CRAZY ATLANTA WOMEN

Written by

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A bored waitress in a seedy rural diner befriends an enigmatic drifter who causes her to question life's meaning and they both jump on a Greyhound bus in pursuit of a man carrying a briefcase.

SAMPLE FEATURE/WEB/TV/STREAM

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FADE IN - EXT - DAWN Rural Atlanta 1999, access road adjacent route 20 leads to one manned petrol station and bus stop where dirt track winds to shabby oasis for long distance drivers. Diner, a few outbuildings, backed by open fields. Farms and woods spread under mountain ridge far distance.

INT - DINER - DAWN Dated eating booths and tables. Wood walls, stone floor. Two buffalo heads, their grotesque bulbous faces stare down at patrons. Dysfunctional fan on counter makes a constant burr, iron till with swing to drawer. Open serving hatch, a woman washes up in kitchen.

SHEILA 50, athletic, silver crop hair, man's vest. Tattooed back of neck and arms, she turns to look towards a side room.

SHEILA

Daisy what you doin? Out here now. Dang just my luck Kade's fired, petty pilfering and he left this mess behind. I'm cook and Powers should hire a temp for this shit.

She stops washing to walk up narrow passageway off kitchen towards ladies rest room and bangs on the door.

Doing a dump in there or something? Am I talking to myself? It's too darn much to get through on my own.

INT - LADIES ROOM - Bottle green tiles, tap drips, cracked mirror. Two army type lockers, two toilet doors.

DAISY 25, tall, slim, pretty, auburn hair. Blue gingham blouse, matching skirt, white apron.

She stares in mirror, dodging either side of crack middle of glass to apply lipstick and blows a kiss. Taking a book from her locker she gazes longingly at the cover girl and arranges her own hair exactly same way. Tweaking out bangs from a neat bun, she smiles, takes a deep breath and heads out.

INT - KITCHEN Cramped galley, Butler sink, cluttered shelving, old gas stove under alcove, facing back door.

SHEILA Bout time too, get stuck in. Sheila throws her a tea towel, Daisy catches it.

DAISY But I'm waitress here.

SHEILA Don't see no customers.

DAISY Where's Kade?

SHEILA Got fired last night.

DAISY But I heard someone yard out back?

SHEILA Just Kiki outside havin a smoke, been in garage since middle of night trying to fix Power's van.

Daisy begins to dry the dishes, stacking them on the shelves.

SHEILA (CONT'D) This shit will ruin my hands but why buy gloves? Powers should get em, even skivvy's need equipment. Gonna take ages hire new cleaner, no one in their right mind wants to be out here, I want a pay rise.

She momentarily turns to look at Daisy.

SHEILA (CONT'D) Why the shit on your face?

DAISY Its called Hollywood Siren Red.

SHEILA

And? Tarantino walking in here anytime soon? You in shit creek, girl, the backwaters so who's gonna notice or give a damn your lips?

Daisy stops stacking and puts both hands on her hips.

DAISY I'll have you know I was runner up Miss Augusta.

SHEILA

You're a dreamer Daisy and you don't wanna be getting truckers hot, we enough trouble already beating em off like flies on shit.

DAISY

I only do it for me Sheila cos little old me is all I got. Yeah, Daisy's treat and I deserve it.

SHEILA

And don't you go giving away freebees that tramp, boss catch you its docked off wage or he fire you.

DAISY

She's no tramp, just down on luck, come for fruit season I reckon.

SHEILA Picks fruit my ass, she's a bum.

DAISY You're so mean Sheila.

SHEILA

I'm just a survivor, free coffee and we'll get whole worlds unwashed in here, before long no business and no fucking job.

DAISY

Don't make a big deal on hot water and a few coffee grains. Sides, she must be a field hand, how else she survive out here? Can only make a living begging in town.

Sheila stops work and walks into diner to gaze out front.

SHEILA Telling you she don't pick crops.

Sheila points her finger towards valley far distance.

SHEILA (CONT'D) No farms around here heard of her, even far up as old man Hope's estate. With them Sunday, far as they know, ain't no one these parts hired a woman like her, ever. Daisy pokes her head through serving hatch to answer her.

DAISY Maybe she'll move on soon and it don't harm none to be charitable.

SHEILA We the samaritans now?

