

"Last Train Home"

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"LAST TRAIN HOME"

OVER BLACK:

SHOTGUN BLASTS, followed by SCREAMS, then muffled SHOUTS of "Let's Go! Let's get out of here!"

FADE IN:

INT. BANK -- DAY

Officer KEVIN DILLY, 40's, lies bleeding from a 12 gauge wound to the neck. ROBERT DEEMER, 30, feed sack over his head, diamond eyeholes scissored out, straddles the Policeman's body, a cold scatter gun hanging from his hand.

He turns to watch two more sack-masked figures, both packing shotguns, booking it for the exit and a smoking '83 black El Camino...

Robert pulls his sack up, exposing his face. Dilly, choking on his own blood, raises his hand. Robert reaches down, takes the trembling hand... squeezes. Dilly's eyes fall closed. Robert lets the Policeman's hand drop...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FLORIDA STATE PRISON NEAR STARKE -- NIGHT

Storm clouds swarm over the old facility. Lightning CRACKS long, crooked streaks from these clouds to earth. Wind begins to blow rain sideways, as WE PUSH CLOSER toward the lighted windows...

INSERT: "FLORIDA STATE PRISON -- 1999"

INT. DEATH ROW, STATE PRISON -- CONTINUOUS

Move through bars to a cell wall, where a shelf of various, mostly history and Stephen King books are being removed by hands. Titles include "THE CIVIL WAR", "THE SHINING", "VIETNAM", "THE STAND", "THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION", "DIFFERENT SEASONS", etc.

INSERT SHOTS:

1. Two hands lift a food tray from a table. On the plate, remnants of a mostly uneaten last meal.

2. The man in this cell, his back to us, sits on a bunk, pulls on a stiffly-pressed white shirt.

3. Another hand finishes shaving a head clean and wipes it smooth with conductive jelly. BUZZING...

4. Another hand shaves a man's calf. BUZZING...
5. Different hands cradle a bible and turn it open.

INT. CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Slippered feet, cuffed at the socked ankles, scuffle forward between two sets of black boots, moving briskly.

PREACHER (O.S.)  
 "Lord, you have been our dwelling  
 place in all generations. Before  
 the mountains were brought  
 forth..."

ROBERT (V.O.)  
 This is it. Almost done. Keep  
 cool.

WE JUMP FROM THE FLOOR TO ROBERT DEEMER'S EYES, already abandoned by life. Deemer, now 44, lean, head shaved, between two GUARDS (#1, #2) glances back at the PREACHER, who reads on:

PREACHER  
 "For a thousand years in your  
 sight are like yesterday when it  
 is past, and like a watch in the  
 night. You carry them away like a  
 flood; they are like a sleep -- "

ROBERT (V.O.)  
 Shut him up. Somebody.

Robert makes eye contact with each of the five prisoners on Death Row, three black. Stares.

ROBERT (V.O.)  
 Don't show them anything. They'll  
 find out soon enough.

JOHN (V.O.)  
 They will, won't they?

Robert's eyes fly from side to side.

ROBERT (V.O.)  
 Who said that?! Damn! Stop  
 talking to yourself. Turn that  
 part off. Turn everything off.

JOHN (V.O.)  
 Not everything. Not just yet.

INT. THE DEATH CHAMBER -- NIGHT

Robert stands and faces his destiny, the 3-legged electric chair and the black-hooded Executioner.

The Preacher reads on from his Bible. Guard #1 leads Robert to the chair. He resists momentarily, yields.

ROBERT (V.O.)  
Gonna puke. Hold it back. Fight it.

Robert falls back into the chair.

JOHN (V.O.)  
Save your strength, Robert.  
You'll need it.

He abruptly lurches forward. Guard #1 eases him back, avoiding eye contact.

Leather straps are fastened around wrists, elbows, stomach and chest, an electrode around his exposed left calf.

Guard #1 reaches across Robert's face, his watch catching Robert's eye. The second hand races across "Seiko." 12.

Robert's feet jitter. His eyes quick.

A draping is pulled back across from the chair. A gallery of witness faces fill three glass windows.

ROBERT (V.O.)  
No, close it. Not his family.  
Isn't this enough?

DILLY'S WIFE, late 50's, and her DAUGHTER, 35, sit square in the middle of the gallery of faces.

Robert turns to the Guard #1.

ROBERT  
Does it have to be open?

Superintendent TAYLOR steps in, eyeballs his guards. Their looks assure readiness.

TAYLOR  
Robert Earl Deemer, a court of the this state has ordered you be put to death by electrocution on this day at this hour. It is our responsibility to carry out that order now. Do you understand?

Taylor, microphone in his hand, leans closer.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

This is the time. If you have  
anything to say, this is the time.  
Do it, son.

Robert glances down at Taylor's SEIKO WATCH, its second  
hand sweeping time away.

ROBERT

What's done is done. I can't  
change nothin'. If I could, I  
probably would. I...

Taylor lays his hand on Robert's shoulder, whispers  
something.

Guard #1 fastens a final strap across Robert's chin and  
mouth. Guard #2 shows a black mask. Robert shakes his  
head vehemently. Taylor nods. The mask is gone. A metal  
cap is fitted onto Robert's jellied head.

All except the Executioner and his charge begin to exit.  
Dilly's wife stands, eyes steely, riveted. A GENERATOR  
WHINES...

PREACHER (O.S.)

"You have set our iniquities  
before you, our secret sins in the  
light of your countenance. For  
all our days have passed away in  
your wrath; we finish our years  
like a sigh."

Robert's body vibrates before a jolt hits him hard.

Sparks dance across the top of the metal cap. Torso  
shudders. Body goes stiff, then convulses, staccato. Eyes  
roll up.

ROBERT (V.O.)

The pain... feels like a train  
running through me. Make it stop!

His head, smoking slightly, tips forward.

Another jolt, and Robert's body does the dance again.

In the gallery the Policeman's Wife sits. The GENERATOR  
WHINE fades to silence.

A PHYSICIAN steps inside, checks the body with a  
stethoscope.

The Attendant rolls in a gurney.

Restraints are removed. Robert hangs forward in the arms  
of the Guards, who lift him toward the gurney, up and on.

A VEIN ON ROBERT'S NECK JUMPS. The Physician fumbles for the stethoscope. THA-THUMP. THA-THUMP. The Physician turns for the Superintendent, wide-eyed.

Taylor motions for the draping to be pulled closed. It is.

DISSOLVE TO BLACK.

INSERT SHOT:

A black wall, faint splinters of light rolling along it. Veins. The wall pulses. Through one of the splinters, a veinous hand and forearm pushes through and slowly reaches out, the wall still pulsing around it. A HEARTBEAT.

A DEEP VOICE  
Take it. I'll save you.

A LONG GASP.

FADE BACK IN:

INT. A TRAIN DEPOT -- DAY

Desolate, out of use. Soundless. Old wood and glass. Several clocks over the ticket windows. All stopped at different times. Through tall windows LIGHT FLASHES, TWISTS and BENDS in chaotic sliding panels.

Robert, in the same prison garb, sits stiffly on a bench, his eyes closed. JOHN, a spare, spry man, stands at a window, looking out.

JOHN  
How did it feel when you made eye contact with his wife?

Robert's eyes open, take in his surroundings, the man speaking to him. Robert feels himself. Whole.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I asked you about the man's wife.

ROBERT  
I... Bad at first. Like she was crawling around, in my guts, eating me alive from the inside out. Then, it was the strangest thing. Oh... Who are you?

JOHN  
Call me John.

ROBERT

Well, uh, John, it was a kind of calm like before a bad summer storm... when nothing stirs. And it was just us in that dead still moment. I looked her square in the eyes, and I saw me there, like somehow I was inside her, and I felt... this peace. Where am I?

JOHN

For so long you raged on about your innocence. Then you no longer raged. You had appeals left, yet you ordered your attorney to stop.

ROBERT

I didn't see the use in stretching it out. My life's been over for a real long time.

JOHN

The chair they strapped you to. Built by inmates. Generations removed. I presume the lesson in that would not be lost on you.

ROBERT

Lesson?

JOHN

(to himself)  
Nothing hidden that will not be disclosed.

(back to Robert)  
What you said in there. Did you mean it?

ROBERT

(distracted)  
Sorry. What?

JOHN

The words you spoke. You may not recall. Memory dims rather quickly.

ROBERT

You mean to the supe?

JOHN (ROBERT'S VOICE)

"What's done is done. I can't change nothing. If I could I probably would."f

Robert nearly falls off the bench.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
You said, "probably?"

ROBERT  
I'm dead. Right?

JOHN  
Are you?

ROBERT  
Huh?

JOHN  
I know the truth, your truth,  
Robert, but let's discuss  
"probably."

ROBERT  
Okay. Well, these last few years  
I've been thinking a lot. Maybe  
when I was a kid, if I hadn't been  
such a punk --

JOHN  
Deviated from the straight and  
narrow at 18. 11 arrests by the  
time you were 22.

ROBERT  
If I hadn't got on such a bad  
run... Did you say you knew the  
truth?

JOHN  
That quiet voice inside we  
sometimes ignore and less often  
heed.

Robert's head is down. He looks up slowly.

ROBERT  
I could've stopped it.

JOHN  
Well then, stop it.

ROBERT  
Whadda you mean?

JOHN  
You know what I mean. Go there  
and stop it. Pick the time, and  
stop it all from happening.

ROBERT  
All?

JOHN  
All that. All this. Do it.



ROBERT  
What, go back... in time?

JOHN  
Not necessarily back. More like  
shift. Slide. Sideways, if you  
will.

ROBERT  
That's impossible.

JOHN  
"With man this is impossible."

ROBERT  
Huh?

JOHN  
Beyond your comprehension. That  
being said, time's a wasting,  
Robert. Pick your moment. Time  
to get up and... go, go, go, boy.

ROBERT  
(rising slowly)  
Not so sure I want to go anywhere  
right now, sir, John.

John takes Robert's hand.

Robert's eyes lock closed, his body GROWLS. He falls back.  
Only John's grip keeps his back from finding cement.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Right, I'll go.

JOHN  
Yes. Thought you might.

They walk toward an exit.

ROBERT  
What if I can't do it?

JOHN  
What?

ROBERT  
Whatever it is I'm supposed to do.

JOHN  
Think positively, Robert. It's an  
overused but tidy little cliché.  
Remove all doubt. What is left?

Robert ponders that, as John leads him to the exit doors.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 One last thing. You will be  
 offered an alternative. Do not  
 take it.

Robert is completely confused now.

ROBERT  
 That's it?

JOHN  
 That is it.

John gently prods him THROUGH A SPIRALING SHEET OF FLASHING LIGHT, OUTSIDE ONTO A LANDING, where the HEADLIGHT of a train is bearing down on them. A TRAIN WHISTLE DRONES.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. A TRAIN -- DAY

Robert, in black pants and a white, long-sleeved shirt, wakes with a start to the sound of the train's WHISTLE. He looks around at the few other passengers, then out the window.

SPIRALING SHEETS OF LIGHT SPEED BY, flashing, twisting and bending.

It's too much. Robert covers his eyes. When he lifts his hand away, the light show has stopped. A faded sign reads:

*"Welcome to Bethel County"*

A black ATTENDANT passes by on the aisle and stops.

ATTENDANT  
 Bethbary, sir? This would be your stop.

ROBERT  
 I just go ahead and get off here?

ATTENDANT  
 Yes, I believe you do.

Robert slides out, starts down the aisle.

ATTENDANT (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Sir?  
 (Robert turns)  
 Your bag?

He shows a small suitcase. Where he got it, a mystery.

ROBERT  
 My bag? Right. My bag.

He takes the bag. The Attendant whispers:

ATTENDANT  
(finger to his lips)  
Can't tell anyone else who you  
are. Remember that. Important.

ROBERT  
What? Why?

ATTENDANT  
Okay. Have a fine day, sir.

The Attendant goes about his business.

EXT. BETHEL DEPOT -- CONTINUOUS

Robert steps down from the train, shields his eyes from the glare. He walks slowly toward the empty, relic substation and stops at the schedule, a slab of chalk-board ready to fall off the wall: "Arrival: July 4, 1971"

Robert squints at the sign, breaks into a run for the road.

EXT. A RURAL ROAD -- DAY

Suitcase in hand, Robert pauses only to catch his breath. His eyes survey the trees with the sun glinting through, a doe, as it scampers into the woods, moon vine twining skyward on a telephone pole... the day, the outside.

LATER

Exhausted, Robert jogs along the dirt road. Behind him, the lush green of the Smiley farm.

A farm truck pulls up, running along a dirt strip near the fence line. NED SMILEY, 68, scarecrow double, leans out the window. In the distance, the sounds of random FIREWORKS.

ROBERT  
Mister Smiley! What time you got?

NED  
Who wants to know?

ROBERT  
Nobody. Me.

NED  
(off his watch, mutters)  
Straight at five o'clock.

Robert dashes off. Ned shakes his head, grumbles.

NED (CONT'D)

What time you got. No time, ya  
idiot.

Robert cuts across a field, loosens his collar. He's panting furiously, and finally stops to catch his breath.

INT. AN ABANDONED BARN -- DAY

WE MOVE THROUGH the dark old place 'til we see a MAN'S back. He's sitting on the wood crate, naked, buzz cut.

WE PUSH IN ON HIM QUICKLY to a Vietnam era .45 service revolver, pressing a dent in his temple. A FLASH AND BLAST KNOCKS HIM OUT OF FRAME.

EXT. A RURAL ROAD -- DAY

Robert, looks up, a GUNSHOT REVERBERATING. He takes off.

He slides down an embankment and stumbles along the nearly dried-up river bed. FIRECRACKERS POP in the distance.

EXT. ANOTHER FIELD -- MOMENTS LATER

Robert's running, the small suitcase smacking against him. A SIREN WAILING.

He stops, watches a black and white cruiser blow dust as it speeds on by. He drops to his knees, exhausted.

ROBERT

No...

EXT. AN ABANDONED BARN -- DAY

FROM A DISTANCE WE SEE...

a cherry condition '63 Dodge Dart pull up. BOBBY DEEMER, 16, practically falls out of the car, scrambles to the barn.

OFFICER KEVIN DILLY, 30, a giant with a limp, wobbles right up to Bobby, holds him back. OFFICER TUTTLE, 45, walks out of the barn, leading a BLACK MAN by the arm.

Bobby flies off after the Black Man.

BOBBY

What'd you do, you bastard!?

TUTTLE  
 (restraining Bobby)  
 He found him, that's all, son.  
 That's all.

Bobby pushes past the cops and into the barn. We hear a terrible, ANGUISHED WAIL.

ROBERT

stares wide-eyed out at the barn and the ambulance sliding to a stop. He walks closer, pauses by a hollowed-out oak.

JOHN (O.S.)  
 No need to go farther. Nothing  
 you can do here.

