

TRAFFIK(ED)

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INT. BACK OF VAN - NIGHT

There is a scraping sound off-screen.

The van's interior is stark and white - windowless, the walls and ceiling lined with foam soundproofing. Cold. Filthy. A red LED strip bleeds dim light over everything.

Scraping continues.

Scattered across the floor: torn clothing, hastily discarded. A broken hairbrush, strands of hair still in the bristles. A single high-heeled shoe on its side, as if its owner were torn away mid-step.

Two hands work a crude tool against the thick plastic of a zip tie - hurried, precise, desperate. Breathing comes shallow and fast.

Scraping intensifies.

At the center of the van sits THE WOMAN - early twenties, striking, in a short, gaudy party dress. Her hands are zip-tied behind her back and looped around a stripper pole bolted to the floor. Her wrists are raw and discolored. She saws at the tie with the metal-tipped heel of her shoe (matches one on floor), levering it against the ground.

A sound from the front. She freezes. Her head turns toward muffled voices behind the closed cab window - too indistinct to make out.

She holds. Listens. Nothing changes.

Sensing no change, she resumes her work on the zip ties, the scratching sound blending with her uneven breathing.

The zip tie snaps.

She tears through the bags and containers around her - and her fingers close on a small, worn teddy bear. Beneath it: children's clothes. Children's things.

The discovery stops her cold.

She looks to the door. Steels herself to jump.

The van slams through a pothole. She pitches over and hits the floor hard, the sound cracking through the metal box.

The voices up front cut out. The cab window slides open.

She freezes, every muscle tensed. Her eyes lock onto the window.

MAN 2	MAN 2
(in Russian, subtitled)	Блядь!
Fuck!	

The curse rolls through the van. She flinches.

MAN 2 (CONT'D)	MAN 2 (CONT'D)
(in Russian, subtitled)	Тормози!
Pull over!	

The car pulls over.

Gravel crunches as the van slows and stops. The engine dies. Silence... then only her breathing.

A door. Footsteps on gravel, coming around back. She scrambles to the door, grabs the handle, yanks. It doesn't move. She shakes it, frantic, and screams.

She backs away, chest heaving.

The door swings open. MAN 2 fills it – huge, hairy, muscle gone soft to fat. She uses the space to launch herself at him.

He catches her without effort; her hundred-pound frame is nothing against him.

THE WOMAN  
(swinging, spitting)  
Fuck you, you fucking pig!

She thrashes. He pins her with one arm, frees a pair of handcuffs from his belt with the other, and clamps her wrists behind her. He hauls her back to the pole and forces her down, securing her to it.

MAN 2  
(English, heavy Russian  
accent; flat, as if to a  
child)  
Stay.

WOMAN  
(spits in his face)  
Fuck you!

A flicker of surprise, then nothing. He wipes the spit from his cheek with his thumb and sucks it clean.

Up front, MAN 1 watches in the rearview. He could be MAN 2's brother.

MAN 1  
(English, **Heavy** Russian  
accent)  
I wouldn't do this. He pays women a  
lot uglier than you to spit on him.

MAN 2 pats her on the face, a mockingly gentle gesture. She tries to bite his hand, but he laughs, clearly amused, and speaks to the man in front.

MAN 2  
(amused, Russian,  
subtitled)  
This one bites.

MAN 2  
Эта кусается.

MAN 1  
(amused, Russian,  
subtitled)  
Then maybe it's naptime.

MAN 1  
Тогда, может, ей пора баиньки.

He digs through his fanny pack and comes out with a pre-loaded syringe.

She thrashes. He wraps her up, holds her still, and hunts for a vein in her arm. He finds it and pushes the plunger.

The needle bites. She gasps as it hits her blood. Her pupils blow wide.

MAN 2 says something, but the sound has gone thick and far away. He pats her face. Nothing answers him now but a glassy, vacant stare.

He climbs out. There are muffled steps, a door opens and closes, and then the engine starts again.

THE WOMAN fumbles her already-short dress higher. Tucked into her underwear: two pill capsules in a small baggie. She works it down to her knee, to her foot – then takes the whole baggie into her mouth.

In the contortion, one breast slips free of the dress, a wide nude pasty over the nipple.

She looks at it. Frustrated tears threaten the corners of her eyes. She sucks the pills from the baggie, spits the plastic, chews. Her eyes drift shut.

