

BIKE WRECK BY QUI NGUYEN

ONE

Lights come up on the MESSENGER who's straddled on his bike.

MAN, THE

A messenger: One that carries messages or performs errands as: A person employed to carry telegrams, letters, or parcels. An envoy to another person, party, or government. A bearer of news. A forerunner. A harbinger. A prophet.

Lights come up on the DELIVERY BOY who's on his bike.

MAN, THE (CONT'D)

Delivery: The act of conveying or delivering. A formal act of transference. The act or manner of throwing or discharging. The act of giving birth; parturition. Utterance or enunciation. The act or manner of speaking or singing. The act of releasing or rescuing or giving.

DELIVERY BOY rides up next to the MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

What you got today?

DELIVERY BOY

Egg drop soup and eggroll.

MESSENGER

Got a fortune cookie?

DELIVERY BOY

Always have fortune cookie.

MESSENGER

Can I have it?

DELIVER BOY

Man say he wants his cookie. Very specific.

MESSENGER

Come on, man.

DELIVERY BOY

What you have?

MESSENGER

What do I always have? A fuckin' letter or check or some shit from the same goddamn schmuck from midtown. Fuckin' lazy midtown motherfucker. Wants me to bring it down to the financial district where I ain't even gonna make it through the gate, pass the fuckin' desk man, the fuckin' door jockey, that fucker that opens the door.

DELIVERY BOY

I never get pass door guy either.

MESSENGER

You fuckin' deliver food, son. This is highly confidential business shit. Fuckin' Wallstreet stuff. This is important. That's food.

DELIVERY BOY

Man on island with no food dies. Man on island with no mail has to pay no bills.

MESSENGER

Where the fuck you come up with that?

DELIVERY BOY

Fortune cookie.

MESSENGER

Door guys can suck a whole lotta my fuckin' black dick. Fuckin' traitoress bitches.

DELIVERY BOY

Traitors?

MESSENGER

Brothers from fuckin' Crown Heights or the fuckin' Bronx or worse, fuckin' Jersey or some shit, gets paid a piss over minimum wage to dress like a fuckin' monkey to guard a bunch of rich white Connecticut fucks. To protect them from who? From brothers like me, brothers that they haven't re-enslaved by using trickle down economics or some shit. That's sick.

DELIVERY BOY

Your brother work for Wallstreet?

MESSENGER

Black dudes, man. And those black dudes, those "brothers" they've hired as desk boys or door boys or valet boys or butt boys, do you know how they look at me? Like I'm black.

DELIVERY BOY

But you *are* black.

MESSENGER

But they see me as black, as in the color scary, as in I'll rape and pillage and rob you kind of scary. Black, like the dark side of yang. Black, like the way their bosses see me.

DELIVERY BOY

You have issue.

MESSENGER

Thicker than the Sunday New York Times, son. I'm the Encyclopedia Britannica of fucked up shiznit.

DELIVERY BOY

We still on tonight?

MESSENGER

If you give me the fortune cookie.

DELIVERY BOY

No.

MESSENGER

I'll give you a dollar. Come on, I can buy like ten for a dollar.

DELIVERY BOY

Then you go to Chinese restaurant and buy ten cookie. I have to deliver this one.

MESSENGER

Ain't the point. I want that cookie. That cookie you gots right there, son.

DELIVERY BOY

Tonight, we have lesson, right?

MESSENGER

Hmmm . . .I don't know.

DELIVERY BOY

What? But it Thursday, every Thursday, you teach me English.

MESSENGER

Well, I might be too exhausted. All this riding around today. No food. It can't be good on the system. Too much work. The body needs nourishment. Fuel. To power -

DELIVERY BOY

You want fortune cookie this bad?

MESSENGER

Hell's yeah, I want the fortune cookie this bad.

DELIVERY BOY

I can't. I lose job.

MESSENGER

Son, after tonight, you won't need a job.

DELIVERY BOY

Always need job. Need money. American way.

MESSENGER

That's all about to change.

DELIVERY BOY

Never change.

MESSENGER

Tonight, I'm going to teach you more than just English, son.

DELIVERY BOY

What you teach?

MESSENGER

How to make money. How to get money. The real American way.

DELIVERY BOY

How that?