Suddenly a trucker wades in. Sheila walks back to kitchen.

SHEILA (CONT'D) Customer Daisy, well go on then and do what you paid for, at least you get to do your own job. Most times.

Daisy goes through, walks right up to him and smiles.

DAISY Hi Percy, how's things?

PERCY - 60, Sinewy, tan leather skin, bald, casual gear.

PERCY

Same as yesterday, same as last year. Tomorrow be same, same as today. Road's for poor now who can't afford planes so go on long coach rides or suckers like me, long distance haulage. Highway to hell and back and all over again.

DAISY

Ah, ain't that bad Percy. We got sun, place to swim Cheaha creek, mobile library back at park now and guess what? I'm learning acting, yeah little old me was Cinderella our community hall.

She waits for his answer, he squints and scratches his head.

PERCY

Only saving grace road, kitty smirk but didn't happen my day, never saw chicks on road back then. Not at wheel anyhow, shame born too late to flirt and wife would kill me.

DAISY Guess you want your usual then? Runny eggs, ham, roll and tea? Another trucker rushes in before Percy has time to answer. EARL - Young, muscles, beard, dreadlocks, cowboy hat.

> EARL Hear you say tea darling? Make mine black as night, hot as hell and as sweet as love.

PERCY

You young uns got no manners, let her finish up with me won't you. Yes Daisy my usual fix. Thank you.

Percy sits. Earl stands and stares, making her blush. She sticks orders on rack and shouts.

DAISY Mr Clark's usual and one extra tea black with sugar.

She leans on steel counter to lower her face towards the fan.

DAISY (CONT'D) Tepid air, cold asking too much? Time we went modern, wish I worked in posh store, proper air con and electronic till but I never even get an interview for Browns.

PERCY

Complainers, your generation. My son's same, glued to mod con boy's toys at thirty. Gadgets replaced communication with real folk, my day we picked up the line if got something important to say.

Suddenly the house telephone rings on counter, she picks up.

DAISY

But Friday's busy drivers headin home weekend. Okay but Mr Powers won't be pleased and Sheila's already cursing and spitting cos Kade's gone. Keep us posted, bye.

EARL

You need a night out? Don't play too hard to get, I only ask twice. And I own my vehicle, a good catch.

She ignores Earl, slams down phone and heads into kitchen.

We get world's worse lechers. Shoulda told him two strokes and he's out but since he only stopping for tea I'll just ignore him.

Sheila begins frying, mugs of tea already on serving hatch.

SHEILA

Tea's done, why's it still there?

DAISY

Sick of being public property, looking at me like they own me.

SHEILA

Why make up your face then? We called Oasis Long Distance Respite, reality check, this place for life's dregs. And this our last loaf, where's today's delivery?

DAISY

That was Royston, van broke down south of Talladega, ain't nothing.

SHEILA

No fresh bread, no cleaner, today's just one big party. Don't get why it's delivered, someone local can bake cos must be farmer's wives needing an extra dollar, time on their hands and big country ovens.

DAISY

Hey I could do it.

SHEILA

No you couldn't, living in trailer.

DAISY

So? They make trailers posh now.

SHEILA

But your's ain't, it's falling apart and you been on Driscoll Park all your life. My friend there says water pumps always fucked and they won't replace it cos they want you all off land to build new rodeo.

Daisy storms out, serves drinks, then opens utility cupboard.

Cloths, tomato and brown ketchup, knife, fork, salt, sugar, pepper.

She holds cloths under arm and lays one on each table.

Man enters kitchen door. ENRIQUE 46, Hispanic, short, tiny ponytail on shaved head, orange boiler suit covered in oil.

ENRIQUE

Motherfuckers think I'm some miracle worker, can't patch up one out back, wanna be kings of road but engines aren't invincible. Big don't mean unbreakable when they ride em into the ground and more.

SHEILA

You can't come in greased up.

ENRIQUE

Why, you fry food in shit oil and roaches crawl over place and as for that freezer perched in shed? Pies there years under a frigging solar panel. How could I do more harm?

He wipes his brow with tea towel, she rips it from his hand.

SHEILA

Can't blame us for roaches, Kade put stuff down but they always back. Daisy was tellin me they immune now to poisons, even a nuclear blast won't kill em. Nothing that girl don't know these days. And rules is rules Powers won't do with mechanics kitchen.

