

INKED IN RED

Written by

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EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - MAINE - MORNING

A nondescript delivery van sits idling on the side of the road in a typical lower middle-class neighborhood. Simple, modest homes.

A car pulls into a driveway half a block away and the delivery van begins to inch forward along the curb.

A man exits the vehicle and walks to the door.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - MORNING

The front door swings open and a man enters - JASON KEIL, mid 30's, once the popular high-school jock, now a divorced detective with a slight paunch. Traces of an old scar still show under his left eye.

The house is messy. Last night's dinner plate and glass left on a cluttered coffee table, along with a neat row of empty beer bottles.

Jason walks down a hallway to his bedroom where he slips off his shoulder holster and hangs it over the doorknob. He pulls off his tie--

There's a knock at the front door.

He looks through the door's peephole to find a shadowy figure in a baseball cap holding up a box, obscuring the man's face.

Jason opens the door and is immediately smashed in the face. A blur of white skin, tattoos, and white hair tucked into the baseball cap as the figure forces his way in.

Jason falls to the ground, his assailant on top of him. Fists pound his face. He struggles with the man, knocking his hat off, and long white hair falls down past the man's shoulders.

The shock of seeing this man over him speaks to a shared past. AESOP QUARRELS, 30, an albino, thin, with long white hair. Both arms are covered in TATTOOS. One arm depicts scenes of Hell, the other scenes of Heaven. There's a calm behind his eyes that belies the turmoil beneath the surface.

AESOP

This is your past catching up with you.

Aesop grabs a plate off the coffee table and smashes it into pieces, wielding a broken shard like a knife.

Jason scrambles to his feet, and Aesop plunges the shard into his back.

Jason screams--

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - PRESENT

Jason wakes with a start-mid scream, and thrashes wildly in bed. He scans the room, trying to control his breathing.

In anger, he grabs a water pitcher off the bed tray and throws it across the room, hitting the window blinds; they snap open.

Blinding afternoon light floods the room--

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Sunlight scorches a lone desolate stretch of two-lane highway. Heat waves shimmer off parched dead earth.

A car appears on the horizon. A lime-green 1969 Oldsmobile speeds along.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

Aesop drives. A fresh cut on his lower lip is just starting to scab. Heavy, pounding music blasts from the car stereo.

A WOMAN wearing a waitress' uniform sits in the passenger seat, slumped over in apparent sleep. Long black hair obscures her face and chest. A plastic name tag, "KIM," hangs loosely on her uniform.

Aesop throws a quick look in her direction, then turns the radio up louder.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The car speeds away as the sun sinks bellow the horizon.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Oldsmobile's headlights cut through the black night. In the distance, a neon sign flashes - "THE RUSTIC MOTEL"

The car pulls into the parking lot of this old two-story building with paint peeling off the walls. Attached to the motel is a small cafe.

(MORE)

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

The lobby is a dingy collage of tile floors, linoleum counters, and paneled walls. A hodgepodge of antique farming implements hang in no particular order on the walls.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DW CUTLIFF, late 50's, stringy hair-greasy personality, thick "Coke bottle" glasses, fidgety, sits on his couch watching TV and eating fried chicken. His face and hands covered in chicken crumbs.

Above him, a shelf containing odd knickknacks and snow globes looks out of place.

Headlights rake across the office window as Aesop's car pulls in.

DW is put-out by the interruption of his nightly routine. In an attempt to smooth out his rumpled T-shirt, he leaves streaks of chicken grease and fried batter on his shirt as he stands.

DW

Fuckin' balls.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

DW steps through his office door, into the lobby.

As Aesop emerges from the car, DW's eyes widen with a glimmer of recognition. He nervously straightens up the front counter.

Aesop steps inside, stopping to take in the bizarre room. DW brushes the rest of the chicken crumbs off his shirt.

DW

Well-uh, good evening, sir.

AESOP

I need a room.

DW looks past Aesop to the silhouette of the girl in the car's front seat.

DW

I'm sure I have something that'll suit yer needs. Will the two of you be needing that room for the night? Or--

(MORE)

DW (CONT'D)
(winks)
DW (CONT'D)

(MORE)
Is it just for a couple of hours?
Now... we can work that out too.

AESOP
Have you got a room...

Aesop looks around, as if this place wouldn't have every room available.

AESOP
Or not?

DW chokes out a nervous laugh.

DW
Does a hobby horse have a Hickory Dick?

DW stares at Aesop for an uncomfortable amount of time, his stupid smile unable to hide his growing unease.

DW
(mumbles)
Well, alright, that works just fine.

His fingers work the calculator feverishly.

DW
Okay, that'll be thirty-eight dollars... cash money, please.

DW's hand hovers over the registry book, pen in hand.

DW
Mister?

Aesop pulls out cash and tosses it on the counter, ignoring the question.

DW greedily snatches up the money and stares back at Aesop with a look of fascination and dread - having forgotten the task at hand.

Aesop returns the stare.

DW
Oh, yes...

DW snaps out of it, and gives Aesop his change.

DW
I gave you quarters. The-uh, bed's
got them magic fingers.

DW (CONT'D)
(wiggles his fingers)
I think you'll find them to your
liking... you enjoy yourself now.

Aesop grabs the change and turns to leave, but DW's
curiosity gets the better of common sense.

DW
Excuse me, but... you wouldn't be-
uh, well...

DW scratches his head. He doesn't wait for an answer that
isn't coming.

DW
Rumor is you-uh, he... was, I mean-
-

Aesop's intense gaze threatens to unhinge DW.

DW
(nervous laughter)
You know how people talk.

AESOP
Cafe still serving?

DW fidgets.

DW
Well-uh, yeah. You and the misses
might wanna grab a quick bite
before you retire for the evening,
though we'll be closin' up soon.

Aesop throws a furtive glance to the parked car.

AESOP
She's not hungry.

Aesop turns and walks into the cafe.

DW nervously strains his neck to get a better look at the
figure in the car.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A loud monitor alarm beeps incessantly--

Jason carefully gets dressed beside his hospital bed, each movement causing him to wince in pain. His naked torso is covered in terrible bruising and stitches.

Two NURSES and an ORDERLY burst into the room with a crash cart. They stop short as they see Jason out of bed, pulling a shirt over his head.

NURSE

Mr. Keil, what are you doing?! You can't be out of bed!

Jason is calm, but determined.

JASON

I'm leaving.

Jason grabs his detective badge off the rolling bed tray and clips it on his belt.

NURSE

You just had your second surgery, you need time to recover.

JASON

Sorry, can't do that, sweetheart.

Jason walks out.

The lead nurse picks up a newspaper lying on the bed - "Director Denies Patient Escape From State Mental Facility."

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - NIGHT

The cafe is equally as bizarre as the motel lobby.

Two men are dining in a booth. RUFUS BALLANTYNE, a hillbilly who fancies himself a nerdy academic, bone thin, hair slicked back, bow tie worn with his flannel shirt, and his brother, SEYMOUR BALLANTYNE, heavy, greasy hair with a patchy goatee. He wears a sleeveless T-shirt, exposing several rows of small puncture marks on his fleshy arms.

Both men stop their conversation and watch as Aesop enters. They exchange worried glances as he sits at a table close by.

From the kitchen, CLYDE, the cook, ugly, scarred, a lumbering giant, chops a slab of beef with a butcher knife. He gives Aesop a long leering stare--

INT. LIVING ROOM - BLACK AND WHITE - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

An overhead lamp casts harsh shadows on several figures sitting around a poker table. Sheriff EDSALL QUARRELS (Aesop's father), ruffled, mutton-chop side burns, with a perpetual scowl, and his "Poker Buddies," DW (who we've met), TEDDY, balding, with a paunch, CHARLIE SYKES, stylishly unstylish, wears rose colored glasses, and ALVIE, a teenager,

bent, afflicted with unspecified mental and physical ailments- Charlie's nephew.

Aesop, a child, watches from his bedroom doorway. Clyde and his unmistakable girth, hands a fistful of money to Edsall.

A pretty blonde, ANNABEL QUARRELS, late 20's, Aesop's mother, nervously motions Aesop back into his room. As the door closes, Clyde gets up from the table.

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

The kitchen door swings open and a waitress in a short skirt walks out. CANDICE CUTLIFF, 21, blonde, idealistic and a little naive, moves through life with the natural beauty of someone not fully aware of her affect on men.

Candice approaches Aesop, undaunted by his appearance. Aesop looks her up and down.

CANDICE

Hey there, what can I get for you tonight?

Aesop looks over his shoulder in the direction of the lobby, where DW tries to look busy while keeping an eye Candice.

CANDICE

That's my daddy.

AESOP

(deadpan)

You must be proud.

CANDICE

Oh yeah, daddy's a real good man, mostly, I mean... hey, you ain't one of those health department fellows, are you?

Clyde stops chopping.

Aesop shakes his head - no.

Clyde resumes his business.

Candice puts her hand on his tattooed Heaven arm, relieved.

CANDICE

So, what can I get you to eat?

AESOP

Pancakes, dry, and some eggs.

CANDICE

Sounds good, sweetie. I'll be right back with some coffee. You look a bit road weary.

AESOP

Just water, thanks.

CANDICE

Coming right up.

Candice spins away in a swirl of ruffles and hair.

Aesop watches her walk away, until his attention is drawn to the booth next to him--

Seymour is shoveling a mouthful of food into his open maw, when Rufus grabs his hand and holds it midway.

RUFUS

Listen Seymour, all I'm saying-and I'm quoting, is that "the pure present is an ungraspable advance of the past devouring this here future. Truth is, all sensation is already memory."

Seymour cares only about the tantalizing morsel of food hovering inches from his mouth.

SEYMOUR

Yeah well, right now...

RUFUS

See, there is no "now." Since you can't stop time, everything is continually happening, so everything is a memory of what has just transpired.

Seymour scratches his head with his free hand, causing dandruff to cascade down onto his shoulders.

SEYMOUR

Say what?

RUFUS

Seymour, don't be so Goddamned stupid. You ain't got an ounce of brains in your empty skull. It's Henry Bergson; I'm quoting Bergson.

SEYMOUR

I don't think I know that fellow, Rufus.

(looks to his plate)

And besides, right now, you're keeping me from savoring the memory of this here meal.

Rufus picks up a fork and stabs Seymour in the arm.

RUFUS

Eat that, shit for brains!

SEYMOUR

Son of a bitch!

Seymour pulls the fork out of his arm and throws it back at Rufus.

SEYMOUR

That ain't cool, Rufus.

Rufus picks up the fork, wipes it on his pant leg, and scoops up some eggs. Without a second thought he puts it in his mouth.

RUFUS

(mumbles)

Might as well be talking to this fuckin' plate.

Candice walks up with Aesop's order and glances over at the brothers.

CANDICE

Now, you two boys behave tonight.

Rufus and Seymour become blubbering idiots at even the smallest amount of attention from this pretty girl.

RUFUS

Okay, sweet Candice, we'll be good.

Chuckles.

SEYMOUR

You sure look pretty tonight,
Candice. Would you like to go to
the Blue Cow with me after work?
It's karaoke night.

CANDICE

Now, Seymour, don't make me call
your Mama and tell her what a bad
boy you are.

Candice turns and walks away as both men giggle like
schoolboys.

SEYMOUR

(lowers his voice)

So, what do you make of that?

He nods in Aesop's direction.

RUFUS

Nothin'.

Seymour leans across the table and whispers.

SEYMOUR

Rufus--

Rufus kicks him under the table.

SEYMOUR

Ow!

RUFUS

It ain't none of our bother. Now
let's get outta here, I wanna have
a smoke.

They slide out of their booth.

SEYMOUR

You can't smoke in my truck.

RUFUS

I ain't gonna smoke in your fuckin'
truck, shit brains. I'm gonna smoke
outside.

Both men try not to be obvious - and fail, as they stare at
Aesop when they walk by.

Aesop returns their gaze, devoid of emotion as his eyes
coldly follow Rufus and Seymour to the exit.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Rufus lights a cigarette as they walk past the Oldsmobile. Seymour catches a glimpse of the shadowy figure in the front seat and walks closer to the car.

Rufus could care less.

RUFUS

Goddamn, Seymour, I'm stuffed. I feel like a grub-worm in a turtleneck.

SEYMOUR

Hey, Rufus, there's a woman in this car!

RUFUS

So what... I'm smoking.

Seymour walks up and lightly taps the window.

SEYMOUR

She don't look right is all.

RUFUS

She's probably just sleepin' one off! Leave her the fuck alone!
(mumbles)
Goddamned retard.

Seymour throws a look to the cafe.

SEYMOUR

(lowers his voice)
She must be with him.

RUFUS

All the more reason to let it be, dip-shit.

Seymour presses his face against the window to look in, but it's too dark to see anything.

SEYMOUR

(excited)
Maybe she's a--

Seymour makes a lewd gesture with his hips. Annoyed, Rufus throws his cigarette on the ground and angrily snuffs it out.

RUFUS

Let's get outta here before I stick
my foot up your fat ass!

Seymour reluctantly gives in.

SEYMOUR

You ain't no fun at-t'all... and
that is happening in the now.

RUFUS

Shut up, Seymour.

They walk to a red Chevy pickup, raised, tinted windows,
with a silver panther hood ornament and flames painted on
the sides.

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - NIGHT

Aesop watches Rufus and Seymour climb into the truck.

The clinking of silverware draws Aesop back to Candice,
who's back with his food.

CANDICE

Don't pay them no mind. They come
here breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
Between the two of them, they ain't
got a lick of sense. Anyhow, how
long are you with us?

AESOP

Just the night.

DW peeks out from the lobby and clears his throat.

DW

Candice, sugar, quit socializing
and get on back to work now, we got
to close up soon.

Candice gives him a sad smile and nod, then turns her
attention back to Aesop.

CANDICE

Well, I hope you enjoy your stay
with us, and good luck in your
travels. Maybe we'll see you on
your way back?

AESOP

Doubt it.

CANDICE
Well, you take care.

Aesop watches her walk away.

Clyde stares him down from the kitchen and Aesop flips him the bird. Clyde slams his cleaver down into a fresh side of beef.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

Amid the clutter of the lobby walls, where there was once a pair of antique sickles, there is only a single blade hanging, with the dirty outline of one gone missing.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Three video surveillance monitors are mounted on the wall.

DW paces nervously. Empty chicken containers are strewn about the table, along with an assortment of porn magazines.

DW scoops up a blob of mashed potatoes and gravy with his finger. As he puts the tasty morsel in his mouth, the office door opens and startles him, causing him to miss the mark. Most of it ends up on his chin.

Candice stands in the doorway.

DW stares at his daughter as the blob of mashed potatoes drops off his chin and hits the floor with a splat.

CANDICE
You okay, Daddy?

DW
Oh yes, fine, fine, just a little restless tonight. Feel another bout of the shingles comin' on, I fear.

CANDICE
Well, I'm all cleaned up in the cafe, so I'm headed off to bed.

He nervously picks up a porn magazine and begins leafing through it.

DW
(preoccupied)
Yes, right, that's-good, good, hurry along then.

Candice closes the door.

DW watches Candice on the monitors as she walks down the outside hallway.

EXT. SECOND-FLOOR OUTSIDE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Candice walks down the hallway. As she passes room "19" the door suddenly swings open, startling her.

Aesop is standing in the doorway.

CANDICE

Oh my gosh! You scared the heck outta me.

INT. AESOP'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aesop has one hand behind his back, holding the small sickle - the one missing from the lobby.

AESOP

Sorry, I didn't think anyone would be out.

CANDICE

That's okay, I was just headed to my room.

Silence.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DW sits on the couch staring at an old dial telephone. He nervously reaches for it, then hesitates. He picks up the receiver, then places it back in the cradle.

The scene playing out on the monitors catches his eye. He pulls out his handkerchief and wipes the sweat off his brow.

DW

No, no, no, this is not good. This won't do at all.

EXT. SECOND-FLOOR OUTSIDE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Candice is getting nervous in the prolonged silence.

CANDICE

Okay, well, my daddy's in his office if you need anything. You can just call down from your room if you like.