MESSENGER

Worry not. I got it wired. No more of this delivery shit.

DELIVERY BOY

No more delivery?

MESSENGER

No more messages either.

DELIVERY BOY gives MESSENGER the cookie.
MESSENGER smashes the cookie and takes out the
fortune.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

Keep your emotions in check. In bed. Ha!

TWO

Lights come up on MAN, THE. He is on the phone.

MAN, THE

Look, I don't give a shit if you have to sell your baby to pay for it, we had a deal. An agreement. You signed papers. I have, in my possession, legal documents that . . . hold on. Yes? Who? Yeah, let him in.

Sorry about that, my secretary . . . what? You don't like the tone I'm using? Would you prefer I use a different tone? How about a different language? Konichiwa? Que pasa? Bonjour? Look, pardon my fucking French, but you're putting me in an extremely difficult situation. Would you like to talk to my lawyer? Would you?

MESSENGER enters.

MAN, THE (CONT'D)

Look, I'm going to say this calmly. Cause I'm a calm man. A relaxed man. I do Yoga three times a week. I'm Zen. Calmly, if you don't find a way to pay the fucking bill, I'll have you arrested and take your home and your wife and your kids and then . . . I'll eat your dog for the fun of it. And then, after you spend a good long while contemplating in your gray concrete cell on how low your life has sunk, you'll still have to pay me when you get out. Got it? Are we clear? Good.

MAN, THE hangs up the phone.

MAN, THE (CONT'D)

Sorry for the wait.

MESSENGER

I need you to sign . . .

MAN, THE

Boy, am I glad to see that!

MESSENGER

Boy?

MAN, THE

Don't get all militant. It's a figure of speech and I wasn't referring to you. I've been waiting for this all . . .

MESSENGER

Sorry, I got backed up. Sign here.

MAN, THE

Why does my letter smell like . . . wonton soup?

MESSENGER

Don't know. It's a mystery. Signature, please.

MAN, THE

This isn't the first time, you know?

MESSENGER

Know what?

MAN, THE

The smell.

MESSENGER

Tell your friends not to send their stuff during lunch break.

MAN, THE

We should talk. You don't mind if we talk, right? You do have the time to converse a bit.

MESSENGER

Well, honestly . . .

MAN, THE

Good. We're friends, right? I mean, not social friends or drinking buddies or anything, but, at least, more than acquaintances, right? I mean, hell, I see you at least once or twice a day? That's more than I even see my kids and so, thusly, I can say we have created a relationship, haven't we? A certain bond.

MESSENGER

I really wouldn't call it that.

MAN, THE

Perspectives, my friend. Perspectives. And as a friend, not as a person who's been using your company's messenger service for over a number of years or a person who's tipped you very nicely for your expediency and efficiency, but as a friend, I'd like to ask you something . . . and you can be honest about this . . . do you think of me as a hard man?

MESSENGER

I just need you to sign . . .

MAN, THE

I'm not a hard man. I have simple wants. One want is for my customers to be happy. To be satisfied.

MESSENGER

You want me to be happy?

MAN, THE

If you were my customer, I'd strive for your happiness. I'd bend over backwards to make sure you were content with the products I've given you.

MESSENGER

Is that what you were doing on the phone?

MAN, THE

Well, another want is for my customers to be honest with me. If I sold you a fridge for instance. I'd expect it to work, be clean, to keep your food cold. If it didn't, I'd personally come over and fix it. I'd replace it if it were broken. In return, all I'd want is the payment that you owe. Not too bad of a deal? For you to pay the amount that was agreed upon.

MESSENGER

That was for a fridge?

MAN, THE

Would you threaten someone's life over a fridge?

MESSENGER

No.

MAN, THE

It wasn't a fridge.

MESSENGER

Cool. So, your signature . . .

MAN, THE

Which brings me to you. My only other want. Besides a clean environment, a happy family, and customer satisfaction is that my letters, checks, and such don't smell like Chinese food when it gets to me. Not that I have anything against the Chinese or their food. I just don't particularly like their ethnic odor on my documents. You dig, bro?

MESSENGER

Bro?

MAN, THE

I'm just saying . . . what if when I paid you, tipped you, before I gave you your cash, I dipped it in barbecue sauce. What would you say?

