

Candy Train

written by

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TEASER

INT. NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY CAR - DAY

The train pulls into a station in the Bronx. The doors open, a few passengers exit. Beat.

JAMAL MCWILLIAMS, early-twenties, African-American, enters carrying a homemade cardboard tray of assorted candy. He is dressed to sell in his finest budget streetwear.

In a split second, he scopes his audience of workaday Bronx New Yorkers—a mix of Black and Latinx construction and service industry workers, healthcare employees in scrubs and the odd Eastern European apartment and office cleaner. Jamal is ready to put on a show as he walks down the car.

JAMAL

Yo, ladies and gents!

Nobody pays him attention. Jamal steps it up notch.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

Awww...the TA gettin' y'all down?

Jamal waves a Snickers Bar and a bag of M&Ms in front of a YOUNG BLACK WOMAN who is trying but failing to ignore him.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

My beautiful Sis, wipe off that frown!

She smiles. But still tries to ignore him

JAMAL (CONT'D)

\$2.75 and you ain't going nowhere—  
fast. As usual. Just \$1 for these,  
(shakes the M&Ms)  
and you don't care.

She looks at Jamal and chuckles a little.

YOUNG BLACK WOMAN

There better be plenty of red ones.

And shyly hands him a bill.

JAMAL

See. Yo' commute just got cute.

Jamal pockets the money.

JAMAL (CONT'D)  
 (to everyone)  
 See y'all. She know what time it  
 is.

More passengers' eyes follow him down the aisle.

JAMAL (CONT'D)  
 When you tell yo' boss the train  
 was delayed, again. Sweeten the  
 message.

Jamal waves a bag of Skittles.

JAMAL (CONT'D)  
 Give him Skittles. \$1. And save yo'  
 skin. He may even hire more folks  
 from the Bronx!

Some passengers chuckle. Jamal knows he's got them. He holds  
 up some Reese's pieces.

JAMAL (CONT'D)  
 You give him a Reese's and he'll  
 give you a raise! \$2.

An OLDER BLACK MAN gets into the spirit.

OLDER BLACK MAN  
 Not just a candy. An investment in  
 yo' career.  
 (laughs)  
 If you don't eat it first.

JAMAL  
 Yes, sir. That's right. Buy two.  
 Insurance. Case one don't make it.

The old guy waves two dollars at Jamal.

MONTAGE

1. Jamal selling in a different train cars with more and less  
 passengers
2. Jamal chatting with passengers of different ages, sex,  
 race etc.
3. Jamal's candy tray getting empty.
4. Jamal seated heading home.

END MONTAGE

EXT. NYC SUBWAY STATION EL TRAIN STAIRWELL - DAY

The day's end. Jamal meets fellow candy sellers, BRANDON, African-American, 17, wearing some fly kicks, and CJ, Latinx, non-binary, 16, dressed not to draw attention to themself, except for a colorful durag. Jamal has sold out and ditched his box. Brandon has a little candy left. CJ some more.

EXT. NYC SUBWAY EL TRAIN EXIT - CONTINUOUS

Outside the station on the sidewalk, in front of a double-parked van with an open door is MELVIN, African-American, 29, his drip is tight. He sees how much candy is left in Brandon's and CJ's boxes and makes a rough calculation.

MELVIN

(to CJ)

Ayight. Fifteen.

(to Brandon)

Twenty.

(to Jamal)

And money bags here, Twenty-five,  
well done again, Mr. Topseller!

CJ and Brandon shrug and hand him \$15 and \$20 in singles.  
Jamal gives him a bunch of \$5 bills.

Melvin takes CJ's and Brandon's boxes and tops them up. Then he reaches into the van and pulls out a whole box of assorted candy and hands it to Jamal.

FADE OUT.

END TEASER

ACT 1

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Jamal pushes a wheelchair carrying his mom, CAROL, heavysset, late-40s, African-American, down the accessibility ramp.