AESOP

Okay.

She gives him a nervous wave and turns.

CANDICE
Good night.

As Candice walks away, Aesop watches her from his doorway.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DW watches Candice on the monitors as she fumbles with the keys to her room. He presses a button, and the camera zooms in on Aesop as he watches her.

DW
(shudders)
Gives me the creeps.

Aesop steps into the hallway and looks directly into the security camera.

DW switches off the monitors.

DW
Hell no.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Music plays from a small stereo on the night stand. Candice slips out of her skirt and pulls on a pair of terrycloth shorts, when--

There's a knock at the door.

EXT. OUTSIDE HALLWAY - NIGHT

The door opens a few inches, revealing a sliver of Candice's face.

CANDICE
It's late.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Candice takes a step back as DW pushes his way into the room. He looks her up and down.

DW
Look at you! You think I didn't see what was going on between you two?

CANDICE
What are you talking about, daddy?
I was fixing to go to bed.

DW
 From the looks of you, I'd say you
 were fixing to do more than that.
 With him!

Candice grabs a robe from off the bed and clutches it to herself.

CANDICE
 (nervous)
 Daddy please, I told you, I'm
 getting ready for bed, honest.

DW grabs her by the arm.

INT. AESOP'S ROOM - NIGHT

Aesop sits at the foot of his bed, staring at the floor. A half-empty bottle of whiskey nearby. The only light in the room comes from the flickering blue haze of the television.

INT. QUARRELS' HOME - QUICK FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

-- The usual group all sit around a smoke-filled poker table, mostly in shadow.

-- Edsall, in his sheriff's uniform, smacks young Aesop across the face.

-- Beer in hand, Edsall pushes Aesop into his bedroom. DW, and Charlie Sykes watch as Edsall steps into the room and slams the door shut behind him.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - AESOP'S ROOM - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

Aesop flinches with the painful memories.

The silence is broken by a crash and angry muffled voices. Aesop sits up straight, listening. We hear a muffled scream and Aesop is up and headed out the door--

EXT. OUTSIDE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Aesop runs to room twenty-one and tries the door. It's locked. There is a sharp crack, and a yelp from within.

Aesop doesn't hesitate, he kicks the door open to reveal--

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A desk lamp is shattered on the night-stand, still burning.

Candice stands at the foot of the bed, tears streaming down her face, with DW holding her roughly by the arm. Her left eye is already swelling up.

DW stands frozen, clutching his leather belt tightly in his fist, ready to land another blow.

Time seems to stand still. Aesop is frozen, staring, eyes unseeing--

INT. QUARRELS' HOME - QUICK FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

-- Annabel Quarrels is pushed onto a couch.

-- A hand is wrapped around her throat, and her blouse is ripped open.

-- DW straddles her.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

Aesop's gaze sharpens, full of hate.

DW
Get the hell outta here! This is
family business, and it don't
concern you!

Aesop pulls the sickle out of his waistband.

AESOP
You and I have our own business.

DW grabs the broken desk lamp and hurls it at him. Aesop ducks out of the way and DW pushes past Aesop.

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

DW careens down the hallway to the stairs--

INT. FRONT LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

DW bursts through the front office doors and races into the cafe--

INT. CAFE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Clyde is just untying his apron as DW bursts through the doors, out of breath, grimacing in pain.

DW
Clyde-that fucking freak albino- he
just went into my baby's room!

DW bends over clutching his side.

DW
Get up there and see what in God's
name is going on!

CLYDE
I'll skin that son-of-a-bitch!

Clyde grabs a cleaver off the counter, and runs past DW.

DW wipes the sweat off his forehead, a smug look on his face.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Blueish grey moonlight seeps through a gap in the curtains.

Candice is curled up in a ball on the bed crying, and hugging the sheets close. She watches Aesop nervously, unsure of his intention.

Aesop stands at the edge of her bed, clearly out of his element.

EXT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Clyde rumbles up the stairs and down the hallway.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Aesop can see that he's making her nervous. He grabs the blanket off the floor and pulls it over her exposed legs, when--

The door flies open and Clyde's hulking form steps into the room to find Aesop is hovering over a partially covered Candice, blanket in hand.

Clyde charges. The cleaver flies through the air narrowing missing Aesop, and thunks into the wall behind him. Aesop reaction is lightning fast. He hurls the sickle and sinking deep into Clyde's chest.

For a moment Clyde is frozen in place. He stares into the eyes of the man who just took his life from him, then topples over.

Candice sobs.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DW is frantic. He locks the office door and closes the blinds.

DW
Hell fire, hell fire.

He grabs the phone. It's dead.

He throws the phone across the room, and it smashes into the monitors, knocking them out in a shower of sparks.

DW
Oh shit!

He frantically looks for something to protect himself with. Hanging next to the office door is a rusty spiked mace and a family crest.

As he snatches the spiked mace off the wall, a crashing sound comes from the lobby. He freezes--

A chair from the Cafe smashes through the window in a shower of glass. DW falls to the floor cowering, his face cut and bleeding from flying shards of glass.

Aesop reaches through the ruined blinds and broken window with his tattooed HELL arm. He unlocks the door and steps into the room.

DW
God in heaven.

DW crawls away until he's backed up against the wall.

DW
(pleading)
Don't hurt me, please don't hurt me! Take anything you want, take what's in the register! It ain't much, but it's yours.

Aesop approaches slowly, determined.

DW
(desperate)
Take my daughter! She's--just take her with you, please, I won't tell no one! It's fair recompense I reckon--just don't hurt me!

AESOP
You filthy animal! I know all your secrets--

INT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Quick, frenetic images flash--

-- The men playing poker, cards, chips, money changing hands.

-- DW hands sheriff quarrels a handful of cash.

-- Annabel struggling in DW's grasp as he starts to pull at her clothes.

-- Annabel tries to fight him off.

-- DW slaps her, and she screams.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - BACK TO PRESENT - NIGHT

Aesop shakes the memory away.

DW

Now don't do anything rash! I'll
make it up to you, I swear!

Aesop grabs DW by the shirt.

AESOP

There's nothing you can do--

He snatches a snow globe off the shelf above the couch -
Snow falling on a peaceful winter landscape - a peaceful
scene.

AESOP

... to make amends for what you've
done.

He bashes DW in the head with the snow globe.

AESOP

(calm)
Nothing.

DW is stunned. A thick stream of blood flows from the wound.
His arms and legs flail in an attempt to ward off his
attacker, knocking Aesop off balance.

Aesop stumbles backwards and drops the snow globe.

DW is on his feet, unsteadily. He staggers to the door
trying to escape. Aesop grabs the spiked mace off the floor
and swings it at DW. The mace slams into the back of DW's
leg. The impact sends DW crashing into the door jam.

Aesop jerks back on the handle and the chain snaps taught,
pulling DW's legs out from underneath him. He hits the floor
hard.

Aesop drops the mace handle and picks up the fallen snow globe. He shakes it, watching the snow fall on a tiny farmhouse.

He moves in close and smashes DW in the face and head with the snow globe. The demons on the tattooed Hell arm seem to writhe in ecstasy as blood splatters across his skin.

He stops and the anger subsides, emotionally exhausted. The snow globe drops from his hand. It hits the ground and smashes. The liquid and fake snow spill out and mix with the blood-soaked floor.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DAWN

A beautiful morning. The sun is just rising into an orange and red sky. The familiar red pickup truck pulls into the empty parking lot.

Seymour and Rufus climb out and walk to the front door.

SEYMOUR

Hey, that car with the girl in it's gone.

Rufus doesn't care.

RUFUS

Shut up, dip-shit.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - LOBBY - DAWN

Rufus and Seymour stand in the doorway staring at an empty room. It's been cleaned up as much as possible. With the lights out in the lobby, all appears normal.

SEYMOUR

DW?

(pause)

Hey, DW, you here?

RUFUS

Course he's here, asshole. Let's go see Candice and grab something to eat.

Rufus heads into the cafe and Seymour follows, mumbling to himself.

SEYMOUR

Ain't no fuckin' lights on. That ain't like DW.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - CAFE - CONTINUOUS

The cafe is also as empty. Rufus and Seymour share a look - something's not right.

Rufus pokes his head into the kitchen, then turns back to Seymour, scratching his head.

RUFUS
What the hell?

SEYMOUR
Well, where they at? I'm hungry.

RUFUS
You moron, that's what I just said!
Are you listening to me?

SEYMOUR
You know I can't concentrate when
I'm hungry...

INT. RED CHEVY TRUCK - DAWN

A pair of hands connect two spliced ignition wires. They touch and spark.

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - DAWN

Seymour pulls at Rufus' sleeve.

SEYMOUR
Let's go knock on DW's door, see--

The truck engine fires-up with a roar!

RUFUS
Hell's bells!

The truck smashes through the front window and plows into them. It comes to rest in the middle of the cafe, steam pouring out of the front end.

Rufus is dead, impaled on the silver panther hood ornament. Seymour is crushed under the front tire, his arm sticking out from under the truck.

Aesop stares out the front windshield at Rufus's dead, lifeless eyes.

INT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - QUICK FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

-- Hands pulling duct tape off a roll.

-- Rufus grabs Annabel by the hair.

-- Another pair of hands pawing at her clothes.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - CAFE - BACK TO PRESENT

Aesop's face is a blank mask. The job is done, and the anger is gone. He opens the truck door and slides out.

EXT. MAINE - STATE MENTAL FACILITY - DAY

A depressingly drab building, with bars on the windows and long-neglected grounds.

INT. MAINE - STATE MENTAL FACILITY - DAY

Jason sits alone in a small, plain office. He pulls out a bottle of pills and washes them down with coffee from a mug on the table next to him. Even the act of swallowing seems to cause him pain.

He picks up a metal nameplate off the desk - "DR. ROBERT CAVENDISH," and stares at his reflection in the polished surface, and winces--

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY - FLASHBACK

-- Jason, thirteen, stands with a group of boys his age, holding a bloody knife in his hand. A hint of remorse flashes across his face.

-- Jason stares at a figure lying in the street, too far away to make out.

-- One of his friend's grabs him and they all run away laughing.

INT. MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY - BACK TO PRESENT

The door behind him opens, and a doctor in a white lab coat enters. DOCTOR ROBERT CAVENDISH, late fifties.

DR. CAVENDISH

Sorry about the interruption. We have a lot of activity this time of day.

He hands Jason a Manila folder. There are three pages inside.

JASON

This all you have on him?

DR. CAVENDISH
Yes, well, he wasn't here very long, as I told you. Doctor Cole was the attending physician at the time... he's since left... retired, actually.

Jason scans the file.

DR. CAVENDISH
Not much of a talker, just stared a lot. I'm told it's very unsettling.

JASON
Doctor Cole reported the escape?

DR. CAVENDISH
Yes, but the authorities assumed that he'd have headed out of state, and dropped the case after a few weeks.

More scanning.

JASON
And his father? You contacted him?

DR. CAVENDISH
Yes, well... his father made it quite clear that he wanted nothing more to do with his son. Doctor Cole simply followed his orders.

Jason reads on.

The last page is a photocopy of a torn piece of paper with the word "Diner," written on it.

JASON
What's this?

DR. CAVENDISH
Only thing the police found on him when they picked him up. That, and six dollars.

Jason is visibly shaken.

JASON
(under his breath)
Shit.

DR. CAVENDISH
That help you at all?

JASON

Maybe.

Dr. Cavendish stares intently at his beaten face.

DR. CAVENDISH

Can I ask... ?

He receives a cold stare from Jason.

JASON

No. Is this it then?

An awkward moment, then--

DR. CAVENDISH

There may be one more thing.

Dr. Cavendish hesitates, unsure.

JASON

Well?

Dr. Cavendish leafs through his file cabinet and retrieves another folder. He hands it over.

JASON

What's this?

DR. CAVENDISH

An employee confessed to having slipped this into his cell... she's since been let go.

Jason opens the folder to find an old newspaper clipping from his hometown. We don't get a chance to read the headline, as he closes the file.

JASON

Fuck.

DR. CAVENDISH

Detective, I hesitate to admit as much, but we did not handled things as judiciously as we could have on our end. Honestly, we just couldn't afford a scandal. We've already had our funding cut below operational levels. This would have closed our doors. It was the hospital's opinion that the patient was more a danger to himself than to anyone else.

The doctor looks into Jason's eyes for a beat, then stares at his shoes.

JASON

Doc, you can justify it any way you want, but you should all be brought up on charges, and after I find him...

Jason waves the folder in the air to clarify, unwilling to utter his name.

JASON

... that's exactly what I'm going to do. I suggest you find yourself a good lawyer.

Jason tucks both folders under his arm and walks out, slamming the door behind him.

Dr. Cavendish sinks into his chair, dejected.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - DAY

Candice lies on the bed where we last saw her, unconscious, half covered by the bed sheet. Aesop stands in the doorway. Blood splattered over his tattooed arm and face.

He walks to the bed and pushes the hair back from her face. Her eyes are vacant; she's in shock.

AESOP

He was an animal.

(pause)

I'm sure I don't need to tell you that.

Aesop grabs a towel off the floor and wipes the blood off his face and arms. He stares at Candice's exposed legs. We're not quite sure of his intentions.

After a long pause, he looks away, genuine remorse showing on his face.

AESOP

Sorry you had to get caught up in this.

He picks up the fallen blanket, and covers her.

AESOP

Casualties of war... I know about that.

He walks out.

EXT/INT. RUSTIC BACK PARKING LOT - DAY

Aesop gets into the green Oldsmobile. The waitress is still in the passenger seat as before. Her hand is lying on the seat by her side. Aesop gently places her hand in her lap. There are dried spots of blood on her white skin.

EXT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

The Oldsmobile pulls around front, and tears out of the parking lot, kicking up a cloud of dust like a rooster tail from a drag boat.

INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - DAY

Jason is dialing his cellphone with one hand as he drives. He scrolls through his contacts and hits the name "Kim Bartoll." It rings, but there's no answer, and it's picked up by her answering machine. He ends the call and dials it again--

JASON

Come on.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The Oldsmobile is parked on the side of the road, next to a steep embankment. A small stream runs at the bottom, mostly obscured by brush, and tall grass.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

Aesop stares out the front windshield at a seemingly endless stretch of highway, then reaches across Kim's body and opens the passenger door.

Rusty hinges creak as it swings open.

EXT. LENNY'S DINER - DAY - FLASHBACK

A small 50s style diner and gas station in the middle of nowhere. A beat-up old pickup and an eighteen-wheeler are the only vehicles in the parking lot.

A green station wagon, rusted, wood-panel sides, a lumbering giant spewing smoke, pulls in off the highway.

INT. LENNY'S DINER - DAY

Water spots mark the ceiling tiles, and the wallpaper is coming off the walls.

Two men sit at the counter eating lunch. A mother and her two children sit in a corner booth. The cook (and owner), LENNY PIKE, pushing 80, a curmudgeon, ninety pounds dripping wet, whacks at a group of scattering roaches.

KIM BARTOLL, the lone waitress (Aesop's silent driving companion), pretty, late twenties, with a pierced nose and heavy eye makeup, is chatting with the mother of two.

Bells chime, and all eyes are drawn to the front door.

Aesop stands in the doorway. His clothes are dusty from the road. He looks as if he's been driving for days without rest.

All eyes follow him as he takes a seat in the closest booth. The two children stare over the top of their booth. Aesop brings the menu up in front of his face to block their view.

KIM
Be right back, Susan.

Kim walks to Aesop's table, her gaze lingering on his tattooed arms.

Aesop lowers the menu and stares up at her. He pushes the hair back from his face.

AESOP
Remember me, Kim?

Nervous recognition shows on her face.

KIM
Oh, wow-uh, Davenport Junior High, right?

AESOP
(cold)
Yeah, right.

Kim's eyes wonder back to the tattoos on his arms. She nervously plays with her hair.

KIM
Wow, I mean-well, you've really changed...

Aesop gazes back at her without a word. Kim fidgets. She brushes his arm with her hand.