Robert sinks to his haunches, gazes down at the scene: the gurney, being lifted out by two Paramedics. Dilly and Tuttle conferring...

ROBERT  
 I never even had a chance. You  
 said I could pick the time.

JOHN  
 Whose life was it? Yours or his?  
 Answer me. It's important.

ROBERT  
 Mine. You lied to me.

JOHN  
 Look out there.

ROBERT  
 No. What kind of per... why would  
 you?

JOHN  
 Look out there now, Robert.

It's no longer a crime scene, just an old barn in a dirt field. A red "X" on one corner, marking it for destruction.

ROBERT  
 (dashes off)  
 Thank you. Thank you.

JOHN  
 Robert!

Robert looks back.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 It's after... not before. After.  
 You know when it is. You picked  
 this time.

ROBERT

When?

JOHN

Just now.

Robert hesitates a beat, sprints off for the barn. He stops at the door, looks inside, staggers back, crestfallen.

EXT. ALONG THE ROAD -- DAY

Robert, sunbeaten, walks along as a Falcon Station Wagon speeds past him. He looks up just in time to see the wagon's right rear tire blow out. The car veers off the road.

The front door opens. SUE KANEELEY, 38, steps out to inspect the damage, heads around to the back gate, pulls it open, struggles to loosen a spare tire.

Robert strides closer. WE HEAR A THUD, as the tire hits the ground. Robert sneaks a peek.

ROBERT

Holy crap...

Sue's a blonde, with a natural, unrefined beauty and a killer smile. She shades her eyes, wears a "Piggly Wiggly" nametag on her simple striped dress.

Robert keeps right on walking.

SUE

Hey, would you mind... ? Hello!

ROBERT

Huh?

SUE

You heading into town?

(Robert stops, nods)

You gimme a hand, I'll give you a lift into town. Fair deal?

Sue shakes her hair out of a rubber band, flashes that smile.

LATER

Robert's nearly got the tire changed. Sue's sitting on the grass under a tree, fanning herself.

SUE (CONT'D)

I'm Sue, by the way. Craziest thing about that dang tire. Had brand new retreads put on not two months ago.

Sue watches him tighten off the last of the lug nuts, toss his suitcase in the back seat, close the door and climb into her car.

SUE (CONT'D)

Okay, then.

She dusts her seat off, heads for the car.

INT. SUE'S FALCON/MOVING -- DAY

SUE

If they're gonna sell you tires that don't last, I just don't get the point. Do you?

(beat)

They say a man don't offer his name's right off's got something to hide or something to fear.

(beat)

Oh gosh, listen to me, rattling on like an old grocery buggy. You'd think I never talked to nobody.

Robert's eyes on the window: AN OLD SCARECROW in blue-jeans and a flannel shirt kicks in the wind.

ROBERT

It's Levi. Levi, uh... Seiko.

SUE

Seiko. Now, that's a different sounding name, isn't it?

(Robert yields a nod)

What brings you to Bethel county?

ROBERT

I'm, uh, visiting.

SUE

Oh, yeah. Who? I know just about everybody around here.

ROBERT

No one special. Just the place.

SUE

(laughs)

Why? Yaa lose a bet or something?

ROBERT

Yes, ma'am. I guess I did.

SUE

(covers her mouth)

Oh, wait. I know exactly what you are.

ROBERT  
You do?

SUE  
One of you fellas came through  
here last Fall.

ROBERT  
One of us?

SUE  
Sure. Your hair give it away.

ROBERT  
Look, I --

SUE  
I know. I know. You're just back  
from Vietnam. Don't wanna talk  
about it. I understand. I do. I  
just think it's sad all those boys  
dyin' over there. Real sad.

Robert moves his hand off a newspaper on the seat between  
them, revealing the date. "July 1, 1973." A beat.

ROBERT  
(sotto)  
Dammit...

SUE  
Excuse me?

ROBERT  
Sorry, Mizz Kaneeley.

SUE  
How'd you know my last name? I  
don't think I --

ROBERT  
Sure you did.

SUE  
No, I don't think I did.

She's really eyeing him now. Robert can sense it. So...

ROBERT  
Ever know a guy named Bill Deemer?

Sue's foot falls from the gas pedal. The car slows  
quickly. She clears her throat, reaccelerates and eyes the  
road ahead.

SUE  
I do. I did. Why?



ROBERT

Oh, old friend. Told me about  
this place.

SUE

He did? Where you stayin' at?

EXT. DOWNTOWN BETHBARY -- DAY

Sue's Falcon stops at "the" red light.

INT. SUE'S FALCON -- CONTINUOUS

Robert stares out the window at the familiar surroundings, the barber shop, Jasper's, the Diner, Post Office, Hardware Store, Drummond's Drugs, the Bank, the Movie House with "DELIVERANCE" on the marquee. Bethbary Park.

SUE

Here's Bethbary. Don't blink.

EXT. SUE'S HOUSE -- DAY

The Falcon parked in front of the garage, beside a small, white-siding house.

INT. SUE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Sue pulls back the drapes. Robert, grocery bag in one arm, suitcase in the other, looks around, wheels turning.

SUE

What is wrong with me, making you  
stand there with your arms full of  
what not. Come on in the kitchen,  
I'll fix you something to drink.  
Lemonade, sun tea, can of pop?

ROBERT

Pop.

SUE

Think we got some Dr. Pepper.  
Okay?

She takes the grocery bag and heads for the kitchen. Robert lingers in the living room, picks up a framed photo of Sue, Sarah and Roy.

SUE (CONT'D)

It's good of my girl. Half a mind  
to cut him out of it, but she'd --

ROBERT

She's sure pretty. She favors  
you.

SUE

You think? Well...

INT. SUE'S KITCHEN -- DAY, MOMENTS LATER

Robert sits at the small kitchen table, a stained electric wire spool with a glass top. Sue rummages through cabinets.

SUE

I know she keeps it around here  
somewhere.

Robert walks directly to a cabinet beside the fridge where he finds a Dr. Pepper bottle, pulls open a drawer, reaches in for a bottle opener, as though he's lived there all his life. Sue hands him a glass and stares at him.

ROBERT

That's right where I'd keep 'em.

Robert opens the bottle and takes one short sip, eyeing her because she's eyeing him.

SUE

Just like my girl, drinking it  
warm right out of the bottle. I  
tell her it ain't ladylike, but  
you know kids these days. Can't  
tell 'em one single thing. Don't  
even try, big old waste of time.

INT. THE DEATH CHAMBER -- NIGHT

The Physician leans over Robert, looks up at the clock.  
12:01. He presses the stethoscope again.

Taylor dabs at his brow with a hanky. REM behind Robert's  
eyelids. The Physician glances up at Taylor.

EXT. SUE'S GARAGE -- DAY

Sue walks up the flight of stairs leading to a small  
landing over the two-car garage. Robert's looking around,  
remembering.

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

A room with a desk, a couch and a small bath. Pictures of all manner of aircraft and flight, from Kitty Hawk to X-15s and Redstone Rockets, adorn the walls.

From the ceiling numerous model airplanes are suspended by fishing line -- a Sopwith Camel sporting twin vickers, a yellow striped F4U Corsair, a black Tigercat, etc..

Door opens. Robert hesitates, follows Sue in.

SUE

It was his little getaway, 'til he finally just got away couple months back.

(beat)

Fifty eight days ago, anyways.

Robert slides open the bathroom's pocket door and peeks inside at the 4' x 8' room, including the tub on the far end.

ROBERT

Never knew you had a bathroom up here.

SUE

What?

ROBERT

Nice, big bathroom.

SUE

Hah. Oh, yeah, ain't it?

Sue leans toward the sofa, fluffs a throw pillow. Robert notices her round butt. Sue turns, catches him looking.

SUE (CONT'D)

Uh... couch folds out. I'll bring up some sheets. Fishing poles in the garage. Don't ask me how they work. They're his. Sarah's old bike if ya wanna take a ride around and see all the wonderful sights. Dinner in a jif. Nothing fancy, but you're more than welcome...

ROBERT

Sure it's okay? Me staying here?

SUE

Why wouldn't it be?

Robert shrugs.

SUE (CONT'D)

This door locks, if you want.

ROBERT

That's okay. Not big on locks.

Sue closes the door behind her.

Robert goes to the front window, pulls back the drape, looks out.

ROBERT'S POV:

Sue, rubbing her arm, goes to the mailbox. She heads back to the house, empty-handed.

Robert lets the drape fall. He checks out a bookshelf on the wall in the shape of a biplane. He spins the prop and "IN THE HIGH AND MIGHTY" plays.

He moves to the desk, looks down into a trash can containing broken pieces of a B-26 model airplane. Robert picks a hunk of hull out of the trash.

MOMENTS LATER

Robert sits on the couch, opens his suitcase. Three folded white shirts wrapped with paper laundry tape, one pair of black pants and a plain white envelope. He opens the envelope and finds 5 spanking new \$10 bills.

He sticks four of the bills in his sock, the last one in his breast pocket, lies back on the couch and takes in the history of flight on display all around him.

INT. SUE'S DINING ROOM -- DUSK

Sue sets three plates around the table. There's a KNOCK at the front door.

SUE

It's open. Come on in.

Robert KNOCKS again, this time on the dining room wall.

Sue's in a short, flimsy house dress. As she leans over the table to set out a bowl, Robert watches her dress ride up.

SUE (CONT'D)

All ready for some of this?

ROBERT

Huh? Oh... yeah.

SUE  
 You can help me bring in the rest,  
 if you want.

They head into the kitchen. When they return with more, SARAH KANELEY, 16, a leggy, long-haired blonde, stands beside the table, smoke in her hand.

SARAH  
 What's all this?

SUE  
 This is a dinner table. What'd I  
 tell you about smoking in my  
 house?

SARAH  
 Who's he?

SUE  
 Sarah, this is Levi... Seiko.

Sarah glares at Robert.

SARAH  
 Who is he?

SUE  
 He's gonna stay up over the garage  
 a while.

ROBERT  
 Just passing on -- through,  
 really.

SARAH  
 That's dad's room. What the hell  
 were you thinking, you stupid  
 woman?!

ROBERT  
 Don't talk to your mother like  
 that, Sarah.

SARAH  
 (to Robert)  
 Excuse me? Just who do you think  
 you are, anyways?

SUE  
 Honey, Levi here knew Bobby's  
 daddy... in Vietnam.

SARAH  
 For real? You knew him?  
 (Robert nods)  
 Holy freaking...

Sarah races past them for the kitchen. Sue mouths "SORRY" to Robert. The PHONE DIAL zips rapid-fire in the kitchen.

SARAH (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
C'mon! Get off the phone, will ya!

Sarah flies by them again, this time on her way out.

SUE  
Where are you going?

SARAH  
I gotta go get Bobby. He's gonna shit a brick.

ROBERT  
No!

Sarah stops, turns back.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
I mean, the dinner. It'll get cold.

SARAH  
Not hungry.

Sarah breezes out the front door.

SUE  
Okay, I guess we should go ahead and eat.

Robert, shaky suddenly, falls back in one of the dining room side chairs. He's broken out into a sweat.

SUE (CONT'D)  
Mr. Seiko, you okay? Look like you've seen a ghost.

She hurries into the kitchen, rushes back with a wet dish towel and a glass of water. Robert grabs the towel and presses his face into it.

SUE (CONT'D)  
Probably not used to this heat, is all.

Robert gulps down the water.

ROBERT  
Sorry, I can't...

Robert makes a hasty exit toward the utility room.

SUE  
 You can go out through that  
 utility room screen --

The screen door SLAMS SHUT OS.

SUE (CONT'D)  
 Door.

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- BATHROOM -- DUSK

Robert stands over the small sink and splashes water on his face. He hyperventilates, stares at himself in the mirror.

EXT./INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- DUSK

Robert leans on the railing of the balcony and looks out toward the field behind Sue's house. A horse stands in one corner of the small, fenced field.

In the moonlight, in the distance, looms a dim shadow of the Bethel Water Tower above the low line of trees.

Robert WHISTLES. The horse SNORTS.

ROBERT  
 Hey, Fuego. Hey, girl. C'mere.

The mare lopes directly toward him; suddenly backs up, distressed.

BOBBY (O.S.)  
 Funny, she don't usually take to  
 strangers.

Bobby, Robert at 18, a cigarette hanging loosely from his mouth, angry of body and spirit, stands below.

Sarah steps out from under the landing, calms Fuego.

BOBBY (CONT'D)  
 So you knew my old man?

Robert, stunned by the sight of his former self, knees buckling, supports himself with the railing and nods.

BOBBY (CONT'D)  
 Yeah, what battalion?

ROBERT  
 Uh... First.  
 (beat)  
 C Company. 20th Infantry. 11th  
 light.

BOBBY  
Were you there, too?

ROBERT  
Where?

BOBBY  
Mylai.

ROBERT  
Uh. No. Met him after.

BOBBY  
(to Sarah)  
Stay here a minute.

SARAH  
Told ya he knew him.

BOBBY  
Yeah.

Bobby kills the cigarette with the tips of his fingers and stuffs it in his shirt pocket, tromps his way up the stairs, until he's face to face with Robert. Same height, eyes. Bobby checks him out but good.

BOBBY (CONT'D)  
So?

Robert stares awkwardly at the kid's face.

BOBBY (CONT'D)  
(wipes at his face)  
What? I got something on me?

ROBERT  
Huh? Oh, no... no.

BOBBY  
Well, stop staring. You're  
freaking me out, man.

Robert walks back inside the apartment, sits down, hangs his head.

BOBBY (CONT'D)  
What's going on? You sick or  
something?

Bobby enters the room, pokes at a model plane.

BOBBY (CONT'D)  
So, why are you here, anyway?

ROBERT  
You mean right here?



BOBBY

Here, Bethbary, wherever. C'mon, man, ain't I speakin' English?

ROBERT

Here because Sarah's... your girl's mom, offered me. Bethbary 'cause I promised...

BOBBY

Bill?

ROBERT

I was gonna say, "your father." Yeah, we, um, promised we'd look up each other's --

BOBBY

What, whoever didn't blow his brains out would pay a visit to his pal's hometown?

ROBERT

Something like that.

BOBBY

Wow, man, that's sooo nice of you.

ROBERT

He'd'a done the same for me. Look out for his kid, my kid.

BOBBY

Well, you're off the hook. I don't need any looking out for. I'm all grown up.

ROBERT

Yeah, I see.

BOBBY

I'm outta here, man.

Bobby starts to leave...

ROBERT

No...

BOBBY

What?

A beat.

ROBERT

Nothing.

Bobby grumbles, exits.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Great...

He walks out onto the balcony, looks down at

BOBBY AND SARAH

Bobby's talking to her near the side door of the house.

Robert's eyes linger on her, as she rubs her arm.

Bobby spots Robert, escorts Sarah off by her arm.

