

WINNING TICKET

One-Hour Limited TV Series

Pilot

Written by

Alexander Rosenstein

Email Address: raconteur.ar@gmail.com
Phone Number: (806)544-1211

FADE IN

Close-up of a banjo. A weathered hand is playing an old West Virginia tune. The view widens to reveal first a BANJO PLAYER and a FIDDLER sitting on two tree stumps, then a bustling Market.

EXT. A MARKET ON THE RIVER BANK - DAY

An open-air market on a grassy clearance bordered by thick woods on one side and a river, with a wooden bridge, on the other.

SUPER: West Virginia and Kentucky border, August 1882.

Two members of the Hatfield family, ELLISON, 41, supporting himself with a cane, and JOHNSE, 19, are standing in the shade of a tree. Johnse points at three young men crossing the bridge from the other side of the river.

JOHNSE

Look at the McCoy copperheads
slitherin' again from Kentucky.

Three McCoy men, TOLBERT, 23, PHARMER, 21, and BUD, 18, stop facing the Hatfields. Bud points at Johnse and looks at his older brothers.

BUD

Ain't this Johnse Hatfield? The boy
who's tryin' to get under our
sister's skirts?

Johnse steps forward.

JOHNSE

Ain't this the half-wit Bud McCoy,
who cain't even tell his mouth from
his bunghole?

Pharmer steps between Bud and Johnse.

PHARMER

Yah better watch your yap, Hatfield
runt, or I'll skin you like a
squirrel.

JOHNSE

You's mighty brave when your big
brother Tolbert is around.

TOLBERT

Pharmer, steer aside. He's mine.

Tolbert smashes Johnse's face with his big fist, knocking him to the ground. Tolbert is going to kick Johnse with his foot but is blocked by Ellison's cane.

ELLISON
Leave mi nephew be.

TOLBERT
Ain't it the ol' gimpy Uncle
Ellison.

Tolbert knocks the cane from Ellison's hand. The two men are locked in a fight. Ellison ends up on top of Tolbert.

ELLISON
You should have listened to mi
brother and stayed on your side of
the river.

Pharmer pulls out a large-blade knife and stabs Ellison under his right shoulder blade.

Ellison screams with pain. Pharmer pulls the knife out and stabs him again. Bud picks up Ellison's cane and smashes the wounded man on the side of his head.

Tolbert is back on his feet, takes out his revolver, and shoots Ellison in the face.

There is a muffled sound of a distant shot. A large caliber musket ball hits the side of Tolbert's head and blows out a big chunk of the opposite side of the man's skull.

ANSE HATFIELD, 43, a tall bearded man, drops still smoking musket and walks quickly toward the McCoy men while pulling out a revolver from his waistband and cocking the hammer.

Pharmer drops to his knees, trying to pick up his dead brother's revolver, but is shot in the middle of his forehead.

SHERIFF, 50, and two DEPUTIES, 20 and 22, arrive on horseback.

Sheriff quickly dismounts and runs toward Anse. Deputies pull their repeating rifles out of scabbards and take their aim at Anse.

Anse is taking careful aim at Bud, who is scrambling toward the bridge. A magnified view of the gun shows Anse's thumb cocking the hammer.

Sheriff knocks Anne's arm down. The gun fires into the ground.

SHERIFF

Shootin' that boy in the back,
Anse, is no self-defense. You'd
hang for this.

Anse is on one knee, touching Ellison's chest and looking at Johnse, who is still out but obviously breathing.

ANSE

These McCoy pieces of shit killed
mi brother and injured mi son.

Sheriff takes off his hat and holds it against his chest while looking at the dead man.

SHERIF

It is a shame. Ellison was a good
man. When is this Hatfield McCoy
feud goin' to stop?!

Anse keeps looking at his dead brother.

ANSE

When every McCoy is dead and
rottin' in the ground.

INT. BALTIMORE CITY HALL - MORNING

The conference room is packed. Every seat is taken, and some people are standing in the back of the room. There are several cameramen with portable TV cameras in the best vantage spots. REGINALD, 45, a confident-appearing Black man in a police uniform with four stars on his collar, is making his way to the podium with the city crest.

SUPER: Baltimore City Hall, January 2018.

REGINALD

My name is Reginald Williams. I am
the Baltimore Chief of Police. It
is my pleasure and privilege to
introduce the new mayor of the
great city of Baltimore, Martin
Stein.

MARTIN STEIN, 37, a man in a well-tailored suit, walks to the podium. He shakes Reginald's hand and waves to the cheering crowd.

Reginald sits down on a chair in the front row next to DVORA, 58, a middle-aged woman. Reginal leans over and whispers into Dvora's ear.

REGINALD (CONT'D)

You must be a very proud mother.

DVORA

You have no idea. Today, my son is becoming mayor, and this spring, my sweet daughter is marrying a doctor!

INT. DERMATOLOGY EXAMINING ROOM - MORNING

Standard small examining room, with walls covered with posters related to skin conditions. MR. GILMAN, 72, a balding man dressed in a patient gown, is sitting on the exam table and fidgeting impatiently.

SUPER: Four months later

There is a knock on the door.

MR. GILMAN

Yes, come in already!

The door opens, and DAVID ROSE, 30, enters. He is a tall, thin man wearing thick-rim glasses and a white coat.

DAVID

Good morning, Mr. Gilman. Remember me? I am Dr. Rose.

MR. GILMAN

I did not pay ten dollars copay to see a medical student again. I want to see a real doctor.

David takes a deep breath and lets it out slowly.

DAVID

Mr. Gilman. I explained to you before I am a real doctor who happens to be a senior Dermatology resident.

MR. GILMAN

I waited for you for twenty minutes.

David sits down on a rolling stool.

DAVID

Mr. Gillman, I am completing my specialty training in a couple of weeks.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

Next time, if you need to see me,
you will have to wait three months.

Mr. Gilman seems to calm down.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What can I do for you today?

Mr. Gilman hesitates for a moment.

MR. GILMAN

There is a new big zit.

DAVID

Where is it, Mr. Gilman?

Mr. Gilman hesitates again.

MR. GILMAN

It is on my shmeckle.

David smiles.

DAVID

My Yiddish is very limited. Which
part of you is the shmeckle?

MR. GILMAN

I guess you grew up on the other
side of the bay.

He grabs his groin.

MR. GILMAN (CONT'D)

You know, shmeckle... My wife will
have nothing to do with it until
the zit is off. She accused me of
sleeping around.

Mr. Gilman slaps his knees.

MR. GILMAN (CONT'D)

I should be so lucky!

David turns around to hide a smile, gets off the stool, and
walks over to the counter, and slips on examining gloves.

David takes another deep breath, slowly lets it out, and
faces the patient.

DAVID

Ok, Mr. Gilman, let's see it.

INT. MEDICAL CENTER CAFETERIA - LATER

A busy cafeteria is crowded with doctors and nurses. David is eating his lunch at a table. ROBERT, 30, an Asian man wearing a green scrub suit and a surgical cap, walks over to the table carrying a tray with food.

ROBERT

May I...

David looks up at Robert.

DAVID

No.

Robert places his tray on the table and sits down.

ROBERT

I cannot let my best friend eat alone.

David takes another bite of his food and washes it down with a sip of soda.

DAVID

I do not want any more guilt trips for the dessert.

Robert looks indignant.

ROBERT

I would not have the poor manners to keep bugging you about abandoning a promising surgical career to become a pimple popper.

David shakes his head.

DAVID

I knew you wouldn't... I want to have a chance for a stable family life. Most of our previously married surgical residents are divorced. Even the majority of our attending were divorced at least once.

ROBERT

I agree working eighty hours per week and many weekends is not conducive to a lasting relationship, but it allows many short ones.

DAVID

It was great, but two years ago, I met a woman I want to spend my life with...I also hope to spend time with our kids if we have any.

Robert is eating quickly while listening to David.

ROBERT

Speaking of that. Even though I lament losing my carousing wingman, I am very excited about your upcoming wedding.

Robert shoves the last of his food in his mouth and washes it down hurriedly with coffee.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I have to run back to the OR. See you at the bachelor's party.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE BANK - SAME TIME

A bank branch with a sign, **Baltimore Union Bank**, occupies the corner of a large office building. A half of a block away, a black Range Rover SUV with heavily tinted windows is parked facing the bank.