Carol's legs are covered by a blanket. She has a brand new walking cane across her lap and a few belongings in a plastic bag.

INT. NYCHA APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

ELEVATOR DOORS

open onto a blank hallway lined by evenly spaced grey steel doors and lit with fluorescent lights.

From behind we see Jamal push Carol, she still has her hospital patient ID band on her wrist. Hospital discharge papers and patient care literature are stuck in the chair's backrest.

CAROL

That first nurse, she a scorpio! I had to get her doing something. Change my pan, whatever. Once she outta the way, Nurse Colette - Libra, nice Trini woman, bit heavy on the makeup - I get her to come.  
(very pleased with herself)  
That's how I get my apple sauce.

JAMAL

(exasperated)  
Apple sauce. Really. Ma!

They reach their apartment door.

CAROL

Come on! Just apple sauce. Plain.  
How sweet is that?

Jamal unlocks the door.

CAROL (CONT'D)

An apple a day, baby. All them apples in a sauce?

Jamal struggles to figure out how to hold the door open and push the wheelchair at the same time. It's all new to him.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
Think how many doctors that keeps  
away!

Finally they get through the doorway.

JAMAL  
(under his breath)  
The apples ain't the problem.

INT. MCWILLIAM'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Carol's NYCHA apartment is small but her furniture is large. Everything looks like it needs more room to breathe. Despite the crowded feeling it's all spotlessly clean, if a little worn around the edges.

Pictures of Carol and Jamal at various ages fill shelves and there are and vases with plastic flowers.

Jamal pushes the wheelchair as far as it can go into the room before the oversized furniture clogs its path.

Carol takes the blanket off her legs.

We see she only has one foot. The end of her short leg is in bandages.

She plants her cane on the floor and hobbles to her recliner chair.

Jamal is clearly unnerved watching her.

JAMAL  
Are they gonna give you one of them  
robot feet? Like the soldiers get?

Carol makes herself comfortable, which isn't easy.

CAROL  
Fetch me a drink, baby. I could  
really use one.

Jamal stands still, processes what he's seeing.

JAMAL  
Should you be drinking?

CAROL  
Jamal! Don't make me get it myself.  
You know how they are about  
painkillers for us.

Jamal heads to the small galley-style kitchen.

INT. MCWILLIAM'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jamal peruses the fridge. For once, he's really taking in all its contents. The packets of burger patties, TV dinners, and other cheap processed foods.

JAMAL

Weren't they supposed to just take  
a toe? Or something?

The fridge door holds giant soda bottles and large containers of sweet juices next to a bottle of pink Moscato.

INT. MCWILLIAM'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jamal returns with two classes of Moscato, his hand shakes as gives one to Carol. Jamal sits down on the sofa.

Carol raises her glass to toast. Jamal lifts his but stops short. His hand shaking terribly.

JAMAL

Can't believe they did this to you!

He breaks down. And starts to cry.

CAROL

It's for the best. You'll see.  
God's gotta plan. When things go  
rotten you got to prune 'em.

She beckons him closer.

Come here, sugar. Give yo mama a  
hug.

Jamal pulls himself together and gets up.

JAMAL

Don't call me, sugar. Not right  
now.

He hugs his mother. And spies his box of candy across the room.

INT. NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY STATION BRONX - DAY

Jamal sits on bench. His box of candy on his lap. He looks at the passengers coming and going into a subway car. The train leaves. His energy completely drained.

Another train pulls up. Same thing. He watches it go.

He gets up and throws his box of candy into a trash can. And walks slowly to the exit.

Behind him, a HOMELESS MAN, rushes to the trash can and takes out the box of candy and rips it open.

HOMELESS MAN

(yelling)

I got Snickers for a dollar! M and  
Ms for a dollar!

MONTAGE

Montage of unhealthy urban eating options. A mix of facades of fast food joints. \$1 burger signs. Cheap soda ads. Garbage bins and gutters full of discarded fast food packages etc.