EXT. SUE'S HOUSE -- DUSK

Bobby and Sarah stand by his Dart, now primed and shackled.

SARAH

So, what'd he tell you?

BOBBY

What's he supposed to tell me?

SARAH

I don't know. I thought --

BOBBY

(looks up at the garage)  
Something weird about that guy.  
Keep away from him. You coming  
tonight or what?

SARAH

Why, so you can scream at me some  
more?

BOBBY

(strokes her hair)  
Hey, I'm sorry, okay?

SARAH

Promise to be nice to me. Is that  
so hard?

BOBBY

Come if you want.

He climbs into the Dart, guns it, pulls off in a cloud of dust, leaving Sarah to stand there rubbing her arm.

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Robert, at the window, lets the drape drop.

EXT. A CEMETERY -- DUSK

Bobby's car parked near the old stone fence. He pulls open the passenger side door.

LILLIAN DEEMER, in a frumpy housedress, 45, but worn out way beyond her years, climbs out, a long-stemmed rose in hand.

LILLIAN  
Will you come in with me?

BOBBY  
You ask me that every time, and  
what do I say?

Lillian walks alone under the iron archway and into the small cemetery.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR/MOVING -- DUSK

Lillian eyes Bobby at the wheel.

LILLIAN  
I need my medicine, Bobby.

Bobby rolls his eyes.

EXT. DRUMMOND'S DRUGS -- DUSK

Bobby walks up to the car to Lillian's window.

BOBBY  
Already closed.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Bobby starts the engine.

LILLIAN  
Guess I just won't sleep tonight.

Bobby lets the car idle, sits there, turns to Lillian, who's fidgeting.

EXT. DRUMMOND'S DRUGS/BACK ENTRANCE -- NIGHT

Bobby stands by the door, jimmys the lock with a pocket knife, grabs a last look around, ducks inside.

INT. DRUMMOND'S DRUGS -- NIGHT

Bobby creeps along in the darkness. He walks right by the cash register, turns a corner. He stops at one section: "Coughs and Colds"

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- NIGHT

Robert, at the desk, pulls open a junk drawer, finds a pack of Marlboros and a book of matches from "AeroFlight." He taps out a cigarette, lights up, heads out.

EXT. BOBBY'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

A crummy, double-wide trailer in a half-empty trailer park. Behind the park, an open field.

Bobby's Dart pulls up, skids to a dusty stop. Bobby kicks open the front door, storms out and up the steps. Lillian climbs out, a paper bag in her hand.

INT. LILLIAN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Lillian sits in the dark, a brown bottle in her hand.

BOBBY  
(flips on a light)  
How many times I tell you not to  
sit in the dark? It's freaky.

LILLIAN  
I'm sorry, Bobby.

Lillian takes a long pull from her bottle. Bobby walks out. Lillian turns off the light.

EXT. BOBBY'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

Across the street at the corner, Robert stands in the dark, stares toward the house, until the one light goes out.

ROBERT  
Night, momma.

Robert makes a beeline for Bobby's Dart, eases the driver's side door open, climbs inside.

EXT. BEHIND BOBBY'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

Bobby stands at a big cage made of wood and chicken wire. He opens a can of sardines, peels one out, pushes it through the chicken wire. An Osprey hops up onto a post and takes the sardine, SCREECHING all the while.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR -- NIGHT

Robert's checking out his old car, when the trailer door flies open. Robert hops in the backseat and crouches down.

EXT. BOBBY'S TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby steps out onto the trailer's front porch, flicks a butt onto the dirt and gravel yard and heads for the Dart.

Bobby gets in the car, flips down the visor and retrieves his key. Peels out on the road.

EXT. A DESOLATE DEVELOPMENT -- NIGHT

Abandoned housing development occupies five acres. A long road stretches north to south down the middle. A railroad track crosses the south end of the long road.

Twenty or so young people, including Sarah, line the road beside cars with their lights on.

Bobby's Dart and a '68 Camaro idle side by side.

Bobby revs his engine, looks over at the Camaro DRIVER, 22.

A SLUTTY-LOOKING GIRL, carrying a white brassiere, steps out onto the road between the two cars. A TRAIN WHISTLE in the near distance.

SLUTTY-LOOKING GIRL  
(yelling over the ROAR)  
It's comin'! Ya'll ready?!

Both engines rev hotter. The Girl raises the bra, draws back the cups, like a slingshot, and lets her fly.

The cars SQUEAL away, churning blue smoke behind them.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby's shifting hard. Behind him, Robert, crouched low, raises up, looks over at the Camaro's Driver...

The Dart's SCREAMING alongside the Camaro, train coming fast.

Bobby cranks his wheel toward the Camaro, to cut it off.

Robert reaches up around Bobby, steers the car straight. Bobby tries to fight him off.

BOBBY  
What the hell?!

The Camaro makes it over the tracks first, the Dart second, but both clear just in time to beat the train.

Bobby, an arm locked around his neck, checks his rearview to find the Camaro Driver out and celebrating.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Thanks a lot, you just cost me 10 bucks, you freaking...

ROBERT

Fair race he takes you. Ten bucks worth messing him up?

BOBBY

Hell, yeah!

ROBERT

Just keep driving.

BOBBY

There's nothing else out here. Road just stops.

Robert makes his way into the front seat and pushes his left foot down onto Bobby's pedal foot.

EXT. A DESOLATE DEVELOPMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby's car flies ahead, then veers off across and into a cul de sac, bounds over a curb and up and out onto a field, toward a bend in the railroad tracks, and the passing train.

INT./EXT. BOBBY'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

BOBBY

What the hell are you doing in my car, man?!

Robert presses harder on the gas pedal, his other arm still locked around Bobby's neck.

The car's going wild, bouncing. Robert in control.

ROBERT

Scaring you?

BOBBY

(struggling to talk)  
Hell, no.

ROBERT

Okay, let's go faster.

Robert really bears down on Bobby's foot.

The Dart's exploding through the field, careening toward the tail end of the train.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
You wanna die? That it?

BOBBY  
Yeah, man! Go ahead. Do it. Do it!

Not the answer Robert expected, he backs off... but Bobby guns it now. They're heading for trouble.

The train's last car is not gonna clear in time. The Dart's closing fast, bouncing, blowing up dust.

Robert stomps on the brakes, and the car slides to a sideways stop in the field, as the last of the train grinds off.

BOBBY (CONT'D)  
Guess you just don't have the balls.

ROBERT  
Takes balls to off yourself? Make you a big man?

Bobby ponders that, slowly raises his bird finger. Robert climbs out his side.

BOBBY  
Yeah, go back to the hole you crawled out of. I don't need any help from you, got it? Stay away from me.

ROBERT  
(leans back inside)  
That codeine's gonna kill your mother, you know that?

BOBBY  
What?!

Robert walks off.

The Dart fishtails backward toward Robert, spins around, drives off.

AT CROWD

Bobby's Dart bounds across the tracks toward the crowd of onlookers, skids to a stop.

Bobby climbs out, kicks the living crap out of his car!

EXT. AN ABANDONED BARN -- NIGHT

Robert sits on a stump, smokes, stares out at the barn.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR -- NIGHT

Sarah tries to get Bobby to look at her; not gonna happen.

SARAH  
... I mean if somebody knew stuff  
about my dad and he was dead, I'd  
just bug him somethin' crazy with  
questions.

BOBBY  
Yeah, I know you would. Get the  
blanket out of the back, okay?

SARAH  
Uh-uh. I don't feel like it.

BOBBY  
Sure you do. C'mon...

He pulls at her, starts kissing her on the neck, hard. She  
pushes him off.

BOBBY (CONT'D)  
What's with you?!

SARAH  
You get way too mean when you're  
mad.  
(rubs her neck, checks her  
hand)  
You hurt me...

BOBBY  
C'mon, babe. I'm not mad, not at  
you.

Bobby grabs her again. Sarah pulls away.

SARAH  
Just take me home.

Bobby glares at her, guns the Dart, and it blows out a  
cloud of smoke as it squeals off.

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- NIGHT

Robert's wide awake, stretched out on the couch. He looks  
across the room, which seems to stretch wider and wider.

THE BLACK WALL APPEARS... THE HAND REACHES OUT TO HIM.



A DEEP VOICE

Take it. You will sleep.

Robert covers his head, turns over, peeks out. NO WALL. He tugs the cushion off the couch and totes it into the bathroom. He lays it on the floor where it just fits.

He lies down. Moonlight shines in through a small window. He reaches back over his head and slides the door closed.

EXT. JASPER'S -- DAY

Robert straddles the bicycle in front of a store window cluttered with 4th of July decorations.

INT. JASPER'S -- DAY

Robert walks down an aisle. He stops at a section filled with boxes of model cars and airplanes. He pulls out a Martin B-26 Marauder, puts it back.

Robert meanders past a fireworks sale display toward the dining counter. He sits at an ice cream bar where MR. JASPER, 52, store owner, serves a Little Boy and his Mother, then walks over to serve Robert.

MR. JASPER (V.O.)

Rocky Road, your favorite.

Robert looks up and sees it's John serving him.

JOHN

So, how are we doing?

John begins to wipe down the counter.

ROBERT

This is not where I wanted to be, John. Not here, not now.

JOHN

You think it is.

ROBERT

He won't listen to me. No way.

JOHN

You think he will.

ROBERT

Stop saying that, huh? I'm gonna help my mother.

JOHN

No. No, you're not.

ROBERT

I think I am.

JOHN

A mother knows her child. Can't be fooled. It's one of those unexplainable perfect things... like the concept of faith. You'll only confuse her, Robert. You know she doesn't need that right now. You want to do something for her, deal with that son of hers. And you better hustle it up. Clock's ticking.

ROBERT

What clock?

JOHN

Every last one of them. You have a three day time limit.

ROBERT

Time limit? What? When... ?

JOHN

Midnight. Day after tomorrow. Don't be late. Or, if you feel you've completed whatever it is you came here to do, simply say, "I'm finished."

ROBERT

Whatever I've come here to do? You said I'd be offered an alternative. What'd you mean? Is that... ?

JOHN

You know what it is.

John twirls a finger and Robert's stool spins around again.

ROBERT

Wait!

When Robert stops, Mr. Jasper stands where John was.

MR. JASPER

That'll be fifty-five cent.

Robert reaches into his shirt pocket for a ten dollar bill and hands it to Jasper, who holds the bill up to the light.

MR. JASPER (CONT'D)

Looks fresh. Just make it?  
(off Robert's worried look)  
Easy, pal. Jus' kiddin'.

Jasper manipulates the cash register behind him. Above the register, a sign reads: "Remember, We Close on the 4th." Jasper hands Robert his change.

MR. JASPER (CONT'D)  
Here ya go. Nine, forty five.

Robert pulls him closer.

ROBERT  
I wanna talk to my mother.  
Understand?

MR. JASPER  
Sure. Sometimes moms can be real  
good listeners. Other times --

Frustrated, Robert walks off.

MR. JASPER (CONT'D)  
What about your Rocky Road?

EXT. JASPER'S -- DAY

Robert squints as he walks out through the front door, pauses a moment to take in the town, then turns to the bicycle leaning against the wall behind him.

LUKE, 20, big and ugly, a Zig-Zag Man tattoo on his left forearm, never without a toothpick, and JASON, 18, weakling in a reb cap, flank the bicycle.

LUKE  
Well, well, if it ain't the  
interloper.  
(toothpick in Robert's face)  
Look, pal, people in this town  
don't care too much for snoops and  
butt-ins. Maybe you oughta just  
head on back wherst you came from.

ROBERT  
(snaps the toothpick away)  
First of all, I'm not your pal.  
Second, people around here don't  
care too much for you, Peanut. As  
a matter of fact, they hate your  
guts.

Jason's on the bike, until Robert's look removes him.

LUKE  
Hop up on your little girlie bike  
and ride right on off into the  
sunset and don't come back, slick.

Luke pushes Robert hard, and he topples over onto the bike, bangs his head against the wall. He picks himself up.

ROBERT  
You don't want me to come back?

LUKE  
Wow, he's real smart, too.

ROBERT  
Can I give you some free advice?

LUKE  
Hey, he wants to advise me. Sure,  
I can dig it. Knock yourself out.

ROBERT  
Here it is...

Robert knees him hard in the nuts. Luke drops to all  
fours, moaning. Robert mounts his bike.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Do me a favor, Jason.

JASON  
Huh? Me?

ROBERT  
Tell Bobby...  
(louder now)  
...whenever you see him, he  
shouldn't let a slug like Luke do  
his talking for him... or his  
thinking. Got that?

JASON  
Yes sir.

Robert pedals away.

LUKE  
(groaning)  
I'll get you!

Bobby steps out from around the corner, eyes Luke GROANING.

BOBBY  
Get up, would you? Damn...

JASON  
I got a message for you.

BOBBY  
Shut the hell up.

EXT. LUKE'S DUMP -- DAY

Jason sits in the driver's seat of Bobby's car, as Luke and  
Bobby work on the carburetor.

LUKE

Well, you must have said something to him. He didn't just guess "Peanut."

JASON

Maybe he saw you naked. He's seems sneaky.

BOBBY

A-hole. Sneaky. Hand me that float spring.

Luke glares menacingly at Jason, who slumps down in the seat. Luke picks up a tiny spring, hands it to Bobby, but drops it.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Great. No way I'll get this damned thing fixed before work.

LUKE

Screw work. Pretty soon you can quit that yeehaw job.

JASON

Maybe he's like Kwai Chang Caine, you know? He just knows stuff and can do stuff. Last night Caine shoots an arrow at a target without even looking. Bulls-eye.  
(mimics Caine)  
"I do not do it. It is not done. It is only experienced. It happens."

They both look at him like he's nuts. An old sedan pulls up beside the Dart.

POLLARD, 29, scraggly beard, twisted ball cap, leans out the window.

POLLARD

Boys need some help?

LUKE

Buzz off, Pollard.

POLLARD

You'll be talking different in a few days.

JASON

Yeah, what's in a few days?

LUKE

He graduates loser school.

POLLARD

Big shipment of Columbian comin'.  
Mucho kilos. You pre-order now,  
you get the discount-o rate.

LUKE

You ride off now, you get the no  
broken jaw-o rate.

POLLARD

Oooh. Scary talk. I like scary  
talk. You'll be sorry you didn't  
sign up once my ship comes in.

JASON

You're so full of crap your  
teeth'd be brown if you had any.

Pollard reaches out and hands two Js to Bobby.

POLLARD

Here you go, Deemer. You get the  
free samples, since you ain't  
mouthed off.

Bobby sniffs the doobies.

POLLARD (CONT'D)

Take it sleazy, boys.

He drives off.

EXT. WITNESS ROOM -- NIGHT

Reporters and various people sit calmly as the Woman,  
standing, leans toward her Daughter's ear.

POLICEMAN'S WIFE

Why'd they close the curtain?