KIM

I like your tattoos. I've got a couple too... so-uh, well, how have you been?

Aesop continues to stare without replying. Kim nervously throws a look back to her friends booth, were the entire family is watching her. She returns her attention back to Aesop.

KIM

Well, can I get you something?

AESOP

Pumpkin pie, iced tea, no straw.

KIM

Good choice, the pumpkin pie is fresh, made today.

Aesop stares back with no reply.

KIM

Okay.

She turns and hurries off to the kitchen.

Lenny, watching from the end of the counter, lights a new cigarette, and gives Aesop the stink eye, mumbling under his breath.

LENNY

Fuckin' freak.

INT. SUSAN'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

At Susan's booth the two boys are still staring over the bench seat. She smacks one of the boys in the back of the head, which starts a series of long wailing sobs.

INT. AESOP'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Kim walks back to the table with his order. She puts the plate down, along with a glass of iced tea. She places the check next to the plate and pulls a straw out of the middle pocket of her apron, and lays it next to the glass.

Aesop picks up the straw and places it back in the same apron pocket, between her legs, keeping his hand there.

AESOP

I said no straw.

Kim doesn't protest and waits while he removes his hand.

KIM
 (shrugs)
 Sorry, sweetie.

She turns away, looking over her shoulder, as she heads back to Susan's booth.

INT. SUSAN'S BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Kim and Susan speak in hushed tones.

SUSAN
 You know him?

KIM
 Sort of. Been a long time though.

SUSAN
 Well, he looks scary. All those tattoos.

KIM
 I don't know, I kind of like--

She turns to find Aesop's table empty. The check is still there, but no money was left behind.

KIM
 Damn it.

Lenny shouts out from the kitchen.

LENNY
 That's comin' out of yer pay check!

KIM
 (under her breath)
 Fuck off, Lenny.

INT. LENNY'S DINER - LATER

A two-hundred and fifty-pound trucker gets up from his booth and waves to Kim on his way out.

TRUCKER
 Money's on the table, sweetheart.
 I'll be seeing you.

KIM
 Good night Hank. Be safe.

Lenny sits at the counter smoking, leering at Kim as she cleans off the tables.

KIM
I'll finish up here Lenny, why
don't you take off.

Lenny breaks into a coughing fit.

LENNY
Fine by me, just don't forget to
lock the fucking doors.
(pauses)
And turn off the gas pump for God's
sake. Don't forget.

Lenny puts out his cigarette and promptly lights another as
he walks out.

Kim flips him the bird.

EXT. LENNY'S DINER - NIGHT

Kim locks the front door and makes her way around the back
of the building. We see her 1969 lime green Oldsmobile.

As she unlocks the car door a reflection appears behind her
in the window. She turns to find--

Aesop is standing behind her.

KIM
Oh my God! You scared the fuck
outta me!

AESOP
Sorry.

Aesop pulls a few crumples bills out of his pocket.

AESOP
I left without paying.

Kim ignores the money, realizing how completely alone she
is.

KIM
That's okay. On the house... my
treat.

Kim turns to open the car door.

KIM
Okay, well, you take care.

Aesop takes a step forward.

AESOP

I-I was wondering if we could get a cup of coffee?

KIM

Sorry, I just closed up for the night.

AESOP

I could really use some coffee, and another piece of that pie.

(pause)

We could talk.

Kim looks into his eyes, her resolve slipping away - always attracted to the wrong guy.

KIM

Alright, well, maybe for a little while.

(pause)

You smoke weed?

INT. LENNY'S DINER - NIGHT

The diner is mostly dark. A few lights shine above the tables. Aesop sits alone in a booth, a piece of pumpkin pie in front of him.

Kim slides into the seat opposite him with two cups of coffee. She starts to ramble--

KIM

Sorry, the coffee here is shit, but it's the only place for miles, so no one really complains, and Lenny - that miserable prick, wouldn't give a fuck if they did. All he does is smoke his stupid cigarettes all day and slap my ass every time I walk by, I swear I'm black-and-blue.

She takes a drink.

KIM

And don't even get me started on his teeth. When they're not floating in a glass of water behind the counter, it's all he can do to keep them from falling out when he talks. It's disgusting!

Kim runs a hand over one of his tattooed arms.

KIM
These are great, did they hurt?

AESOP
Yeah.

Kim stops talking long enough to take a joint out of her apron. She lights it and takes a long drag, then hands it to Aesop.

KIM
How's the pie?

The pie hasn't been touched. He takes a drag and hands the joint back to her. She takes another drag and blows the smoke out slowly.

KIM
Pot always makes me horny.

She realizes that her coffee cup is empty and slides out of the booth.

KIM
I'm gonna get a refill.

INT. LENNY'S DINER - CONTINUOUS

Kim moves easily through the dark kitchen. She makes her way to the coffee machine and pours herself a fresh cup, when--

She's grabbed from behind and spun around.

Aesop pushes her against the counter with his body and kisses her hard on the lips. Kim grabs him back, digging her nails into his skin, by no means objecting to the kiss.

Aesop grabs her roughly by the hair and pulls her head back. He rips open the front of her dress.

KIM
I like it rough.

Kim starts to pull on Aesop's clothes, getting caught up in the moment. Aesop yanks her hair tighter. He moves closer to her ear.

AESOP
You remember our first kiss?

Kim's not listening, she tries to lean in and kiss him, but he still has her by the hair.

KIM

What?

With his free hand, Aesop grabs Kim's jaw, and stares into her eyes.

AESOP

(menacing)

Our first kiss.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY - FLASHBACK

Aesop, 11, is eating his lunch in the school courtyard. He sits alone on a bench while other kids gather in groups, eating and socializing.

Kim is surrounded by her friends, BETHANY, and SUMMER, the pretty, popular girls.

AESOP (V.O.)

It was in junior high. You hung out with all the popular girls.

The girls occasionally throw a look to Aesop and laugh.

AESOP (V.O.)

I was a fucking freak to you and your stuck-up friends.

The girls are egging Kim on.

BETHANY

Come on Kim, just do it. We'll give you twenty dollars.

The girls start digging in their bags for money.

KIM

No, I don't want to, he's always staring at me, creeping me out.

SUMMER

I'll throw in another ten!

Kim's boyfriend, a young Jason Keil, tall, good looking, jock, walks up to the group. He has a scar under his left eye.

He kisses her on the cheek and throws an arm around her waist.

JASON

What's going on?

SUMMER

We dared Kim to go and kiss the
freak on the lips.

BETHANY

Yeah, for thirty bucks, but she
won't do it.

Jason's face lights up.

JASON

C'mon, babe, do it, go kiss the
freak. He wouldn't know what the
fuck to do, he'd probably shit in
his pants.

They all laugh.

KIM

Alright, I'll do it, but you've got
to go away so he doesn't see you.
He won't even look at me if he
knows you're watching.

JASON

Okay, okay.

Jason walks away.

Kim takes the money from her friends and stuffs it in her
bag. She walks to Aesop. He begins to fidget nervously.

KIM

(coy)
Hi.

He stands, and nervously wipes his hands on his pants.

AESOP

Hello.

KIM

I forgot my lunch today, and I'm
starving. Do you think I could have
some of yours? I'd be grateful.

Aesop fumbles through his lunch bag and clumsily pulls out
half a sandwich.

Kim takes it from him, and holds on to his hand. She leans
in and kisses him on the lips, lightly, as if afraid she
might catch something.

AESOP (V.O.)
I would have given you whatever you
wanted.

Her friends laugh out loud.

AESOP (V.O.)
But you thought it was so fucking
funny.

Kim turns away giggling. She tosses the sandwich into a
trash can, as Jason walks up to Aesop, his fists balled
tight.

JASON
Hey, freak! You kissed my
girlfriend; I saw you!

AESOP
No I, I didn't, she--

Jason punches Aesop in the nose, knocking him to the ground.
He stands over him taunting.

JASON
Stay away from her, freak!

Aesop sits dejected and alone on the ground, blood oozing
from his nose.

All the kids in the schoolyard have been watching, and
laugh.

AESOP (V.O.)
But, it didn't stop there. The
beatings from your boyfriend and
his buddies became routine.

EXT. SCHOOL - ANOTHER DAY

Aesop is ambushed by Jason and his buddies in a school
stairwell. They beat him to the ground.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DIFFERENT DAY

Aesop walks home from school, his face badly swollen and cut
from a recent beating.

Jason and his buddies jump out of the bushes and begin
beating him. One boy grabs his fallen books and rips the
pages out, throwing them in the air.

They run away and leave him lying in the street with the
pages raining down on him.

AESOP (V.O.)
Every day I went home with bruises
and my father beat me for not being
man enough to defend myself.

INT. SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DIFFERENT DAY

Aesop stands in the shadowy corner of a classroom, watching
the last of the buses pull away.

(MORE)
He cautiously makes his way down an
empty hall, but slows when he hears
muffled voices.

Aesop peers into a classroom--

INT. CLASSROOM - SAME

Kim is huddled with Jason and three of his buddies.

She pulls a small knife out of her pocket and slides it
across the desk to Jason.

KIM
He gives me the creeps! He's always
leering at me like some kind of
pervert. I want him to go away.

Kim sees him in the doorway--

KIM
Hey!

Aesop panics and bolts to the doors, but Jason and his
buddies are after him.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Aesop runs across the lunch yard and onto the baseball
field, where he is cornered by the gang.

The boys grab Aesop. Jason pulls the knife out of his back
pocket and holds it up to Aesop's face.

JASON
Look here you fucking loser! You
can't run from us! We'll find you
no matter what pile of shit you
crawl under. You better disappear,
you understand me, freak?

Jason jabs Aesop in the stomach with the knife. The boys let
him go and take off running across the field, laughing.

Aesop falls to the ground holding his stomach.

INT. LENNY'S DINER - NIGHT - BACK TO 1ST FLASHBACK

Aesop still holds Kim by the hair. His breathing is heavy, and his eyes burn with anger.

AESOP

I was never able to go back to
school again. Did you even realize
AESOP (CONT'D)

that? You started it all with that fucking kiss!

KIM

Aesop, I was young, stupid...

Kim moves in to try and kiss him again. Aesop's hand moves to her neck.

Kim puts one hand on his chest.

KIM

That was a long time ago. Looks
like you turned out okay, right? I
mean...

Kim moves her hands down to his belt.

KIM

Why don't you let me make it up to
you.

Aesop pushes her against the counter, pinning her in place with his body. He tightens his grip on her neck.

Kim panics, trying to pry his hands off her neck. She blindly reaches around for a weapon. Her hand hits a stack of metal pots. Her thrashing desperate motion knocks them off the counter top, clattering onto the floor.

She punches Aesop in the face, splitting his lip open--

Aesop stops and takes a step back, almost surprised by his actions.

Kim gasps for breath.

KIM

You fucking freak.

Aesop's eyes go black and he lunges, grabbing her by the neck. He drags her off the counter top, and slams her to the ground, hard--

Kim's head bounces off the floor. She's dazed and can barely fight back. She claws blindly at his arms and manages to squeak out a few words--

KIM
Mother fucker.

Aesop's tattooed arms shake under the strain.

Kim's eyes roll back in her head, and her arms fall slack.

Aesop gets to his feat and pushes the matted hair out of his face.

AESOP
You may not remember that first
kiss, but I'll never forget it.

EXT. LENNY'S DINER - NIGHT

Aesop carries Kim's dead body down the front steps and around the back of the diner.

Fumbling through her purse he finds the car keys and puts her in the passenger seat.

EXT. LENNY'S DINER - GAS PUMPS - NIGHT

Aesop is at the pump, filling a metal gas can. He drops the nozzle, letting the gas flow onto the ground as he grabs the can and walks to the building, leaving a trail of gas behind him.

He dumps the can inside the diner, and walks back to the car.

The engine roars to life, and Aesop pulls up to the gas trail. He lights a match and drops it out of the window, igniting the gas. The HELL tattoos are lit up by the orange glow, as--

The tires kick up dirt as he takes off.

The gasoline trail burns its way towards the pump and the diner like a living thing.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - NIGHT

Aesop watches through the rear view mirror as the diner/gas station explodes in a huge fireball.

The blast shakes the car as it speeds away.

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY - DAWN

A beautiful sunrise paints the sky, as a vehicle approaches on the horizon.

EXT. TWO-LANE ROAD - DAWN

A beat-up late model pickup truck pulls off the side of the road and into a parking lot. The door opens, and Lenny gets out of the truck, cigarette dangling from his mouth. His jaw hangs open, and his eyeballs threaten to pop out of his skull as he stares at--

EXT. LENNY'S DINER - DAWN

Lenny's Diner is now a charred, shouldering mass of blackened wreckage.

A metal pole with a single switch still stands untouched in the devastation.

LENNY
Mother of God.

The cigarette drops out of Lenny's mouth. His eyes glaze over in a state of shock as he slowly makes his way to the standing pole.

The switch for the gas pump is in the ON position. Lenny flips the switch to the OFF position.

EXT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

The Oldsmobile is parked on the side of the road.

Aesop gets out of the car and walks around to the passenger side and opens the door.

AESOP
This is not what I wanted... you
were my first crush. My only crush.
(pause)
Things could have turned out
different... sorry, but this is
where we say goodbye.

Aesop pulls Kim's lifeless body out of the car and drags her down the embankment, placing her body at the waters edge, partially concealed by some brush.

He walks back to the car and slides in.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - CONTINUOUS

Aesop reaches over and turns the radio up and hits the gas.

EXT. TWO LANE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

As the tires spin, kicking up gravel, the car speeds off in a cloud of dust, and one of the rear hubcaps pops off. It spins like a top, finally settling in the middle of the road.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The Oldsmobile speeds down the highway. A gas station is up ahead. Aesop pulls in.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Aesop gets out of the car. He digs through his pockets and pulls out a few crumpled dollars and begins pumping gas.

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY - DAY

A tan and brown Sheriff's cruiser speeds across the barren landscape.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

EDSALL QUARRELS, now in his late fifties, is at the wheel. He picks up the CB radio hand mic--

EDSALL
JJ, you read me?

No answer.

EDSALL
JJ, come in JJ, you read me?

Nothing. Edsall puts the hand mic back.

EDSALL
Goddamn fool.

A gas station looms on the horizon.

Edsall eats chocolate chip cookies out of a bag. He drops one in his lap and begins fumbling for it between his legs--

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Aesop puts the nozzle back in the pump and walks inside to pay--

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - DAY

Edsall pulls the cookie out from between his legs and looks up in time to see the green Oldsmobile parked at the pumps as he drives past.

He watches it disappear in his side mirror.

EDSALL

Damn fine automobile, that one.
Color's a bit off though.

He blows on the cookie and pops it in his mouth. Spewing crumbs, he sings to a country music song on the radio.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Aesop steps out of the gas station just in time to see the Sheriff's car disappearing down the road. His eyes narrow with hateful recognition. His disdain for the law is evident. He gets in the car and pulls back onto the highway in the opposite direction.

EXT. LENNY'S DINER - DAY

Lenny works alongside several other men in an attempt to clean up the ruins of the Diner.

A dark sedan pulls into the parking lot, and Jason steps out of the car. Lenny makes no effort to hide his interest in Jason's beaten, bruised face.

JASON

Accident?

LENNY

Not hardly.

JASON

Everyone get out alright?

LENNY

Don't see no bodies, do you?

Jason ignores the question. He pulls a photo of Aesop out of his pocket and shows it to Lenny.

JASON

You seen this man?

LENNY

Yeah, I seen him, gave me the creeps.

(MORE)

LENNY (CONT'D)

(pause)

You a cop?

Jason pulls back his jacket to show the badge hanging on his belt.

JASON

Yeah, but this is personal.

Lenny's making the connection between Jason's face and the strange albino. Jason tucks the photo back into his pocket, causing a twinge of pain.

JASON

You missing a waitress?

Lenny gives him a sideways look.

LENNY

You know Kimmy?

JASON

We were married for a short time,
just out of college.

LENNY

She never mentioned an ex.

JASON

I wouldn't have mentioned me
either.

Jason pulls out his note pad.

