

DON OF DIXIE

Written by

Evan Tarver

Based on True Events

1411 N. Mansfield Ave.
Los Angeles, CA, 90028
evan@evantarver.com

FADE IN.

INT. TEXAS DINER (AUSTIN) - LATE MORNING

Black and white checkered floors, fluorescent lights above. Red booths against dusty windows, FOUR MEN eating together.

Opposite, a long counter lined with barstools. A neon Coca-Cola sign hangs behind it, retro, if not for the year...

SUPER: AUSTIN, TEXAS - 1962

A gruff DINER COOK rings a bell, lit cigarette in his mouth.

DINER COOK

Order up!

An older waitress (MARLOW, 40s) ushers a trainee (JUDY CATHEY, 20s) over to the counter.

Judy is bright-eyed and innocent, apron and knee-length skirt immaculate, hair in an elaborate bun.

Marlow is tired and disheveled. She hands Judy a plate.

MARLOW

Order ready for Tim.

She sticks a coffee pot in Judy's other hand.

MARLOW (CONT'D)

He always tips well. Just smile, put the plate down, ask if he wants coffee, and then leave without being a bother. Can you do that?

Judy nods, turns to go, unstable on her heels.

Marlow steadies her, looking Judy's young form up and down.

MARLOW (CONT'D)

Careful...

Her voice trails. And then, almost to reassure herself:

MARLOW (CONT'D)

You'll be fine; you'll learn.

Judy looks at the four men - TIM OVERTON (30s) and posse.

They laugh, loud, cigarette smoke curling from the booth.

Judy approaches. The men grow silent, staring.

JUDY CATHEY
Country fried steak and eggs?

TIM OVERTON
Over here, sugar.

Tim is well dressed, cowboy hat and blazer, no tie.

Judy remembers to smile, puts the plate down, turns to go.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)
Coffee?

He motions with his empty mug. Judy refills it.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)
For my boys, too?

None one else offers their cup.

Judy leans over the table, filling the empty mugs.

The men look at her cleavage.

JUDY CATHEY
Anything else for you, gentleman?

FAT JERRY (30s), short, strong, and well-named, snorts.

FAT JERRY
Gentleman? Shit.

TIM OVERTON
Come now, Jerry, I'm sure Miss...?

JUDY CATHEY
Judy. Judy Cathey

TIM OVERTON
I'm sure Miss Judy knows a
gentleman when she sees one.
(off her look)
Now how does a classy lady like you
come to be in this here diner?

JUDY CATHEY
(blushing)
I'm from Corpus Christi - saving
for nursing school.

TIM OVERTON
Working here? Gal like you could do
better.

JUDY CATHEY

Could I?

TIM OVERTON

Why, sure. How much they pay you?

JUDY CATHEY

Thirty dollars a week.

The men laugh.

JUDY CATHEY (CONT'D)

Plus tips.

Tim silences them. He's nice; soft.

TIM OVERTON

I know a place that pays more.

(beat)

Work's more fun, too.

Ring! The diner door opens, a break in conversation. In walks HARVEY GANN (late 40s), plain-clothed and unassuming.

Tim turns sour. His men bristle. They get up.

Tim writes his number on a napkin, hands it to Judy.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)

Give me a call. Name's Tim.

He pulls out a wad of cash, places a large bill on the table.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)

Come on, Y'all, I've suddenly lost my appetite.

Tim leaves, his plate untouched, coffee mug steaming.

His men follow, shouldering past Harvey as they go.

EXT. TEXAS DINER (AUSTIN) - CONTINUOUS

Four American-made muscle cars wait in the dusty parking lot, surrounded by hot, flat countryside.

Tim and gang climb into separate vehicles, speed away.

Judy watches from the doorway. Behind her, Marlow.

MARLOW

Best forget about them, Judy.

Marlow returns to work. Judy lingers - she can't.

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES.

EXT. AUSTIN DIRT ROADS (MOVING) - AFTERNOON

Tim and gang drive muscle cars west down East Fourth Street.

To the left and right, nothing but barren farmland, remnants of the dust bowl.

Downtown Austin looms ahead, the Capitol building gleaming in the late-afternoon sun.

On the other side are beautiful mansions lining the Colorado River - a clear divide between east and west.

CUT TO:

EXT. TARRYTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD (WEST AUSTIN) - NIGHT

Halloween in 1960s Austin - lawless. Mayhem, everywhere.

Teenagers run from mansion to mansion, throwing eggs and water balloons at buildings, cars, and people.

Fist fights break out. A flaming tire rolls down the street.

AUSTIN P.D. does its best to keep the peace.

Tim Overton and posse - Fat Jerry, HANK BOWEN (20s), FREDDIE HEDGES (20s), and brother DARRELL OVERTON (20s) - walk down a wide street with bats, chains, and duffle bags in hand.