Her Daughter stares ahead blankly.

POLICEMAN'S WIFE (CONT'D)

Said they wouldn't close it until  
after they wheeled him out of  
there.

A REPORTER turns to her.

REPORTER

(whispering)  
I think there's some kind of  
problem.

POLICEMAN'S WIFE

Thought they just got rid of the  
problem.

They look back toward the closed drape.

EXT. A GIANT OAK TREE -- DAY

Robert's bicycle leans against the trunk of the tree. Up in the tree Robert carefully maneuvers his way higher.

A LITTLE BOY sits on his own bike, gazing up.

LITTLE BOY  
What'cha doing up there, mister?

ROBERT  
I... uh, I'm climbing this tree.

LITTLE BOY  
Oh.  
(beat)  
Why?

ROBERT  
I guess I just haven't climbed a tree in a long time, is all.

LITTLE BOY  
Yeah, I could tell.

The Little Boy shrugs and pedals away.

Robert continues his climb, stops, sits back and looks out...

over the trailer park in the near distance, where

LILLIAN

clips a rose from behind her trailer, walks back inside.

ROBERT stares out, loses his footing, clammers for a crook in the tree...

The black wall appears before him. The veinous hand extending...

A DEEP VOICE  
Take it. I'll catch you.

Robert begins to reach out, but quickly retracts his arm, and tumbles down and out of the tree.

Robert lies flat on his back, out.

LITTLE BOY  
Mister, are you...

Robert's eyes blink open slowly. The Little Boy hovers over him, blocking out the sun.

Robert rises carefully, looks up at the tree, back to the boy, then walks over to his bicycle, mumbling.

EXT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Luke's pickup pulls into the lot, parks. Bobby climbs out, lights up a cigarette. Luke leans out, slaps his hand on the outside of the door.

LUKE  
Get me a bag of Dorts! Cool ranch.

BOBBY  
Get 'em yourself.

LUKE  
You know what I'm paying for gas now to run you out here, right?

Bobby ignores, walks into the store.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY -- DAY

Bobby, pack of gum in hand, is next in line, as Sue finishes up with her customer.

SUE  
Thanks, hon.  
(then)  
Hey, Bobby. What brings you out here? They got gum at the Quick Stop.

BOBBY  
Whatta you know about that guy staying over your garage, Mizz K?

SUE  
Not too much. Why?

BOBBY  
He say anything to you about me?

SUE  
Uh-uh. Don't say a whole lot in general.

BOBBY  
So, nothing about me.

SUE  
I just said. But maybe you should try and talk to him, you know, about your dad and all.



Bobby frowns, hands her a quarter, walks out.

EXT. FUEGO'S CORRAL -- DAY

Sarah, astride Fuego, spots Robert heading up the stairs.

SARAH

Hey!

Robert hesitates, starts back down the stairs.

Sarah guides the horse closer, as Robert approaches. But Fuego suddenly rears up, sending Sarah flying on her butt.

ROBERT

Sarah...

Robert enters the corral.

The horse rears close to him, wild-eyed, snorting.

Sarah tries to push herself up.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

No, stay down.

Fuego retreats. Robert kneels beside Sarah, helps her up.

SARAH

Wow, never did that before. She's a Missouri Fox Trotter. They're real easy going. I don't get it.

ROBERT

If people was meant to ride 'em, they'd be born with saddles on their backs.

SARAH

That's exactly what Bobby says. Exactly.

ROBERT

Let's get you over in the shade.

EXT. SUE'S FRONT YARD -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby, in a Texaco shirt, climbs out of Luke's pickup.

EXT. FUEGO'S CORRAL -- CONTINUOUS

Robert leads Sarah to a spot in the shade under a giant Oak.

ROBERT  
You didn't hit your head, did you?

SARAH  
Bobby says you broke in his car.

ROBERT  
C'mon, you know he never locks  
that thing. We just went for a  
little drive together.

EXT. SUE'S GARAGE/SIDE -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby watches Sarah and Robert.

EXT. FUEGO'S CORRAL -- CONTINUOUS

Fuego buries her snout in a bucket.

SARAH  
She's a sweet horse, really.

ROBERT  
Yep.

SARAH  
Bobby don't go in much for  
animals, except that screechy old  
bird of his.

ROBERT  
M-80.

SARAH  
Told you about her, huh?  
(Robert caught, nods)  
Supposed to help her fly again.  
Won't even let it out. I tell him  
that's just plain cruel. Don't  
you think?

ROBERT  
You know, maybe Bobby doesn't  
think his bird's a hundred per  
cent ready yet.

SARAH  
Who knows what he thinks anymore?  
For sure I don't.

ROBERT  
C'mon...

SARAH  
It's true. He used to be so  
sweet... all the time, nicest guy  
in the whole wide world. Now...

ROBERT

But you still like him, right?

SARAH

I guess. I don't know. Ever since, well, you know, he just goes off, like that, like a crazy man or something. It's like there's an explosion going off inside him. I tell him, take it easy, you know, live your life now the way you're gonna wish you did when you're takin' your last breath.

That hits Robert close to home.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Somebody else said that. I didn't make it up or nothin'.

ROBERT

Yeah, well, whoever said it...

SARAH

You knew Bobby's daddy, huh? He never said two words to me.

ROBERT

That surprises me, because he talked about you a lot. Said you were great for Bobby an' all.

SARAH

Yeah?

(Robert nods)

Well, too bad he ain't here to tell Bobby that. I mean, that boy can't expect me to just hang around forever waitin' for him to clean up his act. I might just take off someday soon.

ROBERT

No! No, you can't do that!  
(he grabs her arm, lets go)  
Hear me? You won't just run off, okay?

Robert turns to the sound of a HORN HONKING.

SARAH

Hey, what's the big deal?

ROBERT

You get in some strange place with nobody to look out for you and no money, you'll end up having to --

Robert has to stop, too painful.

SARAH

What? I'll end up having to what?

The sound of Luke's pickup PEELING OUT. We can see Robert thinking, remembering.

ROBERT

Has Bobby quit his job at the gas station yet?

SARAH

He's quitting his job?

ROBERT

Look, I gotta go.

SARAH

Oh, don't you tell Bobby I'm thinking about leaving, okay? He's got all this money coming from the army or someplace and he's gonna give me some. That's a secret, though, the money. He'd be ticked all to hell and back if he knew I told you.

Robert jogs off.

EXT. BUDDY'S TEXACO STATION -- DAY

PUSH PAST Gas sign that reads .45/9 to find BUDDY, 35, longtime garage rat, who stands in the doorway, eyes fixed on Bobby, as he climbs out of Luke's pickup.

BUDDY

You're late. Thought you were coming in early to get a jump on that rear seal job.

BOBBY

Yeah, well, I had things to do.

BUDDY

You had things to do here.

BOBBY

Hey, Buddy, get off my back, will ya?

BUDDY

You don't want me on your back?

BOBBY

Hell no!

They both watch a car pull up to the pump and HONK.

BUDDY  
 Okay, then, I'll get off your back. I owe you twenty bucks for yesterday. Go in and get it, then get your butt outta here... for good.

The horn HONKS again.

LUKE  
 Hey, Buddy, you got you a customer!

BOBBY  
 You want me outta here. I'm outta here. I don't need this bullcrap.

BUDDY  
 Fine.

HORN!

BUDDY (CONT'D)  
 I'm coming. Hold onto your damn horses.

Buddy pulls the hose off the pump, eyes Bobby inside.

INT. BUDDY'S TEXACO STATION -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby punches open the cash register. He slides out two tens, looks out toward the pumps.

Buddy's leaning under the hood, checking the oil.

Bobby eyes the drawer, pulls out another twenty, jams it in his back pocket, and closes the register.

EXT. BUDDY'S TEXACO STATION -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby pulls off his work shirt, tosses it in the air. He climbs into Luke's pickup, which backs up and burns rubber as it spins off, Luke hooting!

BUDDY  
 AND DON'T THINK YOU'RE GONNA COME  
 IN HERE AND USE MY LIFT, NEITHER!

EXT. A HIGHWAY NORTH -- DAY

Luke's pickup rumbles along the new highway construction, bouncing up dirt as it goes.

INT. LUKE'S PICKUP -- DAY

Bobby rides shotgun with Jason sandwiched between him and Luke. Bobby stares out the window.

LUKE  
And he's hitting on your babe.  
Unbelievable.

JASON  
I'd bust him one.

LUKE  
Sure you would. Right before he  
made a turd burger out of you.

Luke levels his line of sight off to the right.

Two young BLACK BOYS toting cane poles walk along ahead.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Well, what have we here? Looks  
like twenty points to me.

BOBBY  
C'mon, leave 'em alone. Let's go.

LUKE  
No, man, let's mess with 'em.

Luke cranks the steering wheel hard right, making a dead bead on the boys.

EXT. A HIGHWAY NORTH -- CONTINUOUS

The Black Boys turn to the sound of LUKE'S PICKUP GRUMBLING through the overgrowth. They drop their poles and run for the wire fence at the edge of a field.

INT. LUKE'S PICKUP -- CONTINUOUS

Luke, Jason and Bobby bounce and toss inside the cab.

BOBBY  
Luke, stop!

LUKE  
Stop? I'm just getting started.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Oooooee!

BOBBY  
Stop, dammit!

Luke stands on his brakes.

LUKE

There you go, I stopped!

He hops out, runs around to the back of the pickup, grabs a long blue pry bar.

EXT. A FOREST OF PINE, OAK AND PALMETTO -- DAY

The two Black Boys cower, as Luke stands over them, whirling the pry bar over his head.

LUKE

You boys scared I'm gonna Kung Fu ya?

BLACK BOY #1, the smaller of the two, nods.

Luke wields the bar menacingly, as the kids cower.

He pulls his bar back and smacks it down near Black Boy #1, close to his leg.

BLACK BOY #1

Stop! No!

Luke pulls back and brings it forward again, but this time his hands are empty. He turns to see Bobby standing there, the pry bar now in his hands like a bat.

LUKE

Why'd you do that?!  
 (kids hightail it)  
 They got away. You're a little wussy! Ain't you, dumplin'? Say it, say, "I'm just a wimpy wussy, Luke."

BOBBY

(glares at him)  
 Let's go.

He hands Luke the pry bar. Luke ROARS, twirls the iron like a crazed Samurai. Bobby and Jason simply walk off.

INT. BUDDY'S TEXACO STATION -- DAY

Buddy, cash drawer out, counts through his meager take.

BUDDY

Thieving kid. Son of a --

He notices Robert watching him from outside, SLAMS the register drawer shut.

EXT. BUDDY'S TEXACO STATION -- CONTINUOUS

BUDDY  
Need something, pal?

ROBERT  
Was Bobby Deemer just here?

BUDDY  
Hell yes. For the last time, too.

A car pulls up for gas.

ROBERT  
Use your phone?

Buddy points inside, heads off to the garage, grumbling.

INT./EXT. BUDDY'S TEXACO STATION -- DAY

Robert looks out at Buddy. Sure he's not watching, he sets two tens beside the register, under a candy bar.

Buddy notices him, starts back toward the office.

When Buddy walks in, Robert's hanging up the pay phone.

ROBERT  
Buddy, I was just talking to Bobby. He's real sorry about everything he said and hopes you won't hold it against him.  
(starts off, turns back)  
Think maybe you could give him his job back?

BUDDY  
Yeah, well, I don't know about that. Me and him's suddenly got bigger problems. What's it to you, anyway? Who the hell are you?

ROBERT  
Me? I'm nobody.

Robert walks out. Buddy notices the candy bar... and the two tens.

BUDDY  
I must be going nuts.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

1. Robert rides along on Sarah's bicycle.



2. Lillian takes a drink of codeine, pulls down the shades, sits in her rocker.
3. Sue rings up customers at the Piggly Wiggly.
4. Sarah sits in the living room, the family photo in her hand.
5. Bobby stands at the cage, feeds his Osprey.
6. Buddy knocks on the door of Bobby's trailer. Bobby pulls open the door, steps outside. They talk. Buddy hands him the shirt, walks off.
7. Robert pedals by his old school, the sign out front reads: "See You In September"

EXT. A DIRT ROAD -- DUSK

Robert climbs off the bike, leans it against a stone fence and walks under the iron archway leading into the cemetery.

EXT. A CEMETERY -- DUSK

Robert steps carefully through the marker stones and stops beside the one marked "William Deemer -- April 15, 1931 - July 4, 1971."

ROBERT

Sorry I never got back to see you.  
Maybe soon...

Unable to look down any longer, Robert looks up.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Help me now. Okay?

LUKE (O.S.)

I'll help you.

Before Robert can turn, he's piled on and pummeled in the darkness by unseen fists and hunks of oak. Knuckles and wood crack down all over his head and body.

THE BLACK WALL APPEARS. THE HAND EXTENDS TOWARD ROBERT, BLOCKING OUT THE OTHERS.

A DEEP VOICE

Take it. I will make it stop.

ROBERT

NO!

Bobby leans against the gate and watches.

The onslaught continues, with Luke doing the majority of the damage. Then, as quickly as it started, it's over.

Left alone in a protective fetal position, Robert struggles to his feet, using his father's headstone for balance.

EXT. A DIRT ROAD -- DUSK

Robert staggers out onto the road, kicks at the now-twisted bicycle and topples down beside it. He lies there, staring at that same star.

Headlights FLASH. He can't move. A red light spins.

Officer Dilly climbs out of his car, adjusts his hat.

DILLY  
 What's going on here?  
 (limps toward Robert)  
 Damn, you all right? What in blue  
 blazes happened to you?

Robert tries not to make eye contact with him.

ROBERT  
 Nothing. A little fall.

DILLY  
 Little. Hell, I seen less damage  
 at the demolition derby. Let's  
 get you in the car.

INT. DILLY'S PATROL CAR -- NIGHT

Dilly tends to Robert's face, working out of a first aid kit. Robert winces.

DILLY  
 Sorry. Can't get no honey without  
 a little sting. Hey, the damn  
 thing stopped bleeding, just like  
 that.  
 (closes the kit)  
 Blood or no, we'll get the doc to  
 take a look at that eye.

ROBERT  
 No!  
 (softens)  
 I'll be okay. Could you just take  
 me back to Mizz Kaneeley's?

DILLY  
Mrs. Kaneeley's? Whatta you got  
 going there?

ROBERT  
Family friend. Bunking over the  
garage.

DILLY  
Uh-huh.

Dilly cranks the engine and it GRINDS.

DILLY (CONT'D)  
Damn, grind a pound for me, Dilly.

EXT. A DIRT ROAD -- DUSK

The patrol car blows up dust as it flies along the old dirt  
road toward Bethbary.

INT. DILLY'S PATROL CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Dilly drives along, occasionally looking over at Robert,  
who's bemused.

BASE VOICE (FILTERED)  
Dilly, come on.

Dilly proudly lifts his cb mic in front of his mouth.