ENRIQUE

Ungrateful bastard, I'm here all hours, any his fleet breaks down. Where is he anyway? Got some bad news, this one's a right off.

SHEILA

He's taken a cab to town, interviews for kitchen hand.

ENRIQUE

Can't he do it? Don't see him working his fields no more? What else he got to do all day? SHEILA

God knows his plan? But he got new saying, why bark if you got a dog?

She holds out a sandwich from fridge for him to take.

ENRIQUE Thanks. Nice. You make em?

SHEILA No they yesterday's my day off, maybe lady muck made them.

ENRIQUE

Lady Muck?

SHEILA

Our Daisy, life here's too hard to bare so she fantasizes all time. Glad I ain't young no more, calm acceptance brings a kinda peace.

ENRIQUE

Peace, you? Bull. Sure as hell got your mojo back since Fun Club opened up valley, full your sort.

SHEILA

My sort? Say it, you mean gay.

ENRIQUE

In shades of gay, you shade weird.

SHEILA

I'll sue you for discrimination, political correctness and all.

ENRIQUE

PC shit, I grew up calling a spade a spade. Side's you won't get me into trouble, been your place remember, seen recreational plants?

SHEILA

Get the fuck outa here, I love you too you too and you owe me a beer.

She laughs and playfully shoves him out of the back door.

INT - BUSY EVENING - DINER Reefer driver hauling refrigerated goods, truckers, short routers, local tractor hands and two men sat in corner together who look like travellers. Daisy works alone, a woman enters, heads turn.

SUZY 45 Sturdy Africana, tall, striking features. Long brown raincoat tied at waist with string covers her ankles, toes of cowboy boots just show. Braided mid length hair. Sits alone in booth, table full from last guests. Daisy approaches.

DAISY

Hi there. Been told no more freebies but since staff all just gone now I'll bring you over a brew. Your later than usual?

SUZY

Hey girl kudos, was watching lovely sunset over ridge up yonder, sun be like a flying saucer, so heavenly.

DAISY

I never get to see it, stuck most nights overtime for acting lessons.

SUZY

Wow, better get your autograph and sell it when you famous.

Daisy takes plates, comes back with coffee, Suzy downs it.

DAISY

Best get you another.

Daisy goes for another cup and brings a slice of pecan pie.

SUZY You good girl and good deeds will be rewarded. Karma will always out.

DAISY

Oh I don't expect nothing in return. Just don't let on. So Suzy? Oh it don't matter.

Daisy becomes too shy to finish her question and turns to walk away but Suzy catches her wrist.

SUZY Go on girl, what you trying to say?

Daisy grins awkwardly as Suzy drops her grip on her.

DAISY Well it's just. Folk wonder about you. You a fruit picker or work pecan farm? Stables?

Suzy's amused and shakes her head. Daisy takes a deep breath.

DAISY (CONT'D) So then? You don't pick fruit or nothing and you don't beg and you ain't turning tricks with drivers?

Suzy laughs at her. Daisy looks down embarrassed.

SUZY

Girl you funny, lot lizard or navvy I ain't but great you're trying to connect more. Shows initiative.

DAISY

Connect's a bit deep, just don't like to see you without and since I'm one holding pot, ain't no harm not marking up occasionally. But you and everyone here thinks a dumb waitress should know her place.

Flustered, Daisy turns to walk away but Suzy gets up.

SUZY

Please hear me out, don't draw attention rushing off. Know you ain't as dumb as life you lead, just a pretty face reading novels, stories meant for simple girls. It's why we kinda hit it off.

Daisy reluctantly returns to sit.

DAISY

Such a long day, could do with a break. I'm tired, my legs ache and got three more hours this.

Suzy leans across table closer to Daisy and lowers her voice.

SUZY

Girl, I really do know you is a deep thinker. Alien cover ups, prehistoric history and science to back up theories? Life stories of Hollywood stars? You Far Side Girl, should write a book your own life not beg tips this dumpster. Daisy's throws her tea towel across angrily, it lands on Suzy's lap, she calmly folds it and puts on seat next to her.

> DAISY And how the fuck exactly do you know all that about me?

Suzy puts a finger to her own lips, issuing her to be quiet.

