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The Projects

Five buildings laid out in a star design with a building at each of the points. In the center of the star was the sixth building, the largest and the first one that had been built. The 5,625 apartments with over 25,300 residents in total were called *"The Projects"*. Built and maintained to house the Residents free at the Taxpayer's expense.

The Politicians had promoted The Projects as a way to *"revitalize"* the slum area of the City with small shops on the ground floors followed by the razing of the neighborhood abandoned buildings. The fact that the seven term Mayor's son-in-law had *"won"* the contract to build The Projects was well known but enough *"palms were greased"* so that fact wasn't talked about...at least not publicly. Instead of revitalizing the area it had the opposite effect. The resulting crime and drug culture drove out the few remaining shops and businesses. Money allocated for tearing down the abandoned buildings was spent on a new park for the influential uptown part of the City.

Building maintenance was almost nonexistent. It had to be something major and in the media's eye before the Mayor would order his Police Commissioner to provide enough manpower to protect the repairmen. It was just easier for the Politicians to ignore The Projects along with its Residents until the next election!

Every election cycle buses provided by the ruling political party would arrive outside The Projects. As the Residents boarded a bus they would be handed a flyer listing the candidates to vote for and a sack lunch. Each bus had a different route and would take the Residents to as multiple polling places as time permitted. Then the Residents would be taken back to The Project and handed a \$50 EBT Food Stamp Debit card when they debarked.

Over the last few years The Projects own government system evolved with The King as the leader. The King (as he insisted on being called) real name was Elroy Jimmy White. The last person that called The King *"Elroy"* died a slow and painful death. And since his skin was blacker then black, calling him Mr. White was not a safe option either. So The King it was.

The King controlled all of the drugs that came into The Projects. Actually he controlled everything that happens in The Projects! Winter and you wanted heat in your apartment? Only cost you 10% from your EBT card. Your old lady is fat from pumping out all of those welfare babies and you want a younger model? The King could make her and the kids disappear and provide that younger model. You still collect the welfare money for the old lady and the six brats, just give 20% a month to The King or else. Weekends were especially busy with all the uptown customers coming down to buy their designer drugs and hookers. The King controlled it all.

The King kept his harem and the rented girls on the top floor of the middle building. The next floor down was The King's with his "trusted" Lieutenants occupying the floor directly below his. The King's soldiers occupy any of the apartments they choose on the remaining floors. The only way local Law Enforcement could get to The King for any arrest attempt was from the roof and the Mayor had assured him as long as The Projects people were made available to vote, that would never happen.

The King had remade his floor into a penthouse. A walk in vault held the cash and drugs (new shipment of drugs came in every Thursday). Another vault secured his collections of firearms. A short ride up in the only working elevator to take care of his carnal desires or on up to the roof to view his domain. Sharing perks with his Lieutenants help insure their loyalty. The King had it all down to a science. That is until the Nation lost its electrical power.



"How long has it been?" JayDee asked his brother Leroy.

"I don't know! Hour? You're the one with the Rolex!"

"It's got hands on it no numbers. You know how to read hands?"

"Don't ask me no stupid questions. If you can't tell time then why you wear it?"

"It's gold that's why and that white honkie was dead and didn't need it no more."

Leroy and JayDee were using a dumpster as cover while watching the police cars.

"This is strange JayDee. Every Cop in the district, maybe the entire city should have been down on us by now. You think it has anything to do with the electric stopping?"

"How should I know? Do know I'm getting tired of waiting."

"You think those cops are still behind that other cop car, the one out of range of our Molotovs?"

"Nah. I think they scooted JayDee when they saw their buddies drop."

If the Police respond to The Projects they always rode in teams of two plus a backup car. One police car was completely engulfed in fire. The Officers had the vehicles windows rolled down so they could "hear" the sounds of the neighbor. Both of JayDee's Molotov Cocktails went through the open windows to break inside the car. Leroy shot both of the Officers when they exited their burning car. The ammunition in the trunk had started popping soon after the fire had reached it. The second police car the three Molotovs had only scorched the exterior paint. Those Officers had their windows up. The gasoline fire from the Molotovs went out soon after JayDee had thrown them. But the Officers panicked and left the safety of their car, if only they had sped away they would have lived. Leroy had shot them too. The third car arrived soon after the first two, Leroy took a few shots at it, not sure if he hit anything at that distance.

"The King told us to lure them in, ambush then and then watch and wait."

"I know what he said! He wants us to do all the dangerous stuff and wait until it's safe for him or his Lieutenants to come down and take what they want. I'm tired of waiting! The fires are almost out. Come on Leroy!"

JayDee ran towards the first car making sure he kept it between him and the other one further up the block. Both Officers had fallen close to their burning car, the plastic on their Glockes had melted and the ammo on their belts had cooked off too.

Leroy had followed JayDee's example as he ran towards the other car. Both of those Officer sidearms were unharmed. JayDee started to pick them up but had an idea. JayDee found the trunk release button under the dash and push it. Inside the trunk he found a case with a M4 in it. There was also box with twelve full magazines. Pay Dirt!

"JayDee! Go back to the dumpster and bring back a Molotov! We need to get this car burning so The King can't know we took the rifle!"



"No more cops?"

"No King. Just those yesterday morning, nothing after that."

"How did Leroy's and JayDee's handiwork turn out?"

“Both cars burned and destroyed everything including the Pigs guns. The one that was out of JayDee throwing arm had a rifle with a scope and a box of ammo in the trunk. The car had a few bullet holes in it but it still ran so we drove up here and hid it the maintenance garage.”

“Tell Assad to post guards at every gate. Anyone that wants to leave can unless she’s a babe, the babes go on the top floor with the rest. Anyone else can leave but they can’t take anything with them. If they want back in they have to pay either with food or ammo or something we need. Got that Khyree?”

“Got it!”

“Good. After you’ve talked to Assad tell Blake to round up all of our food and bring it up here. Then starting on my ground floor and working their way up, search every apartment, take half of all the food they find, bring that up here too. We’ll meet up here tonight to divide the food up equally. Shouldn’t take long for the other buildings to hear what we are doing. That will give them motivation to get out, less mouths we’ll have to feed. What I have I mind we’ll need a bigger army at first, the young males have to stay too! The ones that give you any trouble kill’em. “

“What about any guns we find and the pregnant ones upstairs?”