DILLY  
Yee-oo got me. C'mon back.

BASE VOICE (FILTERED)  
Can ya get on over to Covington's  
trailer up on that new stretch of  
75? They got some dynamite  
suddenly gone missing.

DILLY  
Every damn fourth...  
(into mic)  
Got a drop-off in town, then I'll  
head on out there.

BASE VOICE (FILTERED)  
'Preciate it. Grab me some nut  
bars when you go by the Stuckey's,  
would ya?

DILLY  
Big 10-4. Will do.  
(beat)  
Roy Kaneeley and my daddy go way  
back. Understand?

They look at each other.

EXT. SUE'S HOUSE -- DUSK

Sue and Dilly converse while Robert watches from the car, the bicycle sculpture beside him. Dilly walks back.

DILLY  
You be careful now. Real careful.  
Do I make myself clear?

Robert nods.

Dilly points from his eye to Robert, climbs inside the cruiser. The car pulls away.

SUE  
What happened, Levi?

ROBERT  
A little accident.

SUE  
You're all beat up. Come on  
inside.

ROBERT  
Uh... okay. In a minute...

He points to the garage. Sue nods, steps back inside.

INT. SUE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Sue at the mirror, plumps her hair, cheeks...

EXT. SUE'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Robert leans the bike against the garage. In the distance a TRAIN WHISTLE.

EXT. ROAD OUT OF BETHBARY -- NIGHT

Robert stands along the side of the road, his thumb out.

A white pick-up with black fenders slides by, blowing up summer dust, and stops. Robert hustles toward the truck, climbs up and in. The Driver, straw hat on, leans out...

DRIVER  
Where ya headin'?

ROBERT  
Whichever way you're goin'.

The Driver waves back "okay" and Robert gets in.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK -- NIGHT

DRIVER  
Still hot, this late.

Robert's distracted, watching behind him as they drive on.

DRIVER (CONT'D)  
I said, still hot.

ROBERT  
I heard you.

DRIVER  
Good. Glad to hear you're paying attention.

The Driver removes his hat, sets it between him and Robert, who looks over at the Driver, John.

JOHN  
You ready to cut out already, huh?  
Wanna go back to where I found  
you? That it?

ROBERT  
I can't. I just can't do this.

John pulls the pickup over, presses his palm against Robert's chest.

JOHN  
"At the proper time, we will reap  
a harvest if we do not give up."  
That's Galatians, which can be  
pretty damned dependable stuff.  
We're both gonna find out what's  
inside you, what you're really  
made of, Robert. Now, get back in  
there and give 'em the old one-  
two, champ. Tick-tock.

EXT. SUE'S FRONT YARD -- NIGHT

The truck stops and Robert climbs out, watches the truck drive off.

SUE (O.S.)  
There you are! Are you comin', or  
what?

He turns to a waving Sue.

INT. SUE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Robert sits at the table, a Dr. Pepper in front of him. Sue rubs some ointment near his eye with her thumb, fixes a Band-Aid there. Robert revels in the contact, her smell.

SUE  
Bobby ever get with you?

ROBERT  
Um... no, why?

SUE  
He was asking me all about you.

ROBERT  
He was, huh?

SUE  
It'd be great if you did talk to him. You know, straighten him out some. He's got Sarah all... She never used to be... Well, anyways, I can see why he's curious about you. You never say word one about yourself.

ROBERT  
Just don't want to bore you, is all.

SUE  
Bore me? I stand behind a cash register fifty hours a week at the Piggly Wiggly. I got a daughter who hates my guts and a husband who's ran off. I watch weeds grow for entertainment. You couldn't bore me on your worst day.

ROBERT  
I'm a race car driver.

SUE  
No kidding?!

ROBERT  
Yeah. I'm on the circuit right now. Supposed to be down in Daytona, but my car... was stole. So, I come up here because I promised Bill and all.

SUE  
Wow-ee. This is so exciting. A race car driver staying right up over my garage.

(MORE)

SUE (CONT'D)  
 You were probably going fifty  
 miles and hour on that old bike  
 when you cracked it up, huh?

Robert sips his Dr. Pepper.

INT. SUE'S GARAGE -- NIGHT

Robert works on repairing the bicycle. He pulls off his Band-Aid and checks his eye in a silver can on the bench. Perfect. He re-applies the Band-Aid.

A KNOCKING behind him. Sarah, tight sweater, tight jeans, hair and lips shining, enters.

SARAH  
 Hey.

ROBERT  
 Hey.

SARAH  
 That old bike.

ROBERT  
 Trying to fix it.

Bobby watches from outside, through a window.

Sarah notices one certain tattoo on Robert's arm, a heart bleeding tears, with two initials.

SARAH  
 Sure got some smooth arms. Wow,  
 that's pretty funny. Those are my  
 initials. S-K, Sarah Kaneeley.

ROBERT  
 (rolls down his sleeve)  
 No... that's, um... Stephen King.

SARAH  
 Who's he?

ROBERT  
 Oh... he's a really good writer.

SARAH  
 Never heard of him.

ROBERT  
 You will.

SARAH  
 Kind of weird having his initials  
 in a heart on your arm, ain't it?

ROBERT  
Yeah. Kind of.

SARAH  
Anyways, I'm bored stiff. Wanna go bowling or something?

ROBERT  
No, uh-uh. Where's Bobby?

SARAH  
Beats me. Supposed to pick me up an hour ago. Can't depend on him no more.

ROBERT  
Hmm. Maybe your mom'd go with you.

SARAH  
(laughs)  
C'mon...

ROBERT  
I'd give anything to have a night out with my mom.

SARAH  
Yeah, but your mom didn't send your daddy packing.

ROBERT  
Way I see it, she's the one who's still here... with you.

SARAH  
She tell you to say that?

Sarah wheels and walks right on out.

EXT. AN ABANDONED BARN -- NIGHT

Luke and Jason unload two small cases from under a tarp in the back of Luke's pickup and carry them into the barn.

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- NIGHT

Robert pushes open the door, steps into darkness. The barrel of the .45 service revolver presses into his ear.

ROBERT  
What, gonna kill me?

Before Bobby can answer, Robert elbows him hard in the ribs. They struggle, Robert coming out on top, the .45 flying across the floor.



ROBERT (CONT'D)  
 You want something from me? Huh?  
 C'mon, talk. I don't have all  
 night. I'm tired.

BOBBY  
 Yeah, gets pretty tiresome putting  
 the moves on a teenager, huh?

Robert tosses Bobby down.

ROBERT  
 You dumb little turd, she misses  
 her dad! You know what that's  
 about. You embarrass me, you know  
 that?!

BOBBY  
 Oh, well. Sorry about that. How  
 about you just kiss my ass. Stay  
 away from her.

Robert snares him by the collar.

ROBERT  
 What the hell are you doing with  
 the old man's gun?

BOBBY  
 What's it to you?!

Robert shoves him away, pulls out his last cigarette, eyes  
 Bobby.

BOBBY (CONT'D)  
 (re Band-Aid)  
 What happened, hurt yourself?

Bobby feels his jaw, pulls out his own smoke, uses a fancy  
 silver lighter to light up. Robert pats his pockets.  
 Bobby chucks him his lighter.

ROBERT  
 (re the lighter)  
 Nice, used to have one just like  
 it.

He lights up, tosses the lighter back. They both take a  
 drag that lasts the exact same length of time and blow the  
 smoke out through their nostrils.

BOBBY  
 Look, man, you been following me  
 everywhere. What's the deal?

ROBERT  
 I don't know. Just trying to  
 help.

BOBBY

Don't do me any favors.

ROBERT

Seeing how my old man went out the same way.

Robert walks off toward the bathroom.

BOBBY

Sure he did.

(beat, then calling out)

So, what'd you do?

WATER RUNS OS, stops. Bobby leans down, looks around for the gun, spots it, under the couch. He's just about to go for it when Robert walks out of the bathroom, wiping his face with a towel.

ROBERT

When?

BOBBY

When your old man checked himself out.

ROBERT

Kind of shut down at first. Wouldn't talk to nobody, see nobody. Then I went nuts, always drunk, stoned, stealing, hurting innocent people. You know the drill.

(beat)

Shame of it is, I was, what, only 17, 18, had a whole lot going for me. Good in school. Ate that history right up.

BOBBY

History?

ROBERT

Uh-huh. Had this crazy idea I'd even teach it someday. Who'd wanna sit an listen to me?

BOBBY

Not me.

ROBERT

Civil War was my specialty. Every general, battle. Couldn't stump me if you'd been there. What's today?

BOBBY

Huh?

ROBERT  
What's the date?

BOBBY  
I don't know... July 2nd.

ROBERT  
Let's see. July 2, 1863, first  
day of --

BOBBY  
Second...

ROBERT  
Huh?

BOBBY  
Second day. Not first. Battle of  
Gettysburg. Lee come that close  
to chasing Meade and his boys out  
of Pennsylvania. So?

ROBERT  
Seems like we got a lot in common.

BOBBY  
Man, why can't you ever answer a  
simple question?

ROBERT  
Guess I'm just not smart like you.  
You got another butt for later?

Bobby pulls out his pack. Their hands are on it at the  
same time. Each has a scar that runs along his right index  
finger from the cuticle to the knuckle. And they both  
notice.

A long moment, finally ended by...

SARAH (O.S.)  
Bobby, you up there?

BOBBY/ROBERT  
Yeah!

BOBBY  
(gives up the pack)  
Man, what is it with you and her,  
huh?

ROBERT  
You don't play your cards right,  
you'll lose her.

SARAH (O.S.)  
Bobby!

ROBERT

Be good to her.

SARAH (O.S.)

I wanna see that Burt Reynolds movie.

ROBERT

Go on. You'll like it.

(Bobby turns to go)

Bobby?

(Bobby stops, turns back)

Just trying to teach you something here, something I found out too late, after I lost a whole bunch of everything...

(a beat)

You know, one thing your father told me... he was proud of you, Bobby. He just never knew how to tell you.

Bobby hesitates, pulls open the door and leaves.

Robert reaches under the couch for the .45, his father's gun in his hand.

EXT. SUE'S FRONT YARD -- NIGHT

Sarah's about to get in the car, but Bobby stops her.

BOBBY

Look, babe, I can't take you to no movie, not tonight.

SARAH

Why not?

BOBBY

I just can't, Saree. Okay?

SARAH

Aw, c'mon, Bobby. Don't you wanna be with me?

BOBBY

You know I do. You... you're special to me, you know that, right?

SARAH

How would I know that?

BOBBY

Look, I gotta go.

Bobby climbs into the Dart.

SARAH  
 Yeah, you go! Like always! DON'T  
 EVEN COME BACK!!

The car pulls away. Sarah picks up anything she can find off the ground and throws it at the car.

EXT. AN ABANDONED BARN -- NIGHT

Bobby's Dart pulls up, parks beside Luke's pickup.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby stares out at the barn. A light flickers inside. He dips his head, weighs options, shoves open the door...

INT. AN ABANDONED BARN -- NIGHT

Bobby, fidgety, paces and draws hard on his cigarette. Luke and Jason sit watching him, Luke chomping down Doritos from a bag. A kerosene storm lamp lights the barn.

BOBBY  
 I'm not wimping out, Peanut. I  
 just said maybe we should think  
 about what we're planning here.  
 (looks around)  
 I hate this place.

JASON  
 I thought we thought about it  
 already.

LUKE  
 (gets in Bobby's face)  
 Yeah, we did. We thought it all  
 out and it's gonna happen. Right,  
 Bobby? You in?  
 (pokes Bobby's chest)  
 Or, are you still just a little  
 ol' wuss?

BOBBY  
 Go to hell.

LUKE  
 Oooooe! You are one mean mother.  
 A mean little mother who don't  
 care if he's broke the rest of his  
 life... stuck in this little  
 dungheap town, livin' with his  
 mommy in that quaint little  
 tornado target on cinder blocks,  
 racin' his piece of crap car of  
 his to nowheres fast...  
 (Bobby's unfazed so far)  
 (MORE)

LUKE (CONT'D)  
and jumping jailbait Barbie in the  
woods come Saturday night.  
Woeeee!

Bobby flies out at him with a right which Luke catches. Doritos go flying. Luke grabs Bobby's right wrist with his other hand and twists. Bobby's face contorts in pain as he drops to his knees.

Luke squeezes tighter, the Zig-Zag tattoo right in Bobby's face. Luke finally just pushes Bobby down on his back. Bobby knees Luke in the nuts.

Luke GROANS in agony.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Again? Really? C'MON!

They go at it furiously, exchanging punches and kicks. Jason watches gleefully.

Luke takes a punch in the jaw, ducks one and drives his massive shoulder into Bobby's chest, knocking him on his ass.

Bobby reaches in his jacket, but comes up empty. Luke's right on top of him.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
What'cha looking for, this?

Luke shows Bobby his fist and nails him with a crossing right. Luke looms over him.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Don't you ever come up at me. Got  
it?

BOBBY  
(struggling to his feet)  
Screw you!

LUKE  
Bet you'd like that.

Luke goes over to a case, reaches down behind it and lifts a six-pack of Bud out of a paper bag. He chucks one to Jason, then hard and fast to Bobby, who catches it.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Now, let's get wasted.

Luke punctures his beer can bottom against a rusted nail head and shoots the beer down quick. He reaches down into the box at his feet and pulls out a stick of dynamite.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Ladies, this here's our ticket out  
of Hooterville.

He pulls a fuse out of his pocket, works it into the stick, making obnoxious, sexual grunts.

He licks the fuse of the dynamite stick and pushes it through a break in the lamp's globe.

JASON

Luke! No!

Jason dives for a nearby rotting hay bale. Bobby watches, unimpressed.

Luke keeps the fuse in the fire until it begins to sizzle. He gently eases it out of the glass and holds it there right in front of his grinning face, finally dousing it in Jason's beer.

But when he pulls the fuse out, it's still sizzling with spark.

Luke slides the fire into his mouth, bites down and pulls the fuse out with his teeth. He spits it out and cackles.

Bobby walks out.

LUKE

You owe me a bag of dorts, Deemer.

INT. SARAH'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sarah lies on her bed, slowly turning the pages of a travel magazine. There's a five-rap KNOCK at her door, followed by a two-rap KNOCK answer.

SARAH

Go way!

(a beat)

Guess you can come in if you want.

The door opens up before the words finish coming out. Sue, a mudpack on her face and her hair in a portable hair dryer plastic bonnet, enters

SUE

You doing okay?

SARAH

Uh-huh.

(re Sue's face)

What's... ?

SUE

Oh. I don't know. I was just sitting around thinking I hadn't fixed myself up in so long, I thought I'd better get a little practice in... before I forget how.

SARAH

This wouldn't have anything to do with who's up in daddy's room, would it?

SUE

Honey, I love your daddy. You know that, right?