JASON

She still driving the Oldsmobile?

LENNY

Yeah.

Jason tucks the note pad into his jacket pocket. Lenny can't help himself.

LENNY

You square, son? Your face--

Without a word, Jason turns and walks away. Lenny goes back to shoveling debris.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DAY

The sheriff's car pulls into the parking lot.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Edsall tries the CB radio again.

EDSALL
JJ, do you read me?

Nothing.

EDSALL
JJ, you dang fool!

Nothing.

Edsall tosses the radio hand mic aside, frustrated.

EDSALL
Jesus, I'm runnin' this Goddamn
town by myself.

Edsall gets out of the car and stares, hands on hips, at the gaping hole in the front of the cafe.

EDSALL
Holy hell.

He walks to the front door of the Motel and enters.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The building is dark. Edsall tries the light switch, but it doesn't work. He walks to the cafe entrance and stops in the doorway where he's greeted by wreckage, smashed furniture, blood and torn flesh.

EDSALL
Jesus Christ and his little baby
sister! Who the hell--

A noise from the other room stops him in his tracks. He spins, pulling out his revolver as the office door swings open--

DEPUTY JAKE JOHNSON (JJ), thin, cheesy mustache, thinks he's "the shit" with his uniform and gun on his hip, comes out of the office and stops short with Edsall's revolver in his face.

JJ throws his hands up in a defensive move.

DEPUTY JJ
(Squeals)
Ah! It's me, it's me!

EDSALL
 Goddamn-it, JJ! You stupid son of a
 bitch! You almost got your damn
 head blown off! What the hell are
 you thinking?

DEPUTY JJ
 Sorry, Sheriff. I parked out back,
 so as not to draw attention, then
 come in that way... through the
 back.

Edsall holsters his weapon.

EDSALL
 Attention from who, you idiot?

(MORE)
 DEPUTY JJ (unsure)

I don't know, the locals.

EDSALL
 And you don't think that fucking
 crater in the front of the building
 is gonna attract the attention?

JJ's feelings are hurt.

DEPUTY JJ
 Well hell, I don't know. I'm just
 tryin' to do my job, is all.

EDSALL
 (mumbles)
 Jesus and Mary.

DEPUTY JJ
 Anyway, you better come take a look
 at this.

JJ leads Edsall into DW's office.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DW's ruined body is splayed out in a pool of blood. His face
 almost unrecognizable. They both turn away.

EDSALL
 Christ... that's a hell of a thing.

JJ nods in agreement.

DEPUTY JJ

We got ourselves a real situation.

Edsall's look tells JJ he's an idiot.

EDSALL

What about the girl?

DEPUTY JJ

Don't know, ain't seen any sign of her. You think she done this?

EDSALL

JJ...

DEPUTY JJ

No, I guess not.

(pause)

DEPUTY JJ (CONT'D)

(MORE)

No sign of Clyde, neither. He usually opens the place.

Edsall contemplates this.

EDSALL

Well, he's capable. Ex-con, strong as a Bull. Dumber than shit, though.

DEPUTY JJ

You think he could have took Candice?

EDSALL

Without knowing his particular demons, I'd hate to speculate. There's bound to be plenty of evidence here though. Whoever's done this sure as hell didn't make any attempt to cover their tracks.

Edsall removes his hat and wipes away the sweat from his brow.

EDSALL

You call the coroner?

DEPUTY JJ

Carl's gone to the city, should be back some time tomorrow.

EDSALL
Picked a hell of a time for that.

JJ
Well, I don't really know as to how
he'd figure on something like--

Edsall puts a hand up to stop him.

EDSALL
Head on over to the supply store
and pick up some plywood and nails
and the like. We're gonna patch up
this hole best we can. Last thing I
want is people rooting around in
this mess.

Edsall takes a deep breath.

EDSALL
I'm gonna take another look around
the Goddamned crime scene.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
(pause)
Christ it stinks in here.

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

A small "MAYBERRY" type jailhouse sits by itself on main street, just outside town. The parking lot is empty and there's no apparent movement inside.

The Oldsmobile is parked across the street.

Aesop gets out and walks across the street. He cautiously makes his way to the side of the building and peeks around the corner. The parking lot in back is also empty. He circles back around and tries the front door. It's locked. He picks up a potted plant and finds a key.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DAY

Edsall and JJ hammer the last nails into the plywood. It doesn't cover all the damage and looks ridiculous.

They stand back and admire their work in the fading afternoon sunlight.

EDSALL
Well, you best head back to town.
When Carl gets in, send him up
here, but fill him in on the
particulars first.

(MORE)

EDSALL (CONT'D)

I don't want him comin' up here unawares. I'll just leave everything the way it is until he gets a look at it.

(pause)

I'm gonna search the rooms and see if I can't piece this thing together, after I get myself something to eat, I'm starved.

DEPUTY JJ

You ain't comin'?

EDSALL

No, I'll spend the night, wait for Carl in the morning. I sure as hell ain't drivin' back up here again tomorrow.

DEPUTY JJ

(flabbergasted)

Are you crazy? What if the person or people who did this come back? Or, what if they're still here, hiding or the like?

EDSALL

Son, whoever's done this is long gone. What would they be sticking around for? To get caught by the likes of some dumb shit-for-brains deputy? I don't think so.

JJ's feelings are hurt.

DEPUTY JJ

(mumbling)

Jeez, just tryin' to look out, is all. You wanna stick your head in the lion's mouth; you go right ahead.

JJ shakes a thumb at the kitchen door.

DEPUTY JJ

Anyway, I'm out back.

This receives a blank stare from Edsall. JJ disappears into the kitchen without a word.

Edsall surveys room.

EDSALL

What a fuckin' situation.

EXT. BACK PARKING LOT - RUSTIC MOTEL - DUSK

JJ climbs into his cruiser and pulls away. He hits the gas at the entrance, and swings out onto the two lane highway.

INT. JAILHOUSE - NIGHT

The jailhouse is a small old building, with two desks, three cells, and a waiting area.

There's a beat up couch and an old black and white TV in the corner. A hallway leads to the bathroom and a storage room.

Aesop stands in the doorway.

In the middle cell, a lone figure sits on a cot, mostly obscured in shadow. A baseball game is being broadcast from what sounds like a cheap transistor radio.

BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And in the bottom of the fifth it's
McNeil at bat, with three balls and
a strike, runners at second and
third--

Aesop closes the door behind him, keeping his eyes on the middle cell.

AESOP

Who's in there?

The radio keeps playing as the man in the cell rises and steps into the light.

BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The pitch is on its way and it's
ball four. The batter advances, and
now the bases are loaded as
Hutchins comes up to the plate.
This kid's a good looking prospect
out of Wichita Falls...

OTIS PENIWISE, 85, grizzled, bone thin, with more hair on his crazy eyebrows than on his head. He has a small homemade electronic device strapped around his neck that transmits his voice through a radio on the table next to his cot.

Otis steps up to the bars and taps the small transmitter around his neck, the game turns to static and cuts out.

The voice that comes out of the device is a mixture of human and electronically produced sounds.

OTIS

Sorry about that friend, I didn't hear no one come in. Sometimes I pick up local stations on this thing. Got a ballgame tonight an' thought I'd listen a spell.

Aesop moves to the closest desk.

Otis points to the transmitter around his neck and prattles on.

OTIS

I made this here device, if you was wonderin'. Sometimes it strikes folks as a little odd... say it sounds funny.

(pause)

Lost my voice after I accidentally shot myself in the throat when I was cleanin' my shotgun. Didn't have a plug nickel to my name, so I didn't say a God-damn thing to no one for almost three years, couldn't... even if I wanted.

Aesop begins rummaging through the desk drawers, ignoring Otis.

OTIS

Figured that ain't no way to live your God-damn life. So, I fashioned this here device to transmit the frequency of my vocal cords--

Otis raises the volume on the radio as he realizes Aesop isn't listening.

OTIS

I'd explain it to you in detail, but it's all very technical, and you probably wouldn't understand most of it anyway.

Otis watches Aesop rummage through the desk.

OTIS

Not very smart, rooting around in the Sheriff's desk ya know! If you hadn't noticed, this here's the county jail.

(MORE)

OTIS (CONT'D)

There's better places to rob, if
that's what's in your mind to do.

Aesop pulls a set of keys out of the drawer.

OTIS

The name's Otis. You got one?

AESOP

I know who you are.

Aesop turns on a desk lamp, revealing his features.

OTIS

Well, I'll be.

AESOP

(grunts)

Hmm.

OTIS

Heard you was dead.

AESOP

Guess you heard wrong.

Aesop moves to a gun rack on the wall. He unlocks it and
removes the lone shotgun.

OTIS

Well I'll be. And regardless of the
path, here you are. Have you seen
your daddy yet?

Aesop loads the shotgun.

AESOP

Soon enough.

OTIS

Well, while you're waiting, how
about you order me up some supper,
since the Sheriff ain't back. Every
couple of days, your daddy orders
me a pie from down at the Pizza
Shack. Been that way since I was
locked up, going on nearly six
months. Trumped up charges and the
like... I wasn't molesting that
little cheerleader, neither! I
don't care what those little
bitches said.

Aesop takes the phone off the desk, puts it on the floor, and slides it towards Otis' cell with his foot. It stops just out of his reach.

AESOP
Call 'em yourself.

Otis strains to reach the phone.

OTIS
Son, that ain't funny. You did that on purpose.

Aesop ignores him and stuffs some shotgun shells into his pockets.

OTIS
If you ask me, you're up to no good here, and I think your daddy is gonna have to put you in your place. That's what I think.

Headlights flash across the window as a car pulls up outside.

AESOP
(turns to Otis)
Don't say a fucking word.

Aesop moves closer to the entrance. The front door opens and JJ enters, eager to talk about what he's seen.

DEPUTY JJ
Otis, you should see the fucking mess down at the Rustic!

WHAM! Aesop bashes JJ on the side of the head with the butt of his shotgun. JJ crumples to the ground.

OTIS
Christ! What you do that for?

AESOP
Shut up, Otis.

Aesop drags JJ's body into the farthest cell, and kneels beside him. He slaps his face several times, until he starts to come to.

AESOP
Where's the Sheriff?

DEPUTY JJ
 (groggy)
 Sheriff...

AESOP
 Where's the Sheriff?

Aesop slaps him again.

DEPUTY JJ
 Sheriff?

AESOP
 Where's the Sheriff, ass-hole?

DEPUTY JJ
 Sheriff ass-hole, coming in... the
 morning.

AESOP
 Good.

Aesop stands.

JJ stares up at him, his eyes starting to glaze over.

DEPUTY JJ
 I thought you were dead.

He passes out. Aesop slams the cell door shut and turns to
 Otis.

AESOP
 Sit down and keep quiet.

Otis taps the transmitter and classical music plays. He
 backs up to his cot and sits.

Aesop grabs the keys and walks out the front door.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Edsall, humming a tune, is busy making himself a sandwich. A
 buzzer sounds, and he moves over to the fryer. He lifts a
 basket out of the hot grease and fills his plate with a
 fresh batch of fries.

He grabs a bottle of chocolate milk out of the refrigerator
 and is on the move. He walks out of the kitchen and into
 dining room.

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edsall scans the destruction and thinks better of it.

EDSALL
What a fucking situation.

He turns back into the kitchen.

EXT. TWO LANE ROAD - NIGHT

The Oldsmobile drives down a peaceful tree lined road.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - CONTINUOUS

Music blasts from the car stereo. The dashboard lights glow red. Aesop stares with vacant eyes--

INT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - QUICK FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

-- A shadowy figure stands behind a screen door.

-- Edsall lets the man in, and money exchanges hands.

-- A bedroom door is opened to reveal, Annabel curled up on the bed.

-- The door closes.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - BACK TO PRESENT

Aesop drives slowly down the street, hands gripped tightly around the steering wheel.

A neon sign flickers in the dark - "TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA."
Aesop pulls over to the side of the road with a good view of the building. There are a few cars in the parking lot, so he turns the lights off, and kills the engine.

INT. RUSTIC CAFE - NIGHT

Edsall stands at a prep table, rubbing his belly, an empty plate in front of him. He burps and lets out a groan of satisfaction.

He leaves his dirty dishes on the table and walks out.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Edsall steps over the pool of blood behind the counter, and grabs a room key off a peg on the wall.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - NIGHT

Aesop watches as a small group of bowlers exit the side door and pile into the two remaining cars in the parking lot. After they pull away, Aesop fires up the engine.

He pulls in with the lights off, and parks. He slides out of the car, shotgun in hand, and heads to the side door.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - OUTSIDE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Edsall walks down the hallway, checking the room numbers as he goes. He stops in front of room number 21.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - #21

Candice is lying on the bed where we last saw her, out cold.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - OUTSIDE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Edsall puts the key to the lock, but it doesn't fit. He checks the plastic number tag attached--

Printed on the plastic key holder is the number "22." Edsall moves down to the next door and enters the room.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - NIGHT

The building is old and run down, with a bar near the front counter. Aesop stands just inside the doorway.

The town drunk, RUDY T, late 40's, resembling a pile of dirty laundry, is passed out at the bar snoring loudly. Nineteen-thirties big band music is playing on the sound system.

TEDDY, now in his late 50's, comb over, unshaven, ornery, a glass half-empty kind of guy, is counting money at the register. Without looking in Rudy T's direction, Teddy calls out--

TEDDY

Hey Rudy T! Wake the fuck up and drag your sorry ass home! You ain't sleeping here again, and I Goddamn mean that!

He gets no response from Rudy T. This is a far too common occurrence.

TEDDY

(mumbling)

Ain't sleepin' here again, that's fer damn sure. And I do Goddamn mean it this time.

We hear the unmistakable sound of a shotgun cocking.

TEDDY

Rudy T, what the hell?

Teddy looks up from his money to find--

Aesop is standing in front of him, shotgun pointed in his direction. Teddy throws his hands up in shock, sending a fistful of dollar bills into the air, only to cascade down around him like confetti.

TEDDY
Holy mother!

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - EDSALL'S ROOM - NIGHT

The flickering glow of a TV is the only source of light in the room. Articles of clothing are strewn all over. Edsall is sleeping in his boxers and wife beater, one hand on his revolver, lying across his chest.

A low muffled moan comes from the room next door, then another, this time louder.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candice is just coming to. As she rolls onto her back, she moans. Her hand instinctively reaches for her swollen eye.

INT. EDSALL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edsall's eyelids flutter.

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candice is dazed, in shock. She rolls onto her side and sits up. Her foot lands in something wet.

She looks down and there it is-barely visible in the dark room, she finds Clyde's ruined body on the floor with blood pooling on the carpet at her feet.

She screams--

INT. EDSALL'S ROOM - 22 - CONTINUOUS

Edsall's eyes snap open. He involuntarily squeezes the trigger of his revolver and it fires-BANG!

The bullet rips through the wall, into Candice's room--

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candice gasps as he bullet buries itself in the wall above her head.

INT. EDSALL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edsall jumps out of bed startled, half-asleep, a black burn mark on the front of his undershirt from the gunpowder.

EDSALL
God-damn fool!

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candice lies frozen, listening. Her eyes wide with fear.

INT. EDSALL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edsall stands still as a statue, then presses his ear against the wall.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - NIGHT

Aesop stands before Teddy, shotgun in hand. Teddy's voice is unsteady.

TEDDY
Are you a ghost, or-or a demon?
Because the tales of your demise
proceed you, son. Although, if you
was an apparition, I don't see as
you'd have a need for that weapon
there.

Aesop levels the shotgun at Teddy.

AESOP
I'm no ghost Teddy, I'm real as
you.

TEDDY
Well, just what are your
intentions? I ain't got money.

He scrambles to pick up the loose currency on the counter, betraying the money's importance to him.

TEDDY
I'm sure you didn't come back here
after so many years, just to rob
the likes of me. Hell, the last
time I saw you, you weren't more
than ten or eleven years old.

Teddy scratches his head.

TEDDY

Think it was right before you run off, if I remember... no, had to be a few years before that, I recon. Seeing as--

Aesop taps on the counter with the shotgun to get his attention.