SUZY Shush don't make a scene, we cool.

Daisy stands to begin to walk away but turns for a final say.

DAISY So what exactly are you doing here? And I ain't callin you Suzy no more cos I guess you ain't no "Suzy."

SUZY Yes, true. I'm a witch doctor and my real name is Tamsin.

DAISY

Witch Doctor?

Tamsin rocks from side to side, roaring with laughter as Daisy anxiously bends down to pick up her tea towel.

TAMSIN

Girl look on your face, priceless and I thought you weren't dumb as these hillbillies surrounding us.

DAISY

Well one day little old me will prove you all wrong and from now on Tamsin go get your own coffee.

Daisy's upset. Tamsin touches her arm in tender gesture.

TAMSIN

Girl weren't no magic, left your phone table. Phreak Telecom expert but all I did with your fancy new blackberry was pick it up. But here's deal, now you got chance to live out your fantasies for real. Get clean away or carry on working here. Die or live, what's it to be?

Wanted one from The Matrix, a banana phone but they a thousand dollars. And I'm closing my e mail from now on and it stays my pocket away prying eyes, just so you know.

TAMSIN

All that doe just cos of a film? If you had one you could pose with handset front your mirror pretendin you're one of em? Daisy unloaded.

Tamsin gets a coin out her pocket and flips it in the air.

TAMSIN Heads, tails? Tails, heads? Pick one girl cos you already limbo.

DAISY I'm happy life I got and don't need

no tramp preaching. Ain't playing.

TAMSIN

Well then you best get back to living dream you happy with. Two truckers over there just signalled so go on, get out your silly notebook and rush on over to them.

Daisy continues to stare down at Tamsin scornfully.

DAISY What's really going on here?

Tamsin waves a finger in the air, issuing her to go.

TAMSIN Go do your duties pig sty.

Daisy becomes madder. Hands on hips. Lips pursed.

DAISY Enough of the pig sty.

She turns to walk away but stalls and turns back to Suzy.

DAISY (CONT'D) Silly games, why don't you go rob rich folk cos nothin these parts to "phreak"? All you're fancy trick's are total waste of time. So there. Tamsin sits upright and slowly opens one side of her coat just wide enough for only Daisy to see the contents.

> TAMSIN Exactly what I thought and was just passing through this motherfucking shit hole. Just passing through so I was and only leave with this.

Daisy's stares wide eyed and open mouthed at the butt of a black and beige 9 millimeter gun. Tamsin taps a forefinger on the barrel, a wry smile touches her lips.

TAMSIN (CONT'D) Is my dick showin? Don't worry none I'd never fire it near you. But as I was waiting my pick up box cargo van to move my ass out of Atlanta.

She turns her head briefly in direction of men's table.

TAMSIN (CONT'D) Noticed those two dudes, heads down and arms akimbo, just like now. Be careful not to stare, turn your head slow like you looking order rack. As I was waiting my ride out, those very same men eyeball to eyeball, talking over some serious shit. Note shoes. Real crocodile skin on fat guy, skinny got gold tipped winkle pickers.

Daisy sits and very briefly glimpses at the two men in corner, then turns her head back quickly to face Tamsin.

DAISY They gold tipped toe's, hell, yeah. You notice an awful lot about folks. Are you a government agent? Or just a nut case?

TAMSIN I'm a motherfucking crazy Atlanta woman and I always survived using my crazy Atlanta antenna.

Tamsin places both her hands at each side on the top of her head and wiggles her fingers, mimicking two insect antenna.

TAMSIN (CONT'D)

This my survival stick. Bee got its proboscis, deer got their antlers and I got this. Leads me, guides me along whatever path I need to take and never failed me yet. And right now its telling me I'm gonna score if I stick around cos those two johns are here for something big.

DAISY

You read too many books too I reckon, trust me get a bag lady who turns Butch Cassidy on my shift.

TAMSIN

And hands smooth like a woman's, they ain't no workers. Donning cheap jackets and john doe jeans makes em stick out all the more. They used to wearing suits, goin nice places and got a lot to hide. Ain't here to eat or drink shit.

DAISY

Nothing ever goes down here Tamsin. They just drifters. Misfits. Passing through just like you and one of them said they readin up on Lookout mountain trail and they already done national park. You just wasted a week that's all. So stop joking around will you?