(beat)

Well, I do. Very much. I know part of what sent him off was my doing. A big part. And I'm sorry that he left you too because of me. And I can't do nothing about that now. But...

(tearing up)

... but what if he don't ever come back?

Mudpack tears flow.

SUE (CONT'D)

You've got your boyfriend, your whole life in front of you. What have I got? A daughter who hates me and a pair of flat old, tired feet.

SARAH

That's not true.

SUE

It's not?

Sue leans against Sarah's shoulder. Sarah slides Kleenex between them to protect her nightgown from the mud.

SARAH

No. Your feet aren't flat.

Sue pulls back, tissue clinging to her cheek. Sarah laughs.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I don't hate you, Mom.

She peels the tissue off her mother's cheek.

SUE

You're sure?

SARAH

You know, I think maybe you could use some practice.



EXT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- NIGHT, LATER

Robert leans over the balcony and looks out. A door SLAMS below. He peeks down.

Sue, dressed to kill, uses her free hand first to lift her boobs, then to coif her freshly-teased hairdo. In the other hand, she carries a huge hunk of chocolate cake on a plate.

ROBERT  
Oh, no. No, no, no.

Robert quickly ducks inside.

Sue, singing to herself, sashays up the stairs.

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The five-rap question KNOCK at the door. The two-RAP answer. A beat. The door opens slightly and Sue peeks in.

SUE  
Yoo-hoo? Mr. Seiko? Are you  
decent?

She sets the cake down.

Robert, in a towel, head watered-down, steps out of the bathroom. His torso, a battlefield of scars and tattoos.

SUE (CONT'D)  
Oh, Lord, I am so sorry.

ROBERT  
It's okay. Getting ready for bed.

SUE  
I can see that. Thought you might  
like some company.

She eyes Robert's body somewhat nervously. A beat.

SUE (CONT'D)  
You poor thing. All those crashes  
and all.

ROBERT  
Huh? Oh, yeah.

She moves carefully, closer to him. She traces her fingers around an old shiv scar on his chest, lowers her head and kisses the scar, slowly, gently... Tiny kisses all the way, she moves up his chest to his neck, softly pushes him back toward and down onto the sofa...

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Mizz Kaneeley...

SUE  
Sue.

Sue's in control now, as she leaves his neck and finds his mouth with hers. A long, passionate kiss, until Robert's eyes open wide.

ROBERT  
Wait... wait.

SUE  
(backs away)  
Oh, I'm so embarrassed.

ROBERT  
For what?

SUE  
I just needed... I'm sorry. I'm so ugly and desperate. I'm disgusting.

She pulls a hanky out of her bra and dabs at her eyes.

ROBERT  
Disgusting? No, you're beautiful.

SUE  
Am I?

ROBERT  
Damn straight. I've had a hard time keeping my eyes off you since I got here.

SUE  
For real?

ROBERT  
Yes. For real. I mean, c'mon.

SUE  
Well, I did kinda notice you sneakin' a peek.

ROBERT  
It's just that I'm... spoken for. Man, that Roy had to be some crazy to leave a woman like you.

SUE  
You think?

Robert takes the hanky from her, helps her dry her tears.

ROBERT

I know.

SUE

Well, I can be kind of a stick in the mud. And I know men like women who are exotic and outdoorsish and all. Truth is he'd come up here just to get away from me... and I finally snapped, couldn't take it no more. Called him on it. Man, I was nail spittin' furious, and bawling my damn eyes out at the same time...

Sue looks over at the desk.

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- NIGHT -- FLASHBACK

ROY, 49, longish blonde hair, smokes as he sits at the desk, working on an intricate fit inside the cockpit of a Martin B-26 Marauder model.

Sue walks in crying, stands over Roy, who doesn't look back at her. She begins gesturing, shouting MOS. Roy's undaunted.

SUE (V.O.)

Didn't bother him a lick that I was so upset. Not a little lick.

Sue reaches over Roy and grabs the Marauder, smashes it on his desk, throws it in the trash and takes two steps back, preparing herself.

Roy switches off his worklight, slowly wheels in his chair, rises and walks out, leaving Sue hurt, confused and ashamed.

WE HEAR A CAR ENGINE race below. WE PUSH IN ON SUE.

SUE (V.O.)

He just drove away.

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- NIGHT -- BACK TO SCENE

ROBERT

You'll patch things up.

SUE

Oh, yeah, when?

Robert thinks. His face reveals his memory. He lies.

ROBERT

Before you know it.

Sue pushes herself up from the couch, heads for the door.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Mizz Kaneeley.

(she turns)

I meant what I said. You are a beautiful woman. You're a great mother and a good person, the kind of person people miss when they're not around.

Sue mouths "Thank you" as she goes out the door. Robert's left holding her hankie. Can't help but sniff it.

EXT. SUE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Robert walks his bicycle down the street, climbs on, rides off.

EXT. BOBBY'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

Robert feeds cake bits to the Osprey.

ROBERT

Good cake? You doing okay, M?

The bird cranks her head sideways.

INT. MT. BETHEL CHURCH -- DAY

Robert sits in the back pew of the empty church. A crucifix hangs over a small altar. Robert's eyes fix on it, the agony in the eyes, the depth of the wounds, the spikes puncturing the hands and feet.

The Church's REVEREND RAINEY steps out from the behind the altar, spots Robert, who rises to leave.

REVEREND RAINEY

Hello. Good morning.

He breezes down the aisle to meet Robert.

REVEREND RAINEY (CONT'D)

Welcome. I'm Reverend Rainey.

ROBERT

Levi.

REVEREND RAINEY

Well, you look good for a man of your age.

Robert doesn't quite...

REVEREND RAINEY (CONT'D)

In the O-T Levi lived to a ripe  
old age of 137.

ROBERT

O-T?

REVEREND RAINEY

Old Testament.

REVEREND RAINEY (CONT'D)

Will we be seeing you on Sunday  
for a little of my renowned fire  
and brimstone, or are you just  
passing through?

ROBERT

No, I think I'll be long gone by  
Sunday.

REVEREND RAINEY

(feigning seriousness)  
Something terminal, is it?

Rainey winks.

ROBERT

Oh. Guess I better get going.

REVEREND RAINEY

Are you troubled, brother?

ROBERT

I was... for most of my life. I  
done a lot of wrong.

REVEREND RAINEY

Are you truly sorry for those  
wrongs?

ROBERT

I am.

REVEREND RAINEY

Yes. Well, I'd call that  
progress.

ROBERT

But it's way past too late.

REVEREND RAINEY

If there's one breath left inside  
you, it's not too late to come  
home.

A DISTANT TRAIN WHISTLE. Robert starts off, turns back.

ROBERT

Reverend?

REVEREND RAINEY

Yes?

ROBERT

Fire and brimstone. Is it... ?  
Nevermind.

Robert exits into the light of day. Where Reverend Rainey stood, John now stands.

INT. BOBBY'S TRAILER -- DAY

Bobby's bedroom is a mess. MUSIC'S BLARING, Creedence "Fortunate Son" or similar. Bobby sits on his bed, smoking one of Pollard's doobies. He stares out the window at the distant water tower.

He reaches for a book, THE CIVIL WAR. He opens it, thumbs through, slaps it shut, chucks it aside.

INT. POST OFFICE -- DAY

Robert leans on the counter. A female CLERK, 26, puzzled expression, finishes writing in a little card. She shows the card to Robert.

CLERK

That okay? You're sure that's  
what you wanted me to write?

ROBERT

It's perfect. Nice penmanship.

He discreetly pulls something out of his pants pocket, Sue's hanky, rubs it all over the card. The Clerk, confused, watches. He shows her his empty hand, like a magician would.

He finishes with the card and envelope, hands it to the Clerk who tapes it onto a small package. She weighs it.

CLERK

Buck twenty'll get it there.

She checks out his Band-Aid peeling away from a healed eye. Robert feels her eyes on it, and tapes it back in place.

ROBERT

When?

CLERK

Goes out in about a half-hour.  
Tomorrow's a holiday. Friday  
morning, probably. That work?

Robert nods.



SUE (CONT'D)  
I never rode her before!

ROBERT  
Yeah? You look like Annie Oakley  
to me.

SUE  
You hungry for dinner?

ROBERT  
No, ma'am. Still can't seem to  
find my appetite.

SARAH  
How about you come fishing with us  
tomorrow?

ROBERT  
Fishing? You fish, Mizz K? Kinda  
outdoorsish, isn't it?

Sue smiles. Robert steps inside.

SARAH  
He's real sweet, huh?

Sue eyeballs her.

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Through the window, Robert watches Sue and Sarah.

INT. THE DEATH CHAMBER -- NIGHT

The window draping closed in front of him, the Physician  
listens intently through the stethoscope to the chest of  
the body in front of him. Taylor stands beside him.  
Behind him the wall clock: 12:03.

PHYSICIAN  
(quiet amazement)  
It's as faint as I've ever heard,  
but it's there. He's still with  
us.

TAYLOR  
How long can he last?

PHYSICIAN  
I don't know. Not much longer.

The guards look at each other, then back to the gurney.



INT. BOBBY'S TRAILER - HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Bobby presses his ear to the bathroom door, hears VOMITING.

BOBBY  
Mom, you okay?

LILLIAN (O.S.)  
Uh-huh. Fine, Bobby.

Bobby scratches his face, walks away, comes right back, ducks into Lillian's room.

INT. LILLIAN'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby finds the brown paper bag, pulls out two full bottles, heads back to the hallway.

INT. BOBBY'S TRAILER - HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby knocks hard on the bathroom door.

BOBBY  
I'm throwing the rest of this crap  
away, Mom.

The TOILET FLUSHES. Lillian opens up, stands before Bobby like a beaten dog.

LILLIAN  
No, you can't. I need it to  
sleep.

She reaches for the bottles. He pushes by her, empties the bottles in the toilet, FLUSHES.

BOBBY  
You can sleep without it.  
Understand?

LILLIAN  
But...

BOBBY  
No buts. That's it.

LILLIAN  
What'd I do that was so bad? Tell  
me, son, so I can live with  
myself.

Bobby hesitates, pulls her close. Lillian sobs now.

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM - BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Robert lifts the toilet tank lid, uses paper clips to hook the .45 in place, safely hidden.

INT. LILLIAN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Bobby, book in hand, sits in the rocking chair, reads...

BOBBY

"Both sides in the 3 day battle of Gettysburg held good positions and what is most anom... anomalous in war both occupied such advantageous ground that neither could turn the other away..."

He looks over the book. Lillian's asleep.

INT. BOBBY'S TRAILER - BATHROOM -- NIGHT

At the sink, Bobby splashes water in his face, looks long and hard at his reflection in the mirror. He grabs both hands full of water, lowers his face toward his cupped hands...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM - BATHROOM -- NIGHT

At the sink, Robert drops his face into his hands, cupped with water, as the faucet runs. He looks up, his face dripping wet...

EXT. THE WATER TOWER -- NIGHT

In the moonlight, at the base of the tower, Luke lashes five sticks of dynamite around one of the tower's legs.

On the other leg, directly across from Luke, Jason ties off a similar bundle.

Headlights flash across the base of the water tower. A car flies by on the nearby bend in the road. Luke and Jason duck behind the concrete pilings supporting the tower's legs.

LUKE

Damn!

JASON

That was close, huh?

LUKE

Yeah, too close. That's why all three of us needed to be here.

JASON

Where ya think he is?

LUKE

Where else? At home playing with himself. Better not back out on us now.

JASON

Yeah. He better not.

LUKE

Would you shut up, dick!

JASON

You know, sometimes you could talk to me like you didn't think I was less than you. I mean, I showed up. That should count for something.

LUKE

Oh, here we go.  
(sings)  
"It's crying time again..."

JASON

I'm just saying. I'm always there for you, you know but you still treat me like some sorry-ass mangy dog.

LUKE

Well?  
(an exasperated sigh)  
Let's just do this and get outta here, huh?

Luke reaches down and grabs a spool of fuse. He hands an end to Jason.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Run this over and wrap it around all the fuses. Good and tight.

Jason takes off with the fuse end. Luke waits until Jason gets to the other side, pulls out some slack in the line and bites it off with his teeth.

Luke wraps the new end around his tail of twisted fuses, then pulls out another ten feet of fuse line, tying one end to the bundle of fuses. He stands and admires his work, mouthing "Boom."

INT. SUE'S SPARE ROOM -- DAY

Robert, sleeping soundly, wakes with a start to FIRECRACKERS.

EXT. SUE'S DRIVEWAY -- DAY

Robert, Sue and Sarah pack Sue's car with fishing/picnic gear.

SUE

Boy, you sure are one fast healer.

ROBERT

Uh, yes, ma'am, runs in my family. Where's Bobby?

SARAH

Me and him ain't talking right now.

SUE

That's a shame, on a holiday and all.

SARAH

Really? Where'd that come from?

SUE

He's got his faults, but I like Bobby. You know that.

They all climb in, Sue at the wheel. The car backs out.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BETHBARY -- DAY

Sue's wagon drives down Main Street.

Moments later, Bobby's car cruises along the same course.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby, eyes on the Falcon, MUMBLES to himself.

EXT. LAKE CHARM -- DAY

A beautiful lake. Robert flips his rod over his head and sends a worm squirming skyward, then down into the water. Sarah and Sue struggle to get their lines in the water. Sue tangles her hook in a bush behind her.

SUE

Oops.

Robert sets his pole down and unhooks Sue's bait.

SUE (CONT'D)  
Maybe I'll just watch.

ROBERT  
No. You can do it. I'll show  
you.

He gives her a quick lesson, arm around her.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Don't force it. Keep it smooth  
and easy. Put your hand here.  
Relax. Now back. It's all timing  
and touch. Don't think, feel.  
Now forward. Let the button go.  
There. Let the weight carry it.

Sue makes a fine cast, laughs giddily.

SARAH  
Show me too.

Robert now takes her through the paces, standing behind  
her, touching her, letting her go.

Sarah's cast flies out nicely. She turns and pecks Robert  
on the cheek.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
(to Sue)  
See that?

Robert reels slightly from the kiss.

SUE  
This is fun, huh?

BOBBY (O.S.)  
Show me, too.

Bobby struts up, grabs Sarah by the arm, shaking the pole  
loose, tugs her with him.

Sarah shakes herself free of his grasp and heads right back  
and picks up her pole.

SARAH  
Who invited you, anyways?

BOBBY  
Yeah, you probably prefer being  
alone with him, huh?

ROBERT  
Come on...

BOBBY  
 (pushes Robert)  
 Big soldier boy.

ROBERT  
 Look, Bobby, either fish with us  
 or go on home to your mother.  
 This is a tough day for her.

BOBBY  
 What do you know about my mother?  
 What do you know about me?

ROBERT  
 More than you. That's all you  
 need to know. More than you.

BOBBY  
 (to Sarah)  
 Can you believe this guy?!