MESSENGER

Where's the celery?

MAN, THE

Funny. Seriously. Or what if I dipped it in vinegar or shit . . . what if I dipped your money in shit? Actual human fecal matter. How would you react? Would that upset you that your money smelled like crap? What would you say to me?

MESSENGER steps up to MAN, THE and starts pounding his face in. He brutally beats and kicks MAN, THE to the ground. He keeps hitting and hitting and hitting and hitting. MAN, THE's body flinches a couple of times. MESSENGER stands up and steps back into the position he was before the attack. MAN, THE sits up.

MAN, THE (CONT'D)

So, you understand? You get my point?

MESSENGER

Yep.

MAN, THE

I knew you would.

THREE

DELIVERY BOY

This not seem right. This not feel like good way to make money.

MESSENGER

Keep your eyes open, man. Trust me. I ever steer you wrong?

DELIVERY BOY

You do this all the time?

MESSENGER

Only when I'm really strapped for cash, son. It's no big deal. Just keep your shit in check and you'll be fine. Remember, if someone wants to get fucked tonight, make sure it's their ass that limping, not yours. Got that?

DELIVERY BOY

How about that girl?

MESSENGER

That girl right there? You want to hit up on that girl? That blonde ass white girl?

DELIVERY BOY

She look pretty.

MESSENGER

Son, we ain't out looking to fall in love. We looking to score. To get paid. Now, that girl. That fine ass college girl you just pointed at, that's the type of lady we pay for, not get money from. Got that?

DELIVERY BOY

We look for ugly girl?

MESSENGER

Ugly girls and rich dudes.

DELIVERY BOY

Dudes?

MESSENGER

Men.

DELIVERY BOY

Man? Oh no, I not go for man. No way.

MESSENGER

Men have the money, son. That's where it's at. They rolling with dough.

Too dangerous. DELIVERY BOY

It ain't dangerous. MESSENGER

I want to go for girl. Safer. DELIVERY BOY

MESSENGER
Look, son, I know it's your first time and shit, but trust me, men are the way to go. Especially the white dudes roaming the village. They're so fucking scrawny, they like bitches anyhow.

But they not woman. DELIVERY BOY

What you got in your pants? MESSENGER

You know what I have in pants. DELIVERY BOY

Whip it out. MESSENGER

Not here. Everybody see. DELIVERY BOY

MESSENGER
I ain't saying wave it around and shit. Just take it out. Hold it in your hand. It'll make you feel better. At least it'll get you to stop being so nervous.

No one see? DELIVERY BOY

No one will see. MESSENGER

DELIVERY BOY pulls out a gun.

Here it is. DELIVERY BOY

MESSENGER
There it is. Now, look, you point that motherfucka in somebody's face, they're not going to fuck with you.

DELIVERY BOY

What if they have gun too?

MESSENGER

Don't matter. When you point that at someone's skull, they're paralyzed. Even if they got a gat, they aren't going for it.

DELIVERY BOY

Have you ever shot anyone?

MESSENGER

I've shot at people before. Never actually hit anyone, though.

DELIVERY BOY

You miss?

MESSENGER

No, I didn't miss.

DELIVERY BOY

I've shot someone before.

MESSENGER

Bullshit.

DELIVERY BOY

I have.

MESSENGER

When?

DELIVERY BOY

Why you think I come to America?

MESSENGER

For freedom and shit.

DELIVERY BOY

No.

MESSENGER

Money?

DELIVERY BOY

No.

MESSENGER

You just want to be an American.

Run away from police.

DELIVERY BOY

You're running from the cops.

MESSENGER

I bad man in home country.

DELIVERY BOY

You're a bad man? You? Then why are you scared to point a gun at a dude, then?

MESSENGER

Never point a gun at man and not kill them.

DELIVERY BOY

What?

MESSENGER

I kill many people.

DELIVERY BOY

Silence as the MESSENGER stares at the DELIVERY BOY.

MESSENGER

You're fucking with me, right?

Beat.

DELIVERY BOY

Yes, I fuck with you.

MESSENGER

You almost got me.

DELIVERY BOY

No, I got you.

MESSENGER

No, you didn't.

DELIVERY BOY

Yes. Yes, I did.

