

OHIO VALLEY BOOGIE

Written by

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INT. DINER/RURAL OHIO - DAY

JOHNNY DELTA, late 30s, heavy beard, thick coiffed brown hair, sits in a booth, smoking a cigarette and writing in a notebook with a blue pen.

MADELYN, late 20s, jet-black hair, a pair of rounded spectacles, with a ring as black as her hair pierced through her septum, sits down across from him.

MADELYN

Can I bum a smoke?

Johnny stops writing, looks up, immediately taken by her physical presentation. He gets lost for a moment, then removes a cigarette from his pack, hands it to her. He lights her smoke for her. She leans back and exhales, nods at a guitar case in the booth next to him.

MADELYN

You writing a song?

JOHNNY

A story.

MADELYN

Aren't all songs stories?

JOHNNY

Some of them.

MADELYN

Are your songs stories?

JOHNNY

Most of them.

MADELYN

What kind of story?

JOHNNY

A road story.

MADELYN

What's a road story?

JOHNNY

There's two types. Either the characters go on some sort of existential quest, or they're criminals being chased by the law.

MADELYN

Which type's yours?

JOHNNY

Both. Based on something true.

MADELYN

You a criminal?

JOHNNY

You think moonshining's criminal?

MADELYN

I don't.

JOHNNY

State of Kentucky thinks otherwise.

MADELYN

State of Kentucky only exists on a piece of paper like the one you're writing on. Think about that.

Madelyn points her cigarette-wielding fingers at Johnny, winks, and makes a light clicking sound with her mouth. He smiles, suddenly even more smitten.

JOHNNY

Is your shift over?

Madelyn points behind her without turning her head.

MADELYN

You see those numbers up there?

Johnny follows her finger with his eyes to a sign hanging on the wall, with numbers 1 through 9. Number 3 is lit up.

MADELYN

Know what they mean?

JOHNNY

Can't say I do.

MADELYN

They're waitress numbers. You get assigned one and when it's lit up it means you're on break. I'm number three.

Johnny watches Madelyn bring her cigarette to her mouth. She gently wraps her lips around it, puffs on it, then exhales.

MADELYN

You gotta name, Mr. Moonshiner?

JOHNNY

Johnny. You're Madelyn?

Madelyn looks down at a nametag pinned over her left breast.

MADELYN

Could be. You on the road then?

JOHNNY

Just 'til things die down.

MADELYN

Want some company?

JOHNNY

Depends what company looks like.

MADELYN

Looks like me.

(stubbing her smoke out)

I'm off at eight.

Johnny leans back, then catches his reflection in her glasses as she gets up and walks away.

EXT. BLUES BAR/RURAL OHIO - NIGHT

Music echoes from inside as Johnny's 1965 FORD MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE rolls into the parking lot and to a stop.

Madelyn's attire has shifted from diner waitress to midsummer small-town hipster chick -- tight tank top with bra straps showing underneath, short cut-off denim shorts where the pockets are longer than the denim, pair of worn-out Chucks.

They walk through the lot toward the bar's entrance. We're down on their feet as they crunch like tires over the gravel, the music inside still muffled but loud and getting louder.

Johnny, ever the gentleman, pulls open the door for Madelyn as a loud, upbeat delta blues music thumps them in the face!

INT. BLUES BAR/RURAL OHIO - NIGHT

Down on Johnny's feet as they enter, then over to Madelyn's, as they weave through a crowd of people grooving to the music on the dance floor. Her feet shift from walking to dance-walking as she glides across the floor to the bar.

She and Johnny both lean against the counter, Madelyn forward into it, Johnny propping himself on his side by his elbow, then turning and taking in the full scope of the place.

Madelyn yells at MICKEY THE BARKEEP, male, 50s, washing a couple glasses at the other end of the bar.

MADELYN

Mickey! Two bottles on my tab when you can, please and thank you!

Mickey looks up, shoots her a smile, finishes wiping the glasses off, then walks over and reaches into a cooler, pulls out two bottles of beer, yanks the tops off with a bottle opener, slides them across the bar to Madelyn like a pro!

She grabs them, hands one to Johnny, then holds hers out for a toast. He clangs his bottle against hers, takes a swig, then settles back into the scene. Madelyn moves her shoulders and torso to the music. Johnny hooks into the drum line and nods his head to the beat.

We then move and rotate around the edges of the establishment, 360 degrees, as a large group of patrons cut rugs to the raucous cover song! We finish behind the bar on the backs of Johnny and Madelyn.

After a few beats, the FIVE-PIECE BAND winds down the song and the place goes silent for a moment, save the remnants of the lead guitar screeching in the background.