TIM OVERTON

Alright, Y'all.

The five men fan out, picking mansions that look unoccupied.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. TARRYTOWN MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

The house is quiet and beautiful - ornate furniture, crown molding throughout. We hear rattling in the kitchen, then...

SMASH! A glass door shatters, it's wood frame still locked.

In walks Tim Overton, right through the now missing pane.

Next is Hank Bowen, reaching through the door and unlocking it, swinging the frame open and walking through, then...

SLAM! He closes it on Freddie Hedges.

Freddie jumps back, shakes his head, steps through the broken entrance without bothering to open it again.

INT. TARRYTOWN MANSION (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

Tim turns around, annoyed.

TIM OVERTON
Will you hens stop clucking?

His voice is calm, but demanding.

Freddie and Hank snap to attention.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)
Check upstairs, I'll look down here.

The lackeys exit toward the ornate spiral staircase.

Tim shakes his head, pokes around in drawers and cabinets, moving through the house like an experienced burglar.

Next, the dining room - rummaging through the china cabinet.

He considers a silver spoon, breathes on it, polishes it with a shirt sleeve, puts it in his bag, then...

Ring! The doorbell.

Tim freezes, head snapping towards the front door.

He tip-toes over, soft, looks through the peephole.

On the other side is a group of YOUNG KIDS, dressed in costumes and holding pillowcases full of candy.

INT. TARRYTOWN MANSION (UPSTAIRS) - CONTINUOUS

Hank and Freddie snoop around the master suite.

Freddie opens dresser drawers, one-by-one. He finds a pair of woman's underwear, holds it up for Hank to see, then...

Ring! The same doorbell. They freeze.

Freddie pulls out a gun, previously hidden.

INT. TARRYTOWN MANSION (DOWNSTAIRS) - CONTINUOUS

Tim pauses, unsure what to do.

Enter Hank and Freddie.

HANK BOWEN

What's up?

Tim shrugs.

Freddie raises his gun, reaches for the handle.

Tim stops him.

TIM OVERTON

It's just a bunch of kids.

Beat.

FREDDIE HEDGES

Kids can talk to cops, too.

Freddie goes for the handle again.

TIM OVERTON

Jesus, Freddie.

Tim grabs the gun, replacing it with a bowl of candy.

He opens the door.

EXT. TARRYTOWN MANSION - CONTINUOUS

YOUNG KIDS

Trick or treat!

TIM OVERTON

Well, look at all of you! Happy Halloween.

Tim pushes Freddie forward.

Freddie doles out the candy, plastic smile on his face.

He pauses at a CHILD DRESSED AS A POLICE OFFICER, skips him.

FREDDIE HEDGES

Sorry, I don't like --

Tim hits him in the back of the head.

FREDDIE HEDGES (CONT'D)
 ...Missing Austin's finest.

He pours the rest of the bowl into the child's pillowcase.

The kids' jaw's drop, mouths agape.

FREDDIE HEDGES (CONT'D)
 Stay out of trouble, ya hear?

Freddie leaves. Tim smiles.

TIM OVERTON
 Make sure you share.

INT. TARRYTOWN MANSION (DOWNSTAIRS) - CONTINUOUS

Tim closes the door, gets back to work.

Hank claps Freddie on the back, ushering him upstairs.

HANK BOWEN
 Doesn't that make you feel good?

The look on Freddie's face says it doesn't.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Man from diner, Harvey Gann, leans over a desk littered with papers, looking at a map of Austin.

He wears a plaid shirt, top buttons open, police badge dangling from his neck, cowboy hat on his head.

He calls over a uniformed POLICE OFFICER.

HARVEY GANN
 Another one.

POLICE OFFICER
 Another one of what, sir?

HARVEY GANN
 Another God damn Halloween. Another coordinated robbery attempt.

POLICE OFFICER
 Attempt?

HARVEY GANN
 Successful attempt.
 (beat)
 For now.

POLICE OFFICER
 You have a lead, then?

HARVEY GANN
 I don't need a lead, I know who it
 was.

POLICE OFFICER
 Oh?

HARVEY GANN
 Yeah, but I can't prove it. Not
 yet, but I will, even if I have to
 search all of God damn Dixieland.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN NEWSROOM - DAY

Desks everywhere. Reporters slave over typewriters, manically trying to meet deadlines - a state of controlled panic.

Executive editor DON BROWN (40s), groomed mustache and laser focus, stands hunched over a map of Tarrytown, calm.

DON BROWN
 Lou!

A portly reporter (LOU VEGA, 60s), elder statesman of the newspaper, makes his way over, small minnow in tow.

The young reporter in his wake is JACKIE SANDERS (20s), wearing a classic reporter's outfit, pad of paper in hand, trying her best to look the part.