AESOP

I'm not here to take your precious money, Teddy. I'm here to collect against your debts.

TEDDY

(nervous)

Well, what the hell kind of debt do I owe you? I'd Goddamn like to know that!

AESOP

How much of your dirty money went into my father's pockets, Teddy? How many times did you commit your filthy unspeakable acts? That's what you're accountable for.

(mimicking Teddy)

And you can God-damn believe that.

Teddy is sweating profusely. He blots his forehead with a handkerchief.

INT. AESOP'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Aesop, 8, stands in his bedroom doorway. His father Edsall, DW, Teddy, and Charlie Sykes all sit around a table, playing poker. Teddy slides a stack of bills to Edsall.

Edsall catches Aesop standing in the doorway watching. He gets out of his chair and approaches the boy.

EDSALL

I thought I told you not to open that door!

He backhands Aesop across the face, sending him crashing to the floor. With tears running down his cheeks, he watches as Teddy grabs his mother roughly by the arm and pulls her into the bedroom. The door slams shut behind them.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - BACK TO PRESENT

Teddy wipes a sweaty palm across the front of his shirt.

TEDDY

Now hold on, son. You ain't got your facts straight, is all. I paid- I paid good money, and-and your daddy said it was... now listen, son, it-it was all his doing!

INT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - QUICK FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

- Aesop looks into an open doorway.
- Annabel is lying on the bed with a rubber strap around her upper arm.
- Teddy is just pulling a syringe out of her arm.
- Teddy turns to find Aesop watching.
- Teddy takes a step towards him and slams the door in Aesop's face.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - BACK TO PRESENT

Teddy stares down the barrel of the shotgun.

TEDDY

Now, let's don't do anything hasty till we talk about this.

Aesop motions to Teddy.

AESOP

Come out from behind the counter, Teddy.

Teddy puts his hands up in the air as he walks around the counter.

TEDDY

Okay now, I think we should just have a seat, and maybe give your daddy a call, so we can clear this up.

From the bar--

RUDY T (O.S.)

Fish tacos!

Aesop turns at the sudden outburst.

Rudy T wipes at the drool on his chin, eyes glazed in a drunken stupor.

While Aesop is distracted, Teddy grabs a bowling pin off the counter-painted with "Teddy's Bowl O Rama" across the front of it.

Rudy T's head drops back down onto the bar--

Wooden bowling pin meets flesh and bone, as Teddy smashes Aesop in the back of the head. Aesop crumples to the ground, the shotgun dropping out of his hand--

BANG! The shotgun fires as it hits the floor. Some of the blast catches Teddy in the foot and shin. He staggers back in pain and falls to the ground, grabbing his lower leg.

TEDDY

Son-of-a-bitch! Goddamn it hurts!

Aesop stirs, groaning.

Teddy crawls to the shotgun and uses it like a crutch to help him get to his feet. He hobbles into the bar and grabs Rudy T roughly by the shoulder.

TEDDY

Rudy T, wake the fuck up!

Nothing. Teddy shakes him again.

TEDDY

Rudy T, you son of a bitch, wake up and help me!

Rudy T is out cold.

Teddy throws a panicked look to Aesop, but he's not moving.

Teddy grabs a towel off the bar and gives Rudy T one last shake.

TEDDY

Rudy T, you useless Goddamned drunk!

Aesop groans.

Teddy panics. He grabs the shotgun off the bar and inadvertently pulls the trigger. The blast rips deep gouges into the counter top and the force of the blast throws Teddy backwards.

TEDDY

Goddamn-it.

Regaining his composure he picks up the shotgun and, checking to see that Aesop is still not moving, limps over to the fallen man. He very gingerly reaches into his front pocket and pulls one shotgun shell out.

Before he can load it--

Aesop's hand grabs Teddy's ankle, causing him to scream in fear and pain. He jerks his leg free and hobbles away as fast as the injury will allow.

Aesop slowly sits up, rubbing his head. He's still dazed. He grabs the wooden bowling pin and finds Teddy's blood on the floor. He follows the blood trail.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - OUTSIDE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Edsall steps into the hallway, revolver in hand. He cautiously makes his way to room 21, where he stops to listen outside the door. With a touch of the doorknob, the door swings open--

INT. CANDICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edsall is silhouetted in the doorway, a hulking figure, gun in hand.

Candice screams--

EDSALL

Candice?!

Edsall rushes into the dark room. He trips and falls squarely on top of Clyde's dead body.

Edsall scrambles off the dead man, panting, trying not to vomit.

EDSALL

Son of a monkey!

He wipes the blood off his hands onto the carpet, and tries to compose himself.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

Teddy's shoe is wrapped in a bar towel, blood soaking through it. He hobbles along the back side of the bowling lanes, loading the shotgun as he goes.

From behind the pin catcher, he stares down the lanes, watching Aesop move through the bowling alley, to a side door that will give him access to the machine room.

Teddy stops.

TEDDY

Goddamn.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O ROMA - CONTINUOUS

Aesop is at the door to the machine room. He pulls the door open, and is greeted by--

A shotgun in his face. Teddy holds all the cards, but he's nervous and shaking.

TEDDY

Okay, son, now you listen here.
We're, we're gonna go make a call
to your daddy. I'll not be accused--
-

In one swift motion Aesop pushes the shotgun barrel to the side and clubs Teddy in the forehead with the bowling pin. As the bowling pin connects, Teddy pulls the trigger and the shotgun goes off, close to Aesop's head.

Teddy falls to the ground, knocked out cold, as Aesop staggers backwards and falls to the ground, ears ringing, in agony.

EXT. HAPPY'S 24 HOUR LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

A crooked neon "LIQUOR" sign flashes and sputters on the facade of a run down spirits establishment.

INT. HAPPY'S 24 HOUR LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Jason steps up to the register and places two small bottles of whiskey on the counter. The employee, GORDON, wearing a Confederate Flag T-shirt, pushes the tail end of a frosted donut into his mouth. He stares long and hard at Jason, even as he's ringing up the sale.

JASON

What are you staring at?

GORDON

You got I.D.?

Gordon feels empowered by his ability to grant or refuse the purchase of alcohol.

JASON

Are you fucking with me?

Gordon points to a sign hanging on the front of the register--

"WE CARD - YOU MUST HAVE PROPER ID. WE
RESERVE THE RIGHT TO
REFUSE SERVICE TO ANYONE."

Jason is not amused, he pulls back his jacket to show the employee his badge and slaps a twenty-dollar bill down on the counter.

JASON
How's that?

Gordon is deflated. He gives Jason a sour look and handles the money exchange without a word. Jason opens the whiskey right there at the counter. He pulls out his bottle of pain killers and washes them down.

JASON
You have a good fucking night.

He turns and walks out, mumbling to himself.

JASON
Jack-ass.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - NIGHT

Teddy is tied up at the end of one of the bowling lanes, down in the pin catcher. His head at floor level.

Teddy struggles to free himself, to no avail.

Aesop stands at the ball tray, a bowling ball in his hand. He looks down at his booted feet.

AESOP
Sorry I don't have the proper shoes
on Teddy; I'd hate to damage your
floors.

Teddy is still groggy from the blow to the head.

TEDDY
You got it all wrong, I didn't do
nothin' to no one that didn't want
it done to them! I swear!

AESOP
(enraged)
I saw you, Teddy! I saw it all...

INT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - QUICK FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

-- Teddy, lecherous, drinking and smoking cigars, playing poker with DW, Charlie Sykes and his nephew Alvie.

-- Annabel walks by, unsteady on her feet, drugged.

-- Teddy slides a pile of cash across the table to Edsall.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

Aesop launches a ball down the lane. It strikes the far right side knocking a few pins over, narrowly missing Teddy's head.

TEDDY

Stop it, please, stop!

Aesop waits patiently at the ball return.

TEDDY

Let's talk about this, son! Please, I can make amends!

Aesop grabs the ball as it rattles back into the return tray.

AESOP

We're way past the point of talking, Teddy. I think you know that.

INT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - QUICK FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

-- Teddy, drunk, in a bedroom pawing at Annabel.

-- Teddy grabs her roughly by the hair.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - BACK TO PRESENT

Aesop's stare is focused, deadly.

AESOP

You're an animal, Teddy. I hope it was all worth it.

TEDDY

Oh, Christ.

Aesop launches the bowling ball down the lane. Teddy tries to move his head out of the way, but it catches him in the forehead.

Teddy's dazed, his vision swimming.

TEDDY

Oh fuck, stop, please don't.

Aesop picks up another ball. He throws it as hard as he can.

The ball rolls down the lane--

Slams into Teddy's face, dead center, with a sickening wet crunch. It caves in his skull and stays buried in his face. A pool of blood spreads from under the ball, and into the ball gutter.

Aesop takes a step back and sinks into one of the plastic benches. As the anger leaves him, his hands begin to shake. He buries his head in his hands and silently sobs, drained, shedding tears of emotional release. Memories of the past and the cost of his actions are finally catching up with him.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - EDSALL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Candice sits on the edge of the bed, wrapped in a blanket, eyes vacant.

Edsall tries in vain to comfort her, while trying to retrieve some information. Any time he comes close, she cringes and moves away.

EDSALL

Now listen honey, you're safe now,
I'll see to that personally. Ain't
no one gonna touch you while you're
in my care.

She stares, unblinking. In an attempt to console her, Edsall gently touches her arm. She pulls back and whimpers.

EDSALL

Sorry.
(pause)
Okay, well, I hate to push the
matter, but I really do need to
know what you saw here. I need to
know who did this. Can you help me
with that, dear?

Candice's face is a blank mask. She's checked out.

EDSALL

Damn.
(pause)
Well, let's get you dressed.

INT. TEDDY'S BOWL O RAMA - NIGHT

Aesop wipes the tears from his eyes and stands to find--

Rudy T, standing a few feet away, swaying slightly, fist clutching a half-empty bottle of bourbon. Aesop keeps the shotgun at his side.

AESOP
You know who I am?

RUDY T
Ain't none of my business.

Rudy T takes a sip from his bottle.

RUDY T
Teddy's a cunt--

Rudy T looks down the lane at Teddy's corpse.

RUDY T
(chuckles)
Was. (pause)

You gonna shoot me?

AESOP
You never hurt me or my mother.

Rudy T sits on one of the plastic bench seats.

RUDY T
Well then... I recon I'll have to
find another bar to frequent.

Aesop grips the shotgun by the barrel and walks past Rudy T, heading towards the door.

AESOP
I recon so.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A light rain falls.

Edsall helps Candice into the passenger side of the car, then walks around to the other side and climbs in.

INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - NIGHT

Edsall looks to Candice who stares blankly out the front windshield.

EDSALL
Any time you feel up to it, you
just go ahead and tell me anything
that might come to mind... no
pressure, you just take your time.

Edsall reaches over and places his hand on Candice's thigh.
She pulls away and presses herself against the door.

Edsall starts the engine.

EDSALL
(mumbles)
Christ.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - NIGHT

The Sheriff's cruiser pulls out of the Motel parking lot and
turns onto the darkened road.

INT/EXT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - NIGHT

Jason drives down a pitch black two-lane road. His eyes are
tired; he's nodding off. He turns the stereo up louder and
rolls down the window to help keep awake.

He grabs the bottle of pain killers, washing a few more down
with the whiskey.

JASON
Oh, fuck...

Jason hits the brakes and pulls to the side of the road. He
opens the door and stumbles out, then drops to his knees and
vomits.

He leans back against the car and tries to get his breathing
under control. After a moment he climbs back into the car
and lies across the front seat, promptly passing out.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - NIGHT

The windshield wipers barely work against a steady rain.
Lightning flashes across the sky.

Blood stains the back of Aesop's hands. He turns into the
jailhouse parking lot.

INT. JAILHOUSE - NIGHT

Aesop enters, wet from the short walk to the front door.

A mixture of static and heavy metal music comes from the
transistor radio next to Otis in his cell.

AESOP
Turn it off.

He slams the door shut.

JJ sits up on his cot in his cell, rubbing the back of his head with a sour look on his face. Otis turns the dial on the transistor radio, and the music stops.

OTIS
Sorry, all I could get in this rotten downpour. Happens from time to time. It helps build an appreciation for different kinds of music though, I must admit--

Aesop lays the shotgun on the desk and pulls off his wet T-shirt, ribs stretching against his pale translucent skin.

OTIS (cont'd) I never did care much for salsa music till a few years back. We got us a spell of nasty weather and all I could pick up was a Mexican station. Out of Abilene no less.

Aesop puts his hand on the shotgun, turning to Otis.

AESOP
Do yourself a favor, Otis...

Otis puts his hands above his head as a gesture of surrender.

OTIS
I get the gist.

Aesop grabs an extra sheriff's shirt that's hanging on the coat rack.

Otis sits on his cot; his feelings hurt. JJ stands and moves closer to the bars.

DEPUTY JJ
Just what do you intend on doing with me?

AESOP
You can shut up too.

Aesop pulls the Sheriff shirt on and rolls up the sleeves.

DEPUTY JJ
You've already assaulted a deputy sheriff, son. That alone is enough to put away.

AESOP

Don't call me son, asshole. I'm the same age as you; we went to the same fucking High-School.

DEPUTY JJ

All I'm saying is that you're in enough trouble for what you done already. And when your daddy gets back...

Aesop grabs the shotgun off the table, and points it in JJ's direction.

AESOP

I'm not gonna' tell you again.

JJ throws his hands up in frustration, and sits back down on his cot.

DEPUTY JJ

(under his breath)

Shouldn't have that shirt on, neither.

Both captives sit on their cots, pouting like children that have just been scolded by a parent. Aesop pulls out a chair and sits down, facing their cells.

INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - NIGHT

Jason lies across the front seat of his car, asleep--

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - BLACK AND WHITE

-- Young Jason buries his knife in the backyard, Aesop's dried blood still on the blade.

-- Jason lies in bed, staring at the ceiling in the dark.

INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

Jason wakes with a start, and painfully pulls himself upright. He swallows a few painkillers with the last of the whiskey, shuddering as it burns its way down his throat.

He starts the car and pulls back onto the road, still rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Rustic Motel sign flickers. In the pre dawn light, the patched-up Cafe wall is barely visible.

Jason's sedan brakes hard and turns off the highway, into the parking lot.

INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - NIGHT

Jason stares at the hastily boarded up hole in the front of the building.

JASON
What the hell is this?

He reaches for the whiskey bottle, only to find it empty. He tosses it on the floor and pulls a flashlight out of the glove box.

EXT. RUSTIC MOTEL - NIGHT

Jason gets out of the car. He tries the door, but it's locked. He moves to a gap in the plywood and shines the flashlight into the cafe--

JASON
The fuck?

The beam of light illuminates the carnage within.

He grabs ahold of a board and pulls hard. It gives way and he squeezes into the cafe.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Jason's flashlight cuts through the dark revealing a scene unlike any he's seen before.

JASON
Jesus.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - DAWN

Candice is still comatose, her makeup running down her face in long dark streaks. Edsall glances over at her while he drives, afraid she might stop breathing any second.

INT. RUSTIC MOTEL - DW'S OFFICE - DAWN

Jason is standing over DW's ruined corpse. He uses a napkin to pick up the broken shards of the snow-globe.

INT. JASON'S HOME - DAY - FLASHBACK

Jason is on his knees with a broken plate shard lodged in his back. Aesop pulls Jason to his feet and slams his face into the wall. He pulls the shard out of Jason's back and slashes him, cutting him deep.

Jason stumbles into the hallway, punching two numbers into his alarm control panel on the wall and the alarm goes off, piercing, causing Aesop to hesitate.

Jason stumbles down the hall, desperate to get to his shoulder holster hanging on the bedroom door. He pulls the gun free, and falls back against the wall.

Aesop watches, weighing his desire for revenge against his instinct for self preservation.

Jason is weak, fighting to stay conscious as he struggles to lift the gun. Aesop turns and runs-his decision made.

Jason passes out.