Johnny turns his head toward Madelyn as the band leads into another upbeat delta blues tune. She takes a long swig of her beer, then slams the bottle on the bar. She sashays onto the dance floor as the song's tempo picks up.

She settles into a spot in the center of the dance floor, enveloped by other patrons moving and grooving to the music. Her movements are more intentional than theirs, though. Sexier, more seductive. She wants Johnny's attention!

And she has it! Johnny takes a swig of his beer, his eyes never leaving her figure, the way she moves so assuredly, her eyes closed, her hands moving through her hair, her breasts swaying back and forth, trying to creep up out of her top.

Johnny takes another swig, sets his bottle down, then glides onto the dance floor up behind Madelyn. He gently puts his hands on her hips. She spins around, dances a couple steps back away from him.

They both dance their own dance now, eyes locked on each other, then drifting and closing as they both lose themselves in their own movements, like Travolta and Uma in *Pulp Fiction*, but blues-ier, grittier, sexier, pulpier!

They creep back toward each other, slowly, Madelyn taking the lead, dancing around Johnny as he stands in one spot but doesn't stop moving! She circles around him like a hawk circling its prey, comes back around to face him, turns a bit sideways, then slides one of her ass cheeks down his leg as he stops moving it to accommodate her movement!

She pops back up, they lock eyes again, then he leans into kiss her but she pie-faces him with the palm of her hand! She then sashays back away from him, the music thumping with each step she takes, headed toward the stage. She climbs up onto it as the band jams through an instrumental portion of the song. Johnny's eyes stay locked on her.

From behind, TWO HULKING REDNECK MEN, 40s, grab him underneath his armpits and drag him off the floor and out of the bar as he yells and flails in confusion!

EXT. BLUES BAR/RURAL OHIO - NIGHT

The two men drag Johnny outside and unceremoniously deposit him on his ass, right in front of THE ANTAGONIST, early 40s, tall and thin, slicked-back black curly hair, dark mustache. He sits on the hood of Johnny's Mustang and smokes a joint as the muffled blues continue to thump in the background.

THE ANTAGONIST

I don't take too kind to cheaters.

JOHNNY

I didn't cheat you, man. I won that game fair and square.

The Antagonist motions to one of his goons to lift Johnny up. The goon obliges, grabs Johnny by the hair. Johnny groans and grimaces as he's yanked to his feet. Madelyn busts through the door, beelines outside!

MADELYN

Hey! Hey!

She walks right up to The Antagonist and gets in his face!

MADELYN

You better have a good goddamn reason for this!

The Antagonist puts his hands up, innocently.

THE ANTAGONIST

Just collecting a debt, sweetheart.

MADELYN

I'm not your sweetheart anymore.

The Antagonist glances at Johnny, then back to Madelyn.

THE ANTAGONIST

Oh, you two are here together.

MADELYN

You gotta problem with that?

THE ANTAGONIST

Well, see, normally I wouldn't have a problem with that. But your friend here's a downright dirty cheating son of a bitch, and he must atone for his sins.

JOHNNY

I'm just smart with cards, man. No cheating, no sinning, swear to God.

MADELYN

Yeah, maybe he's just smarter than you. Wouldn't take much effort.

The Antagonist smiles at Madelyn, a little too affectionately considering. He takes a drag of his joint, blows out the end of it, drops it in his front shirt pocket, hops off the car and takes slow, considerate steps past Madelyn toward Johnny.

THE ANTAGONIST

I know you're not from around these parts, but we settle differences like this in one of two ways.

He comes face to face with Johnny, then circles around him.

THE ANTAGONIST

Number one, my associates here relieve you of one of your appendages, perhaps the one in between your legs there, and then we mail it to your next of kin, and we all get a good hearty chuckle out of it. And that would most certainly cut your date tonight a little *short*. Or number two...

He comes back face to face with Johnny. The Antagonist looks back at Johnny's Mustang, then back to him.

THE ANTAGONIST

I don't know how y'all boogie down
in the Bluegrass, but we do it for
pinks here. So, Johnny Delta,
consider this an official
challenge, from me to you. Two pink
slips, two players, one winner
takes all. But only if you got any
guts in between your legs there.

Johnny shoots a glance at Madelyn. She looks revved up by the possibility presented by The Antagonist!

JOHNNY

Let's boogie then.

THE ANTAGONIST

Tonight. Midnight. Your other pink
here knows the place.

MADELYN

Mhm, mhm, sure do and *fuck you*.

The Antagonist winks at Madelyn. He and his redneck goons load into a vintage Chevy truck and peel out of the lot. Madelyn hops up and seamlessly slides into the Mustang through the passenger window. She sticks her head back out.