A Mercedes van, wrapped in a colorful ad for a tour company, is parked across the street.

INT. INSIDE OF THE SUV - SAME TIME

ESTHER STEIN, 27, a petit but well-proportioned woman with meticulously done face makeup, wearing a jacket and a well-fitted skirt.

In the passenger seat, JAY, 29, a muscular Black man in a well-tailored suit. Both of them are wearing sunglasses and are focusing on the bank entrance in front of them.

DISPATCH OFFICER (V.O.)

The suspects are on the move. ETA ten minutes. The driver is our informer. Let him get away.

Jay picks up the microphone from the dashboard.

JAY

Understood.

DISPATCH OFFICER (V.O.)
Once you position yourself to
protect the civilians, you will
signal the SWAT team.

JAY
Roger. Out.

Esther is speaking without taking her eyes off the bank.

ESTHER
I warn you, Jay, if you let
yourself get hurt and miss my
wedding, I will make sure you will
never have children.

Jay smiles.

JAY
Esther, try not to hurt the
suspects as much as you usually do.

He hands a small transmitter with one red button and a safety
cover to Esther.

JAY (CONT'D)
You know the drill. Flip up the
safety cover, push the button, and
it will rain green SWAT people.

Esther puts the transmitter into her jacket pocket and turns
off the engine.

ESTHER
It's showtime.

Esther gets out of the SUV, picks up a leather briefcase from
the back seat, and starts walking toward the bank entrance.
Jay follows her a minute later.

INT. BANK'S LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

A small bank lobby. The tellers are behind thick glass
opposite the entrance. A line of customers winding around the
barriers.

BANK GUARD, 57, a gray-haired man in a blue uniform, armed
with a 38 revolver in an oversized black leather holster, is
greeting incoming customers.

BANK GUARD
Welcome. Deposit and withdrawal
slips at the counter on your right.

Esther enters the lobby and positions herself behind a standup counter. She pretends to be filling out a deposit slip.

Jay walks in and stands at the end of the line.

There is the sound of a muscle car engine followed by the screech of brakes. The doors of the 1970s souped-up four-door Pontiac can be seen through the glass entrance door. The car doors open, and three men get out.

All three have baseball caps pulled low to shield their faces from the camera above the bank entrance.

SUSPECT1, 36, a tall, muscular man with thick bleached hair sticking out from under his cap, is wearing a light runner's jacket.

SUSPECT2, 27, an overweight man with a red hair ponytail, wearing a long coat despite the warm weather.

SUSPECT3, 32, dark complexion, jet-black straight hair, also wearing a long coat.

As soon as the three of them entered the lobby, they all pulled up their fishing neck gaiters to just below their eyes.

Bank Guard stops Suspect2 closest to him, with his left hand tentatively grabbing the handle of his revolver.

BANK GUARD (CONT'D)

Just a minute...

Suspect2 pulls out a pump shotgun from under his coat and hits the Bank Guard in the face with the butt of the gun.

Bank Guard falls backward. His head hits one of the chairs on the way down. The man is sprawled motionless on the floor.

Suspect1 pulls out a large frame stainless 357 revolver, and Suspect3 produces an Uzi submachine gun.

Esther is holding the transmitter behind the counter. Her thumb flips up the safety cover and rests on the red button.

YOUNG MOTHER, 28, walks in with two little girls. She is trying to calm down her rambunctious children and is oblivious to the three armed men in front of her.

ESTHER

(WHISPERING)

Oh shit!

She flips the safety cover back on the button, slips the transmitter back into her pocket, places the briefcase on the counter in front of her, and pulls out her semiautomatic from her underarm holster.

Esther points her gun at the suspects.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
FBI, drop your weapons!

SLOW MOTION:

Suspect3, closest to her, swings his Uzi toward her. His coat opens, and his bulletproof vest can be seen. Esther moves her aim up and shoots him in the middle of his forehead. The man falls backward.

Jay spins around while pulling out his semiautomatic pistol from his belt holster. He shoots the shotgun-armed Suspect 2, hitting him in the shoulder. The wounded man spins around on the way down, providing the opportunity for Suspect 1 to shoot Jay in the chest. Jay's body is thrown backward.

BACK TO THE NORMAL SPEED:

ESTHER (CONT'D)
Drop your weapon, or die!

Esther is aiming her gun at the back of Suspect1's head.

After a moment of hesitation, Suspect 1 drops his gun.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
Facedown on the ground and lock
your fingers behind your neck.

Suspect1 complies.

While still pointing her gun at Suspect1 with her right hand, she takes out the transmitter with her left hand, flips the safety lid up, and pushes the red button.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE BANK - CONTINUOUS

The members of the SWAT team, wearing green uniforms and full combat gear, are jumping out of the Mercedes van and running toward the bank entrance with their automatic weapons ready.

INT. BANK'S LOBBY - LATER

SWAT members are handcuffing Suspect1 and leading him out of the lobby.

Two EMTs are wheeling out on a gurney, handcuffed and bandaged Suspect2.

SUPERVISING AGENT, 48, wearing a blue FBI slicker, enters the lobby. He walks over to the body in a body bag on the floor. He sighs and turns to EMT, 22, next to him, wearing gloves.

SUPERVISING AGENT

Let me see him, please.

EMT gets on his knees and unzips the top of the bag. Supervising Agent looks for a moment at the lifeless face of Suspect3 with a bullet hole in the middle of his forehead.

SUPERVISING AGENT (CONT'D)

Thank you. You can take him away.

Supervising Agent walks to the other side of the lobby where Jay is sitting on a chair, with his shirt unbuttoned and Kevlar vest opened, holding a bag of ice to his chest. Esther is standing next to him.

SUPERVISING AGENT (CONT'D)

How is our wounded doing?

ESTHER

Not good, sir. I am ready to shoot him myself...He is refusing to go to the hospital to be evaluated.

JAY

I am fine, sir. I have been hit in the vest by a 9mm before, but this 357 kicks like a mule.

Supervising Agent turns to Esther. Expression of sympathy is gone from his face.

SUPERVISING AGENT

As you well know, every shooting incident triggers an internal investigation.

(he lowers his voice)

What I would like to know now, Agent Stein: why did you confront the suspects without bringing the SWAT backup?

Esther nods toward Young Mother, comforting her crying girls.

ESTHER

I wanted to avoid getting them in the crossfire between the bank robbers and the SWAT team.

Supervising Agent nods with understanding.

SUPERVISING AGENT
Esther, where is your bulletproof vest?

Esther opens the briefcase and shows the vest in there.

SUPERVISING AGENT (CONT'D)
Why aren't you wearing it?

ESTHER
You may not be comfortable with my answer, sir.

SUPERVISING AGENT
Try me.

ESTHER
It flattens my breasts, and I have a wedding gown to wear in two weeks.

INT. SYNAGOGUE SANCTUARY - EVENING

A sanctuary is full of people of different ages. On the "bima," a raised stage, a traditional "Hupa," a cloth canopy with four posts.

Under the Hupa, the bride, Esther, and the groom, David, are standing with their backs to the congregation, facing the RABBI, 77, with a bushy white beard.

SUPER: Bney Jacob Synagogue two weeks later.

RABBI
Now, with the power vested in me by the State of Maryland, I pronounce you husband and wife.

Rabbi puts down a glass wrapped in a napkin in front of David's right foot. David crushes the glass with his foot.

RABBI (CONT'D)
Mazel Tov!

The congregation cheers.

RABBI (CONT'D)
Now, Dr. Rose, you earned the right to kiss your bride.

David appears to be confused. Esther grabs David's face with both hands and kisses him passionately.

The couple is locked in a long kiss. The Rabbi is getting uncomfortable. He loudly clears his throat.

RABBI (CONT'D)

It is my honor to introduce to you,
for the first time, Dr. and Mrs.
Rose!

David and Esther are making their way toward the sanctuary exit. Martin, his WIFE, 32, DAUGHTER, 8, and SON, 5, Dvora, and the rest of the guests shower the newlyweds with candies.

GUESTS

Siman Tov and Mazel Tov and Siman
Tov and Mazel Tov...