INT. DW'S OFFICE - BACK TO PRESENT

Jason braces himself against the door frame, waiting for the images to fade. He pulls out his clunky cellphone and dials a number.

JASON

Yes, could I get the number for a Sheriff Quarrels? It's in Chesterfield County.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAWN

Aesop is asleep in his chair. His eyeballs move under closed lids. His face twitches--

INT. AESOP'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Aesop, 12, does homework at a desk in his room when Edsall staggers in, bottle in hand. He smacks Aesop in the back of the head, then grabs him by the collar and drags him to his feet.

EDSALL

What are you doing, homework?

He takes a long pull from the bottle.

EDSALL

I told you to take out the God-damn trash, you good for nothing--

Edsall backhands Aesop across the face, knocking him to the ground. Annabel Quarrels runs in and grabs Edsall's arm.

ANNABEL

Please, leave him alone, please!

Annabel tries to put herself between father and son.

ANNABEL
Aesop, go finish your chores, don't
anger your father.

Edsall pushes her away, and turns back to Aesop. The bottle comes crashing down on Aesop's head.

EDSALL
You worthless shit!

Aesop lies in a pool of alcohol and broken glass, blood oozing out of a deep gash in his forehead.

INT. JEEP MOUNTAINEER WAGON - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Aesop sits in the passenger seat holding a blood-soaked towel to the gash in his head. His neck and T-shirt stained red. He leans into the door, staring out the window.

Annabel drives, her hands clutching the steering wheel too tight, her eyes unblinking. Tears run down her cheeks.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Annabel sits in a chair as a DOCTOR cleans the wound on Aesop's forehead. The pain and guilt she feels for her son is crushing her.

DOCTOR
You say he fell down while throwing
out the garbage?

Annabel continues to stare off into space.

DOCTOR
Mrs. Quarrels, you said he hit his
head when he fell?

No answer.

DOCTOR
Mrs. Quarrels?

ANNABEL
(startled)
Oh yes, he fell, outside-that's
right.

The doctor looks to Aesop.

DOCTOR
 Son, you hit your head on the
 mailbox? Is that right?

Tears well up in Aesop's eyes.

DOCTOR
 I need to know. For the medical
 report.

The doctor reaches in and pulls a piece of glass out of Aesop's forehead, dropping it into a small metal bowl. He casts a sideways glance at Annabel. She looks away.

EXT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

The jeep sits in the driveway of their drab house. It's surrounded by an old chain link fence that needs repairing, the only sign of life is a small flower garden under the front windows. It's beautiful flowers are a stark contrast to the shabby facade of the house.

INT. JEEP MOUNTAINEER WAGON - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Annabel and Aesop-his head heavily bandaged, sit and stare out the front windshield at a house neither of them wants to enter. Annabel's eyes are softer now. She moves closer to Aesop and puts her arm around him. She lovingly strokes his face.

The colorful flowers catch the porch light and stand out in the darkness.

AESOP
 The flowers are pretty, Mom. I like
 the purple ones.

ANNABEL
 Some day my sweet boy, you will
 leave this dreadful place and never
 look back... and live a life free
 from pain.

Aesop lays his head on her shoulder.

ANNABEL
 The answer to a mothers prayer.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAWN - BACK TO PRESENT

The room is dark.

JJ and Otis sit on their cots watching Aesop sleep. Otis turns the volume down on his transistor radio and holds it close to the bars as they speak in whispered tones.

OTIS
Goddamn fool's up to no good, I
know that much.

DEPUTY JJ
Well, ain't you a fucking genius?

OTIS
What the hell happened over at the
Rustic?

DEPUTY JJ
Trust me, you don't even want to
know. I ain't never seen any shit
like that before. Them two
Pottstucker boys and old DW must
have suffered mightily. That's all
I can say on that.

OTIS
Now you can't tell me that and not
give me the fucking details. That
just ain't right... it just ain't
right.

The phone rings, waking Aesop with a start. He looks around the room trying to get his bearings.

Otis points to the phone on the sheriff's desk.

OTIS
You gonna answer it?

The Sheriff's car pulls into the parking lot, but Aesop fails to notice, distracted and still groggy with sleep.

AESOP
Do you ever stop talking?

They both stare back with no response. The phone is still ringing.

A car door slams and Aesop jumps. He moves to the window in time to see Edsall helping Candice out of the car.

AESOP
What the fuck?

Aesop turns to his two captives.

AESOP
 (forcefully)
 Stay quiet.

He backs up against the wall as the front door opens and Edsall enters, Candice in tow.

EDSALL
 JJ, you here? Goddamned phone is ringing!

Edsall clocks JJ, locked in the cell.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
 What the hell?

DEPUTY JJ
 Sheriff!

Edsall turns in time to see Aesop as he lunges--

EDSALL
 Joseph and Mary--

Aesop slams the butt of the shotgun into Edsall's forehead, knocking him back into Candice. They both fall to the ground, hard.

Aesop pulls Edsall's unconscious bulk off of Candice and helps her to her feet. She's dazed, still in shock. Recognition flashes in her eyes, and then it's gone. Aesop relaxes, brushing the hair out of her face.

AESOP
 Jesus, why did he drag you all the way down here?

Aesop directs Candice into the middle cell and sits her down on the cot. He unfolds the blanket at the end of the cot and wraps it around her shoulders. On his way out he closes the cell door but doesn't lock it.

EXT/INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - DAY

Jason is driving with the phone to his ear. He tosses it onto the seat.

JASON
 Of course, no answer. Fuckin' red-neck.

He's sweating. He fiddles with the air conditioning controls, but nothing happens. Pounding on the dashboard yields the same result.

JASON

You gotta be kidding me!

Giving up, Jason rolls down the window and cranks up the radio. He steers with his knees and opens his bottle of pain killers, washing them down with a fresh bottle of whiskey.

On the road ahead there are black skid marks and a round shiny object lying in the street. Jason slams on the brakes and screeches to a halt.

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY - DAY

Jason stands over a silver hubcap gleaming in the sun. The Oldsmobile logo is stamped into the metal-he knows where it came from. He tosses it into the trunk, then moves to inspect the tire marks on the side of the road.

He scans the horizon, looking up and down the ravine. Something pink is sticking out of the bushes in the shallow water bellow. He scurries down the embankment and pulls up short--

A body lies face down in the water.

He turns the body over, and Kim's corpse stares back at him.

JASON

Mother fucker.

Jason pulls her body out of the water. He says a silent prayer, then climbs up the embankment with purpose, tears in his eyes.

JASON

I'm gonna' put a fucking bullet in your skull, freak.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Edsall is now tied to a chair in the center of the room. Blood seeps out of a deep gash in his chin, covering the front of his shirt.

Aesop paces like a caged animal. His eyes reveal years of anxiety, fear and anger finally being released.

Edsall shakes the cobwebs out of his head.

EDSALL
 Damn it, boy, what the hell are you
 up to?

He looks down and seems to realize for the first time that he's tied up. His boots have been removed and his big toe sticks out of a hole in his sock.

EDSALL
 Have you lost your Goddamn mind?!
 Untie me, now!

Aesop backhands his father across the face, almost knocking him over.

Aesop is visibly shaken. This is the first time in his life that he's stood up to his father.

Blood seeps out of Edsall's mouth. He grits his teeth.

EDSALL
 That's the first and last time
 you'll ever strike me!

Aesop paces. He shakes out his sore fist. All his nervousness and apprehensions finally coming to the surface.

JJ speaks up from his cell.

DEPUTY JJ
 Aesop, stop this right now, before
 it goes too far! We can talk it
 out.

Aesop turns on JJ. He jams the shotgun into the bars of the cell, forcing him back.

AESOP
 You have no idea--

He begins pacing again.

AESOP
 We're way past the point of
 talking, JJ. In fact, there's never
 been talking, has their, Father?

He points the shotgun at his father.

AESOP
 There was only violence, and
 control.

Edsall smirks.

Aesop moves in close to his father and presses the barrel of the shotgun against Edsall's head.

EDSALL

(laughs)

I should have known you'd find a way back here some day. Like a fucking stray dog I can't get rid of.

AESOP

You coward, you left me to rot in that shit-hole--

INT. MAINE - STATE MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY - DAY - FLASHBACK

A bleak, sterile reception area. DONALD SHIRE, 50s, stands at the reception desk. He looks as if he's been up for days, and close to tears.

NURSE, MONA, 50s, thick red lipstick on a scowling face, a real sourpuss, sits behind the reception desk. She has a thick Maine accent. A woman who has seen and dealt with too much on the job, and is now void of all compassion.

Mona's busy working on a crossword puzzle. She barely acknowledges the man in front of her.

DONALD SHIRE

I'm here to see Susanna Shire. She was brought here late last night.

NURSE MONA

And you are?

DONALD SHIRE

Her husband, Donald.

NURSE MONA

Well, sit down, it's gonna be a while. Lunch was an hour ago, so most of 'em are probably busy shitting in their diapers. That means there's a shortage of orderlies, so I'll have to find out where the hell she's got to.

Mona pulls her sizable girth from the chair and walks through a set of double doors, mumbling to herself.

NURSE MONA

Jeez, what a wicked grand life I've made for myself. Stinkin' shit job.

CUT TO BLACK:

The scratching of a pencil on paper. A page turns.

INT. MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY - WHITE ROOM -DAY

Aesop sits in a stark white room, on a white chair, with his eyes closed. He's wearing a white straight jacket, with several electrodes attached to his head.

There is a door against the back wall. Through a small window in the door, Mona peers into the room, then moves on.

DOCTOR COLE, middle aged, sits behind a small white desk, across from Aesop. He jots down a few notes, and closes the notebook. He stands and walks to the door.

INT. VIEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A man sits in the shadows of a dark room, watching through the viewing window. The door opens, and Doctor Cole enters.

DR. COLE

Sorry, it's a disturbing image, I know. He hasn't spoken a word since he came here. Not one single word in over a month.

He quickly opens the notebook as if suddenly remembering something forgotten, and jots down a few notes.

DR. COLE

Plenty of brain activity though. Alarming neural patterns. Intense emotional instability, and an almost uncontrollable rage; hence the jacket. There have been some outbursts... certain triggers.

(pause)

Oh, I'm sorry.

The doctor flips on a light switch to reveal--

Edsall Quarrels, a sour look on his face.

INT. WHITE ROOM - SAME

The light seems to trigger an invisible connection, a shared thread of hate. Aesop's eyes snap open and he stares into the two way mirror, sensing his father's presence.

INT. VIEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Cole continues on, unaware.

DR. COLE

Police records show that he's been in Maine for about eighteen months. He was arrested and brought here after being deemed mentally unfit. Caused quite a few problems at the county lock-up. They had no choice really. He nearly beat a police detective to death. A young man from your hometown--

Dr. Cole checks his notes.

DR. COLE

I believe they went to school together. A Jason Keil--

This elicits no response from Edsall.

DR. COLE

Quite a gruesome ordeal, I'm told.

(pause)

Can you remember anything else about his childhood, maybe something in a past experience that might give us some clue as to his current condition? Outbursts, destructive behavior, and the like?

Edsall doesn't want to be here, and makes no attempt to hide the fact. He never takes his eyes off his son as he talks.

EDSALL

I told you before, normal enough, but he ain't exactly normal, is he? Had it better than I did when I was his age, but he was soft. A real mama's boy. What else can I say? Had no stomach for the real world. I'm not surprised he ended up in a place like this. Just like his mother--

DR. COLE

Yes, I'm so sorry to hear about that.

Edsall is losing patience.

EDSALL

Yes, it's all very sad.

Edsall motions impatiently for the doctor to continue.

DR. COLE
Sorry, yes--

Dr. Cole takes a beat to get back on track, consulting his notes.

DR. COLE
You said he ran away when he was a boy.
(pause)
He's been gone a long time. He never tried to contact you?

Edsall watches two orderlies come in and take Aesop out of the room.

EDSALL
(interrupting)
Listen, doc, I've got a town to run back home, and my man in charge there is just shy of moron. It's still not clear to me why you insisted I come up here? I could have given you all this information over the phone.

DOCTOR COLE
Yes, well, he's your son. I thought maybe--

EDSALL
Cost me a Goddamned fortune to travel on such short notice. Money that could have been better spent. Besides, he's better off here anyway, can't hurt no-one else. So if there's nothing else, I'll wipe my hands of the whole affair.

DR. COLE
No, no. I thank you for flying all the way out here. If there's any change I'll be sure to--

EDSALL
You needn't inform me of anything further.

Edsall stands. He grabs a folded newspaper off the chair next to him and leaves the room without another word.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

As Edsall approaches the front desk, he stops to talk with Mona.

EDSALL

Do me a favor, sweetheart, and make sure my boy gets this.

He slides the newspaper across the counter.

INT. WHITE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lined with white doors, each door has a small sliding bar at eye level, for checking up on the rooms occupant.

INT. AESOP'S CELL - ROOM 40 - NIGHT

A white room with a single cot. Aesop lies on his back, staring at the ceiling, still visibly shaken from seeing his father.

The sliding window opens, and Mona's heavily made-up face stares in, but Aesop refuses to look in her direction.

NURSE MONA

Brought you a present, frosty. A little taste of home.

She pushes the paper through the opening, and slams the bar shut as Aesop rises.

EXT. WHITE HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Mona walks away, Aesop screams in agony. Her red lips curl into a wicked smile as a banging noise begins to echo through the hallway.

INT. AESOP'S CELL ROOM #40 - NIGHT

Aesop violently throws himself against the door, tears streaming down his face.

The viewing window slides open and two orderlies look in- DALE, tall, thin, balding, and FINN, a gym rat, dumb as dirt.

DALE

Knock it off, fuck face, or we're comin' in!

Dale holds up a syringe so Aesop can see it. Aesop throws himself into the door again. The orderly slams the sliding bar closed. The door opens, and they rush in.

DALE
Fuckin' freak!

Finn knocks him to the ground.

FINN
You fuckin' pecker head!

Finn gives him a few punches, until he lies still at their feet.

In the struggle, his straight jacket has come loose.

DALE
Careful, I don't want him getting free.

FINN
Don't worry about it. Look at this scrawny little fuck--he's crying like a baby.

Aesop lies still as if content to accept his fate.

Finn He ain't got no fight left in him.

Finn lets go and stands over him, confident that he poses no threat.

Dale moves in to administer the injection--

Aesop slips his arm out of the straight jacket sleeve and grabs Dale's wrist. He pulls the needle out of his hand and slams the syringe into Finn's leg, pushes the plunger down.

FINN
Oh shit!

Finn stumbles back. The sedative acts fast. He teeters on unsteady legs and collapses with a thud, as Dale tries to pin him to the ground.

DALE
Son of a bitch, We're gonna beat the snot out of you!

He throws a punch at Aesop, but misses. Aesop grabs the orderly's arm, using his momentum, and knocks him to the

floor. Aesop wraps one of the straight-jacket arms around the man's neck, and begins to strangle him.

Finn can only watch, barely conscious. He reaches out, grasping at air.

Before Dale passes out, Aesop grabs him by the hair and slams his head into the ground, knocking him unconscious. He rummages through the man's pockets and pulls out a small key on an elastic ring.

Aesop stands, and pulls off the rest of the straight jacket. The HEAVEN and HELL tattoos come together and wrap themselves around a flaming black heart in the center of his chest.

He searches Finn, pulling out some cash and a switchblade. A wave of fear washes over Finn's face as Aesop inspects the blade.

AESOP

Who's crying now, bitch?

With one punch he knocks Finn out. As Aesop escapes his cell--

The newspaper is lies crumpled on the ground - "The Teresville Gazette." Along with a photo of Annabel, the headline reads, "Annabel Quarrels, wife of Sheriff Edsall Quarrels found dead in apparent suicide."

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Aesop uses the key he took from Dale to open a locker, pulling out a pair of jeans and a T-shirt.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

The front window is spotted with fresh raindrops. Mona works on a crossword puzzle at her desk. A few powdered donuts and a cup of coffee sit within arms reach. A light dusting of powdered sugar covers her chin.