MONTAGE ends on a FRUIT AND VEGETABLE STAND.

EXT. FRUIT AND VEGETABLE STAND - DAY

Jamal buys a small bag of cherries. He puts one in his mouth. Spits out a seed. It lands

ON A DISCARDED ENERGY BAR WRAPPER in the gutter.

END ACT 1



ACT 2

INT. ENTIREFOODS SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Jamal lurks in the healthy snack bar aisle. He takes snacks off shelves, looks at the ingredient list and puts them back. His eyes move over the HIGH PRICES marked on the shelves.

A WHITE WOMAN passes by, decides not to get a health bar while giving Jamal the fisheye. He pointedly ignores her.

At the end of the aisle in the cashier's booth, YVONNE, 19, African-American, in uniform, clocks her break and signals to Jamal. She takes a slender text book from beside the register.

EXT. ENTIREFOODS SUPERMARKET - CONTINUOUS

Yvonne and Jamal step outside.

JAMAL

Damn! Those shits are expensive.  
Any Black folks be buying that  
stuff?

YVONNE

Just the bougiest of the bougiest.

They glance over at an unmarked truck.

A GUY in a sweatshirt with a "House the Homeless" logo carries large plastic bags of nuts and dried fruit to the van. He loads them in the back and returns into EntireFoods.

JAMAL

Don't look bougie to me.

YVONNE

Donations. We give all the expired  
shit to the homeless. Heard it's  
some tax-free thing.

JAMAL

For real? I never seen a homeless  
bruh eat no nuts. Seen plenty who  
are nuts.

(wistfully/smooth)

It's cray every damn day on the TA..

YVONNE  
 (chuckles)  
 Maybe that explains that. You are  
 what you eat, baby.

Yvonne opens up the text book she's carrying.

YVONNE (CONT'D)  
 Here. Page 62. Ask me those  
 questions. I gotta test tomorrow.  
 The GED don't wait!

She hands the book to Jamal.

INT. NYCHA APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jamal is taking out small bag of trash. As he gets to the trash chute he starts tying it up. Something is getting caught at the top of the bag. He pulls out a small pamphlet called "HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES".

He flips through it, looking at pictures of easy to make healthy food, including a FRUIT & NUT SNACKBAR. He pockets the pamphlet, ties up the trash and puts it down the chute.

EXT. GROUP HOME - NIGHT

Brandon and CJ are outside their group home talking with Jamal, who is showing them Healthy Alternatives, pointing to the Fruit & Nut snack bar.

BRANDON  
 I dunno. Sounds whack. You tasted  
 that shit?

CJ  
 (points over shoulder)  
 Well, we gotta kitchen. Nobody in  
 it late. I love to cook.

BRANDON  
 Like, when you ever make anything  
 more than a sandwich?

CJ pokes their tongue out at Brandon.

JAMAL  
 I know where we can lay our hands  
 on the ingredients. For free!

## INT. MCWILLIAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Carol is sitting having some juice with MRS. SAUNTER, attractive, 30s, smart but conservatively dressed.

MRS. SAUNTER  
 Goodness. It's gettin' late!  
 (getting up)  
 Everyone at bible study will be  
 thrilled you're doing so well.

CAROL  
 I'll be joyin' y'all before too  
 long!

MRS. SAUNTER  
 When do you think? Bein' realistic?

CAROL  
 Ima get Jamal to take me to church,  
 Sunday.

MRS. SAUNTER  
 Jamal! How's he doin'? My husband  
 will be so pleased to see him. He  
 always wants more young men  
 attendin'.

CAROL  
 He's good. Stayin' out of trouble.  
 Mostly. But this is hard on him.

MRS. SAUNTER  
 I'm sure. He should talk to my  
 husband.

Mrs. Saunter heads to the door.

MRS. SAUNTER (CONT'D)  
 I can let myself out. No trouble.

CAROL  
 Give the Rev. Saunter my regards.