INT. SYNAGOGUE SOCIAL HALL - LATER

The guests are sitting at well-decorated tables surrounding the large dance floor.

Esther and David are sitting at the head table on a raised platform. Dvora is sitting next to Esther. David's parents, MR. ROSE, 60, and MRS. ROSE, 58, are sitting next to David.

Nearby is the wedding party table with six bridesmaids and six groomsmen. Robert and Jay are among them.

BAND LEADER, 47, gestures for the band to stop playing and walks up to the microphone.

BAND LEADER

And now a word from our sponsor!

The guests are laughing.

BAND LEADER (CONT'D)

Just kidding. The bride's brother
will deliver a toast for the
newlyweds.

Martin Stein walks out to the middle of the Dance floor, holding a half-full champagne glass.

MARTIN

As unaccustomed as I am to public
speaking...

A few guests chuckle.

ESTHER

As most mayors are! Especially the
recovering trial lawyers!

The guests burst into laughter.

MARTIN

First of all, many thanks to our
mother for spending our inheritance
on this beautiful wedding.

Dvora lifts her glass and smiles. Guests chuckle.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

We welcome David's parents, Mr. and
Mrs. Rose, to our family.

(guests are applauding)

I was told that you were the only
Jewish parents in the US
disappointed when your son decided
to become a doctor instead of a CPA
like his dad.

(sporadic laughter)

David's parents smile beatifically and lift their glasses.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

A few words about my sister...
Don't be deceived by her beauty.

David, somewhat unsteady, jumps up from his chair.

DAVID

I was!

The guests laugh. Esther pulls David back into his chair.

MARTIN

Ester graduated at the top of her
law school class while earning a
second-degree black belt in Krav
Maga. I am glad she did not
practice on me.

Everyone laughs. Esther blows Martin a kiss.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Instead of joining me at a
successful law firm founded by our
father, she chose to become an FBI
agent.

Martin's face becomes very serious.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

For years, I thought our father's untimely death spared him the disappointment...

(looks at Esther)

but now I am convinced that he would be so proud of you...

Martin poses, a tear running down his cheek. Esther runs over and hugs him. After the tender moment, Martin gently pushes his sister away.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

This is a happy occasion. We shouldn't be doing this. Get back to your throne.

Esther wipes her tears while walking back to her seat. Dvora is also drying her tears.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

A few words about my new brother-in-law David, who I had the pleasure of getting to know over the past two years while my sister was reeling him in.

Laughter and cheers from the wedding party table.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

David is a bright and ambitious man but also has a refined and gentle soul. He is loyal to his and true to his friends, and I am convinced he will be loyal and true to his wife... if he values his life.

The guests explode with laughter.

The groomsmen get up and cheer. Martin raises his glass.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Esther and David, may their life together be filled with love, joy, success, and diapers.

(he points to his mother)

The last one was for you, Mom.

INT. SYNAGOGUE SOCIAL HALL - LATER

The tables are now partially cleared. The dance floor is packed with guests.

The bride and groom are sitting on high-backed chairs in the center of the floor. The majority of the younger guests are dancing the Hora around them.

Robert, Ray, and other groomsmen pick up David and Esther on their chairs. The bride and groom are joyfully bouncing on the chairs, connected by holding a cloth napkin.

Tired chair lifters finally place the chairs with dizzied newlyweds back on the floor.

David stands up, obviously unsteady. Robert grabs David just in time to prevent him from falling.

ROBERT

Be careful, man. I consider it to be my personal failure that I did not help you to learn how to hold your liquor better.

DAVID

That's OK. Esther and I complement each other. She knows how to hold her liquor, and I know how to pass out.

Robert helps David to sit down on a chair and sits down next to him.

ROBERT

Before you pass out, tell me where you guys are going for your honeymoon.

DAVID

Esther and I decided to spend our honeymoon in the final frontier of an exotic wilderness while interacting with untamed natives.

ROBERT

Papua New Guinea?

David makes an obvious effort not to fall off the chair.

DAVID

No, no, no...West Virginia!

INT. BY THE EXIT OF THE SYNAGOGUE SOCIAL HALL - SAME TIME

Jay is bending over, studying an ornately decorated, beautifully framed document in Hebrew displayed on an easel. Walking by, Rabbi notices Jay's curiosity.

RABBI
This is a Katuba.

Jay straightens out.

JAY
What is it?

RABBI
It is a traditional contract,
signed in front of witnesses, by
Jewish grooms on their wedding day
for thousands of years.

JAY
A contract?!

RABBI
This is a promise from him to his
wife to sustain her and satisfy her
needs.

Esther comes over and hugs Jay from behind.

ESTHER
Every need! That is why every girl
wants to marry a Jewish guy.

Jay turns around and hugs Esther back.

JAY
I was always told every girl wants
a Black guy...but we will not be
talking about the reason for that.

Both young people laugh. Rabbi shakes his head and leaves.

INT. CAR - MORNING

Esther and David are riding on a highway in a Jeep Grand Cherokee. Esther is driving, and David is sleeping on the passenger side. Esther is listening to a banjo tune on the radio. She has to turn the radio louder to cover David's snoring. They are passing a road sign:

**South 15 West 340
Leesburg Charles Town**

David wakes up. He is rubbing his temples.

DAVID
Where are we?

Esther turns the music volume down.

ESTHER

Just past Frederic and heading
toward Harpers Ferry. Soon, we
should be at the museum you always
wanted to visit.

David looks uncomfortable.

DAVID

Sorry about last night. I shouldn't
have the entire glass of Champagne.

Esther glances at David with a mischievous smile.

ESTHER

No problem, babe. We will have to
consummate our marriage in the wild
and wonderful West Virginia.

EXT. GAS STATION - LATER

The Jeep pulls into the gas station. David gets out and walks
around the car to the pump. He inserts his credit card. The
message on the screen reads **Prepay inside.**

David is frustrated. He enters the gas station store.

INT. GAS STATION STORE - CONTINUOUS

David walks to the counter and stands behind a large bearded
BIKER, 32, wearing a leather vest with three patches. One of
them is a skull. Biker takes a long time choosing a pack of
cigarettes. He finally pays for the pack after checking his
many pockets for cash and fumbling with the change.

David appears to be boiling up with impatience.

DAVID

Smoking can be dangerous to your
health.

Biker turns around. He is a head taller than David and looks
down on him with a menacing expression.

BIKER

So can be sticking your fucking
nose where it doesn't belong.

David backs up, looking up at Biker's face.

DAVID
Just saying...

Biker leaves the store.

David exhales, obviously relieved. The ATTENDANT, 19, at the counter, also seems to be relieved.

David hands his credit card to the Attendant.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Fifty bucks on pump five...

David notices the sign for the Lottery with lit-up red **200 million** on the screen.

DAVID (CONT'D)
...and a lottery ticket, please.

Attendant touches his register screen, swipes the card, and hands it back to DAVID with a conspirator's expression.

ATTENDANT
You got your fifty on pump five,
but for the ticket, you will need
two dollars in small unmarked
bills.

David smiles and searches his pockets. He looks back and sees a long, impatient line of customers behind him.

DAVID
Sorry...

David finally finds two dollars, hands them to Attendant, picks up the ticket printed for him, and leaves the store.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

David walks out of the station store and opens the passenger door of the Jeep. Esther is sitting in the driver's seat and checking her emails on the phone. David shakes his head.

DAVID
We are on our honeymoon, remember?

David shows her the Lottery ticket.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Here, Mrs Rose. Our first joint
investment. Potentially two hundred
million dollars!

ESTHER

Oh great! So neither one of us will have to work anymore. We just stay in bed all day, make love, and the servants will bring us food.

DAVID

That can work... as long as they don't bring us any booze.

David smiles, puts the ticket in his wallet, shuts the door, and starts fueling the car.

There is a piercing sound of screeching brakes and a loud bang of an impact. David stops fueling and runs to the road.

EXT. THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT - CONTINUOUS

An older two-door sedan with a steaming, smashed front is stopped in the middle of the road.

Biker is sprawled on the pavement. His right foot is pointing in the wrong direction, and his right arm is twisted into an unnatural position.

The mangled motorcycle is on its side, the motor is running, and the rear wheel is spinning in the air.

GIRL, 16, stumbles out of the driver's side of the involved car. She is crying.