BLACK.

INT. BACK OF VAN – NIGHT

THE WOMAN's head lolls upright. Duct tape now seals her mouth.

Her eyes snap open and dart. A twitchy, stimulant energy crackles under her skin.

The van crunches to a stop. A single whoop of a siren. A second car pulling in behind.

MAN 2 (O.S.)	MAN 2
(in Russian; subtitled)	
What the hell did you do?	Какого чёрта ты натворил?!

MAN 1 (O.S.)  
(English; defensive)  
Nothing!

MAN 2 (O.S.)	MAN 2
(in Russian; subtitled)	
Then why are we being tickled?	Тогда какого чёрта нас тормозят?

The word lands wrong in her clouded head – subtitles right themselves, like a slot machine settling. "Tickled" becomes "pulled over".

MAN 1 (O.S.)  
(English)  
I don't know.

A car door. Gravel underfoot – an officer approaching.

One man turns up the radio. The other slides the window shut. Her eyes go wide with hope. She screams into the tape.

OFFICER (O.S.)  
License and registration, please.

She screams again. The tape and the soundproofing swallow it. A thin wash of flashlight leaks through the gap in the window.

OFFICER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Tail lights are out. Turn the radio down for me, sir.

Her muffled cries climb, ragged now.

OFFICER (O.S.) (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
What've you got back there?

MAN 2 (O.S.)  
Prize pig.

MAN 1 (O.S.)  
 (English; miming a big  
 belly)

Yes, she is – беременная –  
 (gestures) – we take her to vet.

MAN 2 (O.S.)  
 Pregnant.

OFFICER (O.S.)  
 I got that. Thank you.

The officer pauses. Her cries turn erratic, her eyes wild.

OFFICER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 I'm going to need you to open up  
 the back, sir.

MAN 2 (O.S.)  
 We are in a hurry. She's no good.

OFFICER  
 I understand that, but the faster  
 you show me, the faster you can get  
 on your way.

The van door opens and shuts. Two sets of feet on gravel,  
 coming around back. Her heart hammers. Her eyes lock on the  
 door; she fidgets, jerky from the stimulant.

Quietly, the far door eases open. Softer steps.

OFFICER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Open the rear, please.

The lock disengages.

The back door swings wide. The flashlight blinds her and she  
 flinches, straining to find the shape of her rescuer – but  
 she can't see past the flashlight beam and the strobing  
 lights behind him.

OFFICER (CONT'D)  
 What in the –

His hand goes for his gun. But MAN 2 has come up the side of  
 the van, and fires. The shot is deafening in the box. Blood  
 sprays the inside of the door; gravel dust drifts in.

For a beat, no one moves. The flashing light paints the dust  
 red, then blue, then red.

MAN 2  
Help me lift it.

MAN 2  
Помогите мне поднять его.

MAN 1  
What? Why?!

MAN 1  
Что? Почему?!

MAN 2  
(in Russian; she catches  
only fragments.)  
—.

MAN 2  
Улики.

MAN 1  
What —?

MAN 1  
Какие улики?

MAN 2  
I don't know. Have you seen  
CSI? There's — hair or —.  
We've got to burn or feed it  
to —.

MAN 2  
Я не знаю. Ты что, CSI не  
смотрел?  
Там всегда волосы или ещё что-  
нибудь. Сожжём его или  
скормим  
аллигатору.

They bend to lift the body.

MAN 1  
Hey. He's — breathing.

MAN 1  
Он всё ещё дышит.

MAN 2  
(grossed out)  
Seriously?

MAN 2  
Серьёзно?

MAN 1  
Yeah.

MAN 1  
Ага.

MAN 2 fires another round into the officer's head.

MAN 2  
And now?

MAN 2  
А теперь?

MAN 1

Nope.

MAN 1

Hea.

They haul the body inside. Part of the skull is gone; blood spreads across the floor. They strip his gun, nightstick, and taser, spare a glance at her half-bared chest, and shut the door.

The engine roars. The van moves. Her eyes stay fixed on the dead officer beside her, the

blood pooling toward her.

The police radio crackles.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Unit 45, status check.

Hope flickers across her face.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Unit 45, respond.

She works her feet toward the officer's belt. Her toes graze it – not enough. She stretches, hooks the edge with her foot.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Unit 45, do you copy?

