

FOSSIL FUEL

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PORCH - DAY (PRESENT)

Country home. FRANK (64), white and feeling his bones, rocks in his favorite chair. He takes in the sunshine with COWBOY HAT down low and long sleeved shirt to protect his skin. Another ROCKING CHAIR next to him and LONE BEER CAN.

A shadow passes over enshrouding him: an OIL PUMP rhythmically blots out the sun and lets it shine.

He POPS the top of the can and sips.

Rocking, he chugs it, tosses, and grabs for another --

Nothing.

He lifts his hat and peeks over the side of his chair.

FRANK  
(yelling inside)  
Where in Sam-hell are my beers?

From there, he scopes out the landing place of the last beer can.

Sunshine lands on him, he wipes sweat from his brow.

FRANK  
SAMMY. Bring me my beer!

SAMMY (O.S.)  
I'm fixin' to pops, be there right quick.

FRANK  
Spittin' cotton no thanks to you...

He attempts to hit the old can with a ball of spit - it falls short.

From inside, the floor boards CREAK as his daughter SAMMY (45) approaches.

SAMMY (O.S.)  
You got a bottle opener out there?

FRANK  
I got my teeth.

Sammy busts out carrying a BEER COOLER.

SAMMY  
Ain't ya hot yet?

She tosses a BOTTLE at him.

FRANK  
That pump there is in my way.

SAMMY  
You hate the sun pops.

FRANK  
Don't mean it's not still there!

Both open their beers. He takes a long draught. She sips.

FRANK  
Can't they get their oil someplace  
else?

SAMMY  
It's deep as hell round here --

FRANK  
And it looks bad for the community!

SAMMY  
How do you mean?

FRANK  
Look on, over yonder.

He wags in the direction of the pump.

FRANK (cont'd)  
You see them folk movin' about?

SAMMY  
I see em.

FRANK  
Look how disgustin' they are.

SAMMY  
They're workin'!

FRANK  
Yeah but look at em.

SAMMY  
I'm lookin' --

FRANK  
They're dirty!

Sammy wiggles around trying to see better.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I bet some-uh them start the day  
dirty.

SAMMY  
Now that ain't right pops you know  
they come out that way.

FRANK  
Out where?

SAMMY  
Outta the field!

Frank chugs the rest of his beer and tosses, hitting the  
first can.

Spits again, nowhere near his recycling pile.

SAMMY  
Now why you gotta go and do that.

He shrugs.

Quiet but for the sound of the OIL PUMP.

FRANK  
Aww I can't take this no more.

SAMMY  
Well whyn't you go and do somethin'  
about it?

FRANK  
I ain't gon do shit --

SAMMY  
Talk to the county! Bring it up at  
the next meetin'.

Frank lets that sink in.

FRANK  
... Naw.

SAMMY  
Now if you ain't then I will. I'm  
tired-ah your complainin'.

FRANK  
Then go right ahead.

She jumps up and stomps inside. He grabs her beer.  
Tilts his hat even lower and eases back.  
She sticks her head out.

SAMMY  
And I'm draggin' you with.

FRANK  
Like hell you are.

SIP.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. TRUCK - DAY

Hood baking in the sun, the sunshade does little good.  
Sammy drags Frank to the passenger side, grumbling all the way.  
With improper form, she loads him in.  
Back to the driver's side.  
She fumbles for her keys letting him stew in the heat and exaggerates her success when it comes.  
She hops in and removes the sunshade.

FRANK  
As if I ain't sweat enough --

The engine TURNS. She smiles and WHOOPS.

EXT. OIL PUMP - DAY

Just doing its thing in a barren land. Workers at lunch.  
The truck drives in and pulls up.  
They get out and stroll over.

SAMMY  
What are you fixin' to do?

FRANK  
Well I dunno yet.

SAMMY  
Any use in kickin' it do you s'pose?

She tries. Nothing.

SAMMY  
You ever work on one-uh these?

He gives her a mean eye.

FRANK  
Not since you been born.

SAMMY  
They ain't change much!

She peeks around. He removes his hat to think.

SAMMY (cont'd)  
I don't see nothin'.

FRANK  
It's all underground.

SAMMY  
Well shit.

Frank spits in the general direction of the pump.

SAMMY (cont'd)  
We come all the way out here for  
nothin'.

He puts his hat back on, ambles to the back of the truck,  
and grabs something.

SAMMY (cont'd)  
What's that?

FRANK  
Advertisin'.

The pump STOPS.

SAMMY  
Wouldja look at that?

Frank beams and jams the sign in the dirt. One side reads:

FRANK'S.

CUT TO:

EXT. PORCH - DAY (LATER)

Rocking chairs in the SHADE of the stopped pump - halfway to the top of its arc.

Sammy and Frank return. Sammy strolls in.

FRANK

Shit.

He hefts cooler and chair and drags both a couple steps back - into the sunshine again.

Plops down, grabs a beer, and takes an easy sip.

In the distance, workers return. The pump starts again.

The shade covers Frank once more.

FRANK

Goddamn Diggers!

EXT. OIL PUMP - DAY

Oil derrick creaking and pump pumping. WORKERS mill about, one stares at Frank's sign.

WORKER

Hey Derrick, come check this out.

DERRICK (65), black, in a wheelchair, and owner of the operation rolls over.

WORKER (cont'd)

They tagged us.

DERRICK

Buncha fuckin' --

The GROUND SHAKES. Derrick shuts his eyes tight.

It stops. The pump continues unharmed.

Derrick's eyes shoot open. The other side of the sign reads --

FRACKERS.

FADE OUT