David waves to Girl, trying to get her attention.

DAVID

Are you OK?!

Girl nods her head in confirmation.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Is anyone else in the car?!

Girl continues sobbing and shakes her head.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Get away from it and get off the road.

David makes it to Biker's side and gets on his knees. He checks the injured man's pulse and respiration.

Esther and Attendant join him.

ATTENDANT

Is he dead?!

David speaks while continuing to examine Biker.

DAVID

No. He has a strong pulse and is breathing on his own. I don't see any active bleeding. Esther, call 911.

Esther is looking at David like she is seeing a new man.

ESTHER

I did it already.

ATTENDANT

Let's move him off the road.

David shakes his head, partially immersed in his thoughts.

DAVID

We should not move him while he is unconscious without a proper backboard. He may have a neck or back injury.

There is the sound of a siren and the screech of the breaks. A highway patrol car with lights on stops in an angle position to block the crash site from the traffic.

PATROLMAN, 24, in uniform, runs over to the crash victim.

PATROLMAN

What happened?!

DAVID

A car vs. motorcycle accident. The car driver seems OK, but the biker is unconscious and looks like he has a dislocated right shoulder and probable right leg fracture.

PATROLMAN

Are you an EMT?

David smiles.

DAVID

No. I am second best. I am a doctor.

Patrolman stands up and uses his radio.

PATROLMAN

This is patrol unit 518 reporting
an injury accident on westbound
340, one mile west of 180
intersection. Requesting immediate
medical support.

At first, there are static noises on the radio speaker, and
then a muted dispatcher voice comes on.

DISPATCHER(V.O.)

Be advised all of the locally
available fire and medical
emergency response personnel are
involved in the rescue of multiple
cars and gas tanker collision
victims at the South Highway 15
exit. Earliest paramedics ETA 30
minutes.

Everyone hears the response.

DAVID

It may be too long for his shoulder
to be dislocated and his broken leg
twisted.

Biker opens his eyes and sees David over him.

BIKER

It's you again. What are you doing
to me?

DAVID

I am a doctor and am trying to help
you. Can you feel your arms and
legs?

BIKER

I can move my right arm and leg,
but they are pins and needles.

David shoots a quick glance at Esther.

DAVID

We will have to pop your shoulder
back in and straighten your leg.
You won't like it, but it should be
done to protect your circulation
and to try to avoid nerve damage.

Biker closes his eyes for a moment, then looks at David.

BIKER

Do it.

David looks firmly at the Patrolman, who appears very hesitant.

DAVID

You will need to hold him down.

David turns to Esther.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You may want not to watch this.

Esther smiles.

ESTHER

I have seen much worse in my line
of work. I will help to hold him.

David instructs his helpers how to turn Biker safely on his back. He sets up Patrolmen to control the injured man's body and Esther to provide counter traction.

Biker is groaning in pain but cooperates. David sits on the ground, gets control of Biker's forearm and puts his foot in the Biker's right armpit.

DAVID

Relax as much as you can. We will
do this on three... One...

David suddenly, in one motion, pulls and twists Biker's arm. There is an audible pop. Biker, who is caught by surprise, does not even have a chance to scream. He is passed out.

ESTHER

Is he OK?

David gets up and moves to the injured man's feet.

DAVID

He is fine. This makes the next
step easier for everyone.

David takes the right, twisted foot, pulls on it, and brings it into a better alignment.

EXT. THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT - LATER

Biker is on a stretcher, being loaded by paramedics into an ambulance with flashing emergency lights.

His right arm is in a sling, and his right leg is in a split. Biker raises his left uninjured arm.

BIKER
Will you wait a sec...

Biker turns toward David, standing with Esther nearby.

BIKER (CONT'D)
Hey Doc, sorry for growling at you earlier. These boys tell me that I was lucky that a trauma doctor was here to save my shoulder and leg. Thank you!

DAVID
You are welcome. I am not a trauma doctor. I am a dermatologist.

David notices an obvious questioning expression on Biker's face as he is getting slid into the ambulance.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Yes, this is true. Use your sunscreen! At least SPF 30.

Esther is laughing.

ESTHER
Now you scared the brute. He does not know that you had surgery training before switching to Dermatology.

David just shrugs his shoulders and walks to the car.

INT. IN THE CAR-- LATER

The couple is riding in the car. David is immersed in his thoughts. Esther is driving. She briefly takes her eyes off the road to glance at David.

ESTHER
A penny for your thought.

David forces himself to return to the present.

DAVID
It felt good to be relevant back there. Besides, it was a great adrenaline rush. I did not realize how much I missed the action.

ESTHER

I did not recognize you there.
What happened with the gentle,
sensitive, can't-hurt-a-fly man I
married?

David smiles.

DAVID

The old surgery residency training
kicked in. I loved my trauma
rotations.

ESTHER

Then why did you switch to
dermatology?

David is looking at Esther with obvious admiration.

DAVID

It is all your fault.

Esther appears to be irritated.

ESTHER

What? I never asked you to change
your career.

DAVID

If you weren't so wonderful, I
wouldn't crave to be with you as
much as possible.

Esther's irritation evaporates.

ESTHER

But babe, we love each other, and
we would make it work.

David shakes his head.

DAVID

On the first day of my surgical
internship, our program director,
in his welcome speech, told us that
if any of us were married, we had a
very high chance of being divorced
by the end of our training.

ESTHER

That must be an exaggeration.

DAVID

No. I actually witnessed it. I had to make a choice, and I chose you.

EXT. SHENANDOAH RIVER BRIDGE - LATER

Aerial shot of the Jeep riding on a two-lane highway with dense forest on both sides. There is a bridge over the river ahead.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The newlyweds see the bridge ahead and a green sign **Shenandoah River.**

Ester looks very excited and starts to sing.

ESTHER

Almost heaven, West Virginia, Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River!

David is looking at Esther with amusement.

DAVID

How did you get into this Hillbilly stuff?

ESTHER

I never was into country music until I stumbled upon an old-time banjo and fiddle performance at one of my favorite college haunts. I have been in love with this music since.

DAVID

I see. That's why you are dragging us to the Vandalia music festival in Charleston. I suspect you chose the date for our wedding so we could be there for our honeymoon.

ESTHER

Great deduction, Doctor Watson. Besides, you always wanted to play golf at the Greenbrier resort, which is only a couple of hours south of there.

DAVID

Don't compare the Greenbrier, the queen of golf resorts enjoyed by over 30 US presidents, with an event where a bunch of people wearing overalls are standing around, playing primitive string instruments.

Esther laughs.

ESTHER

My dear refined, opera on Thursdays, symphony on Saturdays, husband. I will have to break you out of your urban gentry shell.

EXT. SHENANDOAH RIVER BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Arial shot of the Jeep riding across the bridge.

EXT. HARPERS FERRY, OUTSIDE OF JOHN BROWN MUSEUM - LATER

The Jeep is driving down a cobblestone street and stops in front of a red brick building with white columns supporting a covered second-story porch. A sign over the steps leading to the entrance reads: **John Brown Museum.**

Esther and David get out of the car.

ESTHER

So why this place?

David is looking over the building and surrounding structures.

DAVID

I came across it while researching interesting things to see on our way.

David comes around the car and holds Esther around her waist.

DAVID (CONT'D)

This museum is dedicated to an important historical figure, John Brown. History was my favorite subject in school, but I do not remember learning about this guy.

Esther smiles while looking at David's face.

ESTHER

You know that I married you for
your trip-planning skills.

They kiss, lock the car, and walk toward the museum entrance.

INT. JOHN BROWN MUSEUM - MOMENTS LATER

The newlyweds are walking into one of the museum's exhibit halls. A museum VOLUNTEER, 75, is sitting on a chair by the far wall. There are several items in the room.

David stops to read a plaque under a portrait of a bearded man with piercing eyes. Esther walks over to a row of pikes with long wooden shafts and bends over to read the description.

DAVID

It seems that Mr. Brown was an
antislavery activist with a violent
streak. He and his supporters
raided the Federal Arsenal right
here in Harper Ferry, to get guns
to arm uprising slaves.

Esther straightens up from reading the low plaque.

ESTHER

He also purchased hundreds of these
pikes for the same purpose.