DELIVERY BOY sees someone pass.

DELIVERY BOY (CONT'D)

Hey. How about him?

BIKE WRECK
by Qui Nguyen

MESSENGER

The guy with the walker?

DELIVERY BOY

He not fight back.

MESSENGER

You sick, man. You really fucking sick.

FOUR

THE MAN on the phone

MAN, THE

Trust me, it's a good neighborhood. No, it's a great neighborhood. It's not even up and coming. It's came. It's here. Hon, really, would I be doing this if I didn't think so? I love her. She's my daughter too. My genes. Your genes. Our daughter. Please, don't make this into a thing. I don't want to get into an argument. I'm already having a crappy day. A hilariously bad day. I already went apeshit on some fucking messenger earlier . . . yes, I know. Yes. Yes, I'll apologize. But this isn't about him. This is about our kid, our offspring. Look, I already signed the papers . . . I came here right after work. Hon, it's safe. Really. I'm standing right here, after dark, and I don't see any drug dealers or gang-bangers or anything of the sort. Well, besides a couple of hookers and a guy that's obviously a pimp, but - I'm joking. It's a joke. I'm pulling your leg. The intent was for you to laugh.

Hon, It's close to the university and she'll love it. There's a million restaurants and cool places to go, places we'd go to if we were her age.

Hon, that was ten years ago. This is the now. It's a different place. A different environment altogether. It's the glorious, the trendy, the very very safe and secure village. Look, I'll show you.

HEY, I'M A WHITE GUY AND I HAVE LOTS OF MONEY!

Do you hear any gunshots? No. Do you hear anyone running over to mug me? No. Do you hear anything that would make you suspect that I'm in danger? No. See?

Lights down.

FIVE

Light come up on MESSENGER and DELIVERY BOY.
They are drinking 40's of OE.

DELIVERY BOY

Five night ago, I deliver food to five chicken wing white boy. They order three beef with broccoli, one sesame chicken, order of small vegetable fried rice, and five eggrolls. It raining. It rain hard. Like dogs and cats. I ride ten block in rain to bring food. When I get to dorm room, they all eating hamburger. They say I take too long. They say "No, ching-chong, we no want fly lice. You go now. Chop-chop". I ride ten block back to restaurant with bag of wet food. I tell manager that chicken wing white boys not want it. He say it my fault, make me pay for it. I make only twenty dollar tip that night. Food cost me forty dollar.

MESSENGER

I fuckin' hate those kids, man. Fuckin' hate them. They move into our neighborhood thinking they own us and shit cause their daddy is paying rent. Fuck that.

DELIVERY BOY

I tell truth. I like it better ten year ago.

MESSENGER

This used to be a place, man. Alphabet city. A Fuckin' scary place, man. We were like the fuckin' Bronx in the day. Or Crown Heights. Or fuckin' east Harlem or some shit. There weren't no fuckin' mid-western kids running around this place. But now . . . look at it.

DELIVERY BOY

It very different.

MESSENGER

It's gentrified, son. Sterilized. It's NYC's version of apartheid.
We're fuckin' infested, man. Getting runned out. Fuckin' NYU college fucks, fuckin' kids from Ohio, rich trust fund babies. We got more white kids than an episode of "Saved by the Bell".

DELIVERY BOY

What is Save by Bell?

MESSENGER

This used to be a place a brother could be from and get respect. It gave you cred. Now . . . it's fuckin' Woodstock, bro. They even got a fuckin' musical about this fuckin' place. With puppets. Fuckin' puppets, man. What the fuck happened? This is Alphabet City. Don't you know not to be here after dark?
Don't you?
Alphabet City is Dead. Long live Guiliani-land.

BIKE WRECK
by Qui Nguyen

MESSENGER takes a drink from his bottle. It's empty.

MAN, THE (OFFSTAGE)
HEY, I'M A WHITE GUY AND I HAVE LOTS OF MONEY!

MESSENGER
Yo, man. I think we just found ourselves a candidate.

DELIVERY BOY
Chicken wing white boy . . .

MESSENGER
Chicken wing white boy, indeed.

MESSENGER hands his bottle to the DELIVERY BOY

MESSENGER (CONT'D)
Hey, dude, can I borrow your phone? It look nice. Is that a Nokia?