NURSE MONA

A twelve letter word for dis-entranced? What, do they think I'm a fucking Harvard grad?

Aesop walks in through the double doors, behind Mona. She can't be bothered to look.

NURSE MONA

Carl? If that's you, I'm busy. Don't bother me with any more of these retards...

Aesop grabs Mona by the hair, snapping her head back. Her eyes bulge with fear as she recognizes him.

NURSE MONA

You-you shouldn't be out of your room.

AESOP

Your problem, Mona, is that you've become unsympathetic to the human condition. Let's fix that.

Aesop slams her head on the desktop. Her body slides out of her chair and flops heavily to the ground. Aesop dumps the contents of Mona's purse on the counter. He takes her money and car keys.

EXT. MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Aesop walks out into the pouring rain.

There is only one car in the parking lot. A rusted-out, late-model green station wagon with wood side-panels.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Edsall spits blood on the floor near Aesop's feet.

EDSALL

You waited too long to save your precious mama, didn't you?

Aesop lands another barrage of punches, then takes a step back. He steels himself. He won't let his father see him cry.

AESOP

We both know she wouldn't take her own life.

Edsall laughs a low, wicked laugh.

EDSALL

She waited a long time for you. Never gave up hope on her precious little freak baby. When we heard about your arrest in Maine, she demanded that we go see you.

Edsall spits more blood on the floor. His eyes lock on Aesop's.

EDSALL

Can you believe it? She demanded I take her to you.

From his cell, JJ moves closer to the bars, his interest now piqued.

EDSALL

I couldn't have that... I wouldn't have it.

DEPUTY JJ

Sheriff?

Aesop levels the shotgun at Edsall.

EDSALL

Well, what are you waiting for? Do it, if that's what you've set your mind to.

AESOP

It's not gonna be that easy.

Aesop slams the butt of the shotgun into Edsall's stomach. Edsall gasps for air, spitting up blood.

AESOP

All the beatings... I could handle the pain. But, what you did to my mother-you rotten bastard. That's what you're accountable for. What you let your friends do to her!

EDSALL

You ignorant ... I beat you to make you strong. At least I tried.

(coughs up blood)

I guess I failed 'cause you're still weak and useless. Just like your mother. Goddamn her for giving birth to a monster like you! She must have spread her legs to the devil--

Aesop punches him again.

AESOP

The only Devil in her life was you!

EDSALL

I should've beat the life out of you then! You and your mother!

Aesop smashes him in the face with another right cross.

AESOP

When I'm done with you, you're gonna beg me to kill you.

Edsall laughs - cruel, mocking.

EDSALL

You're just as dumb as when you was a boy. You think I was the only man yer precious mama laid with.

Aesop begins beating his father when JJ rattles his cell bars.

DEPUTY JJ

Goddamn it, son! Don't do this!

Aesop turns. He Thrusts the butt of the shotgun through the bars and smashes JJ in the face, knocking him to the ground with a large gash in his forehead. Blood flows over his face as he lies unconscious on the floor.

OTIS

Hells bells.

Rage burns in Aesop's eyes. Candice gets to her feet and reaches through the bars. She lays a gentle hand on his arm and it seems to quiet the storm building inside him.

Aesop turns back to his father who has passed out from the beating. He grabs the back of his chair and drags Edsall into the back hallway.

OTIS

Where you going with the sheriff?

AESOP (O.S.)

Shut up, Otis!

Aesop comes back and grabs his car keys.

OTIS

What do you intend on doing now?

AESOP

Clean up some loose ends.

Aesop turns to leave, but is drawn to Candice who is still standing at the bars, tears running down her cheeks.

AESOP

I'm sorry... you shouldn't have to witness any of this.

He turns to leave, hesitates.

AESOP
You don't have to fear me.

Candice wipes some of the tears away. There is no uncertainty in her voice.

CANDICE
(whispers)
I know.

AESOP
When I come back I'll take you
somewhere... anywhere you want to
go.

Aesop turns and exits the building, locking the door behind him.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Oldsmobile drives down the sleepy, small-town street.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - CONTINUOUS

Aesop passes an old movie theatre, the ORPHEUM, with a dilapidated marquee out front. The once majestic building is now in a state of disrepair.

He drives around the theatre and pulls into a back alley, parking a short distance from the door.

INT. JAILHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Edsall is coming too. His eyes flutter and open. He looks around disoriented, trying to get his bearings.

The hallway seems to stretch out endlessly before him.

EDSALL
Son of a bitch.

Edsall calls out.

EDSALL
Candice?! I need you to listen to
me.
(pause)
Candice, can you hear me? I need
you to focus on my voice.

EXT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - BACK ALLEY - DAY

Aesop uses the butt end of the shotgun to make quick work of a padlock on the back door.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Aesop enters a small room, full of empty film canisters, boxes of candy, cups and popcorn. He closes the door, and the room goes black.

INT. JAILHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Edsall is still trying to get through to Candice as he works at his bonds.

EDSALL

Come on, honey-you've got to snap out of it! I really need your help! Your cell ain't locked, darlin'! All you gotta do is get up and open the door! JJ's in a bad way and he's gonna need a doctor, real soon!

INT. CANDICE' CELL - CONTINUOUS

Candice looks to DEPUTY JJ lying prone in the next cell, but makes no move to get up. Tears begin to roll down her cheeks.

OTIS

Now, Miss Candice, I think we may all be in mortal danger here, not just the Sheriff. His boy ain't stable, no matter what he says. You've seen it for yourself. No telling what he's capable of. He killed your pa didn't he?

CANDICE

(mumbles to herself)
The things he did to his family.

OTIS

What's that?

Candice stares back.

OTIS

Sweetheart, if you could just unlock my cell, I'd surely appreciate the gesture, and likewise--

EDSALL

Otis! Shut up, you ain't helpin' matters!

(pause)

Now, Candice, I want you to concentrate on the sound of my voice! Can you do that?

Candice wipes at the tears that streak her face.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - LOBBY - DAY

The theatre is in varying states of decay.

ALVIE SPAIN, now in his late 30s, stands behind the concession stand, wearing a red velvet ushers jacket, and a plastic name tag that he's constantly fiddling with.

Alvie cleans the counter tops. He stops to adjust his name tag, using his cleaning rag to polish it.

A voice calls out--

CHARLIE SYKES (O.S.)

Alvie! You clean out the theatre yet?

ALVIE

Uh-no sir, no I didn't.

CHARLIE SYKES (O.S.)

Alvie! Don't be so fuckin' useless! Get to it! We open up in forty-five minutes!

ALVIE

Okay boss... boss?

CHARLIE SYKES (O.S.)

What?!

Alvie pulls his flashlight out of his pocket, and turns it on.

ALVIE

Please don't use those words, boss.

He walks out from behind the counter, and through a set of double doors to the auditorium. His afflictions making his movements jerky and unsteady.

INT. PROJECTION ROOM - DAY

The small room is filled with shelves crammed with reels of film, stacked one on top of another. Old film projectors salvaged for parts are strewn about.

CHARLIE SYKES, now late 50s, sour-it's been said that charlie has an onion permanently lodged up his ass, sits at a small table repairing one of his machines.

He wears polyester pants and a short sleeve polyester shirt with white Rockports, and the same rose colored glasses.

He looks up to the heavens.

CHARLIE SYKES

Lord, what the fuck did I ever do to get stuck with my sister's crippled kid? It's a fuckin' unfairness.

He shakes his head and goes back to his work.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The theatre is dark. The walls, while filthy and in need of paint, are ornate. The seats are all covered in red velvet, matching Alvie's jacket.

With his awkward gait and jerking movements, Alvie's flashlight dances crazily in the darkness. He reaches for his name tag, and it pops off his jacket. It bounces on the carpet and disappears under a row of chairs.

ALVIE

Crud.

He bends over and smacks his head down on the seat in front of him, dropping his flashlight. He watches it roll down the center aisle, too far to warrant the physical toll it would take for him to retrieve it.

He gets down on all fours and crawls between the seats looking for the name tag. His hands and knees stick to the dirty floor.

He frees a hand from the sticky mess and finds popcorn, and a condom wrapper stuck to his palm.

A window in the projection booth above him opens, and Charlie pokes his head out.

CHARLIE SYKES
 Alvie, I gotta go to the Piggly
 Wiggly to get a light bulb for this
 Goddamned projector! Don't open the
 fucking doors till I get back! You
 understand?

Alvie halts his search under the seats to reply.

ALVIE
 Boss?

CHARLIE SYKES
 What?

ALVIE
 Please don't use those--

CHARLIE SYKES
 Shut up!

He disappears back into the booth and slams the window shut.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Jason drives through the sleepy town. He turns a corner and
 slams on the brakes as a battleship of a town- car swings
 out onto the street from an alley, almost clipping him.

JASON
 (yelling out the window)
 Watch where you're going you
 ignorant fuck!

Charlie Sykes drives away oblivious to it all.

Jason begins to drive, then hits the brakes again. Down the
 alley the back end of the Oldsmobile is just visible.

INT. JAILHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Edsall painfully inches his chair down the hallway. It's
 slow going, and his frustration level is peaking.

EDSALL
 Candice, you need to be strong and
 get out of that cell. Think abut
 your daddy. Do it for him.

He rounds the corner, exhausted from the effort.

CANDICE
 My daddy. He used to hit me...

EDSALL
 (deflated)
 Christ.

CANDICE
 I'm glad he's dead.

Edsall's near his boiling point.

EDSALL
 Men don't always do the right
 thing, honey.
 (more forceful)
 If you help me out of this chair,
 I'll do my best to protect you, I
 promise!

He tries a different approach.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
 You've seen what my son is capable
 of.

Otis stands at the bars and turns his transistor radio to
 classical music. Candice wipes the last of the tears away,
 and stares at Edsall. She doesn't move.

Edsall has lost his patience.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
 Goddamnit, Candice! Get up and help
 me outta this fucking chair! Now!

Candice moves deeper into the cell.

EDSALL (CONT'D)
 You're just like your fucking
 mother... useless in trying times.

CANDICE
 (barely audible)
 My mother?

He gives one more violent struggle to get out of his bonds
 and nearly knocks himself over.

EDSALL
 Goddamn it!

Candice stares back at Edsall, her eyes hardening.

CANDICE
 You knew my mother?

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Alvie is still searching for his name tag under the seats, when a bright light suddenly shines down on him.

Startled, he struggles awkwardly to turn and look up into--
A blinding light and black silhouette.

ALVIE

Boss?

Aesop cracks him over the head with the flashlight and everything goes black.

INT. PROJECTION ROOM - DAY

Alvie's vision blurs back in as he comes to, being propped up in a chair. He rubs the welt on his forehead.

Aesop holds the shotgun up to his face. Alvie, dazed and confused, tries to focus. He sees the shotgun and the sheriff's shirt.

ALVIE

Sheriff?

Aesop pokes him in the chest with the shotgun.

ALVIE (CONT'D)

You're not the sheriff. Why did you hit me like that?

AESOP

You're lucky that's all I did.

ALVIE

What did I ever do to you?

AESOP

It's not about what you did to me.

Alvie shudders. Tears begin to well up in his eyes.

ALVIE

I'm sorry; I don't remember your name. I'm afflicted...

Alvie lowers his head in shame.

ALVIE (CONT'D)

I forget things.

Aesop feels a connection with Alvie. He lowers the shotgun.

INT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The room is filled with cigar smoke. Aesop, now 10, watches from his doorway as DW, Teddy and Charlie Sykes are all playing poker. Young Alvie, early teens, sits in a chair behind Sykes, staring off into space, uninterested.

Annabel walks up and places a fresh beer in front of Edsall. Her left eye is black and blue. Edsall slaps her ass as she turns to leave.

She walks away without looking back.

Charlie Sykes gets up from his seat and grabs Alvie by the arm.

CHARLIE SYKES

Come on Alvie, it's time fer you to grow up and become a real man. You just watch me, an I'll lead you to the promised land.

(under his breath)

You worthless shit When Alvie resists, Charlie backhands him across the face, knocking him to the floor. He pulls him to his feet and drags him down the hall.

INT. PROJECTION ROOM - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Both men stare at one another with a shared a memory between them.

AESOP

You were there, in that room with her. I need to know.

ALVIE

Oh no, I don't want-I just can't, please.

AESOP

I need to know. For your sake, I need to know.

Aesop's tone tells him he better start talking.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Jason creeps through the dark theatre, gun in hand.

ALVIE (V.O.)

My uncles not a good Christian man...

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - PROJECTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alvie takes a deep breath.

ALVIE

And... he had his way with... when he was done-he, he tried to make me do the same, but, but I didn't think it was right, so he beat me. He beat me bad.

(pause)

He said I wasn't nearly a man, and never would be.

Alvie wipes away some tears.

ALVIE (CONT'D)

I remember your mama was a real pretty lady. I'm sorry for her passing... your sister carries her looks.

AESOP

I don't have a sister, Alvie. I need you to concentrate.

ALVIE

Well, your half-sister least-wise. Seeing as DW's the father.

The news hits Aesop like a lead pipe to the brain pan.

AESOP

Sister? My God... how do you know this?!

ALVIE

Well, everyone in the group knew it- except Candice, and I guess... you.

Aesop stumbles backwards, sending a stack of film canisters clattering to the floor. The realization is too much for him to process. Tears well in his eyes.

AESOP

Jesus Christ... my sister?

Using the shotgun like a baseball bat, he begins smashing everything in site.

Alvie cowers in fear.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Jason listens to the sounds of destruction and takes off running.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - PROJECTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aesop's rage has subsided. He slumps to the floor, his chest heaving and his face streaked with tears. He's defeated.

AESOP

I don't know if I can do this anymore.

There's a connection. Alvie's eyes well with tears; he understands the meaning behind the words.

ALVIE

I'd be lyin' if I said I hadn't thought the same thing a hundred times, but every time I wanted to end things... I thought of my mama... and the sacrifice she made bringing me into this world... my mama died giving birth to me.

AESOP

In a way... mine did too.

There's a shared connection between the two, until the silence is broken by footsteps on the stairs. Aesop grabs the shotgun.

The door swings open and Jason steps into the doorway. Both men fire. Both men are hit--

A bullet rips into Aesop's side and he drops to the ground. Jason stumbles backwards--

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Charlie steps through the lobby doors and runs to the projection room stairs with a brown paper bag under his arm.

CHARLIE SYKES (O.S.)

God-damn it Alvie! What's all the racket? You better not have touched any of my--

Jason's body tumbles down the stairs and lands completely still at Charlie's feet.

CHARLIE SYKES (CONT'D)
Holy Mother...

Charlie leaps over the body and races up the stairs.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - PROJECTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlie takes a step inside the room--

CHARLIE SYKES
Shit!

The butt of the shotgun smashes Charlie in the forehead and he crumples.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Edsall inches his way closer to Candice, sweat mixing with blood.

EDSALL
Goddamn it, Candice! If you don't
get up and help me, I'll give you
something to really be scared of!

She doesn't acknowledge him, just stares, trying to put the pieces together.

CANDICE
How do you know my mama?

Edsall struggles violently against his bonds. He lifts the chair off the ground and slams it down. One of the back legs splinters and as the chair collapses. He hits the ground hard, with the chair now in pieces. He lies there, stunned, but his anger quickly lights the fire in his eyes.

INT. ORPEUM THEATRE - PROJECTION ROOM - DAY

Charlie lies prone at Aesop's feet, dazed. Blood oozes out of a deep gash in his forehead.

Aesop pushes the shotgun into his side.

CHARLIE SYKES
The hell... who hit me?
(blinking)
Sheriff?

Some of the cobwebs clear.

CHARLIE SYKES (CONT'D)
You're not the Sheriff.

AESOP

No, I'm not the Sheriff. I'm my
mothers son you scum-bag.

CHARLIE SYKES

(recognition)

Crap.

Charlie registers the tattoos, blood splattered on his Hell
arm--

CHARLIE SYKES (CONT'D)

Oh shit... you son-of-a-bitch.
Alvie, help me! Help me, you
worthless cripple!