David and Esther walk over and stop in front of two mannequins. A Black slave armed with a pike, and a United States Marine armed with a musket with a long bayonet. The weapons were crossed in a fighting position.

DAVID

Why have I never heard about this
uprising?

VOLUNTEER

Because it never happened. The
slaves did not rise. John Brown and
his men were surrounded. Most of
them were killed or wounded.

The volunteer points at one of the etchings on the wall.

VOLUNTEER (CONT'D)

John Brown was captured, hastily
tried, and executed by hanging.

DAVID
Thank you. That explains it...

David looks at Esther, who is politely smiling.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I think, on this cheerful note, we
should move on.

ESTHER
Yes indeed.
(She turns to Volunteer)
Thank you.

The couple leaves the room.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF JOHN BROWN MUSEUM - MOMENTS LATER

David and Esther exit the front door and walk down the steps.

DAVID
I think violence is never the
solution.

ESTHER
I believe in certain situations,
physical force can be justified.

As they are walking toward their car, David is shaking his
head.

DAVID
I wonder if there is something more
to that story. Did anything else
motivate John Brown to act so
radically besides the quest to
liberate the slaves?

ESTHER
Don't you believe a man could risk
his life for an ideal alone?

DAVID
I would for you, but an ideal... I
don't know.

EXT. CABIN - EVENING

INNKEEPER, 67, a friendly large woman in a plain dress, is
guiding the newlyweds through a gate in a chain-linked fence
to an old-style log cabin surrounded by deciduous rainforest.

INNKEEPER

This is our nicest and most remote cabin, as you requested. One thing I ask of you is to keep this gate closed and latched at night.

David suddenly looks nervous.

DAVID

I did not know you had issues with crime here.

Innkeeper laughs.

INNKEEPER

No, no...I just don't want the forest critters to bother you.

She hands David a large, old-fashioned skeleton key with a wink.

INNKEEPER (CONT'D)

You two enjoy yourselves.

The Innkeeper leaves. Esther is looking around at the dense emerald-green vegetation and the high forest canopy.

ESTHER

Honey, this is beautiful! How did you find it?!

David unlocks and opens the thick wooden door. He lifts Esther in his arms.

DAVID

You know me, Mrs. Rose. Finding awesome people and cool places is my life!

David carries Esther over the cabin's threshold.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The cabin is rustic but cozy. A large bed in the middle. Night tables, two chairs, and a table are made from live edge wood. Metal wood-burning fireplace in the corner stacked with wood. The bathroom door looks like an old-fashioned outhouse door, complete with a cutout crescent moon.

David is carrying Esther inside and drops her on the bed.

DAVID

And now is the time to get to the
main business of the honeymoon.

Esther kicks her shoes off and nestles into the cushy bed.

ESTHER

Definitely, but first, would you
please bring in our suitcase and my
purse.

David, with disappointment, scratches the back of his head.

DAVID

I see. I have to earn it.

Esther winks and smiles seductively.

ESTHER

It will be worth it.

David sighs, turns around, and leaves the room.

EXT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

It is dark out. David comes out of the cabin and walks toward
the gate in the chainlink fence. A cloud covers the moon, and
it is even darker. The gate is open toward him. As he
approaches the opening, it is filled with a large figure.

David steps aside.

DAVID

Good evening. It is hard to see,
but I assume you are our hostess.
We are settling in.

The cloud moves off the full moon, and David sees a large
black bear standing on his hind feet only a few yards in
front of him. Bear growls.

David grabs the chainlink gate and slams it closed.

The startled bear climbs up a tree right next to the cabin.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

David is back in the cabin. He locks the door and leans
against it, trying to catch his breath.

Esther, still in bed, picks herself up on her elbows.

ESTHER

What's wrong, babe? Where's our stuff?

DAVID

When our hostess warned us about the forest critters, I thought she was talking about rabbits and squirrels.

ESTHER

Oh honey, did you step on a little bunny?

DAVID

No! A big bear almost stepped on me.

Esther laughs

ESTHER

This trip into the wild really stimulates your city boy's imagination.

David turns off the light, walks over to the window, and pulls apart heavy cloth drapes.

In the light of the full moon, the bear can be readily seen on a pine tree twenty yards away.

Esther gets over her surprise. She stands up and starts taking off her shirt and bra.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

A wild voyeur! Let's give him something to look at.

David quickly closes the drapes. He growls and embraces half-naked Esther.

DAVID

No! I want you all for myself.

Passionate lovemaking follows.

INT. INSIDE OF THE CABIN - MORNING

A light ray from the crack between the drapes is illuminating the naked lovers in bed covered by a light sheet. The beam of light hits David's eye and wakes him up.

David gets up and opens the drapes, revealing the spectacular view of the lush forest.

Esther opens her eyes and looks at David's naked bottom.

ESTHER

I see; the full moon is still out.

David laughs, jumps back into bed, and embraces his bride.

DAVID

The bear is gone. Let's get up, dress, and enjoy the second B of the B and B.

Esther snuggles up to David.

ESTHER

You have this gorgeous naked woman in bed next to you, and all you can think about is BREAKFAST?!

DAVID

As the only doctor on this team, I recommend getting nourishment before any further vigorous activities.

Esther has a fake, pouty expression on her face.

ESTHER

Now, you are trying to renege on your contractual husbandly duty to satisfy your wife.

David laughs and kisses Esther.

DAVID

I promise you a quickie before we have to get back on the road.

ESTHER

Quickies are only good for lunch dates. This is my honeymoon, and I will only accept longies.

David puts on his pants and slips into his shoes without the socks.

DAVID

I am going to the car to get our suitcase. We need some clean clothes, especially the unmentionables.

Esther closes her eyes and turns on her side.

ESTHER

OK.

David opens the door but has to stop abruptly. The bear is sitting a few yards away, facing the door.

David slams the door shut and locks it.

DAVID

The bear is guarding our door.

Esther smiles with her eyes still closed.

ESTHER

Tell him I will pay him later, as I promised.

She lifts the cover.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

I guess you have no choice but to get back into bed.

David takes off his pants and jumps back into bed.

DAVID

I can see it now: weeks later, they will find two shriveled bodies frozen in a 69 position.

The newlyweds' passionate kissing is interrupted by loud banging outside of their cabin's door.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE CABIN - SAME TIME

Innkeeper is banging a large wooden spoon on a large frying pan.

INNKEEPER

Scoot, you pest, before my brother makes a rug out of you.

The bear runs away. She knocks on the cabin door.

INNKEEPER (CONT'D)

Good morning, lovebirds! You are about to miss a delicious country breakfast.

DAVID (VOICE FROM BEHIND THE DOOR)

Is the forest critter gone?

Innkeeper laughs.

INNKEEPER

My apologies. I should have warned you about our resident bear. My brother, the hunter, keeps wanting to shoot it. I like the bugger, and I am afraid this bear knows it.

ESTHER (VOICE FROM BEHIND THE DOOR)

We would love to have breakfast... as soon as we are able to get our clean clothes.

INT. THE LODGE DINING ROOM - LATER

Country-style dining room. Esther and David are sitting at a long wooden table. They are hungrily eating fried eggs, potatoes, and biscuits smothered with gravy.

INNKEEPER

A bit of coffee warm-up? All the other guests already eaten and gone. We have plenty more food.

Esther waves her arms.

ESTHER

Please don't say that! I will never be able to get David out of here.

David, with his mouth full, nods in agreement.

Innkeeper pours herself a cup of coffee and sits down at the table.

INNKEEPER

Where are you two heading next?

David swallows his food.

DAVID

I read about the unusual Blackwater Falls, just outside of Davis. We should check it out.

INNKEEPER

A great place. Are you going to be staying in Davis?

David takes a sip of coffee.

DAVID
We found the Blackwater Inn online.
It's just outside of Davis.

Innkeeper looks at Esther.

INNKEEPER
You guys made the right choice.

ESTHER
Don't look at me, David is the
travel planner. I do too much
planning every day at work.

INNKEEPER
What a dainty girl like you does
for a living?

Esther smiles.

ESTHER
It can be described as a sanitation
job. I get rid of garbage.

David chokes on his coffee and has to cough it out into a
napkin.

DAVID
Sorry...

Innkeeper looks surprised.