SIX

Lights come up on MAN, THE.

MAN, THE

Deliverance: The act of delivering or the condition of being delivered. To rescue from bondage or danger. A public expressed opinion or judgement, such as a verdict of a jury. To do away.

DELIVERY BOY and MESSENGER enter. DELIVERY BOY points a gun at MAN, THE's head.

DELIVERY BOY

Give me mother, moneyfucker!

MESSENGER

Incorrect.

DELIVERY BOY

Give me fucker money, mother!

MESSENGER

Incomprehensible.

DELIVERY BOY

Give me . . . fuck!

MESSENGER

That's certainly not it.

DELIVERY BOY

Why I not just shoot him?

MESSENGER

You can't just shoot him. That would be incorrect. Improper.

MAN, THE

I agree.

MESSENGER

Shut up.

DELIVERY BOY

I shoot him and take the money. Easy. No need talk. Just . . . Bang! Then take money. Easy.

MESSENGER

This is why your people always get a bad rap. You don't know how to intimidate properly.

DELIVERY BOY

I don't what properly?

MESSENGER

That's why you're always getting walked over. Ignored. You need to stand up, son. Keep the man from stepping on you.

DELIVERY BOY

No one step on me.

MESSENGER

Not literally.

DELIVERY BOY

And I standing.

MESSENGER

Yes, literally, you are standing.

DELIVERY BOY

I intimate.

MESSENGER

Intimidate.

DELIVERY BOY

Intidate.

MESSENGER

You need to learn to be scary.

MAN, THE

Actually, I find him pretty scary right now.

MESSENGER

I said . . . shut up.

DELIVERY BOY

Your way . . . too much talking. It tire brain.

MESSENGER

Point the gun at me.

DELIVERY BOY

I don't want to point at you.

MESSENGER

It's practice, man. Worry not. We cool.

DELIVERY BOY

Okay. I point the gun.

MESSENGER

MOTHERFUCKER, DON'T YOU EVER POINT A FUCKIN' GUN AT ME. Are you fucking insane? You best step off me.

DELIVERY BOY

But you say -

MESSENGER

I don't care if I beg you, bitch. If you ever pull this kinda shit again, I will beat the slant off your eyes and the yellow off your ass, you got me?

DELIVERY BOY

Yes. Yes.

MESSENGER

See, that's how you intimidate.

DELIVERY BOY

What?

MAN, THE

He said intimidate.

MESSENGER

Anyone talking to you?

MAN, THE

Sorry.

MESSENGER

Look, man, you got a gat and I got shit. See, you gotta learn how to impose threat. Got that, son? Don't take shit from nobody. Now, point that gun at me again and scare me.

DELIVERY BOY

But you just say -

MESSENGER

I was acting, man. As I said . . . Worry not. We cool.

DELIVERY BOY

Yes.

MESSENGER

MOTHERFUCKER. I just told you -

DELIVERY BOY

So sorry.

MESSENGER

Yo, man. Don't just back down. Talk some shit. Tell me "Shut the fuck up! Who's fuckin' packin and who's just standing there yapping like some cracked up hooka? Huh? I'm asking. Huh? Who got the fuckin' gun, bro? I do. The yellow man does. So shut the fuck up, nigga! Smell me?"

DELIVERY BOY

Smell you?

MAN, THE

It's an expression.

MESSENGER

Hello. Would you like to do this?

MAN, THE

Just trying to help.

MESSENGER

Be quiet.

DELIVERY BOY

I no understand.

MESSENGER

Just hold your shit like you're in a John Woo flick. Got me, son? Try it again. Be strong.

DELIVERY BOY

Yes.

MESSENGER

Yo, fool. I told you -

DELIVERY BOY

Shut fuck up. Who packin', huh? I say "Huh?" Who fuck the gun? I do. I fuck a gun. Smell me?

[Silence]

[MESSENGER breaks into hysterical laughter]

MESSENGER

Oh, damn.

DELIVERY BOY

What damn?

MESSENGER

That was some funny shit, yo.

DELIVERY BOY

What funny?

MESSENGER

"Who fuck the gun?" Ha!

MAN, THE

I have to agree, that was pretty funny.

MESSENGER

Fuckin' white boy thinks it's funny.