MRS. SAUNTER  
 You're in our prayers, Carol.  
 Always.

## INT. ENTIREFOODS SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Yvonne pulls large packets of nuts of the shelves, checking their expiry dates. She finds one that's too old.

YVONNE  
 (to herself)  
 Yasss!

She puts the packet in an EntireFoods shopping bag which already has several packets of nuts and dried fruit in it. As she reaches for another packet she hears a man's voice from behind. MITCH, white, 31, a store manager, a tablet tucked under his arm.

MITCH  
 What's going on Yvonne?

YVONNE  
 (startled)  
 Oh, ah, a customer complained that a lot of the nuts were past their dates. And, I, I, thought I'd give these to the homeless outreach guy.

Mitch looks unconvinced. He gazes down at all the packets of nuts in the bag. He pulls one out. Checks it's past its date and puts it back.

MITCH  
 In the future, if you want to do something for the homeless talk to Denise in HR.

Mitch walks down the aisle, tapping some info into his tablet.

EXT. ENTIREFOODS SUPERMARKET — NIGHT

Yvonne looking over her shoulder meets Jamal, Brandon and CJ carrying two EntireFoods shopping bags of expired dry fruits, nuts and high-end agave syrup.

YVONNE  
 Chile! You don't know what I had to go through to get you this shit!

JAMAL  
 Thanks Yvonne.

CJ  
 Much appreciated.

Jamal, Brandon and CJ turn and start walking away.

YVONNE  
 (exasperated)  
 So, you ain't gonna help me study tonight? And you're still surprised we broke up, huh!

JAMAL  
 I got to get my hustle on. It's business, baby.

YVONNE  
 (angry)  
 Well, you better go on and mind your own God damn business!

INT. GROUP HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jamal, Brandon and CJ are in the group home kitchen trying to follow the snack bar recipe in the Healthy Alternatives pamphlet. The lights are low so they don't attract attention.

CJ is scooping out nuts and putting them in a mixing bowl. They check the recipe, squinting in the low light. There's ingredients all over the place. It's clear they have no clue what they're doing.

CJ  
 Yo, this shit's for just 10 bars.

BRANDON  
 So, multiply it by 10. You want a 100, right, Jamal?

Jamal is about to turn on a blender full of ingredients. Then thinks better of it. Takes off his hoodie and wraps it around the blender first. Then hits the button. It still makes a LOUD WHIRRING NOISE.

More lights come on in the kitchen. MISS REYNA, Latina 40s, with a strong Nicaraguan accent is standing at the door, looking very pissed.

MISS REYNA  
 Coño! Who said you could be in here?  
 (at Jamal)  
 And who the hell are you?

Brandon starts to speak but is overtaken by CJ.

CJ

(rapido)  
 ¡Señorita Reina! ¡Qué bueno  
 verte! ¡Estamos trabajando en  
 una tarea para la buena  
 salud! Ayudando a nuestro  
 querido amigo Jamal, aquí. Su  
 madre estaba muy enferma. ¡Le  
 cortaron el pie! ¡Es  
 terrible! ¡Ahora estamos  
 haciendo bocadillos  
 saludables!

CJ

(translation- rapidly)  
 Miss Reyna! Great to see you!  
 We're working on an  
 assignment for good health!  
 Helping our dear friend  
 Jamal, here. His mother was  
 very sick. She had her foot  
 cut off! It's terrible! Now  
 we're making healthy snacks!

Miss Reyna looks at CJ and softens. She looks around the  
 kitchen mess and rolls her eyes.

MISS REYNA

Si se come todo esto  
 engordará.

MISS REYNA

If she eats all this she'll  
 get fat.

CJ

Bueno, podemos vender un poco  
 nosotros mismos. En el lado.

CJ

Well, we may sell a little  
 ourselves. On the side.

Miss Reyna nods. She looks at Jamal.

MISS REYNA

Un negocio, ¿eh?

MISS REYNA

A business, huh?