“Take all the guns you find, no sense in anyone trying to get smart and use them against us. Upstairs, take them out one at a time. Tell them we’ve set up a nurse in one of the other buildings and then take them to the basement and kill’em too. Wait until it’s dark then dump their bodies in one of the empty buildings across the street. We are going to have water and food problem so why waste anything on them too! How many of our customers showed up last night?”

“Surprisingly it was almost a normal night for a weekday. Most we were able to segregate like you said to kill them. Their cars we’ve parked in that old parking garage four blocks over, here’s their Driver’s Licenses. The rest we gave them the drugs or women they asked for, told them everything was free for tonight like you said. We’ll do the same for those that come tonight and the night after, as long as the white fools keep coming.”

“With their fancy cars and clothes I can hardly wait to see where they live and what they have we can take! Their Driver’s License will make that easy for us.”



One month later The Projects population was down to less than two-hundred, most were either The King's army or his women. All food, water and anyone else found within a six block radius had either been collected or killed. Time for The King to extend his reach further.

"King we're just about out of food. Water...maybe three days and it will be gone..."

"It's time. We're going to take uptown."

Blake, "They've got the streets blocked with what is left of the Pigs guarding them."

"Simple." replied The King. "We still have that police car that we took right?"

Khyree nodded his head .

"And we have some cops uniforms too right?"

Again Khyree nodded his head .

"Good. Khyree and Blake you don't have any exposed tats so you both will dress as cops.

Blake, both of your girls are white and pregnant ripe, ready to pop right?"

Blake's face turned a shade paler. He knew The King had ordered all pregnant women to be disposed of. But these were his favorites and they weren't even fifteen years old so you couldn't really call them women.

"Yes King"

"Good. Khyree you drive and Blake you're in the passenger seat. Those white honkies will swallow one of them is being chauffeured by one of us. Put both girls in the back. Khyree pick two car loads of men you trust, make Leroy one of them, he seems to be good with a rifle. Khyree drive right up to their gate like you own the place with red lights flashing! Blake you jump out and yell that you've got two women giving birth and you being chased. Make sure they can see you are white! Then the other cars loaded with our men will come out of the alley behind you at an angle. Tell Leroy to try and get as many of the pigs on the wall that he can before they return fire. While this is happening get the girls out of the back seat and start running as fast they can waddle to the gate. Two white girls and a white cop, they've will let you in. Once inside you mapped out where the food is, water, how many armed guards, everything we should know before attacking. Then you both can slip out to get that info back to me."

"King. What about my girls?"

"You can get them back after our attack is over. Any questions?"

“One.” Assad said. What if they ask for City issued ID from Khyree or Blake. Or questions about what Precinct we’re from?”

“Simple. Say you aren’t really cops, stole the uniforms and cop car from us. Rescued both girls at the same time and was looking for somewhere safe.”

“Sounds good King.” Kyree nodded in agreement with Assad. Blake’s face said he wasn’t too sure but he nodded in agreement too.

“Good. All of you go to set things up...wait a minute Khyree. I got second thoughts about Leroy...Blake and Assad go ahead and go. Khyree will be down in a minute.

They both remain silent until the elevator door closes.

“You trust Blake?”

“A Whitie? Never. I’ve tolerate him because he was my only contact with our drug supplier. I’m sure Blake pocketed the increases he claimed were from the Supplier. And the first chance he has he’ll go back with his own kind. Watch your back.”

“I will.”

“Leroy and another Shooter you pick will be in separate buildings beside and above the Whities blockade and gate. Once you are inside they will take out the guards. Half of our men will in the buildings along both sides of the street, I’ll lead them in. You make sure that gate stays open so we can come in too. The rest of our men will come up through the sewers, we’ve already got them cleared. It should be over before...”



Khyree took the last intersection so fast the tires squealed louder than the siren. For a second they thought the car was going to tip over. Khyree regained control just in time to slam on the brakes stopping inches from the gate. Blake didn’t have time to exit the cop car as he planned before their “pursuers” drove out of the ally to start spraying bullets in the gates direction. When several of the bullets shattered the cop car’s rear window the girls in the back seat screamed.

“Open the gate! They’re ours!”

The gate quickly swung open and just as another stray bullet went through the windshield. Khyree floored the gas pedal causing the car to lurch forward before he slammed on the brakes again. The car was now blocking the gate so it could not be closed. Khyree had the

presence of mind to turn off the ignition and pocket the keys. Their pursuers had continued across the street and back into the alley. "Now!" he yelled at Blake. Both men exited the car and tried to help the girls out. The girls were still screaming hysterically lying on the floor. What seemed like an eternity the men finally got the girls out of the car, past the gate into relative safety just as a guard fell from the barricade wall.

Directly in front of Khyree was a sandbagged pit with two men and a machinegun pointed at him. One of the two men was waving at Khyree to go around them so they would have a clear shot at anyone else coming through the gate opening. Khyree complied as another barricade guard fell. When Khyree was beside the machine gun pit he drew his captured Glock and shot both men. Then he turned towards Blake to find Blake already had his gun pointed at Khyree. They both fired at the same time. Khyree was the better shot. Khyree rolled into the machinegun pit to play dead. His own men almost killed him in the car and he wasn't going to take any further chances when they came pouring through the gate especially while he was wearing a pigs uniform!!!

The Defenders didn't have a chance. Their perimeter tried to retreat back to the City Municipal building but was surprised by the King's men that had come up through the sewers. King thought about the loot that had to be inside the Municipal Building, it would have to wait. The Survivors had barricade themselves inside, just a matter of time before The King would have them convinced it was in their better interest to surrender so they could leave in peace. A promise The King would not keep. The bad part was that there wasn't enough captured white women for all of his men, of course that was after he and his Lieutenants took first choice.

"Glad to see you made it Khyree. Blake?"

"Over there."

"Shame. And the two girls?"

"Up here. Both dead. One got caught in the cross fire and the other bled out, something wrong with pushing out the baby I suppose cause you can just see Its head."

The King looked in the direction Khyree had pointed then turned back to notice the bandage on Khyree's arm to ask, "How's the arm?"

"Not too bad. Muscle and no bone. It will be sore for a while. The Vodka I poured into it and me will take care of it."

"To sore for the woman I picked out for you?"

The smile on Khyree's face revealed his gold capped teeth. "I'll never be that sore!"