INNKEEPER
An unusual job for a young girl...
In any case, Blackwater Inn is
owned by a friend of mine,
Mr. Brown, a retired sheriff. A
tough but hospitable man.

DAVID
It sounds like it is a safe place.

INNKEEPER
You big city folks always worry
about safety. We don't have the
same problems. Sheriff Brown is
respected by the community and
avoided by the local scallywags.

EXT. DAVIS WV GAS STATION - LATER

The Jeep pulls into a small gas station. The billboard next
to the station reads:

**Welcome to Davis,
the Gateway to Blackwater Falls Park.**

David gets out of the car and walks into the station store.

INT. INSIDE OF THE GAS STATION STORE - CONTINUOUS

David is walking up to the cashier's counter. SETH, 27, an overweight man with a toothless smile, is at the register.

SETH

What can I do you for?

David smiles, shakes his head, pulls out his money clip from his pocket, counts out two twenty-dollar bills, and puts them on the counter.

DAVID

You can do me for forty dollars on
pump two.

SETH

Yes sir!

Seth picks up the bills.

SETH (CONT'D)

Go ahead and pump away.

David turns to walk away but seems to remember something. He takes out the Lottery ticket from his wallet and extends it to Seth.

DAVID

Would you scan this for me?

SETH

Our ticket barcode scanner hasn't
worked since last Christmas, but I
can check it by hand.

Seth takes the ticket, walks over to the Lottery screen, and enters the date of the drawing.

Seth looks stunned. He is looking back and forth at the screen and the ticket.

SETH (CONT'D)

Hey, mister, it looks like you got
the winning ticket!

It takes David a moment to process. His face lights up with joy. David snatches the ticket from Seth's hand.

DAVID

Let me put this one away.

David excitedly but carefully puts the ticket into his wallet and looks at the shocked attendant.

DAVID (CONT'D)

How do we get to Blackwater Falls
Park and the Blackwater Inn?

Seth seems to force himself to return to reality.

SETH

You take a left on Henry, left on
29, past the cemetery. You can't
miss it. The Inn is at the end of
Justice Lane, half a mile before
you get to the park.

David leaves the store with an obvious happy spring in his step. Seth makes sure that the store is empty, pulls out his cell phone, and dials a number.

SETH (CONT'D)

Hey Troy, this is Seth...What do
you mean Seth, who? This is, from
now on, your most favorite cousin,
Seth Hatfield... I have the tip of
a lifetime for you. A \$200 million
unclaimed winning Lotto ticket is
traveling to Blackwater Falls right
now...

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM - SAME TIME

A typical single-person public bathroom. A cleaning woman, DREAMA, 45, with a long-handled mop in her, is standing and attentively listening. She takes out a cell phone from her apron's pocket and dials a number.

DREAMA

This is Dreama McCoy. You need to
get hold of my cousin Patrick and
let him know I have some urgent
information for him.

INT. IN THE CAR - LATER

David is driving. He looks excited.

ESTHER

You have been bursting with excitement since you came out of the store. What happened there?.. Did you discover a new skin lesion?

David smiles.

DAVID

Even better than that, but for me to tell you about it, we will have to be in a place where I can hug you.

Esther has a perplexed expression on her face.

ESTHER

Now, you have made me very curious. There are only a few things that make you really excited. I can name most of them.

David laughs.

DAVID

I love it when you talk dirty, but despite your uncanny deductive reasoning talent, you will never guess it.

EXT. BLACKWATER FALLS PARK ENTRANCE - LATER

The couple is taking a selfie in front of the Blackwater Falls Park sign.

EXT. BLACKWATER FALLS - LATER

The newlyweds walk up to the falls. The place is deserted. They stand, mesmerized by the cascading red water.

EXT. THE FOREST AROUND THE BLACKWATER FALLS - SAME TIME

Two men, MCCOY1, 19, with a large hunting knife in his hand, and MCCOY2, 30, brandishing an axe, both in hunting outfits, are quietly making their way through thick undergrowth.

Two other men, Seth and TROY, 27, a well-groomed athletic man, are moving stealthily behind the McCoys. The Hatfields simultaneously throw cables around the McCoys' necks and quietly choke them.

The Hatfields move to the edge of the vegetation and observe David and Esther standing by the falls.

EXT. BLACKWATER FALLS - CONTINUOUS

David takes Esther's hands into his.

DAVID
Tell me, my love, what do you
believe every human being strives
for?

Esther closes her eyes, appearing deep in thought.

ESTHER
Hmm, I don't know, love, affection,
acceptance?

David smiles and holds Esther closer.

DAVID
More basic than that.

Esther looks perplexed.

ESTHER
Happiness, health...What are you
looking for?

DAVID
Something that can facilitate all
of that.

Esther pushes herself out of David's embrace.

ESTHER
You are acting weird... Enough with
the riddles.

DAVID
How about money?

ESTHER
I know how financial security is
important to you, but...
(singing)
...money can't buy you love.
Luckily, you already have mine.

Esther pulls David close and kisses him. David gently pushes her away and holds Esther by her shoulder.

DAVID

How about a lot of money? How about
multigenerational wealth?

Esther looks at David with a concerned expression.

ESTHER

David, what's gotten into you? Are
you alright? You've been acting
strange since we left the gas
station.

David takes out his wallet, pulls out the Lottery ticket, and
opens it in front of Esther's face.

DAVID

We won the jackpot! Over one
hundred million, after taxes!

Esther, at first, is stunned with an expression of disbelief,
but then she starts jumping and clapping with excitement.

EXT. THE FOREST AROUND THE BLACKWATER FALLS - SAME TIME

The Hatfields look at each. Seth raps the cable tight around
his hands.

SETH

(WHISPERING)

What'd I tell you, Troy? Should we
take care of 'em out now?

Troy puts his right index finger to his mouth and taps his
left ear with the left index. Seth strains to listen. There
is the sound of an approaching vehicle.

EXT. BLACKWATER FALLS - CONTINUOUS

A school bus pulls up and stops. The door opens, and a bunch
of elementary school children pile out and run over to the
falls.

Frazzled TEACHER, 29, a short woman in a simple summer dress,
rushes out of the bus.

TEACHER

Slow down, keep together, and stay
away from the water!

David and Esther find themselves surrounded by children. They
are making their way toward their car and come face-to-face
with Teacher.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Sorry about this. It looked like you were having a special moment at this very special place. Children have their way of interfering with romance. Trust me, I know.

David seems to be quite happy to be among children, but Esther looks uncomfortable.

DAVID

No problem. Hopefully, we will be blessed with having our own someday.

David frees himself from the crowd.

ESTHER

Yes, maybe someday.

The couple gets back into the Jeep.

EXT. THE FOREST AROUND THE BLACKWATER FALLS - SAME TIME

Troy speaks to Seth without taking his eyes off the leaving newlyweds.

TROY

Follow them. Bring your brother Biff. Make sure it looks like a robbery gone wrong.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

David is in the driver's seat. Esther still looking uncomfortable.

DAVID

I know you are not ready to have kids, but keep in mind generational wealth needs generations to use it.

ESTHER

I have seen too much evil. I don't think I want to bring my child into this world.

DAVID

That's where you're wrong. If only evil people reproduce where this world is going to be.

ESTHER

I'll think about it.
 (She hugs David)
 For now, I'm open to practice...
 We need to celebrate our winnings!

The expression of excitement returns to David's face.

DAVID

Let's pick up a bottle of champagne
 before going to the Inn.

Esther looks at David with a twinkle in her eyes.

ESTHER

You got a deal, as long as you
 promise to drink only one-half of a
 glass. I have plans for you, doc.

David smirks and shifts the car into the gear.

DAVID

I will have to check my calendar.

EXT. DAVIS LIQUOR STORE - EVENING

The newlyweds are walking out of the liquor store and down a poorly lit street. Esther is carrying a bottle of champagne, and David is carrying a bag of ice.

Seth and BIFF, 19, a heavysset young man, get out of the shadows and follow the couple. Both men are wearing hunting masks.

SETH

Hey, you two! It looks like you are
 having a party. Can we come?

David and Esther turn around. David tries to look friendly.

DAVID

Hey, boys, we are not looking for
 any trouble.

Seth moves close to David.

