

EXT. TOLLY'S BBQ DRIVE-THRU - DAY

A BIG PLASTIC PIG with a joyful expression, holding a plastic cleaver in one hoof.

The apple in its mouth is a SPEAKER.

Behind it, thunderclouds boil; Texas in late summer.

A LITTLE HONDA idles with the window down.

CLAIBORNE
(OS - from inside car)
Two rapes and a murder.

DRIVE-THRU SPEAKER
Excuse me? (pause) Two apple pies?

INT. CLAIBORNE'S CAR - DAY

BUNNY CLAIBORNE (40s), dark flyaway curls and a white button-down shirt, talks on her hands-free car speaker phone.

DRIVE-THRU SPEAKER
Could you repeat?

PHONE VOICE
(heavy drawl)
And grand theft auto.

CLAIBORNE
(to phone)
Oh please, the grand theft charge is bullshit. He moved the car to transport the body. It's not like he killed her for the car. I mean, have you seen the car? (laughing)
It's a fucking Dodge Dart.

Claiborne leans out the window and YELLS INTO THE PIG'S MOUTH:

CLAIBORNE
Small rib bucket!

INT. CLAIBORNE'S CAR - DAY

Zippping down a tree-lined parkway, the buildings of DOWNTOWN HOUSTON rapidly approaching.

Claiborne unbuttons her shirt, which now has a BBQ sauce stain on it.

She reaches for the clean one that hangs in the back window.

Yanks it off the hanger, swerving into the next lane.

HONK!

She HONKS back.

Notices there's also some sauce on her white bra. Chagrin.

EXT. HARRIS COUNTY CRIMINAL COURTHOUSE - DAY

An enormous courtyard plaza, featuring the Texas Lone Star symbol in blue and silver tile.

THE JUSTICE CENTER TOWER reaches to the sky, the scales of justice depicted above the entrance.

People in suits and street clothes alike weave in and out.

CLAIBORNE

(VO)

When I was a kid, there was this new strip mall that was going in behind our subdivision. I used to go out there real early in the morning before any of the workmen came and spend hours turning over the rocks in the dirt. Just to see all the squiggly stuff underneath.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Claiborne, professional attire and cowboy boots, stands several feet from the JURY BOX, as comfortable as if she is speaking to a few close friends at a dinner party.

The courtroom is overflowing with sweaty people. Ceiling fans at full speed.

CLAIBORNE

...So I can understand that my client, no offense Zach, is

(MORE)

CLAIBORNE (cont'd)
something you can't help but stare
at. He's squiggly stuff.

ZACHARIA LEE (30s), an enormous SKINHEAD with face tattoos,
sits at the defense table. He frowns at the description.

CLAIBORNE
But it's your job to look at the
evidence provided in this case. And
if you're doing your job, you'll
see that everything the prosecution
has presented doesn't amount to
capital murder; it amounts to
Zacharia Lee is bad guy. And being
squiggly is simply not a legal
reason to send somebody to the
death house.

Scattered LAUGHTER in the courtroom.

INT. HARRIS COUNTY CRIMINAL COURTHOUSE - DAY

Claiborne walks past the metal detector into the marble
lobby, nodding to LONNIE (70s), the armed guard, on her way
out.

CLAIBORNE
How's the wife, Lonnie?

LONNIE
Got the shingles.

CLAIBORNE
Sorry to hear it.

LONNIE
Skin's all scaly-like.

CLAIBORNE
Tell her to feel better for me, all
right?

LONNIE
You ever seen a gila monster?
That's kinda what it's like.

CLAIBORNE
No, I never have.

Claiborne gives a wave of her hand and pushes out the doors
into the sunlight.