It took only two days for The King's men to search all the buildings in the uptown area. The number of whites captured was surprisingly high, that would account for the lack of food and water found. Adult men were killed. The Women were passed around and any survivors made to cook. Children were ignored unless they became bothersome, then they joined the dead white men.

The Municipal Building was one of those new high-rises with total climate control with break resistant glass windows that couldn't be open. Without air conditioning and the hot summer sun shining in, the Building had turned into a hot greenhouse.

The King, Khyree and Assad were enjoying sitting out in the courtyard having fun watching those Whities trapped inside trying to break windows for ventilation. Assad had figured out how the machinegun that had guarded the gate worked, it took several rounds from it to shatter a window and the people behind it. And any one that tried to venture out on the Municipal building roof to escape the heat were shot at by The King's men from the neighboring and taller buildings. The few Whities that tried to escape the first night were dealt with unpleasantly; their screams discourage any more from trying.

Khyree and Assad had a side bet going on. Assad took the even days and Khyree had the odd days. It was day four when the front of the Municipal Building opened just enough for a man waving a white flag stepped out. As soon as the man had cleared the door it shut behind him.

"Well you won Assad!" Khyree got up from his lawn chair to walk over to the naked female chained to one of the fancy lamp posts. He unlocked the chain from the post and hands the chain to Assad. "She's yours."

"Hello? Hello! The Mayor has sent me to ask you your terms." A pudgy over weight man dressed in a dirty suit and a tie called out.

"Come on down and we'll discuss it." Was The Kings reply as he waved at Pudgy to come. The King snapped his fingers and henchman brought a fourth lawn chair. "Here have a chair. Thirsty? Bring him some water. Comfortable? Good. Now what are these terms you're talking about?"

"You're the one they call The King, correct?" The King nodded. "Good. The Mayor thought he recognized you. Said you help him keep The Projects in line and are a reasonable man." When The King didn't responded Pudgy continued. "The Mayor, his wife, the Police Commissioner

with his wife are to receive special treatment and you will grant safe conduct for everyone to leave. “

“The Mayor...” King looked at his Lieutenants “...has been very cooperative in the past. I will be glad to provide him, the Comish and their wives special treatment. As for the rest of the people in the building I will grant them safe exit, including you ...IF...when they all leave the building they WILL stack ALL of their food, water and guns in two separate and equal piles over there.” Pudgy’s face started to light in alarm at what he just heard. “Your Mayor will be in charge of one pile the Comish in charge of the other pile. They will insure the piles are equal in size and everything is turned in. I’ve got to give my men something, if I don’t the Mayor can’t hold me responsible for what they will do, so one pile will stay here with me and the other pile can leave when the Mayor leaves. That’s the best I can do. You sure guzzled down that water ... here have some more and here...take my watch, yes those are real diamonds, take it, that’s your reward for the excellent job you’ve done negotiating with me. Let’s say one hour is the time I’ll wait for that door to open with the Mayor coming out first. After an hour my men will lose all their patience...you see what they’ve done to the women they captured?”

Pudgy stares at the naked female chained nearby and slowly nods his head.

“Good. We have an understanding! Now hurry along, you don’t want to keep the Mayor waiting.”

“Thirty minutes or less” Khyree said to Assad.

“I’ll take the thirty or morer” Assad resonded back. “What? Yours or mine?”

Khyree looked at the chained female. She met his glaze with fire in her eyes. She’ll kill him if given a chance. “Mine.”

“And when you lose again?”

“Your choice of any two of the bitches that come out ... after The King of course.”

“Deal.”

And the three of them returned amusing themselves by watching the Whitie trying to break their windows with a roar of approval for the one that fell from the roof screaming until she hit the ground.

Twenty-two minutes later Assad got up to hand the chain back to Khyree as the Mayor followed by his Commissioner came out the front door.

The King was rather impressed. The Mayor was clean shaven and dressed in a fine three-piece suit. His Commissioner was in full uniform with metals shining bright and the exit was very well organized. His people were silent and stayed in single file. The Comish would check each person and then direct them to the pile they were to contribute too. Once the Whities had made their contribution The King had his men separated them into two lines for a count. The males and any children in one and the women in the other. Each line had its own water jugs. Whities could drink all they wanted as long as they didn't hold the lineup too much. From there they were taken across the street to the former Milton Hotel's largest conference room. Eighty-three adults was Khyree's count. Thirty-two were females mostly dogs but enough good looking ones he was glad he hadn't lost the bet. The King noticed that a few of the Whities the Comish barely searched with a small nod of approval from the Mayor. Mayor was up to something.

"There Elroy...er I mean The King. That's all and everyone. Which pile is ours and we will need transport."

"We've got four large busses with engines running behind the Milton and waiting to take you and your people out of here. One of them can swing around to help you load. You pick which pile is yours."

Mayor suppressed a small grin and pick the smaller of two piles. "We'll take this one." The King had notice that even though the pile was a bit smaller the quality of the items was better.

"Good. Works for me." said The King. "That's your wives standing over there?" The Mayor and the Commissioner nodded. "Good. Now for the special treatment you asked for..." The two henchmen that had been standing behind the Mayor and Commissioner quickly placed gasolione soaked rags over the two Officials noses and held them there until they quit struggling. The wives screamed as looked on in horror. King looked around then pointed, "By the front entrance. Strip them and tie them between those pillars. And send men in to search the building. Wouldn't surprise me if the Mayor left a few things or a few people behind."

The King, Khyree and Assad settled back into their lawn chairs to wait. When the Comish came to before the Mayor Khyree handed the chain back to Assad.

"You promised! You promised to let us go!"

"No. I promised to give to special treatment and that is exactly what you'll get as soon as the Mayor wakes up too."

Before the Comish could respond guns shots came from inside the building.

“Well Commish sounds like you didn’t keep your end of the deal. Who’s inside shooting at my men?”

“There’s a few. They said we shouldn’t trust you. They barricade themselves on the top floor...what have you done to my wife!” The Comish had final become fully conscious to see both wives naked, gagged and tied upright to a statue.

“Nothing yet but that depends on you. The Mayor’s wife appears to be waiting on her man to wake up. Ah there he is, about time you joined us Mayor.” It took less than ten minutes of cutting, slicing and dicing before The King felt the two men had told all they knew. Khyree even got his chain handed back to him. “Get that Police car out of the way and back one of those busses in here. Khyree. Watch the men load all of our new found riches on the bus while Assad and me open the safe that the Mayor so generously gave the combination too. Split the captured women between the busses, the best in the bus with the goods, that’s our bus. Any of their men that the poisoned water did not kill, shoot them...children too. Once we have those guns cleaned out of the Cities safe and the Whities on the top floor taken care we’re out of here.”