Tamsin becomes deadly serious.

TAMSIN

This no joke, only difference them and me is I look comfortable anywhere. Bullshit they here admiring view this lowly slice of abject poverty, hear maudlin trucker tales or leer your perfect ass. They put up with sitting on broken shit pans cos this the catalyst to something worthwhile in their profound scheme of things.

Tamsin smiles and wiggles her hands at each side of her head.

TAMSIN (CONT'D) I feels it in the wind, something big's goin down and I want in. INT - LATE EV. DINER. Only Tamsin remains, tucked away in a booth out of sight. A trucker enters.

TED 40, Big build, greasy dark hair, denim clad, belt buckle size of silver saucer middle of his protruding belly.

TED

Dang my brain's fried, turned wrong lane up spaghetti friggin junction.

He sits by window and picks up menu, Daisy goes over.

DAISY Yes please?

TED I'll have the special and all the trimmings and a beer.

DAISY Sorry hot food stops at eight but got sandwiches, meat or vegetarian?

TED But I'm here to saddle up for the long haul?

DAISY Cook starts again at dawn.

TED What else you got?

DAISY Crisps, nuts, jerk scratching, pecan pie or blackberry cobbler.

He bangs both fists on table. Suzy puts her hand on her gun, watching him intently.

TED Why call it Oasis Respite? No better than a junk yard, didn't know places like this still exist. Trust me to find a Mom and Pop stop. And suppose you got no dump station? I need to off load?

Daisy shakes her head.

But big truck stops charge and boss here let's drivers stop off free his discretion to sleep their van. We ain't capitalist run but still got regular's who say we last bastion of a dying rural community. Sign says rest and respite, what you see is what you get and farm hands love Sheila's home cookin.

She goes to kitchen fridge. Ted shouts over.

TED

Make it two beers and do you even know what capitalist means?

She ignores him and brings over bottles to open in front of him, before walking back to clean the steel counter.

TED

God knows how I end up here. Aiming for hot showers and civilization but it's first time on route to Georgia, steel buckets for bobcats.

DAISY

Bobcat's? Ain't they in zoos?

TED

They be excavators, no doubt making ground to build fancier places than this shit hole. Another bottle.

DAISY Finished already? Guess your thirsty and men's room's building to the left, out front outside.

TED

I know I read the sign, ain't hillbilly like rest you.

DAISY

Some folk miss sign and ask anyway. Three bottles is three dollars, you can leave money table.

TED

I might want to sup some more? You ever get lonely on your own here?

No Enrique's asleep out back.

Tamsin suddenly stands up and makes her presence known, she swaggers into middle of room.

TAMSIN

You don't like it here? You never heard saying "When your here, your half way there?" So I guess you still got half your journey left.

TED

-

What's it to you?

TAMSIN

Nothing.

TED So mind your own business.

TAMSIN

People is my business, these roads they arteries of nation's highway.

TED What kind of people?

He swigs bottle, wipes mouth with back of hand and looks sternly upwards into her eyes, resenting her entrance.

TAMSIN

Well that I cannot answer in one cos people is infinite in variety their ways. But I can tell you this a dark place where bad shit happens to men just like yourself. Now I don't want to scare you but on average seven hundred truckers are killed yearly and that's just statistics they knows about.

Tamsin leans in nearer, right up close into his face.

And guess what? Ya'll never see it comin and could be anyone. And speedin hard lane ain't only way to go, some you just plain disappear. No pile up, no body.

Ted turns away from her and shouts over to Daisy.

TED Who's the harbinger of doom?

DAISY She's just our local witch.

He suddenly stands agitated and throws coins on the table.

TED

You even got women on liquid tankers here, you can stuff Atlanta, you're all crazy.

He walks out, starts his truck and drives off. Daisy turns on her cassette recorder high volume as Tamsin moves closer her.

DAISY

Can't get enough this song, Whitney's Heartbreak Hotel. Didn't know that bout me did you? Now I told you something new. Bring it here cos my saintly mom bangs on wall I play it late and we got a neighbor who rag's on us.

TAMSIN

Can tell your used to his sort, you a brave girl sticking it out here.

DAISY

Just another man's world routine, venting away from her indoors. Another king of road. He scare you?