DELIVERY BOY

Not funny.

MESSENGER

Actually, it kinda was.

MAN, THE

Who fuck the gun?

MESSENGER

Ha!

DELIVERY BOY

Stop it.

MESSENGER

"Shut fuck up."

MAN, THE

Hehehe.

DELIVERY BOY

Stop.

MESSENGER

I say, "Huh?"

MAN, THE
I never can understand any of those guys. Learn how to speak English, you foreign fuck.

MESSENGER
Whoa.

DELIVERY BOY points the gun at MAN, THE.
MAN, THE
I was kidding.

MESSENGER
Think you went too far, bro.

MAN, THE
Hey, man. I was joking.

MESSENGER
I don't think my boy sees it that way.

MAN, THE
Hey. It was a joke.

MESSENGER
Yo, dude, I'd suggest you give him your wallet.

MAN, THE
My what?

MESSENGER
"Give fucker money, fucker."

MAN, THE hectically finds his wallet and slides it to
DELIVERY BOY

MAN, THE
Here.

MESSENGER
And that's how you rob somebody.

DELIVERY BOY
I don't want money.

MAN, THE
What?

MESSENGER
Hey, man. He gave you his cash.

I don't want cash.

DELIVERY BOY

Hey, man, put down the gun.

MESSENGER

Wait. I know you. You're my guy. My messenger guy. Is this about earlier?

MAN, THE

No.

MESSENGER

You're fucking with me, right? This is a big joke. You guys are funny. You really had me.

MAN, THE

Seriously.

MESSENGER

Yo, man, lesson's over.

DELIVERY BOY points the gun at Messenger

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

Hey. Seriously. Put it down.

DELIVERY BOY doesn't blink.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

You laugh at me.

DELIVERY BOY

I was kidding.

MESSENGER

He laugh at me.

DELIVERY BOY

DELIVERY BOY still does not move.

MESSENGER

Hey, man, don't play like you all crazy and shit. That ain't cool.

DELIVERY BOY points the gun at MAN, THE.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

Hey, man. What are you doing?

DELIVERY BOY

You scare?

MAN, THE

Come on. I get it. I was an asshole. I've learned my lesson.

DELIVERY BOY

You scare?

MAN, THE

You can drop the charade. I'm not buying it.

DELIVERY BOY

I say . . . you scare?

MAN, THE

No.

Silence

DELIVERY BOY lowers the gun.

MESSENGER

Yo, man, for a second there, I thought you really were going to -

DELIVERY BOY shoots MAN, THE in the stomach.

MAN, THE

Oh, fuck! Oh my fuck! You just shot me, you fucking Chinese fuck! I'm gonna kill you, you fucking gook fucking - Ow!!! I need a fucking doctor. Someone call a doctor. Please!

MAN, THE continues screaming and cursing.

DELIVERY BOY

Is that intimidating?

MESSENGER

Uh . . . yeah. Lesson over. Let's go get some pizza.

DELIVERY BOY

Who fucks the gun?

SEVEN

MAN, THE

Indifference: The state or quality of being indifferent. Having no marked feeling for or against. Being neither too much or too little; moderate. Being neither good nor bad. Being neither right nor wrong. Being neither. Neutral. Unaffected.

MESSENGER and DELIVERY BOY are straddled on their bikes. MESSENGER smashes fortune cookie after fortune cookie, reading his fortune. DELIVERY BOY goes through MESSENGER's mail.

MESSENGER

You will be a very fortunate in your business matters . . . in bed.

DELIVERY BOY

Ms. Stewart, who is the party of the first party, hereby, declares . . . too confusing.

MESSENGER

Not all is what it seems . . . in bed.

DELIVERY BOY

We are happy to inform you that our foundation will be fully supporting your project to build a special collegiate fund for students with special needs in the form of . . .

MESSENGER

Keep your expectations realistic. Not all goals are achievable . . . in bed.

DELIVERY BOY

Enclose is a check for . . . Fifty thousand dollar!

MESSENGER

Lucky numbers: 10 14 26 93 42 74 96 . . . in bed.

DELIVERY BOY

Fifty thousand dollar.

MESSENGER

Your luck will soon change . . .

DELIVERY BOY

In bed.

Lights down.

End of play.