“What about those two and their women?” Khyree asked.

“Here.” The King pick out a jar labeled honey from one of the piles and tossed it to Khyree. “Spread this on their junk and let the ants keep them company. The two wives stilled tied and gagged tried to struggle free just to fail again. “Ladies. Ladies. Don’t you want to stay and keep your men...” The King looked at the tortured men, yea they’re stilling breathing “...company?”

“What about the Mayor? He doesn’t have his junk anymore.”

“Improvise.” The King answered.



Buses were loaded, women distributed. Counting the desertions since the electric went out five months ago, the twelve lost on the attack on the Mayor’s compound and another six clearing the Municipal building, that left The King with forty-three men. Still a lot of mouths to feed and then throw in the white female slaves too, The King had a problem. The only way he had to control his men was through sexual favors, drugs, fear and control of their food and water. Everyone once in a while they would capture a few that had ventured back into the City

looking for supplies. How'd they to know The King had already picked it clean? The King was sure there was still a few that had never left the city and were surviving but they had to be far between otherwise The King's men would have already found, robbed, raped and killed them.

Khyree had won his captive back. He allowed her to put on a pair of pants before he lock her ankle chain to one of the bus seat legs. The he quickly tied a small rubber tube around her bicep. A needle in her vein and watched until her eyes rolled back. "Where to King?

"We're running low on everything, especially drugs. We hit every Drug Store in the Yellow Pages and we've got too many men to feed. I figured we lose more taking out the Mayor. Who do you have in charge of the last bus? "

"JayDee and Leroy. Loyal but too many drugs for too long I think, not quite all there."

"Perfect. Tell them to drive their bus load back to The Projects to pick up the guards we left behind. Then meet us at..." The King looking over one of the city maps they had taken from the Municipal Building "...at this park. Tell them not to hurry we'll wait until they get back."

Khyree starts smiling, "They don't have enough gas..."

"Give them an hour...no two hours head start then we'll go in the opposite direction...the suburbs. Got to be food and fresh women in the suburbs. And while we're waiting for JayDee's a head start, bring that redhead to me."



There was one winding road into their subdivision. A thirty foot concrete wall at the back was designed as a sound barrier between the subdivision and the interstate beyond. On the two sides was an eight foot brick walls topped with ornamental wrought iron spikes. The front street entrance was gated and had a guard shack that had been manned twenty-four by seven. To "sell" the new street lamps to the membership, the Homeowners Association offset the cost by reducing the security to nights and weekends only.

Most of the neighbors had agreed several years back that they all should make preparations for a disaster and actually the majority did, mainly from peer pressure. They had survived the mass exodus from the city and the much smaller packs returning to scavenge.

When "The End Of The World As We Know It" lasted longer than they had hoped, siphoning gasoline from abandoned vehicles was now their primary source of fuel to run their generators, but they were worried about having to range further and further from their safe haven to find gas. Recovered twenty pound LP grill tanks was their next option but they didn't have the

carburetor conversion quite figured out. When one of their chest freezers quit, they simply found one in the block over, loaded it on two children wagons to pull it back. Took two weeks for the smell of rotten meat to air out of the freezer before they could start using it.

Too late to plant any gardens but they had found a tiller and prepped some yards for next year's spring. By then they might be into their MREs and freeze dried food but with a good spring crop...

When the City's water towers emptied they lost their primary water source but they had a Plan B. Two of the property Owners had installed illegal water wells to water their lawns. Illegal because the City's Ordinances required all residences in the City limits to be connect to the Municipal Water. One of these wells was jury rigged to a generator. Garden hoses from one house's outside water spigot to the next house's spigot provided water to all the occupied houses. Stools still flushed into the City's sewer and where the sewerage went after that no one was sure but as long as it kept going. The other well they had fashion a bucket to lower down into the well casing to draw the water up. Pulling up three gallons at a time was getting old so they relied more and more on the generator powered well.

They hadn't seen any strangers in two months and figured the worst was past them. They were survivors!



The King, Khyree and Assad were sitting in lawn chairs on top of their bus. Each was looking through the binoculars they had liberated from the campers they had surprised yesterday. "Well how you want to handle this one?" asked Assad.

"See any of our color?" replied Kyree.

"No. Guess that rules out the husband and wife routine. Imagine they'd be shooting black on sight, especially with a white wife, too racist. Think we'd not be trustworthy." The King let out a chuckle. "They'd be right!"

"How about the three white females in distress? Warm day, torn halter tops for the men but not too much to make their women object for letting the three in? Got to be a few White Knights that would love rise up to rescue them."

"That wouldn't be the only thing of theirs to rise up Assad. We got enough to give them a fix now and they do know they have to return to get another right?"

"We've got enough left to get them high going in King. Nothing for them on the trip back."

“Well if one or two of them don’t make it back to report just a few less mouths to feed anyway. And they are community women so hard telling what disease the men have given them. Send them in and have them spread the joy!” Another chuckle from The King.

“There are eight males, three of them armed with pistols and six women, one of them armed too. Five children. They are all living in that house there.” The Brunette was shaking the least. The eyes of the other two were silently pleading with the Brunette to finish her report faster. “The one with the campfire in the backyard. They would not let us in the house, we tried. But I did talk to the little girl before her mother chased her back into the house. The girl said the basement was full of food. They gave us each a jug of water, peanut and jelly sandwiches on homemade bread, see? We had walked almost all the way to their yard before they saw us. They didn’t have any guards...we don’t know about at night. Now please?” The Brunette asked as her voice had started to break.

“Good report.” At the sound of The King’s voice all three women tied a tourniquet around their upper arm and had extended their arms towards Assad who was holding the vial and syringe. “Go ahead Assad. They’ve earned it.”

Assad held the vial upside down as he drew back the plunger to draw the liquid into the syringe. Tap the side to float any air bubbles to the top. Squirted a little of the liquid to insure all the air bubbles were out. The three females were busy trying to find a good vein for Assad to inject the need into. None of them notice that Assad drew back the plunger before he injected each of them from the vial of poisoned water and a lot air. The King, Khyree and Assad sat back to watch the show and wondering, would the poison kill them first or the air in their veins? By the next morning all three women would be dead.