SETH

Let us help you with your wallet if
 you don't want any trouble.

DAVID

There is no need for violence.

Seth punches David in the face, knocking him down to the ground. Esther tries to move toward David but is scooped up from behind by Biff.

BIFF

Where do you think you're going,
button?

Esther expertly swings her leg back and hits Biff in the groin. Biff screams with pain, releases Esther, and doubles over, holding his crotch with both hands. The next instant, she hits Seth on the side of his head with the champagne bottle.

Seth topples down, unconscious. Esther spins back to face Biff, who is trying to straighten up. Esther grabs him by his messy, curly hair and drives her knee into his face, breaking his nose with an audible crunch. Biff falls backward and lies there motionless.

Esther rushes to David, sitting on the ground, rubbing his left cheekbone. She helps him to stand up and examines his face.

ESTHER

Let me see what this thug did to
you... You are going to have a
major shiner. Good thing we bought
enough ice.

David sees the two attackers prostrated on the ground. He gently pushes Esther away and quickly examines the men.

DAVID

They have good pulses and breathing
on their own. We need to call the
police and an ambulance.

Esther hands the bag of ice to David.

ESTHER

We will do no such thing. I am on
my honeymoon, and I am not spending
the night doing the paperwork. For
a change, let it be someone else's
mess.

Esther, with care, directs protesting David into the passenger seat of the car.

EXT. BLACKWATER INN - EVENING

A classic large West Virginian log and white mortar structure. The sign next to the main entrance reads:

Blackwater Inn

The jeep pulls into the parking spot next to the entrance.

INT. BLACKWATER INN LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A large room decorated with late 19th-century furniture. A large fireplace across from the entrance. Newlyweds are entering the front door, carrying their suitcases.

They are welcomed by BECKY, 57, a plainly but neatly dressed woman with her hair in a tight bun and no noticeable makeup.

BECKY

Welcome to the Blackwater Inn. I'm
Becky, the House Manager.

David and Esther put their suitcases down.

DAVID

Sorry for arriving late. There were
unexpected holdups.

BECKY

No problem. You are the only guests
staying with us tonight. I'll be
the one getting you situated this
evening.

ESTHER

We don't need to trouble you
tonight. Please, just point us to
our room.

Becky smiles and shakes her head.

BECKY

Oh no. We can't abandon the
tradition of the house. Mr. Brown
always invites his guests for a
welcome dinner on the first evening
of their stay.

ESTHER

That will not be necessary.

DAVID
I am kind of hungry...

Esther flashes David a scornful look and shakes her head.

ESTHER
Men's priorities always baffle me.

Becky laughs.

BECKY
It's settled. Please take some time
to freshen up. The dinner will be
served in the dining room at eight.
Let me show you to your room.

INT. BLACKWATER INN HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The newlyweds are following Becky down the hallway. They stop
in front of a door with a plaque that reads: **Suite 1**

BECKY
This is our Honeymoon Suite, as you
requested.

Becky opens the door, reaches in to turn on the light, and
hands the key to David.

BECKY (CONT'D)
See you at eight.

ESTHER
Thank you. How should we be dressed
for dinner?

Becky laughs.

BECKY
This is West Virginia. Come as you
are.

INT. HONEYMOON SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

Esther and David enter the bright-lit room and look around.

The room is decorated in the late 1800s fashion. A four-post
bed is covered with a handmade quilt. rd.

Esther nods her head while looking around the room.

ESTHER
You did well...

David smiles and points at the headboard.

DAVID

Look, they even have a padded headboard. Now, we can have safe sex.

Esther laughs and jumps on David, rapping her legs and arms around him, and gives him a passionate kiss. They both topple on the bed.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Let's not start what we cannot finish. We need to be at dinner in thirty minutes.

Esther laughs.

ESTHER

Thirty minutes has always been more than enough for you.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

The brightly lit is dominated by a large dining table surrounded by ten high-back chairs and old photographs on the walls.

At the head of the table, MR. BROWN, 62, Black man with a full head of gray hair and a weathered but still handsome face. He is reading a newspaper.

When the newlyweds enter the room, he self-consciously removes the reading glasses and examines his guests.

MR. BROWN

Welcome. I am Wilmot Brown.

DAVID

Good evening, Mr. Brown. Sorry, we arrived much later than I originally indicated.

ESTHER

We did not realize that we would be delaying your meal.

MR. BROWN

That's alright. To me, an arrival dinner is more of a chance to meet my guest than a meal. This is my home, and I need to know if I like you.

Esther smiles.

ESTHER

You mean, if you don't like us, you
may throw us out.

Mr. Brown obviously likes Esther. He covers a smile.

MR. BROWN

I've thrown guests out before...

His stern face breaks into a big, friendly smile.

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)

... but never honeymooners.

The momentary tension in the room evaporates.

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)

Please sit down. Becky will be
coming out with the food any
moment.

Mr. Brown points at the seats on both sides of him

David holds the chair for Esther to sit down and takes his
seat across the table. Mr. Brown noticed the fresh big bruise
under his left eye.

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)

Hey lady, have you been too rough
on your husband, or has one of our
local boys been less than
hospitable?

David touches his tender bruise.

DAVID

Two derelicts tried to rob us
outside of the liquor store in
town.

Mr. Brown appears to be perplexed.

MR. BROWN

That seems to be strange. I know
things are not as tight as they
used to be when I was the sheriff,
but attacking people in town...

ESTHER

We don't want to make a big deal of
it. The hoodlums learned their
lessons.

Mr. Brown looks at David with an expression of approval.

MR. BROWN
Well done, young man.

Esther smiles and winks at David.

ESTHER
He can hold his own.

David appears to be uncomfortable with the subject.

DAVID
By the way, as you may know from my reservation, I am David, and this is Esther.

MR. BROWN
Being a man of the law for over thirty years, I deduced that you are on your honeymoon.

ESTHER
How did you figure that out?

MR. BROWN
David booked the honeymoon suite.

ESTHER
Clever!

Mr. Brown gets up from his seat, walks over to the cabinet in the corner of the room, and takes out a mason jar half-full of clear liquid.

MR. BROWN
Also, being an experienced West Virginia law officer, I know where to get the best moonshine... Would you like to try some?

DAVID
Not too much for me.

Esther moves her shot glass closer to the host.

ESTHER
Fill her up.

Mr. Brown pours the moonshine for his guests. A drop for David and a full shot glass for Esther.

Becky enters the room carrying a tray full of local dishes.

INT. BLACKWATER INN DINING ROOM - LATER

Mr. Brown, Becky, and the newlyweds are sitting. All have in front of them partially eaten Stack Cake.

MR. BROWN

I am still wondering about the attack on you two outside of the liquor store.

David appears to be quite content and mildly intoxicated.

DAVID

It wasn't a big deal...

BECKY

Davis is usually a quiet and safe little town.

ESTHER

I think we are going to leave this incident behind and move on with our honeymoon adventure.

Mr. Brown seems to be thinking out loud.

MR. BROWN

We do have two competing gangs that are involved in everything from a Ginseng harvesting protection racket to crack and moonshine distribution.

Esther seems to perk up from her relaxed state.

ESTHER

I wonder, how do criminal gangs form in such a pristine and sparsely populated environment?

MR. BROWN

They are two diseased branches on otherwise healthy family trees of two historically feuding West Virginia and Kentucky clans.

BECKY

You may have heard of Hatfields and McCoys.

Now David appears to perk up.

DAVID

Yes, I loved the TV series.

MR. BROWN

I have known both gangs' leaders since they were bullies in Thomas Middle School.

BECKY

They are homegrown treasures. Bless their hearts.

MR. BROWN

Troy Hatfield fancies himself a high-class gangster, and Patrick McCoy is proud to be a country thug.

Esther points at an old photo on the wall across from her of a clean-shaven man in an eighteen-hundreds outfit.

ESTHER

Speaking of history, I could swear I have seen a picture of this man before.

Mr. Brown smiles with a mischievous expression on his face.

MR. BROWN

This is John Brown.

DAVID

Yes, we saw his face, only with the beard, at the Museum.

Becky points at the old picture of a very distinguish-looking Black woman in a well-tailored eighteen-hundreds dress.

BECKY

This is Mr. Brown's great, great, great grandmother, Harriet, a runaway slave who was able to become a nurse.