Miss Reyna reaches behind the door and grabs her apron from a  
 hook and puts it on.

MISS REYNA (CONT'D)

(to Jamal)

You lucky I'm still here. My  
 nephew's car broke down.

She motions for Jamal to hand her the recipe.

MISS REYNA (CONT'D)

This needs a little spice.

She goes to a cupboard and pulls out some unmarked spice  
 jars.

TIME LAPSE

Miss Reyna takes control of the kitchen. Orders the crew  
 around and we see them help her mix and bake a huge quantity  
 of snack bars.

END TIME LAPSE

Jamal, CJ and Brandon do a taste test.

ALL TOGETHER

Damn! These are dope!

Miss Reyna smiles as she puts her apron away. Her phone BUZZES. She answers.

(into phone)

Si. En la cocina. Si.

Miss Reyna starts to gather her things. As VICTOR, 25, heavily tattooed (even more heavily built) and looking like he has better things to do, enters.

MISS REYNA

So, Jamal, it's a deal. 10% of sales.

She walks out. Victor looks Jamal up and down.

INT. MCWILLIAM'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Carol is sitting in a chair with her foot and stump up watching Jamal sort out his heathy snacks for the next day. Putting them in a box on the coffee table.

JAMAL

Folks gotta start eating right. You even read that book I got the recipe from?

CAROL

Always a Leo, ain't you? You think I lost my foot just because I eat what I like? People supposed to eat what they know tastes good. That's why God gave us taste buds!

JAMAL

These snacks are good! Miss Reyna hooked up the recipe. You should try one, mom.

CAROL

Hmph. Miss Reyna. What she know? She probably some Aquarius. One Aquarius airhead latin bitch gonna make some boring ass junk food special?

JAMAL

Junk food? You should see how much people be paying for this stuff where Yvonne's at.

CAROL  
More money than sense.

INT. NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY CAR - DAY

The 2 train is busy with its usual assortment of working class Bronx residents.

Jamal walks down the aisle presenting his health bars, giving it his best shot.

JAMAL  
Just because your health comes first, flavor don't need to be second.

Everyone stays busy with their phones.

JAMAL (CONT'D)  
\$3. That's it. A quarter more than your ride. And you get to a healthier place.

Still no luck. Totally ignored.

JAMAL (CONT'D)  
Save on yo' doctor's bill. But don't save on taste.

He leaves the car and enters the next.

INT. SUBWAY CAR #2 BRONX - CONTINUOUS

It's rinse and repeat.

JAMAL  
Instead of downing some fat-ass fries. Try these. Energize yo'self.

Finally, he gets some interest from a young BLACK COMMUTER. Jamal hands him a bar.

BLACK COMMUTER 1  
What is this? Pigeons eat that shit. I ain't no birdman. \$3? Nah.

He hands it back.



INT. NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY CAR #3 - DAY

CJ holding their box of healthy snacks is talking with a young LATINA COMMUTER.

LATINA COMMUTER #1

You gotta give a me taste. I dunno.  
Looks healthy. But I dunno. Looks  
like white people food.

CJ unwraps a snack and breaks off a chunk and hands it to her. She takes a bite. And likes it.

LATINA COMMUTER #1 (CONT'D)

Not bad. Kinda sticky. But you say,  
\$3? No way. I can get me a taco,  
\$2.50. \$1 Maybe. Maybe. I'm just  
gonna be hungry again right after.

INT. NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY CAR #4 - DAY

Brandon with his stash is doing no better.

BLACK COMMUTER #2

Nah, bruh. Looks like something a  
deer threw up. Y'know, one of them  
deer with that disease. Lymes.  
(winks across the aisle)  
Ha, maybe you should give folks a  
slice of limes on tha' side!

Other commuters start laughing along.

INT. GRAND CONCOURSE 149TH ST STATION - LATER

CJ, Brandon and Jamal regroup in one of the corridors between the different subway lines.