It was a hot night so they had left the house windows open wishing for a cooling breeze. Their wish had not been granted. The sun would be up soon he thought as he rose from the bed; the movement of the bed caused his girlfriend to murmur something in her sleep. Her two children were curled up on the floor sound asleep. The other two women were sleeping in the bunkbeds. The woman on the top bunk rolled over inadvertently exposing her sweaty breasts. At least he thought it was accidental, she had been flirting with him lately when his girlfriend wasn’t around. With three bedrooms the house sleeping arrangements were a bit tight, not that he was complaining. They all thought they would be safer together. He looked back

towards the top bunk and as he started to feel himself rise to the occasion which reminded him of the fight he and the girlfriend had again last night. Since their supply of condoms was gone she didn't want to risk a pregnancy. He looked again at the top bunk to see the morning sunlight hitting those breasts perfectly. He headed towards the bedroom door wearing only his Boxers but not before looking back at the top bunk again only to see her smiling at him. He thought about what the repercussions could be as he shut the bedroom door and headed towards the stairs. The two women in the bunk had showed up a month ago. Looking for food, water, shelter, safety and asking if they could stay. One look at the women's figures and the men thought it would be an excellent idea.

The sound of their night watch snoring from the direction of the living room brought him back to the present. He walked from window to window to glance out of each of them. Everything looked normal he thought as he went out the back door to relive himself. Maybe he could arrange to stay behind with her the next time the group went out scavenging? They'd have to watch the kids of course but they could get the children to play by themselves long enough...he never felt the knife blade slit open his throat.

After she heard him close the bedroom door she rolled over with her back to the door. Her mother had taught her the only way to survive in life is find the man in charge and latch onto him tight. Do what you have to do make that man happy and he'll take care of you. So when she turned eighteen she had her tubes tied, a pregnancy would never get between her and her man like it did with her mother. And the man that had just left was the man in charge. She'd been working on him slowly and the argument the whole house heard last night just made it easier. She heard the bedroom door reopen, he had come back, couldn't resist what she was offering. She slipped off her panties before making an exaggerate show of spreading her legs as she climbed out of the upper bunk. When her feet touch the floor she slowly turned around to face him. She almost screamed when she saw the black man smiling at her with gold capped teeth but quickly realized that there had just been a change in leadership. She smiled back as he reached down and unzipped his pants. The girlfriend lying in the bed hadn't been as oblivious as the rest had thought. She had her children to fight for and her man! She pulled the Colt Cobra from under her pillow. Her first four shots hit the black man in the center of his back. As an afterthought her last two shots she used to kill the naked bitch. She should have saved the last bullet for herself.



“Khyree up and got himself killed?” The King was looking down at Khyree’s body. “Well at least he died with pants down. Him and me go way back, same neighborhood growing up. Who killed him?”

“The one with the kids”, Assad points. “The other one we found hiding under the bunk.”

“Strip her and tie her spread eagle to her bed. Kill the brats in front of her. Then have the men come in to take a turn at her. No gag, let’s see how long she can last. You...” The King called to the other woman that had hidden under the bunk, “...you are coming with me. The basement full of food?”

“A few shelves with food in glass jars. Not what we was lead to believe...Khyree’s woman?”

“She’s yours. “

“NO WAIT! I KNOW WHERE THERE IS FOOD! YOU LEAVE MY CHILDREN ALONE AND I’LL TELL YOU!”

Three of The King’s men had tied her to the bed as they had been told and the youngest of the three men had won the coin toss so he was crawling unto the woman.

“King. We are down to two buses. We need food and gas. If this bitch can help us...”

“You’re right Assad. OK wait men. Oh I see I’m too late. Well you other two wait. I want to hear what this female has to tell us.”

It took several minutes for the woman to stop her sobbing. “You promise not to hurt my children?”

“Well it depends on what you have to say. If you can tell us where we can get food and gasoline...I promise I will not touch your brats.”

The tied woman looked at her children. The oldest only six years old. Their father, her husband was killed when he had resisted a mugging four years ago. With the help of his life insurance she had managed until the power had gone off. When she realized the electric would not be coming back on and that to continue to live in their tenth floor apartment was impossible, she decided they needed to head for the country. Relying on mass transportation was the norm so she didn’t own a car. With mass transit now out of the picture they had started walking. It was after their third day walking and they were still within the city is when a car pulled up and the male Driver offered them a ride. If it wasn’t for the fact she was exhausted she wouldn’t have accepted. The man turned into her “White Knight”. They had reached the suburbs before his car had run out of gas. The first house they had walked to that had a “For Sale” sign in the yard they took as theirs. At first there were a few neighbors but most of them left for? Being close

to the Interstate it wasn't too long before two more couples and several single men joined them. Strength in numbers they thought. And their little community was working well together. That was until *that* woman was allowed in last month. "My boyfriend? He's alright isn't he? You haven't..."

"He's outside with the rest of your men. I will not touch them or your children IF you tell me where we can find gas and food!" The King made a sign of a cross over his heart. "NOW!"

"My boyfriend. He said last week when they were out looking for supplies. The wind was from the north and they heard a generator running. A generator takes gas right?" She looks pleadingly at The King. "And someone has to be running it so there's food too?"

The King nods his head at the lady and at Assad. "Well you kept up your end of the deal." Assad draws an already bloody knife from his sheath and steps towards her children.

"YOU PROMISED! YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T TOUCH THEM!" She screams in horror as another man climbs on her.

"But I haven't touch them, he did. And your man is stacked outside with the other dead bodies, see I kept my word."



After several failed attempts they finally perfected how to convert their gasoline generators to run on LP. Well perhaps perfected isn't quite the right term. Reusing a small copper pipe taken from the failed deep freezer. Insert the copper pipe into a hole drilled into air cleaner all the way pass the carburetor's choke. Jury rig the other end of the copper pipe to a twenty pound LP take taken from one of the abandoned houses. Too much LP flooded the carburetor. One of them came up with the idea of inserting a nail into the carburetor end of the copper tubing, smashing the end shut and then pulling the nail out leaving a smaller hole or jet. They trialed and errored several nail sizes until they "*discovered*" the right size. Generator started but once they put the well pump or any other large load it would stall. They solved this by letting the generator warm up and as a load was put on it the tank regulator valve would be opened just a bit more allowing more LP to keep the generator running. This was accomplished just as they had finished scavenging all of the gasoline they could find within a day's walk of their subdivision.