LOU VEGA
 What's up?

DON BROWN
 Eleven, can you believe that?
 Eleven.

LOU VEGA
 I can believe it.

JACKIE SANDERS
 Eleven?

DON BROWN
 (hopeful)
 Yes?

JACKIE SANDERS
 Eleven of what?

DON BROWN
 (to Lou)
 Who is this?

Jackie thrusts her hand forward.

JACKIE SANDERS
 Jackie Sanders, sir.

Don doesn't shake it.

LOU VEGA
 Fresh meat for the bullpen.

DON BROWN
 So you're my new reporter.
 Investigative?

JACKIE SANDERS
 I'd like to be, sir.

LOU VEGA
 We're starting her off with some
 easier beats. You know, parades,
 community picnics, help get her sea
 legs.

Don walks away, beckons the two reporters to follow.

They snake through the building's bustling hallways.

DON BROWN
 Eleven. Eleven houses in Tarrytown
 were knocked over on Halloween.
 Police say the total rake was well
 over twenty thousand, give or take
 a few diamonds.
 (beat)
 Lou, we need somebody on this.

LOU VEGA
 We've got somebody on this.

DON BROWN
 Lou, crime is up. Vagrancy is up.
 Racial tension is up.

(MORE)

DON BROWN (CONT'D)
Austin is headed in the wrong
direction and we don't have
anything to say about it.

LOU VEGA
Don --

DON BROWN
Want another number? Thirteen.
Thirteen unsolved robberies in the
past two years. Everything from
drugstores to bookstores, but never
enough to cause attention. Now, I'm
no mathematician, but by my count,
these robberies add up to nearly
two hundred thousand in stolen
loot. Unrelated petty crimes, or
connected? Planned? A coordinated
robber's guild, if you will, always
flying under the radar, working
together, but independently.
(beat)
Where's that story? That's what we
owe the people of Austin. A bright
light, shining on the entrenched
and persistent crime in this town.

They stop walking, standing just outside Don's office.

LOU VEGA
It's unrelated, Don. I don't want
to glorify petty criminals in the
Statesman.

JACKIE SANDERS
I have a theory.

DON BROWN
Do you?

JACKIE SANDERS
(hesitating)
What about Tim Overton?

DON BROWN
What about him?

JACKIE SANDERS
Couldn't he do something like this?
He has the friends for it, and the
temperament.

LOU VEGA

Overton and his boys? No way.
Criminals, yes. Sociopaths, maybe.
But masterminds? No.
(to Don)
You've met him. I don't think Tim
has the ambition, or the brain.

Beat. Don considers it.

DON BROWN

Put her on assignment. Give her
what we already know about Overton
and his gang. See what she can come
up with.

Jackie and Lou are both shocked.

LOU VEGA

But Don --

DON BROWN

Now, Lou.

Don walks into his office, closes the door, avoids protest.

Lou turns to Jackie.

LOU VEGA

I'd drop this if I were you. The
Overton boys might not be smart,
but that doesn't mean they're not
dangerous.

CUT TO:

INT. M&M COURTS MOTEL - NIGHT

PROSTITUTES in the lobby. Tim Overton and gang lounging
around, popping pills and shooting up, women in their laps.

HATTIE VALDES (60s) works the front counter - short, stout,
and steely, pistol in her garter.

Tim smokes a cigar, dumps a bag onto a table. Diamonds,
jewels, and cash rain down.

He shakes it for good measure. A few stragglers rattle out.

FAT JERRY

Which hen you got for me, Hattie?

HATTIE VALDEZ
Pick one yourself, Jerry.

JERRY
Pick one myself? You see what we
got here, don't you?

He tosses a diamond across the room to Hattie.

She catches it with one hand, stashes it in her brazier,
scans the room, signals two girls over to his waiting lap.

TIM OVERTON
Slow down, Jerry, no need to blow
your load so fast.
(beat)
Or ours.

Fat Jerry's too preoccupied to hear.

Tim looks around, everyone equally absorbed by female talent.

He gets up, walks past a PROSTITUTE on his way to Hattie.

The prostitute holds a silver tray. Tim places a necklace on
it, pearl by pearl.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)
Meet me in my room.

The prostitute smiles, walks down the hall, experienced.

Tim continues over to Hattie. She eyes him suspiciously.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)
Nice place you got here.

HATTIE VALDEZ
What do you want, Overton?

TIM OVERTON
Now, why do I have to want
something?

HATTIE VALDEZ
Trick in your bed, and you're out
here talking to me? Cut the shit.

TIM OVERTON
(smiling)
I like you, Hattie, I really do.

Tim acts like he's been struck by an idea.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)
Say, my outfit and I are expanding
into greener pastures, entering new
markets. A partnership could
be...mutually beneficial.