JAMAL

We're just starting. Folks need to  
get the idea.

BRANDON

It ain't happenin'. Just ain't. I  
gotta make bank.

He hands his stash of bars to Jamal.

CJ

Can't do all or nothing. Ima keep  
tryin' but I need to sell them  
alongside Mel's candy.

JAMAL  
But that's the point! They an  
alternative.

CJ shrugs.

Brandon and CJ walk off together. CJ looks over their  
shoulder and shrugs again.

Jamal is left standing on his own. Commuters pass him by for  
a few beats.

A HAND APPEARS on Jamal's shoulder.

Jamal is startled, it's Melvin.

MELVIN  
(looking at the unsold  
snacks)  
Making money feels good, right?

JAMAL  
New product.

MELVIN  
(laughs)  
Like hotcakes, I hear.

Melvin squeezes Jamal's shoulder.

MELVIN (CONT'D)  
I could use my top seller. I have  
to make people happy, too. Y'know?  
Candy don't grow on trees.

He releases his grip.

MELVIN (CONT'D)  
No pressure. When you're ready.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Jamal is exiting his stop. He steps out onto the street and  
is blocked by Victor. Jamal tries to get around Victor, who  
shoves Jamal against a wall, holding him there.

JAMAL  
We didn't sell nothing.

Victor keeps the pressure on.

JAMAL (CONT'D)  
 (panting)  
 10% of nothing is nothing

VICTOR  
 You owe us. Time is money,  
 motherfucker. Have it tomorrow.

INT. ENTIREFOODS SUPERMARKET - CAFE AREA - NIGHT

Yvonne sits across a table from CJ who is reading questions from Yvonne's text book.

CJ  
 Yep. You got that one.

YVONNE  
 Thanks for doing this, CJ. I appreciate it.

CJ  
 I'm going do mine, too. Maybe next year, before I age out.

YVONNE  
 What do you want to do?

CJ  
 Everyone asks me that. I've spent my whole life bouncin' from one place to next. What should I *do*? I just wanna *be*!

Yvonne takes stock of CJ's reaction.

YVONNE  
 (nods)  
 Aight. Next question.

INT. MCWILLIAM'S APARTMENT -LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The stack of unsold health bars are heaped on the coffee table. Jamal is on the sofa, his head in his hands. Carol has her arm around his shoulder.

CAROL  
 Sometimes, you gotta swallow your pride, honey.

JAMAL  
 I can't go back. It's so fucked up.

CAROL

Nothing wrong with giving people what they want. You mess with folks food, you mess with their culture.

JAMAL

Where'd that culture come from? McDonald's? Whose culture is that? Snickers?

CAROL

(Beat)

Spoke to my worker today. She a Virgo, but late, almost like a Libra, so balanced. All my disability papers is getting signed off. If we can make it through to the end of the month, we're good.

JAMAL

(sits up)

End of the month? Today's the 6th!

CAROL

Guess, I'll be eating a pile of them snack bars of yours, after all.

(she picks ups one)

Maybe with a little syrup...

Jamal looks at her in shock.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Just kidding. Whew chile! You sumpthin.

END ACT 2

ACT 3

INT. SUBWAY CAR BRONX — DAY

Jamal is back on the 2 train carrying his snacks in front of him like a hotdog seller in a ballpark. The usual assortment of Bronxites are riding the rails with him. He's giving it his best shot, but the enthusiasm isn't there.

JAMAL

Save yo'self, money. Healthy snacks  
that cost an arm and leg, just ...

The public address system SHRIEKS into action.

CONDUCTOR (V.O.)

Ladies and Gentleman due to signal  
failure, we're going express to 149  
and Grand Concourse.

The train jolts and speeds up.

DISSOLVE TO:

The train pulls into the station. The PASSENGERS bum rush the exits, PASSENGER 1 elbows Jamal's tray and knocks some snacks flying off. Jamal scrambles trying to collect the snacks before they get stomped on.