One of the mistakes they had made was relying heavily on batteries. They had place wireless motion detectors around their perimeter to warn them but when the batteries died they didn't have too much luck finding replacements. A few here and a few there. The closest

convenience station was two days walk, they cleaned it out but that just postponed the problem. One of them took a lot of ribbing about carrying a box of rat traps back from that convenience station until she showed them her invention. A hole carved into wood base of the rat trap with a piece of ridged plastic water line epoxied in the hole. A nail epoxied to the trap's arm, clear fishing tied to the trip plate completed it. Nail the rat trap to a tree, set the trap, string the fishing line about a foot off the ground and tie to something solid. Drop a twelve gage shotgun shell into the pipe. When the rat trap was tripped the nail would hit the primer on the shot gun shell causing a loud warning "BOOM". The trap would be destroyed in the process but served its warning function. Generation Two would be reusable and a steel pipe instead of plastic permitting aiming and hopefully a secondary benefit of maiming whoever tripped it.

Food stored would carry them all though to another year. Seeds and what to plant come spring were already acquired and selected. Plenty of LP tanks had be found either from backyard barbeques or from recreational vehicles abandoned on the freeway. By running a generator only twice a week to fill all of their containers, the LP could last another year. The abandoned houses furniture they used for cooking fire wood. When they had burned all of the furniture then disassembling the houses for the wood was next. They figured they had at least two years before forced to move down to the next level of substance.

With three sides of their community secured by walls they had enough manpower to keep an armed gate guard 24x7. They felt very secured.



"King you will never guess who we brought back with us!" Assad had taken half of their remaining men to scout ahead to the north. "Remember those idiots Leroy and JayDee you sent back to The Projects? Looks like none of them could read the map we gave them so they couldn't find the park we told them to wait for us at." The King was in a drugged induce stupor and hadn't responded to Assad's report. Assad reached over and unlocked the chain holding Khyree's former woman. Assad had won her numerous times betting with Khyree but had always managed to lose her back to Khyree. She was a screamer he had heard, actually heard and screamers where better than the moaners. If she was half as good as Khyree had said...she had to be because that would be the only reason he had kept her for so long. "Come here baby and ride this."

She hated his touch. The first time it was all she could do to keep from vomiting. At least he kept himself cleaner than the rest of the men. It was all about survival so she would continue to pretend he was the best and only his touch is what she desired. The first chance she'd have

she would kill him. She had been a Manager and Pharmacist for a chain drug store. When the power first went out she thought it was just a local outage. She kept the store open and continued to fill prescriptions for the benefit of her loyal customers. The next morning she was surprised the power was still off. She walked to the Drug Store as was her custom, helped he keep her figure. She tried to call her Assistant to ask why he not shown for the morning shift but the phone was dead, so was her cell phone. Cashiers will be here soon so she left the front door unlocked before heading to the back room to start the weekly drug inventory. First time ever she was able to complete the inventory uninterrupted. With concentration back from the inventory she noticed how quiet the store was. Even if business was slow the teenage cashiers should be talking up a storm about their latest boyfriends and conquests. She looked out the door to see a tall black man decently dressed standing patiently at the prescription counter. This was mainly a white area of the city but it wasn't too unusually to have a minority come in. She did her best to treat all races the same. "I'm so sorry Sir you had to wait. One of the Cashiers should have let me know you were here." She glanced quickly at the cash register to give the Cashiers a dirty look but they weren't there. She turned back to her customer with a frown of confusion. "Do you have a prescription to fill?" When he smiled back at her she noticed all of his teeth were capped with gold.

"No prescription. Just unlock the narcotics safe." He said with another gleaming gold smile.

The Drug Store chain had instructed all their employees to cooperate with any robbers and push the audio alarm button the first safe opportunity they had. After unlocking the safe she squeezed that alarm button into the counter...nothing...no alarm. It was then she realized that the alarm battery must have went dead sometime after the store lost its power. She was in shock as he led her out to the waiting car. Soon she was dazed from the something he had injected into her arm and then woke up naked in an apartment in the building complex they called The Projects. Fluid and blood oozing out onto her thighs and too weak to get off the bed to find a bathroom to clean up. The black man with the gold smile came into focus. He smelled like he just had a shower, the bath towel wrapped still around his waist. "I'm Khyree and you are now mine. You want some more of this?" He asked holding out a syringe to her. She didn't know what he had injected into her in the car, she had never felt so good. Her mind said no but her head nodded yes. Oh the warmth that flowed through her veins. Her eyes rolled back as the drug worked its magic again.

Catherine didn't know how long it was before they moved from the apartment to the bus. She was staying more lucid, the drugs he had been giving her, she was either building up a tolerance or the drugs were weaker. She craved for the next fixed but somewhere in the fog of her mind she realized she was now a drug addict and she fought herself to regain self-control. He kept her chained by her ankle. She now had a knife hidden and the next opportunity she would

thrust it deep into his heart. Tonight, she would do it tonight after he was done with her and was sleeping. Deep with the knife and then a hard twist, she'll find out if he's a screamer or a whimper, yes tonight. But he didn't come back. Someone had beaten her to her revenge and now Assad owned her. He was worse.

"JayDee said they saw about thirty men and about the same amount of women. The men outnumber us about two to one but we'll surprise them like we've done the others. They are using the houses at the far end of the street. Real nice setup with running water, food, and power he says. Everything we'd need for a long time. Walls on three sides, we saw a fire hydrant access door on the Interstate traffic wall, we can come through that and surprise them from their back side. They also have a guard in a little building by the front gate. Two groups and come at them from both directions just before sunrise?"

"Sounds like a good plan Assad. I'll take the front gate with four men and you bring the rest though the back. Get in position and we'll attack at first light." The King looked over at Catherine then back at Assad. He had never trusted Assad not like he had Khyree, at least as much as drug dealers could trust each other. Assad would not be returning alive from this raid.

"Please?" Catherine pleaded to Assad. "Just a little to take the edge off? Until you get back? Please?"

"Here" Assad tossed his keyring to her. "JayDee. You and Leroy stay back and try and keep everything in control. You got that JayDee?"

"Yea Boss. Don't you worry. We got this."