Hattie snorts, leans in.

HATTIE VALDEZ
A partnership? With you? You might
be a pimp, Overton, but I run
prostitution here in Austin.

Tim smiles, slides a jewel across the counter.

TIM OVERTON
It's not just prostitution that
interests me.

Hattie looks down at the gleaming rock, back at Tim.

HATTIE VALDEZ
My daddy always told me that pigs
get fat, but hogs get slaughtered.

Tim laughs, give her a pat on the cheek, soft, but dangerous.

He walks down the hall in search of his whore, whistling an
old country tune.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE OVERTON'S APARTMENT - LATER

The apartment complex is beat-up and worn.

Tim's car skids into the driveway, stopping abruptly.

Tim exits the car, drunk, loose tie, ruffled shirt and coat.

He stumbles towards the front door.

INT. THE OVERTON'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Dark and quiet. TWO GIRLS asleep in their shared room.

Tim enters, loud.

He stumbles through the home, makes it to his bedroom.

Inside, Tim's wife SUE OVERTON (20s) is awake, waiting.

Tim notices Sue, stops - ashamed, but too proud to show it.

TIM OVERTON

What?

SUE OVERTON

Nothing.

TIM OVERTON

Why you up then?

SUE OVERTON

Waiting.

TIM OVERTON

Yeah, for what?

SUE OVERTON

You promised my kids you'd have dinner with them.

TIM OVERTON

Your kids?

SUE OVERTON

Yeah. My kids.

TIM OVERTON

I was out.

SUE OVERTON

At Hattie's?

TIM OVERTON

I had business.

Sue shakes her head, fed up.

SUE OVERTON

You're weak, you know that?
(off his look)
You do, don't you? Just like your
deadbeat father --

Tim can't control his temper, his weakness.

TIM OVERTON

Don't bring him up under my roof!

SUE OVERTON

Our roof.

TIM OVERTON

I found you, Sue, don't you forget that. Who were you before me? A sad, single mother, husband in jail, no job to support her two beautiful girls. A heroin addict, a whore. I found you, Sue. I pulled you up off the pavement. I gave you a life.

(beat)

I promised? I'll tell you what I promised. I promised you and your kids wouldn't starve, that your ex-husband wouldn't beat you. That's what I promised.

Sue confronts Tim, Puts a finger to his chest.

SUE OVERTON

Look, you can lie to me. You can use me as a trick. You can stay out all night, hell, stay out all week. I don't care. But don't lie to my kids. They've had enough failed father figures already.

TIM OVERTON

Failed father figure? Just because I was working too damn hard to eat dinner like a happy family?

Tim gets a drunken idea - tightens his tie, flattens his jacket, checks his watch.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)

Well, hell, it's not too late, is it? We can still have dinner.

Tim storms down the hallway.

SUE OVERTON

(hissing)

Tim, Tim!

He reaches the kitchen, thrusts open a green-cream fridge, grabs deli meats, mayo, mustard.

Next, a knife. Menacing. Sue tries to restrain him.

Tim throws her off, grabs bread, makes two deli sandwiches.

He carries them towards the girls' bedroom.

SUE OVERTON (CONT'D)

(crying)
Tim, please, no! Please.

Tim ignores her, opens the bedroom door, flips on the lights.

TIM OVERTON

Wake up girls, wake up.

The two girls are in opposite twin beds, groggy.

They rub sleep from their eyes, confused. Tim approaches.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)

Your mom wants us to have dinner.

He reaches down, puts a sandwich in each one of their faces.

They refuse, look at their mother, frozen in the doorway.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)

Come on, girls, you gotta eat.

They refuse again, wild in their eyes.

TIM OVERTON (CONT'D)

I said eat your dinner!

Tim smashes the sandwiches into the girls' mouths, rubs their faces in the food, condiments everywhere. They cry.

Sue lunges forward. Tim backhands her. She falls to the floor in a heap.

Her body on the ground brings Tim to his senses.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK: INT. TIM OVERTON'S CHILDHOOD HOME (1946) - NIGHT

Tim Overton's father, SNOOKS OVERTON (30s), sits at a beat-up kitchen table, drinking. His shoulders are slouched, poor and ashamed of it.

Enter IMA NELL OVERTON (20s), broad-shouldered and strong, wife of Snooks and mother to all five of his boys.

She says something Snooks doesn't like. He grabs her arm.

Ima struggles to get away. Snooks hits her, hard.

CUT TO:

END FLASHBACK: EXT. THE OVERTON'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Back to present (1962), Tim stands in the driveway, distraught, trying to unlock his car door.

He can't. His hands are shaking.

He lights a cigarette, takes a deep drag, calms himself.

He opens the door, speeds off.