SARAH  
 You can fish if you want.

Bobby's so embarrassed now, he grabs the pole out of Robert's hand, snaps it over his knee and flings it into the water.

BOBBY  
 I don't want.

He wipes his hands together, turns and struts off.

EXT. ROAD NEAR WATER TOWER -- DAY

Sun nearly gone. Bobby sits on the fender of his car, base of the Water Tower, pitches rocks at the tower, pulls a pack of smokes out of his shirt pocket.

Robert watches him from behind a tree, mumbling.

JOHN (O.S.)  
 Talking yourself into something,  
 Robert?

Robert looks up. John's sitting in the crook of a tree.

ROBERT  
 I gotta tell him.

JOHN  
 Tell him? You mean you.

ROBERT  
 So, you're saying I can?

JOHN  
 (shrugs)  
 What's it gonna take?

Robert looks back to Bobby. John's gone. Robert starts to move out from behind the tree and sees Pollard walk up.

POLLARD  
 Nice shot.

Bobby lets Pollard light his cigarette.

BOBBY  
 Thanks.

POLLARD  
 Don't mention it. How were those J's?

Pollard picks up a rock, throws it like a girl.

BOBBY  
 Good. Your ship come in yet?

POLLARD  
 Pulled right up to the dock. Just gotta unload it. Might could use some help just in case they try and pull a fast one on me.

BOBBY  
 Who's they?

POLLARD  
 Can't say names, now can I? That wouldn't be cool.

BOBBY  
 Whatta you want me to do?

POLLARD  
 Just be righteous, little brother. Just be righteous. C'mon. You ride with me.

BOBBY  
 Why?

POLLARD  
 They see some strange car pull up, they get off-put. They get off-put I could lose all my credibility.

(Bobby weighs that)  
 Got some kickass tunes and more primo.

BOBBY  
 I got stuff to do later.

POLLARD

Don't we all.

They both climb into Pollard's car. It chugs away.

INT. POLLARD'S SEDAN, MOVING -- DUSK

Pollard slides in an 8-track, some rock. He steers the sedan off the road. They're now parked at the end of Smiley's fence line.

BOBBY

Why you stopping here?

POLLARD

This is stage one.

He offers Bobby a stick of Black Jack Gum.

BOBBY

What?

POLLARD

Stage one. Get the bucks. Ka-ching! Stage two, change the bucks into two keys of Mary Jane.  
(jams in 2 sticks of gum)  
You know this guy?

BOBBY

Ned Smiley.

POLLARD

Bingo. The old man's got more money than the Pope, especially since he sold off a big hunk of land for that dearly departed little housing project. He don't trust bankers. Don't trust people in general. Word is he's got over a hundred G's squirreled away somewhere in there.

BOBBY

What, we just go in and take it?

POLLARD

Why not? We knock on the door, flash our little friend here...

He reaches under his seat and pulls out a sawed-way-off shotgun and flails it Bobby's way.

POLLARD (CONT'D)

... and we'll pretty much scare the money right out of him. I take some, give you some and the big wheel keeps on turning.

(MORE)



POLLARD (CONT'D)  
Rollin', rollin'.... You in or  
what?

BOBBY  
(thinks a beat)  
Hundred grand, huh? You're sure?

POLLARD  
Dead sure, baby.

EXT. NED SMILEY'S FARM -- NIGHT

Pollard and Bobby skulk along the trail that leads to Smiley's place, nearly to the house. Pollard signals Bobby to move over to the porch. Bobby, carrying the shotgun, starts that way, but...

Robert pulls him back around the side, presses the .45 to Bobby's ear...

ROBERT  
The hell are you doing? Drop it.

BOBBY  
Man, would you get out of here!  
You don't know what you're into.

ROBERT  
Sure I do. Drop it.

Bobby complies, dropping the shotgun. Robert picks it up, tucks the .45 into his belt.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
What's up, Pollard?

POLLARD  
Who in hell are you?

The porch light blinks on. WE HEAR A SCREEN DOOR CREAK OPEN.

NED (O.S.)  
Anybody out there?

Smiley, shotgun of his own in hand, peers out.

Robert motions for them to stay silent. They do. Smiley ducks back inside.

POLLARD  
You really need to take off,  
brother, leave us do our thing.

ROBERT  
I'm not your brother. Now get  
lost.

POLLARD

Kiss it like you mean it, mister.

ROBERT

Look, you know what's gonna happen? You're gonna go screw it up, 'cause you're an amateur, Pollard. A no-nothing punk. You can't do nothing yourself, so you bring other people in on your lame-ass schemes. And you and him are gonna be hightailing it with your tails between your legs and buckshot flying over your heads in two minutes.

POLLARD

No, see, you got it wrong. Him and me are goin' in there and we're comin' out fully banked. How do you know me?

ROBERT

The smell.

POLLARD

Gimme my damned sawed-off.

ROBERT

You want it? Here.

Robert swings it and cracks Pollard across head, knocking him out cold.

BOBBY

What the crap are you doing here?

ROBERT

You gotta stop, Bobby. You're gonna lose everything. Don't give up on yourself. When Lee realized he licked at Cemetery Ridge, what'd he do? He hightailed it for the Potomac.

BOBBY

Don't need a history lesson from you.

ROBERT

Yeah, what were you gonna do, shoot the old man, blow him to pieces for what... money?

BOBBY

Yeah... no. We were just gonna scare him.

ROBERT  
Then why bring this?

Robert shows Bobby the shotgun.

BOBBY  
I don't know.

ROBERT  
You don't know. You could do it, though, right? You're a tough guy, aren't you?

BOBBY  
Yeah, I am.

ROBERT  
Okay. So, let's do it. Let's go take the old coot's cash. Two way split. But we don't waste any time talking. We go in hard, strong.

Robert starts toward the house. He tosses Bobby the .45. Bobby follows Robert toward the porch.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
Yeah, you're gonna grow up now. You're gonna watch a man's head explode. You're gonna know what it's like to stop a life cold... turn it off, for good, just like your old man did. It's time to grow up, Bobby. You ready? Here we go...

BOBBY  
(looks back at Pollard)  
Wait...

ROBERT  
Wait? Oh, yeah. You're right. Gotta take care of the witness.

BOBBY  
What?!

Robert marches directly over to Pollard, stands over him, the shotgun trained on his head.

ROBERT  
No, wait a minute. He's yours, not mine. It's your deal. Get over here.

Bobby walks over, the gun in his hand slowly lifting...

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
 Put one right there. Smiley comes  
 out, I'll take him. 50-50, right?  
 You and me. Locked up in this  
 together.

Bobby looks down at Pollard, trains the .45 on him, but his  
 hand begins to tremble.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
 No way you'll miss. No way. Do  
 it!

Bobby's head's swimming. The .45 falls from his hand.  
 Robert squats to pick it up, tucks it behind him.

The porch light comes on again. Smiley pulls a curtain  
 back. Bobby looks deep in Robert's eyes.

BOBBY  
 You really knew my father?

ROBERT  
 Yeah. He was sick, kid. Sick in  
 his head, couldn't live with what  
 he did. It had nothing to do with  
 you or your mom. Make sure she  
 knows that.  
 (a beat)  
 Understand?

BOBBY  
 No... How do you know so much  
 about me?

ROBERT  
 Look at me, Bobby.  
 (waits for Bobby's eyes)  
 You know who I am. You do. Look.  
 (waits, nothing yet...)  
 You don't eat butter, because when  
 you were a kid Luke tried to shove  
 a whole stick of Land of Lakes  
 down your throat.

BOBBY  
 Lots'a people don't eat butter.

ROBERT  
 You named your Osprey M-80 'cause  
 some kids chucked one up in her  
 nest, blew up all the babies. You  
 found her flopping around on the  
 road that day. You know what day  
 I mean, don't you?

BOBBY  
 (shaking his head)  
 Sarah told you that.

ROBERT

You hid your dirty magazines in a plastic bag inside an old Victrola in the tool shed and nearly flipped out when the old man donated it to the Salvation Army. Did Sarah tell me that?

BOBBY

No. It can't... you can't...

ROBERT

I know, I know, I don't believe it either. But here I am. To show you.

BOBBY

Show me? Show me what? This is messed up. You're screwing with my head, man.

Bobby takes a swing at Robert, connects, knocks him down, runs off.

ROBERT

Bobby! Don't go into town!

NED (O.S.)

Who is it?!

A SHOTGUN BLAST! Ned aims his Remington skyward. Shoots again. Robert reaches down, digs Pollard's keys out of his pocket, checks Pollard's watch, lays low.

Robert watches Smiley, as he stands sentry on his porch. Pollard moans.

One quick punch quiets Pollard.

EXT. A RURAL ROAD/NED SMILEY'S FARM -- NIGHT

Bobby jogs up to Pollard's pickup, notices his own car there, climbs in, guns it, and takes off.

EXT. NED SMILEY'S FARM -- NIGHT

Robert flings the sawed-off into the night, runs up to Pollard's sedan, hops in. The Sedan peels away.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR/MOVING -- NIGHT

Bobby drives hard, wipes tears away...

INT. POLLARD'S SEDAN -- NIGHT

Robert drives like a crazy man.

ROBERT  
Don't do it. Don't do it.

BEFORE HIM, THE BLACK WALL, BLOCKING HIS VIEW. THE HAND REACHING OUT.

A DEEP VOICE  
Take it. You can't stop him.

Robert SCREAMS OUT, turns the car hard, and it flies off the road onto the shoulder and into a gully.

EXT. BETHBARY PARK -- NIGHT

The park is filled with 4th of July revelers. From the bandstand, a small brass band plays "Stars and Stripes Forever", badly.

In one corner of the park, sky-bound fireworks are loaded and launched, bursting into colorful displays overhead, delighting everyone, especially the children.

A group of hippie-type war protestors, carrying signs denouncing Nixon and the bombing of Cambodia, form a line on a sidewalk near the street .

EXT. BEHIND BETHBARY CENTER -- NIGHT

Luke leans around the Hardware Store. Jason taps him on the shoulder from behind. Luke's startled.

LUKE  
(a loud whisper)  
What are you doing here?

JASON  
We got problems.

LUKE  
What problems?

JASON  
The, uh, dynamite's gone.

LUKE  
(grabs him by the shirt)  
I checked it this morning. It was all set.

JASON  
It ain't now.

LUKE  
 Dammit! Okay, we can still pull  
 it off.

Luke runs for his truck, and opens up a case of dynamite sticks, all fused. He pulls out a fistful.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
 Gimme your belt.

JASON  
 My belt?

LUKE  
 The thing holding up your pants,  
 dipstick, c'mon.

Jason pulls his belt off, rolls the top of his pants under. His drawers nearly drop off.

Luke pulls his belt off, fixes new bundles of dynamite together, twists the fuses together.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
 Put one under each leg. Nine  
 o'clock, light this one...  
 (shows a long-fused bunch)  
 Soon as it goes off, light the  
 other one, and I'll light mine.

JASON  
 Won't I be a little close?

LUKE  
 What, are you scared?

JASON  
 No, um, yeah, no.

LUKE  
 Then get outta here. Go, boy!  
 (Jason dashes off)  
 Hey, genius, take the truck and  
 the dynamite.

Luke pulls a couple of sticks out of the box.

JASON  
 Where's Bobby?

LUKE  
 Don't worry about Bobby. I'll  
 take care of him. Go!

Jason goes.





EXT. BEHIND THE BANK -- NIGHT

Jason drives up in the pickup and backs it up to the wall. He climbs out, a little wobbly and charred.

JASON  
(off the hole)  
Wow. It worked?

LUKE  
Yeah. Now, get in there.

JASON  
Me? Why me first?

LUKE  
You're small. You crawl around up to the window and make sure no one's lookin' in.

JASON  
Bobby here yet?

LUKE  
Inside.

Luke hands Jason the pry bar. Jason crawls inside.

EXT. BETHBARY -- NIGHT

Pollard's car noses in, parks. Robert climbs out, frazzled, looks out toward the park and the festivities. He glances up to the clock in the park: 9:11

He eyes

Dilly who helps a little girl hold a sparkler, as Office Tuttle strides up quickly.

Robert ducks through cars, and walks briskly along the sidewalk, toward the bank.

He's stopped by a few of the protestors. PROTESTOR #1 carries a sign that reads, "No Independence for 50,000 dead Americans."

PROTESTOR #1  
Hey, Mister crewcut, you a soldier or something?

ROBERT  
(startled)  
Huh? No.

Another bigger PROTESTOR #2 joins the battle.

PROTESTOR #2

Yeah, I wouldn't admit it either.

ROBERT

Get outta my way. War's over.

PROTESTOR #1

So, why are we still dropping  
50,000 bombs a month over there?

Robert tries to push him aside.

PROTESTOR #2

This government won't stop the  
killing.

Robert looks back as Dilly confers with Tuttle, who jogs  
toward his cruiser.

ROBERT

Okay, here's the deal. I'm C.I.A.  
The bombing stops soon. Ground  
troops out next month. We've got  
tapes on Nixon. Bad tapes. Next  
year he'll resign in disgrace.  
That's the plan. Guaranteed.

The Protestors look at him, shocked. Robert grabs  
Protestor #1 by his fringed vest.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

You can't tell anyone. We cool?

Protestor #1 nods, dumbfounded, and watches as Robert makes  
for the corner...

INT. BANK -- CONTINUOUS

Jason creeps toward the front and peeks up through the  
blinds. A Police Cruiser, LIGHTS FLASHING, SCREAMS through  
town.

EXT. BEHIND THE BANK -- CONTINUOUS

Luke looks around, grabs a flashlight and a huge  
refrigerator dolly out of the bed of the pickup, carries  
them to the hole, ducks inside the bank.

INT. THE BANK -- NIGHT

Jason pries open the till drawers, while Luke attempts to  
tip a small safe onto the dolly. He's straining, but stops  
to listen to a RUSTLING back at the hole.

LUKE  
 (a loud whisper)  
 Bobby?

A LOW WHISPER COMES BACK, "YEAH." Luke aims the flashlight toward the hole, until he finds movement, and follows it.

Luke's pulling his .22 pistol out of his pants, as Robert steps through the beam of light quickly.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
 Don't you move. Got a gun on you.

Robert ducks into the darkness.

ROBERT  
 So do I. Mine's bigger.  
 (ducks behind a half wall)  
 Where's Bobby?

Luke steps carefully toward the sound of Robert's voice.

LUKE  
 He wimped out.

Robert allows himself a smile.

Jason slides down behind the counter and duckwalks toward the lighted hole, and flies out.

Robert turns to the sound.

ROBERT  
 Show me your .22, Peanut. Show it to me, then put it on the ground.

LUKE (O.S.)  
 No can do, pal. And it's a .44. Big old bad-ass Dirty Harry kinda gun.

ROBERT  
 Just get out of here, now, before Dilly shows up.

Luke's gun aimed right behind Robert's head.