TAMSIN

No, tell by lookin in his eyes he just a coward talkin bull.

DAISY

I'm leaving in ten, Enrique comin graveyard shift, he's really a mechanic but we short staffed. You best go, not meant to be here.

TAMSIN

Didn't you listen to anything I said earlier girl?

DAISY

Hear folks pipe dreams most days, you got carried away, that's all.

Tamsin goes to lean on counter as Daisy checks till money.

TAMSIN

Be old fore your time, carried outa here pine or oak. Go LA insteada readin on it, ain't no John gonna come take you away. Soon no choices or chances left, maybe promoted to cook. Got brains so why keep lettin em treat you like trailer trash?

DAISY

And what you suggest instead? Ain't Jack Shit in till, barely last a week on this. Look.

Daisy holds up a wad of notes and handful of loose change.

Anyhow Mr Powers comes in clockwork every night to take cash home ain't even no safe cos weren't worth him buying one. Ain't nothing here worth hanging round to steal.

TAMSIN

Exactly. Nothin in these walls, it's a person of interest, they expecting someone. A mark yet to ride into this mother motherfuckin hole, they waiting on human prey.

Daisy finishes the accounts, putting takings into cloth bag.

DAISY

They don't look like bad guys.

TAMSIN

What do bad guys look like? Gimp masks, big guns? Flip flops, sawn off jeans, machete? No, bad's a smell not a look and they bad. What day special bus pass through?

DAISY

All buses special to whoever's waitin on em.

TAMSIN

No, I mean private coach tours. Don't they sometimes stop at pump station top of lane? When they stop how long? And do they come in here?

Greyhound refuels regular now but only till September cos of roadworks bypass. Dearly's summer history tour takes back road once month but posh folk got fancy places to eat and two washrooms on board. Met a guy headin Nashville to write bout blues music, got a corvette with sun roof back home.

TAMSIN

And why he tell you that? Just what this place all about, folk just pass through and impress you with a few empty words. Getting what they can then ride off into the sunset.

DAISY Well he was nice though.

TAMSIN But did he call you?

Daisy casts her eyes to the ground and bites her lower lip.

TAMSIN

No course he didn't. And they never will here, life's on back burner and in a few years you hit thirty. Wait for life to happen to you, still be in library at forty.

DAISY

Ain't all bad Tamsin.

TAMSIN

Well, tell me what's good now? Other than you get to read, swim, speed tap dance around roaches or get lucky decorating dashboard's of smooth talkers with deep pockets?

DAISY

I ain't no loose woman so don't make me out be one, change subject.

TAMSIN

So, what about bus driver's don't they rest none, ever stay to nap? Get out, stretch their legs even?

Only one guy ever falls asleep but he's snail bus, local, stopping everywhere circular tour. Greyhound never stops over ten minutes.

Daisy glances around despondently.

Folk wanna head hell out, even diesel bears rarely come. Boss radioed Evil Knievel's once when a driver got robbed but cop's bikes got stuck in flooded old tracks.

Tamsin waves a finger in the air.

TAMSIN

They been casing joint, ten minutes to carry out whatever shit they got planned and middle nowhere's best place. Someone special's passing through and they waiting unnoticed.

DAISY

But you noticed them though?

TAMSIN I ain't no ordinary human.

DAISY

I kinda gathered that already but men back soon so you best leave. See you tomorrow Tamsin.

Daisy walks off to ladies locker to gather her belongings. On her way out she looks for Tamsin but she's already gone.

INT - MIDDLE NIGHT - TRAILER Cramped bedroom, brown Hessian curtains, each side of room a patchwork from wallpaper sample books, clothes spill from broken closet, tiny analogue TV perches on fruit box, game show on screen but Daisy cannot concentrate. Lying on a single bed in a yellow petticoat, she looks up at the cheap wood cladding on the ceiling.

DAISY

Strange woman!

PLEASE REQUEST FURTHER SCENES. CRAZY ATLANTA WOMEN IS PRODUCED FOR LOW BUDGET TEASER TO ADD TO EXECS PITCHES, HALTED DUE COVID. OPENS 1999 BUT MATERIAL TO PRESENT DAY. CLOSED ENDED FEATURE, STREAM OR SPIN OFF WEB EPISODES.