MR. BROWN

The family legend claims that she was John Brown's secret lover and the mother of his out-of-wedlock son.

David slaps the table.

DAVID

I knew that there was more to the story.

ESTHER

This is fascinating. Do you have anything supporting this legend?

MR. BROWN

When West Virginia became a state and joined the Union side, Harriet was willed this estate by an anonymous trust. She recorded her son's last name as Brown.

ESTHER

Thank you, Mr. Brown, for sharing this great story with us and your hospitality. Becky, thank you for the great food.

David drunkenly waves his hand.

DAVID

Thank you. I love this kind of stuff. If it would pay better, I would be very tempted to be a historian.

Esther stands up.

ESTHER

I better take my husband back to our room before I have to carry him.

Mr. Brown smiles and gets up from his seat.

MR. BROWN

You both are welcome.

BECKY

Can I get ya'll anything?

ESTHER

No, thank you. It looked like we had everything we needed for tonight.

BECKY

It was a pleasure. Tomorrow you will be treated to a real West Virginia Breakfast.

EXT. MCCOY FISH CAMP - SAME TIME

A camp with two tents is situated on the bank of a fast-moving river. A large campfire is burning with light reflecting in the headlights of a side-by-side ATV.

PATRICK MCCOY, 30, a large, muscular man with a bushy red beard, wearing bib overalls and no shirt, is cleaning fish on a large flat rock.

Across from him, sitting on another rock, CLARENCE MCCOY, 26, a heavy-set man with a red curly beard and ponytail, is talking on a cell phone.

CLARENCE

Where were they found?... Aha. Do we know who did it?... I agree, there's no doubt...Oh yeah?... Don't hurt him yet. Bring him straight to the camp.

Clarence hangs up. Patrick breaks his attention away from the fish and looks at Clarence.

PATRICK

How many times have I told you, baby brother, not to bring your phone when we are fishing?

Clarence shakes his head.

CLARENCE

Bad news, Patric. The two of our guys you sent to harvest the winning ticket turned up dead.

Patrick sits up and looks at the light reflecting in the rushing water.

PATRICK

We don't have to guess who would dare to do that.

Patric examines the long blade of his filet knife.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

The war is back on.

CLARENCE

Our boys stumbled on Biff Hatfield. They're bringing him over.

INT. BLACKWATER INN HONEYMOON SUITE - SAME TIME

David and Esther enter the room. David leans against the door.

DAVID
What a day!

David stands there for a moment with his eyes closed. Esther comes out of the bathroom, walks over, and hugs him.

ESTHER
It better not be over yet. We have
a cork to pop.

David nods in agreement.

DAVID
Yes, indeed, and we also have
champagne to open.

They both burst into laughter. Esther sniffs David's chest.

ESTHER
You need a bath.

David nods and starts walking toward the bathroom.

DAVID
Shower sounds like a good
investment.

ESTHER
By the way, we have no shower here,
but there is a luscious big tub,
and I started it for you.

INT. BLACKWATER INN BATHROOM - LATER

Naked David enters. The water is running into a large freestanding bathtub. David turns off the water and gingerly lowers himself into the tub.

Esther enters. She is still wearing her top, but her blue jeans are off, revealing sexy underwear.

ESTHER
Are you enjoying it?

DAVID
Now I am, but I think I boiled my
testicles on the way into this hot
water.

Esther shakes her head.

ESTHER

You would do anything not to have children, wouldn't you?!

DAVID

I think you can still rescue them.

David grabs Esther and pulls her into the tub.

EXT. MCCOY FISH CAMP - SAME TIME

Patrick is still filleting the fish. There is the sound of an approaching ATV. Clarence gets out of his tent with a scoped deer rifle in his hands. He strains to look in the direction of the sound.

A four-seater side-by-side ATV enters the area lit up by the fire. Clarence seems to recognize the people in the ATV and lowers his gun.

The ATV stops. Two men in front, wearing hunting overalls, MCCOY3, 22, and MCCOY4, 19, get out and bring Biff, with his hands tied, from the back seat.

Biff's nose is swollen and bruised. He is obviously scared. The men bring Biff to Patrick, who stops working on the fish and looks at Biff.

PATRICK

Well, hello, Biff. Haven't seen you since you were a fat little fuck, hiding behind your fat mama at the playground. (he turns to MacCoy3). You were told not to harm him.

MCCOY3

We handled him like a Blenko glass vase. Someone must have tried to improve his look before we got him.

BIFF

(Stuttering with fear)
Nice seein' you again, Patrick

PATRICK

Yes, yes, we're old friends...
(he looks at his men)
Untie him.

McCoy4 takes the rope off Biff's wrists and steps back.

Patrick keeps his eyes locked on Biff.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

We lost some of our family today.
Do you know anything about it?

Biff is obviously shaken.

BIFF

I don't know nothing about them two
guys.

Patric stands up.

PATRICK

How did you know there were two?

Biff steps back to the edge of the embankment.

BIFF (STUTTERING WITH FEAR)

My brother told me...

Patric steps closer to Biff

PATRICK

Where is your brother now?

BIFF

I don't know...

Patrick moves closer with a menacing expression on his face.

BIFF (WITH TEARS IN HIS HIS VOICE) (CONT'D)

I can't... Troy will kill me.

Patric stops advancing. His expression is almost friendly.

PATRICK

Plainly, my ol' friend, you can't
worry about Troy right now... Where
is your brother?

Biff glances at the rushing river behind him.

BIFF

I was supposed to meet him and the
boys tonight near the ol' sheriff's
place.

Patric puts his massive left hand on Biff's right shoulder.

PATRICK

See, it wasn't that difficult... I want you to deliver a message for your brother and Troy.

Biff seems to calm down.

BIFF

Sure thin', Patrick.

Patrick slashes Biff's throat with the filet knife.

Biff tries to scream, but only the gurgling sound and blood come out of his mouth. Patrick pushes Biff's convulsing body into the river. He turns back to his men.

PATRICK

Message sent!

INT. HONEYMOON SUITE - LATER

David comes out of the bathroom wearing a bathrobe and carrying Esther wrapped in a towel.

ESTHER

This was a most satisfying bath. I can get used to this.

DAVID

Special occasions only. I am too expensive.

David carefully lays Esther on the big bed. He takes off his robe. Esther is looking at him with a surprised expression.

ESTHER

Ooh! It looks like you are ready for some more already. I better Take some of that moonshine stuff home.

EXT. BLACKWATER INN - SAME TIME

Troy, Seth, and three other men dressed in black tactical outfits are in the bushes just outside of the Inn.

Troy carefully examines the surroundings.

TROY

It's quieting down.

He looks at Seth, who has a black eye and a bandaid across his nose.

TROY (CONT'D)

Pathetic. You got licked by two city slickers.

Seth is staring at the ground.

SETH

Actually, it was...

TROY

Never mind. Where is Biff?

Seth looks concerned.

SETH

He didn't show up. It's not like him.

Troy keeps looking around.

TROY

We will deal with him later. Seth, you come with me, and the rest of you surround the house and take care of anyone who comes out.

Troy pulls up his neck gator and takes out his semiautomatic pistol. Seth pulls down a bow hunting mask and takes a large hunting knife out of its sheath.

Troy and Seth stealthily run toward the house and stop under a lit-up first-floor window. They crouch down and listen to groans of pleasure coming out of the partially opened window.

SETH

(WHISPERING)

Let's do it.

Troy is deliberately screwing a silencer on his pistol.

TROY

(WHISPERING)

We aren't barbarians like the McCoys. We're going to let them finish.

EXT. A VIEW THROUGH A RIFLE SCOPE - SAME TIME

The view with crosshairs pans from the men hiding in the bushes around the house to Troy and Seth crouching by the first-floor window.

EXT. THE HILL ABOVE THE INN - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick and Clarence are lying prone on the ground behind two scoped deer rifles propped on sandbags.

Patrick is looking through his rifle scope. He seems to be satisfied and turns his head to his brother.

PATRICK
(WHISPERING)

The Hatfield boys look ready. We'll
let them harvest the ticket for us.

FADE TO BLACK

CREDITS WITH BANJO MUSIC PLAYING IN THE BACKGROUND.