LUKE  
 Dilly's got bigger fish to fry right now. Turn around real slow-like. As they say in them cop movies, "Hands up, punk."

Robert feels the gun now pressed to the back of his head.

ROBERT  
 You screwed up. Safe sits on a trip. Somewhere an alarm's going off right about now.

LUKE  
That's bull.

ROBERT  
You and me screwed up on a lotta  
stuff.

LUKE  
Do not act like you know me!

ROBERT  
Whatever you say.

LUKE  
Here's what I say. You shouldn't  
mess with people's explosives.

ROBERT  
No idea what you're talking about.

LUKE  
Yeah, sure you don't.

He pistolwhips Robert, knocks him all the way down.

INT. BOBBY'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

Lillian sits alone in the small living room. The door  
pushes open. Bobby enters.

LILLIAN  
We didn't go to the cemetery. We  
should have gone. This day of all  
days.

INT. THE BANK -- NIGHT

Robert stands over the safe.

LUKE  
Pick it up, strong man. Jason!

ROBERT  
He took a hike. You're on your  
own, Peanut.

Luke slaps Robert across the back of his head.

LUKE  
Do not call me that again, never.  
Hear? I swear I will hurt you.

ROBERT  
Nothing to be ashamed of, just a  
little physical shortcom --

LUKE  
SHUT THE HELL UP AND DO IT!

Robert rubs the back of his head, bends and donkey kicks the gun out of Luke's hand. He wheels and jabs him, right in the kisser. Luke staggers back, bangs into the teller's cage. Robert pops him again... and again.

DILLY (O.S.)  
Who's in there?

They both turn to see Dilly looking in the window, tapping with his night stick. FLASHLIGHT SWEEPS THE PLACE.

ROBERT  
Bigger fish to fry, huh? Better go now, while you still can.

Luke flies up over the counter, falls on his ass, gathers himself and dashes out through the hole.

EXT. BEHIND THE BANK -- CONTINUOUS

Luke climbs out, looks for the pickup. History.

LUKE  
You slimy little mother...

He adjusts his jaw, scrambles up onto the chain link fence.

INT. THE BANK -- CONTINUOUS

Robert looks up at the clock on the wall. He walks over to the front window, peeks out, just as

Bobby's Dart drives by slowly, Lillian at the open passenger window. Something makes her look toward the bank, directly at Robert, as the car continues on.

DILLY  
Freeze, buddy! Now!!

Dilly grabs Robert from behind, pulls him into cuffing position.

DILLY (CONT'D)  
Sorry. Guess your boy left you high and dry. Saw a big fat ass flying over the chain link out back. Let's go.

Dilly turns him around, shines the light in Robert's face.

DILLY (CONT'D)  
Well, if it ain't Mr. Demolition Derby. Had a feeling about you.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- NIGHT

Dilly walks Robert down the street. Onlookers gather.

DILLY  
Just keep right on moving, buster.

Sue and Sarah run up. Sarah pushes her way closer to Robert.

SARAH  
What'd he do?

DILLY  
Tried to pull off a bank job.  
Blew up the water tower. Thought  
he'd distract me. He didn't.

ROBERT  
I'm okay. You take care. You and  
your mom. Tell Bobby for me.  
Tell him... tell him I'll see him  
down the road. He loves you,  
Saree, a whole lot. Stick by him,  
huh?

Dilly yanks Robert away. Sarah stops short.

SARAH  
He called me Saree. Nobody ever  
called me that... but Bobby.

Dilly leads Robert down the street under the movie marquee  
and the word "Deliverance."

EXT. A CEMETERY -- NIGHT

The Dart's headlights beam through the iron railing,  
silhouetting Bobby and Lillian as they enter hand-in-hand,  
Lillian carrying a long-stemmed rose.

INT. BETHBARY JAIL -- NIGHT

Dilly pushes Robert into the tiny cell and locks the door  
behind him.

Robert paces back and forth, finally sits on the cot  
against the wall and stares ahead, drawn, on the verge of  
tears.

THE CELL BARS BECOME THE BLACK WALL. A SPLINTER OF LIGHT  
OPENS. THE HAND.

A DEEP VOICE  
Take it. You're done.

Robert moves toward the wall, nearly touches the hand, smiles...

ROBERT  
Not done. I'm finished, John.

EXT. BOBBY'S TRAILER -- NIGHT

Bobby reaches into the cage, pulls out the Osprey, holds his hands open. The bird seems content to stay put.

BOBBY  
Go, on.

M80 flies off, SCREECHING all the way.

Bobby reaches down, picks up a gas can and walks over to his Dart. He climbs in, but it won't crank, battery dying.

He climbs out and heads off on foot into the field behind the trailer park, gas can in tow.

EXT. AN ABANDONED BARN -- NIGHT

Bobby throws gas all over the old structure, finally tosses the can in through a window. He reaches into his pocket, for his lighter. He flicks it into flame, studies it closely in his hand. THE SCAR.

INT. BETHBARY JAIL -- NIGHT

Dilly and Tuttle walk down the short hallway. Dilly has Luke by his collar, pushes him into Robert's cell.

DILLY  
Get in there, punk.

TUTTLE  
Where's the other one?

Luke slides down in a corner.

DILLY  
He was right here, not 2 hours ago.

TUTTLE  
He for sure ain't here now.

They both scratch their heads.

EXT. AN ABANDONED BARN -- NIGHT

Bobby leans back against the same hollowed-out tree Robert had earlier, and watches the barn go up in flames. HEAT LIGHTNING CRACKS OVERHEAD.

EXT. AEROFLIGHT AIRPORT -- DAY

A tiny airfield, a string of small buildings, private planes, one landing strip and a control tower. A two-seater climbs for a blue sky.

INT. AEROFLIGHT HANGER ONE

MAX, 38, a mechanic, walks across the empty hanger, carrying a brown package under his arm. He stops near a small office.

MAX

Hey, Roy!

Up above the office on a step ladder, Roy, tool belt on, tightens up a screw on an electric conduit pipe fitting leading to a huge paddle fan, its blades made from airplane props. Roy wipes his brow.

ROY

Yup.

(looks down at Max)  
What's up, Max?

MAX

Got a package for ya.

ROY

For me?

MAX

Uh-huh.

(smells the box)  
Smells pretty too. Lilacy, sorta.

Roy climbs down the ladder. He flips a switch on the side of the office and the paddle fan overhead WHIRS into action.

Max lets the wind hit his face, blowing back his nasty hair.

MAX (CONT'D)

Ah. Can't beat a nice, fresh breeze.

He pats Roy on the back, hands him the package and walks away, still using his face to feel the fan's wind.



Roy sits on a pallet of boxes, opens the envelope.

INSERT: CARD

*"Dear Roy. I miss you and love you. Come home to me, to your family. ... Me"*

BACK TO SCENE:

Roy stands the card up beside him and tears the paper off the package. He holds the box in front of him: The Martin B-26 Marauder Model Kit. He smiles and reads the card again.

INT. A TRAIN DEPOT -- DAY

Robert stands at the window now. John sits on the bench.

JOHN  
You've done so much more than,  
well, to be honest, than I  
expected you would.

ROBERT  
Thank you.  
(beat)  
But... What is all this? I  
mean... how is all this...

JOHN  
Possible?

Robert nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Possibility is all around us, in  
all of us, Robert. Potential.  
Built right in. There just for  
the believing.

ROBERT  
And you're...

JOHN  
A believer.

John smiles. Robert takes a moment to process.

ROBERT  
Why me, John?

JOHN  
Probably. You weren't sure  
before. Are you now?

ROBERT  
Yes. I am.

A beat, as John sizes him up.

JOHN  
Good, then it's time. Ready,  
Robert?

Robert looks puzzled. John rises, leads him by the shoulder toward the exit doors.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I have two last things I must tell  
you. First, there's good inside  
you, Robert Earl Deemer, and it's  
been noticed.

ROBERT  
Yeah? I appreciate that, John. I  
really do.

JOHN  
Second, we're sending you back.

Robert's beyond confused now.

ROBERT  
Back? Back where?

John pushes open the exit door. A wild breeze whips against them. He gestures for Robert to leave.

Robert steps past him and out into a suddenly blinding light. He looks back at John, who nods once.

JOHN  
Make something of it.

Robert lingers, turns to face the brightness...

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. DOWN THE ROAD A WAYS -- DAY, LATER

A sun-drenched day. Bobby walks along the road.

A '62 Corvette passes him, then backs up, fishtailing all the way. Bobby jogs for the car, slides to a stop at the passenger side.

ROY  
Need a ride, stranger?

BOBBY  
You betcha.

ROY  
Hop on in. Oh wait.

Roy lifts the model airplane box off the passenger seat and tucks it carefully behind him.

ROY (CONT'D)

Okay.

Bobby hops in. The Corvette speeds away.

INT. CORVETTE, MOVING -- CONTINUOUS

They drive on, not saying anything for a few moments, then:

BOBBY

So, you home? I mean...

ROY

I'm home.

BOBBY

That's good. That's real good.

ROY

Did something I'm not real proud of. Something stupid. Think they'll give me another shot?

BOBBY

No doubt.

ROY

Not gonna be easy.

BOBBY

You'll make it work, though, right?

ROY

I will. You bet.  
(after a beat)  
How's Sarah?

BOBBY

Well, she's pretty ticked at me right now. But I'll make it up to her.

ROY

Yeah? How 'bout Sue?

BOBBY

She's doing good, Mr. K. Saw her yesterday fishing up the lake.

ROY

Sue fishing? C'mon...

BOBBY  
My own two eyes.

ROY  
Wow. What's this world comin' to?

Bobby watches the countryside flying by, looks back to Roy.

BOBBY  
I don't know. Yet.

Roy nods. Bobby pulls off his shoe, looks inside.

ROY  
Something in your shoe?

BOBBY  
Thought so, but no. It's in my  
sock.

He slides his finger down deep inside his sock and pulls out a wrapped square of US currency, which he unfolds: Two tens.

BOBBY (CONT'D)  
Hey, twenty bucks. What about  
that?

Bobby thinks a beat, smiles, folds up the bills and jams them in his pocket. He leans back and out the window to let the wind smash against his face, as Roy gives the Vette a good workout.

EXT. BETHBARY -- DAY

The Corvette breezes into town past the old church.

PREACHER (V.O.)  
(barely audible)  
Your kingdom come. Your will be  
done...

EXT. FUEGO'S CORRAL -- DAY

Sarah trots Fuego around the corral, until she spots Roy standing by the fence. She practically falls off the horse and sprints toward her father. They embrace over the fence.

PREACHER (V.O.)  
... on earth as it is in heaven.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY -- DAY

PREACHER (V.O.)  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts...

Sue hands a package stuffed with groceries to a Customer and turns to pull a bouquet of Piggly Wiggly flowers toward her register. Another bouquet, followed by another, then another pile onto the conveyor belt.

PREACHER (V.O.)  
(building)  
... as we forgive our debtors.

Roy reaches for Sue's hand. Sue hesitates, takes it.

EXT. SUE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Bobby's Dart pulls up and parks.

Bobby climbs out, strides up to the front door, KNOCKS.

A curtain moves at the front window.

SARAH (O.S.)  
Go away!

Bobby KNOCKS again. The front door opens. Sarah steps out.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
What?

BOBBY  
Hey.  
(a beat)  
I thought we could spend the day together. Picnic, fishing, movie... Up to you.

SARAH  
Why?

BOBBY  
I want to be with you, Saree.

SARAH  
No you don't. Soon as something else comes along, you'll take off.

BOBBY  
No. That's not me. Not now.

He reels her in for a long embrace and kiss.

PREACHER (V.O.)  
 And do not lead us into  
 temptation, but deliver us from  
 the evil one.

INT. THE DEATH CHAMBER -- NIGHT

PREACHER  
 For yours is the kingdom and the  
 power and the glory forever.  
 Amen.

Preacher closes his Bible. The Physician listens again to the heart of the body on the cart, shakes his head and pulls a sheet over the corpse.

PHYSICIAN  
 It's over.

Taylor motions to the Guard #1 to pull the drapes back. When he does, we see the Policeman's Wife and Daughter stand, holding each other.

The Attendants roll the cart out.

INT. BANK -- DAY

All MOS. A normal day inside. A few tellers at windows.

A Man at one window, his back to us, with his LITTLE GIRL, 5. The Girl wanders off toward a Policeman, his back also to us, as he makes out a deposit slip.

He spies her coming, pulls out a lollipop. She grabs it, kisses him where he points on his cheek and runs back to show the Man at the window.

The front doors kick open. Two GUNMEN, wearing long, dark coats, feed sacks over their heads, scatter guns leveled chest-high, storm into the place, motioning everyone down with the barrels of their weapons.

Beyond them, through the window, the empty, black, '83 El Camino smokes.

The Policeman, Officer Dilly, 40's, crouches down but comes right back up, his weapon drawn.

The Man at the Window, turns. It's Robert/Bobby, early 30's now, shirt and tie, a teacher's apple tie tac, hair neatly parted on one side. A book bag on the counter beside him.

GUNMAN #1

swings his rifle toward Dilly.

ROBERT/BOBBY

mouths, "No!" and jumps out between the Gunman and Dilly, just as the Gunman squeezes out a blast, sending him flying.

DILLY

gets off two quick shots, but the Gunman gets off one big one, flipping Dilly end for end, before the shotgun drops from the Gunman's grip and he falls to his knees.

GUNMAN #2

hightails it out of there.

THE LITTLE GIRL

screams, "Daddy!"

INT. A CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

The Attendants hustle the gurney down the long, gray corridor, with the others trailing close behind.

The gurney bumps over a portal past a window, where LIGHTNING FLASHES. Out from under the sheet, the body's left arm drops down and swings back and forth, revealing a Zig-Zag man tattoo.

An Attendant reaches down, tucks the arm back under the sheet, and the entourage proceeds down the corridor and out through a steel door...

INT. BANK -- DAY -- BACK TO SCENE

WE PUSH IN through the front door and move directly toward Robert, who lies in a pool of his own blood. A shaft of light washes across him.

Robert's eyes blink slowly. He lifts his hand, which is quickly grasped by the Little Girl. He pulls her hand close to his mouth and kisses it.

FROM OVERHEAD we drift over them for a long moment then slowly lift away.

INT. THE DEATH CHAMBER -- NIGHT

The Policeman's Wife and Daughter hug each other and cry.

AS THEY SLOWLY GATHER THEIR THINGS WE MOVE BEYOND THEM, as other Witnesses continue to exit.

A Man holds the door for others, his jacketed back to us. He helps Dilly's wife and Daughter out, then starts out behind them, but stops and slowly turns back to us and the now empty witness room.

IT IS ROBERT, a neatly trimmed and greying professorial beard. WE SLOWLY PUSH IN ON HIM, HIS EYES GLIMMERING, and...

FADE OUT.