MADELYN

Stop standing there holding your
guts and let's boogie, baby.

INT. POKER CLUB/RURAL OHIO - NIGHT

Johnny sits at a poker table with The Antagonist and THE DEALER, late 40s, in a dimly lit, private poker club. Madelyn and a group of approximately 15 OBSERVERS watch on.

The game is Texas Hold 'Em and all five community cards have been dealt in the middle of the table -- SIX OF SPADES, NINE OF SPADES, TEN OF SPADES, TWO OF HEARTS, KING OF DIAMONDS.

The two players sit across from each other. Johnny has the most chips stacked in front of him. The Antagonist's beady eyes lock on Johnny for a beat before he stacks some chips and pushes them into the pot.

THE ANTAGONIST

Twelve hundred.

Johnny studies The Antagonist's face for a couple beats.

JOHNNY

How much you have behind there?

The Antagonist counts what's left, coolly, no visible tells.

THE ANTAGONIST

Thirteen thousand.

Another moment of study by Johnny as he calculates what he wants to do, even if it's just for show, which it is.

JOHNNY

Raise. Sixty-eight hundred.

He counts out the chips in two even stacks, then slides them into the pot.

THE ANTAGONIST

Sixty-eight? How much more is that?

THE DEALER

Fifty-six hundred.

THE ANTAGONIST

Why so much there, Johnny?

JOHNNY

Felt right.

THE ANTAGONIST

I'm serious. Why so much?

JOHNNY

Well, you didn't play like you were chasing. You raised pre-flop, probably with a high ace. You were pretty aggressive on the flop, doubled your bets on the turn and the river, which tells me you want me to call because you think you have a made hand and you wanna maximize the value and not run me out of the pot. I'm thinking you think you flopped a nut flush, ace of spades with the king or queen.

THE ANTAGONIST

So you think I flopped the nuts, call every bet I make, then raise me on the river?

Johnny doesn't answer, just stares blankly at him.

THE ANTAGONIST

That makes this decision pretty easy then. I'm all in.

JOHNNY

Except they weren't the nuts, my friend. I call.

Johnny stands up and snaps over the SEVEN OF SPADES and EIGHT OF SPADES! He turns and takes a couple steps away from the table, enjoying the momentary adrenaline rush.

The other players react in amazement! Some whistle, others stand up and clap at the dramatics. The Dealer pushes the six, nine and ten of spades up from the rest of the cards to emphasize the hand.

THE DEALER

Player shows a straight flush.

The Antagonist looks at his hole cards, then begins to hand his cards to the dealer in an act of defeat, but he's interrupted by --

JOHNNY

No, no, no. I paid to see those.

THE ANTAGONIST

I don't have to show you shit.

JOHNNY

Dealer?

THE DEALER

Technically, since he called your bet, you're supposed to show your hand first.

THE ANTAGONIST

But he showed his first, and he won. I don't have to show anything.

JOHNNY

Oh, for fuck's sake. I just wanna know if I read your hand right.

OBSERVER 1

Hey, c'mon. If he's that good...

OBSERVER 2

Yeah, we're all curious.

MADELYN

Show him your cards, asshole!

THE ANTAGONIST

Okay, okay. Okay. Just this once.
Any other time, y'all could go fuck
yourselves, you hear?

The Antagonist turns over his cards -- ACE OF SPADES and KING OF SPADES! Murmurs of amazement spread through the room. The Dealer collects the cards. The Antagonist stands up...

THE ANTAGONIST

I'll be back for my truck, Delta.

...and leaves the table. Johnny eyes him as he leaves, not thinking of his statement, then sits back down. His eyes settle on the two pairs of keys in the middle of he table.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DINER/RURUAL OHIO - DAY

Johnny sits in the booth across from Madelyn.

MADELYN

Dude, can I bum a smoke or not?

JOHNNY

Uh, yeah. Yeah, sure.

Johnny removes a cigarette and a lighter from his pack, then hands them to Madelyn. Madelyn picks up the lighter and lights her smoke as Johnny watches, a bit mesmerized. She leans back and exhales.

MADELYN

Thanks, man. I owe you one.

She gets up, walks to the other end of the diner, where a jukebox sits. She thumbs through it for a moment. Johnny watches her from the other end of the restaurant.

After a beat, another delta blues song takes over the speakers. Madelyn lingers near the juke for a moment, then slowly dances her way into the back of the restaurant.

Johnny leans back into the booth, perplexed, then smiles and digs another cigarette out of his pack. He lights up, then places the lighter on top of his notebook, next fresh, blue handwriting scribbled across the top of the page -- OHIO VALLEY BOOGIE.

THE END