Her foot nudges the belt slightly, but it's not enough. The van jolts, her shoulders overextend, crunching at the sockets. She gasps in pain.

RADIO DISPATCH  
Unit 45, do you copy?!!

She grits her teeth and twists her body, using her other foot to gain better leverage. Her toes manage to pull the belt closer, inch by inch.

RADIO dispatch  
All units, be advised, Unit 45 is not responding. Last known location Terminal Island Freeway near Pier T Avenue. Possible officer needs assistance.

She finally hooks the belt with her toes, drags it toward herself painfully slowly. She moves the belt to her hands behind her back, and fumbles for the handcuff keys.

## DISPATCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

All units — Unit 45 unresponsive,  
 last location Terminal Island  
 Freeway near Pier T Avenue.  
 Suspected foul play. Last contact,  
 a stop on a white 2005 Chevrolet  
 van, plate Alpha-Seven-Eight- Delta-  
 Charlie-Foxtrot-Three-One,  
 headed west. Approach with  
 caution. Suspects possibly armed  
 and dangerous.

Sweat beads on her forehead as she works the key.

Up front, the men argue, oblivious. She lifts the officer's  
 radio, thumbs the volume down, tucks her breast back into the  
 dress, and mouths the words once before she speaks.

## THE WOMAN

(whispering into the  
 radio)

This is Unit 45's radio. The  
 officer's dead — his body's in the  
 white van with me. I've been  
 kidnapped. Still heading the same  
 direction. Please. Help.

A siren answers almost at once. The van lunges forward and  
 she tumbles into the dead officer, barely swallowing a  
 scream. Over their shouting, the men don't hear her.

Tires scream. Engines climb. Sirens swell — several cars now.

She clutches the radio, hands shaking, and braces as the van  
 swerves. The discarded syringe rolls across the floor. She  
 forces her breathing down.

Sharp turns. Hard stops. Then the van hits something solid  
 and throws her into the wall, headfirst. Pain. A ringing in  
 her ears.

The sirens thin and fade. The van slows and turns into an  
 abandoned factory. She holds her breath, straining to catch  
 words through the ringing.

MAN 1

(Russian, subtitled)  
 We need to — the girl.

MAN 1

Нам нужно убить девушку.

Fear floods her face.

MAN 2 answers, reluctant, the words lost under the ringing in her ears.

MAN 1 (CONT'D)  
(Russian, subtitled)  
She can — us.

MAN 1 (CONT'D)  
Она может нас опознать.

MAN 2  
(Russian, subtitled)  
You do it. I did the —.

MAN 2  
Тогда ты и сделай. Я уже  
завалил копа.

Her eyes sweep the van and land on the officer's vest and the syringe. Their argument fades under her focus.

She grabs the syringe and clamps it in her teeth to free her trembling hands. She unstraps the vest fast and silent, eyes flicking to the closed window. She slips it on.

The front door opens and shuts.

She hears the front door open and close, followed by the crunch of gravel as footsteps approach the back of the van. Her grip tightens on the syringe.

The footsteps grow louder. She positions herself near the door. Her eyes lock on the handle, every muscle in her body coiled like a spring.

The lock clicks. The door begins to swing out. She breathes in, eyes narrowing.

The door opens wide on MAN 1's bulk. She lunges from behind it, syringe first.

EXT. ABANDONED INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX - DAWN - CONTINUOUS

The needle drives into his eye. She slams the plunger, forcing air in.

MAN 1 howls and crashes down, her on top of him. He grabs for her — the gun spills from his belt and goes off, the round tearing into his own leg. His screams ricochet across the empty lot.

MAN 1  
(in Russian)  
Help!

MAN 2 charges around the van. She dives for the gun.

He reaches the back just as she brings it up. She doesn't hesitate. The shot cracks across the lot. MAN 2 drops.

She kneels there, panting, scanning. Sirens rising. Police lights wash the complex.

MAN 1 is still going, his body seizing.

She watches him a long moment. Then she sets her heel on his throat and presses down – a wet, gurgling struggle, then a last thin gasp. She smiles. Something darker underneath it.

The police pour in.

OFFICER (O.S.)  
(approaching, cautious)  
Hands where we can see them!

She obeys, sets the gun on the ground, and raises her hands – wrists raw, bruised, bloodied.