"These are the idiots that couldn't read a map. Bet they couldn't even read period. Well at least they did as they were told." thought Assad as he left the bus. It took most of the day for his group to find a way unto the Interstate. Finding the right fire hydrant access door in the concrete wall was easy; the street name of the subdivision was stenciled above the door. Door was locked, no problem they had brought a torch with them. They weren't in the best defensive position with thirty foot wall on both sides like a tunnel without a roof, leaving only the two ways out. Assad wasn't concerned because they haven't met anyone or anything that had stopped them since The Projects. He used the abandoned convertible in the median as his command headquarters and told his men to rest. Man he wished he had brought her along. That's when he realized she hadn't given his keys back to him. No big deal there wasn't any drugs left in the strong box away, he chuckled. He was disappointed he wouldn't see her face when she found out! He was sure The King still had some hidden away...well maybe not

because The King the last few days had started to become more erratic. Now was the time for Assad to make his move, The King isn't going to survive this attack. Assad smiled at the thought as he pulled a cigar stump out of his shirt pocket and lit it.

JayDee and Leroy were already up on the bus roof waiting for daylight and the show to begin. Catherine had watched them lean a ladder against the bus and haul some chairs up. Now was her chance. On Assad's keyring she found the key to the padlock that fastened her chain around her ankle. With hands shaking from withdrawal and nervousness she managed to unlock it. She was free! Her eyes lingered longingly on the locked drug box. Just a little to help her escape she thought. No! Her resolve was set!

Being freed from the chain she was now able to reach the back of the bus where the supplies were kept. Her first priority was something to wear she thought as she looked for pants and a shirt. Socks and shoes she found next, she had gone so long barefooted the shoes hurt her feet. She wouldn't get far running barefooted so she dismissed the discomfort. Next was food and water. The best she could find to carry it in was a plastic bag, it would just have to do. As she carefully stepped towards the front of the bus she spied a dark knapsack stuffed under the seat JayDee used. Better than the plastic bag she had found! As she went to put her escape supplies in JayDee's knapsack she found pieces of a rifle. Dare she take the time and try to assemble it? During her lucid moments she had seen Khyree instruct the men on how to disassemble and clean their weapons. The two halves go together like this, push the two pins through. The clip...no Khyree would swear at the men when they called them clips...the magazine goes in here...wrong way this way and push until you hear or feel it click..."click". Then pull this back to put a bullet into the rifle...quietly...quietly so Leroy and JayDee don't hear. Then this on the side she moved from "safe" to "auto". She's fully clothed for the first time since her capture with food, water and extra cli...magazines in the knapsack which was now on her back. As she gently stepped off the bus she looked back for the last time at Assad's drug box to shake her head.

It was still dark out. Catherine could hear Leroy and JayDee whispering to each other. She thought about taking the ladder away from the bus so they couldn't get back down but she doubted if she had the physical strength to do it and without them hearing. There were two more things she had to do before running for her life. One of the two was to free the women in the other bus. They had started with four buses. One of which was sent back to The Projects. The second bus they abandoned when it stopped running. The third was for some of the men, their share of food and their captured women. The last bus, the one she had just escape from

was The King's, Assad's and the rest of the men. She knew they had captured more women during the last raid and Catherine wanted to free them if she could. Keeping her bus between her and the men on the roof Catherine slowly worked her way to the other bus.

She could hear soft crying and moaning coming from the women inside. Catherine opens her mouth to let them know she was trying to rescue them and to be quiet but thought better of it. She found the side door locked with a padlock. None of the keys on Assad's keyring fit. She found the back "Emergency Escape" door was padlocked too with the same results as the side door. If she could find something to pry off the locks but JayDee and Leroy would hear. She knew the women were chained like she had been so she did the best she could, she threw the keyring at an open window which resulted with a "ow" from inside the bus. What could be described as more of a shuffled limp than a run, Catherine disappeared into the closest alley.



"Do you smell that?"

"What"

"Cigar smoke. Smell it?"

"I don't smell anything. You use to smoke didn't you?"

"Yea. Finally quit when we couldn't find any more. Guess I was just having a flash back. Well I'm here to relieve you. Anything happening?"

"Nope. Just another long boring shift. There's some fresh squeezed apple cider on the table if you want it."

"Fermented?"

"No. You know how the rest feel about that."

"I know. Just thought if I was dreaming about cigars I might as well dream about the taste of a good Scotch too."

The King and his group had watched the guard change. The two hours before sunrise would be plenty of time for the new guard to fall asleep. They would silently knife the guard and then quickly move down the street and wait for the first sign of alarm of Assad's attack. Sometime during the confusion, kill the revival Assad and all will be back to normal with the bonus of fresh women. The King motioned his men to move back, no reason to be risk being spotted by the new guard.

“It will be daylight soon. Start torching the lock...and be quick about it.” It took one of Assad’s men only a few minutes to cut the door lock out but the door still wouldn’t budge. Assad reach his arm though the hole where the lock had been to feel around on the backside. Burnt his arm in the process but he didn’t flinch, could not afford to show the men that he felt pain. One of the illusions he used to keep them under control. A dead bolt! When he unlocked it the door open with a little protest from the rusty hinges. “Be quick about! Get through the door and spread out...”BANG!” The first man through the doorway screamed as he covered his face. “Go go go” Assad yelled at the men. With all surprise of their attack gone they ran towards the nearest house. Another “BANG!” followed by another yell from one of his men. Who’s was shooting at them and how did they know of the attack? The King had set him up?

The King had the best of his men scale the wall away from the gate. At the sound of the first shotgun blast that man ran towards the guard shack with his knife raised, kicked open the door only to find the shack empty. The King and his other three men rushed the gate and with a pair of bolt cutters cut the padlock. As they opened the gate they heard several more shot gun blasts one of them was close. When he had found the guard shack empty he had turned toward the gate to see what The King wanted him to do. During his turn his chest caught the full effect of the Guard’s shotgun blast. He was dead before hitting the ground.

As they had discussed, they had felt the guard shack was too obvious of a target for anyone that would attack them. Off to the left was a circular row of bushes in which a guard could see 360 degrees without being seen. This is where a chair and patio table with the camo painted umbrella was placed for the guard on duty. This is also where the guard with apple cider spilled all over him was fumbling trying to reload his single shot shotgun. He looked up in horror as he saw four more men run pass the now open front gate. Prayed his family and the rest of the community was warned, he didn’t want to die for nothing.