CONDUCTOR (V.O.)

Due to a sick passenger at 138th  
St, this train is now running  
express on the 5 line.

As Jamal grabs the last of his snacks. The doors close. He's trapped.

Over a MONTAGE of subway station names, subway line symbols, delay notifications and other transit imagery, the Conductor's announcements become increasingly faster.

CONDUCTOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We have a police incident at 86th  
St...

CONDUCTOR

...A track fire at 42nd St...

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)

...Due to suicide at Astor Place  
all passengers must exit the train  
at 14th St...

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. UNION SQ STATION -CONCOURSE - DAY

Jamal is disoriented and looking around, clearly not used to being in this part of town. He approaches a nearby commuter.

JAMAL

Excuse me. How do I get back to the Bronx right now.

COMMUTER

Now? Gee, it's so messed up.  
(pointing to a stairwell)  
I guess, take the L crosstown.

Jamal goes to the stairs.

INT. UNION SQ STATION - L TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

Trains are on both the platforms going both directions. The PA announces the doors are closing. He jumps onto a train.

A YOUNG WHITE WOMAN, early 20's, in hip clothes eyes Jamal. She looks at his box of health bars.

YOUNG WHITE WOMAN

Are they vegan?

JAMAL

What? Sorry, you talking to me?

YOUNG WHITE WOMAN

Your snacks. You're selling them, right?

Jamal composes himself.

JAMAL

Ah, yeah. \$3. Delicious, healthy too.

YOUNG WHITE WOMAN

No gluten? I just can't.

Jamal shakes his head.

The train pulls into 3rd Avenue Station. Jamal spies the station sign. The doors open.

JAMAL

Are we going to Brooklyn?

The girl starts rummaging in her bag. She's sorting through stuff and doesn't answer.

Jamal is getting agitated.

YOUNG WHITE WOMAN  
 (obliviously)  
 Hold on.  
 (beat)  
 Here. I only have \$5.

The doors close. She hands Jamal the bill.

YOUNG WHITE WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 Keep the change.

The girls sits down. And starts eating her snack. She gives Jamal a thumbs up.

JAMAL  
 (to himself)  
 Well, Brooklyn, get ready, here I come!

INT. GRAND CONCOURSE 149TH ST STATION - DAY

In a passageway, Brandon is receiving a pep talk from Melvin.

MELVIN  
 You done the right thing. I know he's yo' buddy an' all. But this is a business. An' it's about makin' bank.

BRANDON  
 I feel bad. About his mom. I mean.

MELVIN  
 That's her. See all these folks?

Melvin waves at all the passing commuters.

MELVIN (CONT'D)  
 They all hot footin' it to where they gotta go. They need a boost! They tired, they bein' dogged day and night, got bills to pay. Gettin' dissed doin' it.

BRANDON  
 And I'm sweetnin' up their grind.

MELVIN

Exactly! An' before Jamal talked to the Holy Ghost, or whoever spooked his ass, tha's what he was dope at.

Melvin gives Brandon a pat on the shoulder.

MELVIN (CONT'D)

You go out there and get his numbers and I'll reduce yo' commission.

INT. SUBWAY CAR — BROOKLYN — DAY

Jamal is on another train. He's walking down the aisle, making sales left and right.

He pockets some cash from ZOË KANDAL, white, late 20's, glasses, buzzes with a nervous energy. She takes a bite.

ZOË

(talking while chewing)

Mmmm. This soooo good. Where does come from?

JAMAL

It's homemade, in the Bronx.

ZOË

The Bronx? I've never been to the Bronx. Sounds very authentic.

Jamal starts to move on.

ZOË (CONT'D)

Hold on, can I get another. For my editor.

As Jamal takes out another bar from his dwindling stash — just a handful to go — Zoë takes out her phone.

JAMAL

(laughing)

Way you're eatin', sure it's gonna make to him?

ZOË

Her. It's a food blog. @Brooklyn Zest on Insta.

