbled.

REVEREND

Oh?

GRAVON

I.....I don't have family here Reverend.  
I just said that. I am passing through.

REVEREND

And you probably didn't have a big  
breakfast either I'm guessing.

GRAVON

No sir. No sir I didn't.

REVEREND

Well I tell you what Gravon. I'll make  
you a deal.

GRAVON

A deal ?

REVEREND

You stay here a few days and help me with  
the chores and unfinished projects and  
I'll guarantee you a big breakfast for  
everyday you stay.

GRAVON

That's might nice of you Reverend. But I  
don't want to be a burden. At least that  
is what my mother-

REVEREND

No bother at all. I could use the  
company. Lord knows I could use the  
extra hands around here.

GRAVON

I'm a mighty hard worker Reverend.

REVEREND

I have no doubt about that. Follow me  
out back and I'll show you the spare  
room.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A moving van is parked in front of a small house. Eddie is walking on the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street. CARVAN, a young black teen, is carrying a box. His father, RICHARD, is exiting the house on his way to the van to grab another load.

They cross in the front yard.

RICHARD

Son. Its probably a good thing. If you aren't playing ball, you can spend more time on your school work.

Carvan is dejected by those words.

EXT. TONY'S HOUSE - DAY

TONY, a tall handsome hispanic 17 year old is walking up the stairs to his house. His Mother MARIA hurries out of the house with a box to meet him at the top of the stairs. Maria is nervous.

MARIA

Tony. Good. You're home early.

TONY

What's up?

MARIA

J.B. and I were talking and I think it might be a good idea if you...well I boxed up some of your sports things.

TONY

Okay. And so?

MARIA

Since you decided not to play basketball this year-

TONY

No one is playing this year. I didn't DECIDE anything remember? They cancelled the season.

MARIA

And since your father gave you the ball and some of these things....We....I mean I think it might be good to keep things like this out of sight. No reason to remind J.B.....I mean no reason to...to-

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

TONY

To make psycho J.B. more psycho?

MARIA

You don't need to call him that. He's part of our family-

Tony grabs the box angrily.

TONY

YOUR family, not MINE!

a beat

I guess there's no need for this stuff anyway.

Tony pulls out a trophy from the box.

MARIA

Maybe you could put it in the shed. Out of sight.

Tony walks down the steps with the box in hand.

INT. CHURCH - BACK ROOM - DAY

Gravon is carrying his bag. Reverend Earl turns on the light. The room is dark. A small desk is in one corner, a bed another corner and a small bathroom adjoining.

REVEREND

This used to be the quarters for the minister, but then the parish built a house and we keep this for guests and overnight dignitaries.

GRAVON

Its very nice Reverend.

REVEREND

Shower and bathroom is in there. Looks like that bed might be a bit small. Hmmm. Maybe you could hang your feet over the edge with a pillow.

GRAVON

It's fine. I'll manage Reverend.

REVEREND

Soap, shampoo and toothpaste are in the drawers. Do you have a toothbrush?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAVON

Yes, I do. Everything is fine. I am okay.

REVEREND

Do you really have one?

GRAVON

I....I can make do Reverend honest.

REVEREND

I'll put it on my list. I need to go to the store tomorrow and I'll pick one up.

GRAVON

It's not necessary, really.

REVEREND

Okay. I'll let you get settled in. Let me know when you want to get started on one of the projects. I am in the house next door. Just knock.

GRAVON

Okay. Will do Reverend.

REVEREND

Oh. Just one more thing.

a beat

There's no drinking or drugs of any kind allowed on the premises.

GRAVON

That's not a problem Reverend. I don't drink and I don't do drugs.

REVEREND

Good. Well make yourself at home. I'll see you.

Reverend Earl exits.

Gravon begins to unpack from his duffle bag. He unpacks a handgun then quickly returns it to the bag. He unpacks a bottle of liquor. He stares at it for a second, then steps to the bathroom sink and opens the bottle and pours the contents into the sink.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SMALL GROCERY STORE - PARKING LOT - DAY

RAY, a thin small 17 year old wears the store apron and is gathering shopping carts in the parking lot. He is pushing the carts up the the edge of the store entrance. MELVIN MEYERS is a frail man in his 60's or 70's. He is exiting the store with a sack of groceries.

MELVIN

Ray. You fixin to graduate this year?.

RAY

Yes sir, Mr. Meyers.

MELVIN

Too bad about the basketball team. I thought you boys had a shot at being pretty good.

Ray expresses his frustrations by pushing the carts hard into their place.

RAY

Oh Well. That's the way it goes.

EXT. FARMHOUSE BACKYARD - DAY

CECIL, a 17 year old white male is dressed in overalls, boots and farm attire. He is carrying two buckets of feed, one in each arm. Cecil's mother, MARTHA, pulls up in a pick-up truck. Martha exits the truck and gathers items from the truck to carry into the house.

Cecil is standing under the basketball goal watching her. The net on the goal is ripped and torn, and the ball is under the goal and appears flat.

MARTHA

Cecil. I finally remembered to pick up a net for your goal Honey.

CECIL

Not much point in that now.

MARTHA

You're not the only one that might like to use it. Little Jay Jay might.

CECIL

Okay. Whatever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cecil continues to carry the feed into the barn.

EXT. CHURCH - BACKYARD - DAY

Gravon is grimacing as he tightens the pipe leading out of the church. His hands, face and clothes are dirty. Reverend Earl tosses Gravon a towel.

REVEREND

Awful stench from that tank.

GRAVON

Had to be done. I think it will be okay now. The fitting was stripped, so I put the new gasket on and kept the old one in there to shim it.

REVEREND

I am very grateful Gravon. That pipe has leaked for over a year and now we can use the back yard.

GRAVON

Just a little elbow grease Reverend.

REVEREND

The kids can at least play back here without worrying about the smell or falling in the mud.

GRAVON

Looks like the grass needs to be cut and leaves raked before kids can play back here.

REVEREND

That's another project Gravon.

GRAVON

Where's your mower?

REVEREND

Mower is in the shed. But it's getting dark.

Lets save that for another day.

GRAVON

No problem. Just tell me what you need and I'll get on it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVEREND

You're going to live to regret those words. See you in the morning.

GRAVON

Good Night Reverend.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DRUG STORE - SIDEWALK - DAY

Reverend is exiting a drug store, carrying a sack and looking at a toothbrush in the package while walking on the sidewalk. The Reverend is not paying attention to where he is walking. SHERIFF TOM POTTER, a strong tall white male, in his mid 40's is walking toward the store and sees his old friend, the Reverend.

SHERIFF

Careful there Earl. You're about to walk in a mess here.

Sheriff points to a puddle of ice cream and cone which some child has deposited on the sidewalk.

REVEREND

Oh Hello Tom.

SHERIFF

I better tell them to get this cleaned up before someone takes a tumble.

REVEREND

Ever notice how they make toothbrushes now Tom?

Reverend shows Sheriff the toothbrush.

SHERIFF

So we're philosophizin about toothbrushes now, are we?

REVEREND

You remember how they used to put a little rubber dimple on the end?

SHERIFF

Yeah, well they must figure it's new and improved. So what's new at the church? I understand you buried Coach Sampson yesterday.

Our Apologies.

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