The sun was coming up rapidly. As The King ran through the gate he saw the man sent to kill the guard fall. Did Assad start his attack early so he could get into position by the gate and thought he had shot The King? The King dropped to the ground and his men followed his example. Sounded like the shot came from those bushes. The King raised his pistol at the

bushes and motioned his men do the same. Just as he started to squeeze the trigger, he heard a woman behind him calling his name.

“Elroy...oh Elroy...I’ve got something for you!”

It’s supposed to be “THE King” he thought in anger as he turned to see who dare dis him! It was Assad’s woman Catherine! “What the...” was his last thought as Catherine pulled the trigger on her M4.

Catherine had never shot any type of firearm in her life. When she had pulled the trigger she saw the end of the gun raise over King’s head so she had grabbed the barrel with her other hand to pull it down. She smiled with satisfaction when she saw how The King’s body started to bounce from the impact of her bullets. She managed enough control that as the rifle’s recoil knock her down on her butt she still managed to shoot two of the three King’s remaining men. She sat there for a while wondering why her gun had stopped. It must be out of bullets. She got another magazine out of her knapsack and was trying to figure out how to get the one in the gun to let go when she heard, “You BITCH!” It was the last man that had come with The King. He was walking towards her with a knife. “I heard Khyree and Assad brag about how good you are. Think I’ll find out if they were lying before I start cutting you!”

Catherine was physically and mentally done. Sad because she didn’t get Assad too but killing King would have to do. She looked up to face the man coming at her.

The Guard final realized that he had finally got his shotgun reloaded and he needed to close the action. As he started to bring it up to get the man walking towards the woman that had saved his bacon he heard a rifle shot. The man with the knife twisted slowly with a look of surprise on his face. He fell to his knees and looked down at the blood flowing from his chest. Seemed like an eternity before the man fell forward on his face with the pool of blood under him growing larger.



“Nice shot Leroy!”

“Ah that was nothing JayDee. At this distance back home I could have gotten a squirrel in his eye.”

“I always did like her. She reminded me of our sister. Never did like the way they treated her or the other girls either.”

“Our sister ain’t white!”

"I know that! I ain't no idiot. But if Catherine was a darkie too don't you think so?"

"Well...maybe a little. Come on. Let's get down off this here bus. We need to make sure those girls got themselves unchained and have what supplies they'd be needing before we head for home again. This city ain't no place for us country boys to be, messes up our bearings." Leroy looked up towards the sun. "Sure is nice to get out away from those tall buildings so we can see again! Sun says its 'bout eight, where' that roadmap we found at that gas station?"



It was over. The Gen 2 shotgun trip wires had taken out some of the attacking men and in turn had warned the community. An attack from their rear was one of the scenarios the community had rehearsed and as planned they all had remained in their houses. Those with a second story, fired down from their windows onto the attackers. Any attacker that managed to get under the fire from the second stories was greeted with more gun fire from the main floors. In the houses, around their firing positions the Community had stacked sand bags. The few shots the attackers did manage to return went easily through vinyl siding, wood sheeting, fiber glass insulation and drywall but were stopped by the sand bags. The Defenders suffered two slightly injured. The Attackers had a 100% mortality rate.

There was some panic when the front gate alarm went off. The teenagers that were assigned that area of responsibility had to run back to their positions; they had gravitated to watch the gunfight in the back yards. When no threat appeared the Teenagers stayed at their positions this time to guard the front approach.

Gunnery Sergeant Maloon was seventy-eight years old and the damp weather was assisting his Arthritis too much. From his position he tried squinting his eyes to bring the details of the battlefield into focus without success. A curse under his breath as he reached for the binoculars, back in his Nam days he didn't need any DA..."House Three" Maloon had picked up the field phone that connected all of their houses. "Movement by the brick barbecue." A shot rang out. "Clear. Red flanks move out. Red Center cover them. Blue hold" He watched as the teams checked the bodies for life, a few of his team members put a finishing shot into a body. When they waved the all clear Maloon picked up the field phone handset again, "Blue hold until I get there. All this excitement going on and they want him to stay in this blasted rocker and watch. No siree! Michael!" Mallon called to his grandson. "Hand me my cane and help me up. We're head to the front door!"

By the time Gunnery Sergeant Maloon hobbled to the front of the house Keith the front gate guard had walked almost half the way back to them. When Keith reached the picnic table he

stopped and gently put the body he was carrying down. He crossed both of his arms across his chest and yelled, "ALL CLEAR!" The crossing of his arms was the real sign that all was OK. "Grandpa he made the cross sign and he's bringing a body back with him." Blue Leader was another grandson and knew Grandpa couldn't see that far... "A body? Hmpff! Keith knows we have a no prisoner policy. Send four out to resecure the front gate and guard until we get this all sorted out."



"Look at those needle marks on her arms, she's a druggie!"

"Shh Mallon! She's waking up. Hello can you hear me? My name is Sabrina, this Mallon and you have already met Keith I understand."

"Two buses hidden outside your front gate...women chained inside...watch out men on the roof...the women need help." Catherine managed to whisper. She was so tired.

"We found your buses three days ago. The chains were unlocked but no women and we didn't find any men either."

"Three days?"

"Yes. We thought you might not make it. You must have been through a lot?"

"Withdrawal and..."

"How do you know it was withdrawal?" Sabrina interrupted.

"I remember the cold sweats, difficulty in breathing, diarrhea and hallucinations. Good that you had me tied down." Catherine emphasized her last words as she tried to lift her arms off the bed.

Mallon had an open medical book in his hands. The description Catherine had given matched what was in the book. Mallon nodded at Sabrina.

"Was you a Doctor?"

"No. A Pharmacist. Before...before..."

"And your name?"

"Catherine. My name is Cathr..." she managed to say before falling back into a restful sleep.

“It’s a OPSEC violation to allow Outsiders in.”

“We all know that Mallon. But I’d be dead if it wasn’t for her. “ Keith’s body started shaking reliving how close he had come to dying.

“And we need a Doctor. I know but a Pharmacist is a lot better than us trying to understand what is in those medical books. Keith is sponsoring her so he’s voting yes” Sabrina saw Keith nod. “And I vote yes because everything she has told us checked out to be true and we need someone with medical knowledge, so I vote yes. Mallon we need a unanimous vote, it’s up to you.”

Gunnery Sergeant Maloon moved closer to the bed and squinted. Was that a tear they saw forming in the corner of his eye? “Hmpff. Well she does look a little like my daughter...the one that didn’t...yes. I vote yes.”

The End