Aesop levels the shotgun at Charlie's face, his cold eyes
resolved to a purpose. He pulls the trigger--

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Edsall is unsteady on his feat. As he staggers to his desk,
he catches a glimpse of his battered face in a mirror by the
door.

Enraged, he grabs the mirror off the wall and smashes it on
the floor. Edsall grabs the car keys off the desk, but
hesitates. He walks into Candice's cell--

Candice stands in front of him and stares back defiantly.
Edsall backhands her across the face and she crumples back
onto her cot.

EDSALL (cont'd) You can sit in here and rot, for all the
help you've been! And yer as useless as yer mother was.

He walks out and slams her cell door, locking it.

Edsall looks down at his brown polyester socks.

EDSALL (CONT'D)

Where are my Goddamned boots?

OTIS

Uh sheriff, I don't think you're in
your right mind.

Edsall spots them partially hidden under a desk. He tucks
them under his arm, in too much of a hurry to stop and put
them on. He unlocks the door and slams it shut behind him.

OTIS (CONT'D)
(calls after him)
I don't think you should be
driving!

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - STAIRWELL - DAY

Aesop steps down the last few steps, shotgun ready. His hand bloody from where he clutches his side. Jason's body is gone, but he's left plenty of blood behind. Aesop turns and walks back up the stairs.

INT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - PROJECTION ROOM - DAY

Blood is splattered on every available surface. Alvie takes a tentative step towards Charlie's ruined body. He speaks softly, more as a reflection of his own life's failings.

ALVIE
The Bible says to turn the other
cheek.

AESOP
More like, an eye for an eye.

Alvie ponders the statement, then comes to a simple conclusion.

ALVIE
Okay.

Aesop throws the shotgun over his shoulder and turns to Alvie.

AESOP
Don't you need to open up?

Alvie grabs a broom and begins sweeping up the clutter as Aesop turns to leave. Alvie moves over to the body. He carefully pokes it with the broom handle, then reaches down and picks up the discarded paper bag.

He pulls out the light bulb that Charlie purchased, and places it in the projector.

INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - DAY

It's raining.

Jason speeds down the deserted road with his phone in hand. His right shoulder is peppered with small shotgun pellet holes, oozing blood. He's in bad shape.

EXT. ORPHEUM THEATRE - BACK ALLEY - DAY

Aesop steps out of the theatre and gets in his car.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

Aesop sits behind the wheel, staring at the rain hitting the windshield, wet hair clinging to his face. He fights back a fresh wave of tears.

He's holding a towel against the wound in his side. He pulls it away to reveal a deep gash, but not life threatening.

INT. QUARRELS HOUSEHOLD - AESOP'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

It's raining.

Aesop's room looks like it's been ransacked. The dresser drawers are all pulled open.

Aesop, 12, stuffs the last of his clothes into a duffle bag, and climbs out the bedroom window, disappearing into the night. Sitting in the center of his desk is a glass of water with a single purple flower.

EXT. JAILHOUSE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Edsall rummages through the trunk of his cruiser and grabs his backup pistol, shoving it into his waistband. He walks to the driver's-side door, stubbing his toe on the way.

EDSALL
Son-of-a-whore!

Edsall angrily tosses the boots into the passenger seat and climbs in after them. He starts the engine and throws it into reverse--

INT. JASON'S DARK SEDAN - TWO-LANE ROAD - DAY

Jason pops a few pain killers and reaches for the whiskey bottle, wincing in pain.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - DAY

Edsall hits the gas and flies backwards out of the parking and onto the street. There's a flash of color in the rearview mirror--

EDSALL
Son-of-a-bitch!

EXT. TWO LANE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The two cars smash into each other. The sedan careens off the road and flips over into a ditch. The sheriff cruiser spins to a stop in the road.

Edsall staggers out of the wrecked car. He barley registers the other car lying on it's roof as he staggers back to the jailhouse.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Edsall stumbles through the doorway.

OTIS
Hell fire, Sheriff! What happened
out there?

Edsall heads to the back room.

EDSALL
Shut up, Otis.

Otis calls out after him.

OTIS
Put your pride on hold sheriff, and
let me out so as I can help you!
The good Lord says--

EDSALL (O.S.)
Shut up, Otis!

INT/EXT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY

Aesop drives, lost in thought.

The Sheriff's cruiser appears up ahead, crumpled, smoke pouring from the engine.

AESOP
What the hell?

Aesop slows to a crawl. The sedan is overturned in the ditch to his left. He pulls the car onto the shoulder and climbs out.

EXT. TWO LANE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Aesop checks the Sheriff's cruiser, but it's empty, except for the Sheriff's boots. He cautiously moves to the sedan.

He puts the shotgun aside and gets down on his hands and knees. No sign of a driver.

It's empty, except for the contents of a box, strewn about the roof. Aesop reaches in and pulls out a plastic bag.

Inside the bag are the shattered remains of the snow globe he used to kill DW. Across the top of the bag is a name written in black marker: "Detective Jason Keil, Badge # 19630."

AESOP

Fucker.

He reaches back in and snatches a Manila folder - "State Mental Hospital," printed on the front. Inside he finds the three page doctors evaluation. He rips the pages out and crumples them in his fist. He's on the move--

Aesop goes back to the sheriff's cruiser. Reaching through the driver's door, he pulls the trunk release.

He opens the trunk and removes a small metal gas can. He throws the plastic evidence bag and crumpled papers back into the sedan, and begins pouring gasoline on the car when something hits the car and bounces off with a metallic clang--

Kim's metal name tag lies in the grass. Aesop turns--

Jason stands in the road with his gun pointed at Aesop, gripping the hubcap in his other hand. He's bloody, dazed, barely able to hold himself up, the gun wavering in his grip.

AESOP

You don't look so good, Jason.

JASON

Fuck you.

AESOP

I see you've been busy. I didn't think you'd survive.

JASON

It's over, Aesop. Whatever fucked-up twisted revenge--

Aesop hugs the gas can to his chest and takes a few steps closer to Jason.

JASON

That's close enough.

AESOP

I'd be careful where you point that. There's enough gas left in this thing to take us both out.

JASON

Why Kim? I can understand coming after me... there's no excuse for what I did to you, but Kim didn't deserve that.

Aesop peeks around Jason to the jailhouse. It's too quiet.

AESOP

To tell you the truth, I don't think I really knew what I wanted from her. I just needed her to know how she affected my life. What I went through. Things just got out of hand.

Aesop takes another step closer to Jason.

AESOP

She just wanted to fuck.

His words have the desired effect. Jason's blood is boiling. He's fighting the urge to shoot Aesop and take his chances.

JASON

You sick son-of-a-bitch.

Jason lunges. He swings the hubcap, catching Aesop in the side of the head.

Aesop drops the gas can and stumbles, falling to the ground. Jason is thrown off balance by the force of the connection and topples, dropping his gun.

Jason scrambles for the gun, but he's too slow. Aesop grabs an ankle and Jason falls back to the ground. Before he can get back on his feet Aesop is on him. Jason elbows Aesop in the face knocking him backwards.

Jason lunges for his weapon. As he turns to level the gun, Aesop is above him and grabs his wrist. Jason is too weak to resist.

AESOP

Sorry, there's one more thing... the only thing I've got left to do. I can't let you fuck that up.

Aesop pries the gun out of his hand and tosses it into the wrecked car.

AESOP

For what its worth, It wasn't my intention to kill Kim. It's just one of many things I'll have to live with. I know that doesn't mean shit to you... but when this is done-if you survive, you can walk away, or you can come after me... but know this. What I did to those men... it was better than they deserved.

JASON

That doesn't make it right.

Aesop picks up the gas can with his free hand.

AESOP

No, it doesn't.

Aesop stands over Jason.

AESOP

I'm tired... and this was never really about you. I've been through far worse.

Jason pulls himself up on his elbows and studies Aesop's tattooed arms - Heaven and Hell.

JASON

You don't have to go in there. It's your decision... which side wins?

AESOP

Nobody wins.

Aesop slams the gas can into Jason's face, knocking him out.

Aesop places the gas can on the car and steps back to the side of the road. He raises the shotgun and fires--

The blast nearly knocks Aesop over. He stumbles back as the car goes up in flames. He watches for a moment, then turns back to the jailhouse.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Aesop pushes the front door open, shotgun on his hip, and steps inside. The room is eerily silent.

The broken chair and pieces of discarded rope lie on the floor. Blood stains mark the place of Edsall's beatings.

Candice is slumped over in her cell and Otis sits in the shadows of his.

OTIS

What manner of demons have you brought with you, son?

Aesop ignores him and walks into the hallway, checking for signs of Edsall.

OTIS

Son?

He comes back out, and stands in front of Otis's cell, tapping the shotgun against the bars.

AESOP

Where is he?

OTIS

Don't reckon I know. You're bleeding.

AESOP

(measured)

Where is the old man?

OTIS

I'm sorry son, but I can't tell you what I don't know.

(pause)

Unless you were to let me out of this here cell, then I'd help you look. Of course, that would be on the condition that I remain free after an appropriate amount of searching, seeing as he could have dropped dead after that beating you thrown on him.

Otis reaches his hand through the bars.

OTIS

We could shake on that, an I'd then take you at your word.

Aesop turns away.

AESOP

You can rot in there.

OTIS

That ain't very Christian of you,
son.

Aesop moves to Candice's cell. He places the shotgun at his feet and grips the bars, no longer trusting his legs to hold him up. He stares at Candice through matted hair.

Candice sits up, slowly. She brushes the hair from her face, revealing a swollen eye. A thin stream of fresh blood runs out of her nose, a gift from Edsall.

AESOP

I'm sorry.

Aesop looks away, unable to make eye contact. Feeling like the monster she must think him to be.

AESOP

(barely audible)

We have a lot to talk about.

Aesop pulls at the cell door but it doesn't budge. Otis states the obvious.

OTIS

It's locked.

Aesop turns to Otis who is watching him intently. Otis's eyes dart to something behind him, causing Aesop to turn.

Before he can get his head around--

He is struck from behind and crumples to the ground.

Edsall stands over him, pistol in hand. Aesop fumbles for the shotgun, but Edsall kicks it away. He sees the blood on his shirt.

EDSALL

You should have killed me when you
had the chance.

Edsall looks down at Aesop's exposed tattoos.

EDSALL

(disgusted)

You're even more of a freak now
then when you were a kid. All those
fucking tattoos. You weren't weird
enough to look at already?

Aesop musters the strength to push up his left sleeve, the Heaven side.

AESOP

I did this side for my mother. For all the years she tried to protect me... from you. For all the abuse she took-because of me.

He pushes up his right sleeve, the Hell side.

AESOP

This side is to remind me of who you really are.

Edsall kicks him in the stomach, then leans in close and grabs Aesop by the hair.

EDSALL

I should have smothered you in your sleep when you was an infant-trust me, I thought about it.

While both men profess their unwavering hate for each other, Otis tries in vain to get the shotgun just out of his reach.

EDSALL

I cursed God and your mother for giving birth to such an abomination. And when your mother finally come home from the hospital with her little freak baby, I beat her good... I never believed you was mine.

Edsall lets go of Aesop's hair and stands over him.

EDSALL

Doctors said she'd never carry another, but, she got herself knocked-up the year you tucked your tail between your legs and ran. And I was a Goddamned bigger fool for letting DW talk me into letting him keeping it.

Candice wipes at the blood on her face, listening to Edsall's words, her eyes lock onto his.

EDSALL

I'll tell you one thing.
(laughs)
It cost him one hell of a pretty penny. And--

Edsall throws a look to Candice.

EDSALL

I made damn sure the two of them
never did see each other again.
Those were the terms I set down.

(pause)

And now your precious mama is dead.

Candice grips the bars, her face twisted in despair as fresh
tears begin to fall.

CANDICE

(softly)

You animal.

Edsall sees Otis reaching for the shotgun out of the corner
of his eye.

EDSALL

Otis! Knock it off, you Goddamn
fool!

Aesop lunges. He grabs ahold of Edsall, and the two men
struggle for control of the pistol.

Edsall breaks free. They both stumble and fall backwards.
Edsall fires as he falls, the first shot misses; the second
grazes Aesop in the shoulder.

Aesop falls back into the bars and slumps to the ground.
Edsall's last step backwards takes him into the shattered
glass from the broken mirror. He falls to the ground
grabbing his foot.

EDSALL

Fuck!

He scrambles to his feet, bleeding from a dozen cuts. One
foot is deeply lacerated. He holds onto the desk for support
and pulls a large piece of glass out of his heel.

EDSALL

Christ! You've caused nothing but
misery in my fucking life since the
day you were born!

Edsall limps to Aesop, leaving a trail of blood behind him.
He grabs one of the legs from the broken chair and stuffs
the pistol into his waistband.

EDSALL

A bullet in the head is too good
for you-too easy. No, I'm gonna
open your skull and watch your
brains spill out on the floor.

(MORE)

EDSALL (CONT'D)

I deserve that much. You should never have come back here--

Edsall swings the chair leg. Aesop manages to get a hand up and partially block the blow, but it glances off his head with just enough force to daze him.

EDSALL

I've God's righteousness on my side!

Edsall rears back for another powerful blow, when--

A shotgun blast rips into Edsall's side. He staggers back and falls to the ground. His pistol clatters to the floor.

EDSALL

You bitch.

Candice sways on unsteady feet in her cell, shotgun in hand, barrel still smoking. Through the grief written on her face, there is a new strength behind it.

CANDICE

For all the years you stole from us, and the pain you caused her.

OTIS

(whispers)

Hell fire.

Aesop uses the bars to help pull himself up. He stares back at Candice. They share a look--a new bond.

Candice sinks back onto her cot, tears streaming down her face. Aesop turns his attention back to Edsall and kneels next to his father.

Edsall can only stare back, helpless.

EDSALL

You don't have it in you... you're weak. Always have been... now get me to a doctor, boy.

Edsall makes a weak attempt at getting up, but Aesop pushes him back down.

AESOP

I'm anything but weak, old man, because I survived. You spent your life abusing a defenseless woman and child.

(MORE)

AESOP (CONT'D)

You tortured the only two people in
the world that you had power over.

This is the first time Aesop's words have had any impact on
Edsall. The first time he's ever been speechless, but his
scowl remains-ever defiant.

AESOP

For a long time I actually believed
everything you said about me, that
I deserved what you did...

Aesop looks away, emotions embed deep. He won't let his
father see any sign of weakness. Aesop's eyes go cold and he
refocuses on Edsall.

AESOP

After today, I won't let the past
control me anymore. I'm letting go
of the hate, and the pain.

Edsall laughs weakly, coughing up blood.

EDSALL

You'll never change... who you
really are.

AESOP

I've done some terrible things.
Things I'll have to pay for some
day, because I let it poison me,
turn me into a monster. But that
ends today.

Aesop stands, and retrieves the fallen pistol.

AESOP

Because the monster that lives
inside me--

Aesop kneels.

AESOP

That monster is you.

EDSALL

You don't have the guts.

Edsall's words don't carry the same weight they once did.
There's a trace of doubt.

AESOP

(calm)

I've got news for you, old man.

(pause)

A bullet to the brain ain't too good for you.

Aesop shoves the gun under Edsall's chin.

AESOP

This is for my mother.

A deafening blast. The muzzle flash explodes like a bolt of lightning, and Aesop's face is splattered with his father's blood.

Aesop looks down on his father's corpse, tears flowing-his life's brutal purpose realized.

In a daze, he staggers to the door, wiping the tears and blood from his eyes. He hesitates, and turns back.

EXT. CEMETERY - DUSK

Aesop and Candice stand in the rain, silently staring at their mother's gravestone.

Aesop carries a handful of purple flowers, like the ones from his mothers garden. He lays them over her grave.

EXT. JAILHOUSE - NIGHT

The jailhouse is dark. Light from a street lamp illuminates the police cruiser sitting at the edge of the road like a wounded animal. The burnt-out husk of Jason's sedan smolders in a steady rain. Jason is gone.

The soundtrack, a haunting melody that carries from the jailhouse through the darkness from a tiny transistor radio.

THE END.