Zoë holds up her phone and takes a pic of Jamal and the snacks. Jamal is a little taken aback. He grabs the overhead rail and leans into her space.



JAMAL  
Yo, mis, that's not cool?

ZOË  
(a little unnerved)  
Sorry?

JAMAL  
Snappin' without askin'

Now Zoë is taken aback.

JAMAL (CONT'D)  
Where you from?

ZOË  
Brooklyn.

JAMAL  
Nah, from, from?

ZOË  
Oh, Idaho. Near Boise.

Jamal nods. Leans back. It all makes sense.

Zoë looks at her phone.

ZOË (CONT'D)  
Nice! Can I tag you? We've got  
6,000 followers.

INT. MCWILLIAM'S APARTMENT — CAROL'S ROOM — DAY

Carol sits on the edge of her bed puffing, she uses her cane to open her wardrobe door.

Still handling the cane, she uses it to slide her clothes along the rail in her closet. She stops at the legs of a pant suit. She pokes at the bottom of the leg. Lifting it up. And twisting it around her stick.

Underneath the pant leg are some nice shoes with heels. She untwists the pant leg and then pokes her stick into a shoe and pulls it towards her.

Taking the shoe in her hand, she turns it about, inspecting it.

Carol starts to tear up.

(a few beats)

She angrily throws the shoe back into the closet.

And breaks into sobs.

EXT. NYC SUBWAY STATION STAIRWELL - NIGHT

When Jamal exits the station onto the street Victor is waiting for him, sitting on the hood of nearby car.

VICTOR  
Hey, candy boy!

Jamal stops. He walks over to Victor.

JAMAL  
My name is Jamal.

Victor spits on the ground.

JAMAL (CONT'D)  
I got your aunt's money.

He pulls out \$30.

JAMAL (CONT'D)  
Count it. \$30. Ten percent.

VICTOR  
Nah, man. \$45.

Victor stands up and moves close to Jamal. Jamal steps back but Victor grabs his arm.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
One. You late. Two. I have to come twice. Delivery charge.

Reluctantly, Jamal hands him another \$15. Victor lets go.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
The good news. Miss Reyna wants to do it again.

Victor gets into his car.

VICTOR (CONT'D)  
Bring everything to the house again tomorrow night. But double.

EXT. ENTIREFOODS - NIGHT

Jamal is doing his best to persuade Yvonne, who, hand on hip, isn't hearing it.

YVONNE

Nerve. You got nerve. Hell no.

JAMAL

But Yvonne. You've always wanted me to do better. And I finally am.

YVONNE

So, you do better. I lose my gig. Then how do you get the next round of ingredients? Huh? It's short-term thinking, Jamal.

JAMAL

Look. I'm under pressure. Mom's disability don't kick in for a month. And even then, she still sick. Plus, I gotta deal with Miss Reyna. And I gotta keep it.

YVONNE

You what?  
(livid)  
If you can have a deal with her. You can have a deal with me. \$5 per bag.

JAMAL

How'm I gonna make any money with that? I gettin' squeezed on both ends now!

YVONNE

That's your problem Mr. Big Businessman.

Yvonne turns and walks off.

JAMAL

Hey! Hey!

Yvonne stops. Jamal catches up with her.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

Here.

He hands over a bunch of cash. Yvonne counts it.

YVONNE

\$40? Eight bags? How'm I gonna come up with that?

INT. MCWILLIAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A pile of cash in small bills sits in the middle of the coffee table. Jamal and Carol admire it from the sofa.

CAROL  
Brooklyn, huh? Well, I'll be damned.

JAMAL  
I'm in business. For real.

CAROL  
Your own business. I'm proud of you. But Brooklyn? I dunno.

JAMAL  
Brooklyn's changed, Ma.

CAROL  
Yeah? Hasn't changed enough, far as I'm concerned. You can go there. But I ain't putting my foot in it.

Carol laughs and wiggles her remaining foot in the air.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END