

(Name of Project)
by
(Name of First Writer)

(Based on, If Any)

Revisions by
(Names of Subsequent Writers,
in Order of Work Performed)

Current Revisions by
(Current Writer, date)

Name
Address
Phone

DON MACNAB-STARK
111 Pound Lane,
Bowers Gifford,
Essex SS13 2HN
England

(44) 1268 727648

macnabs@hotmail.com

LONG, COLD WINTER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEGIN TITLES:

EXT. GIVENS' HOUSE. DAY/EXT. FOREST. DAY.

INTERCUT:

A beautiful old Montana farmhouse sits bathed in sunshine.

Forest - with a loud roar a chain saw rips through a tree.

Outside the house a young girl swings back and forth on a swing, eyes closed, face in the bright sunlight.

The sharp teeth of the saw rip through pale virgin wood.

The house is isolated - deep forest behind it, snow-covered mountains in the distance.

A silver bladed ax glints in the sun as it swings in a fast arc and hacks into a tree trunk.

The clouds move across the sun...

With a tearing, rending sound a tree crashes to the ground.

The house now lies in deep shadow.

END TITLES.

FADE IN.

INT. CITY APARTMENT - KITCHEN. DAY.

A couple move around a small kitchen, preparing breakfast.

RAY GIVENS, 37, sets the table. Ray is lean jawed, with sharp eyes and an intense expression. Even at rest he's a coiled spring, burning with barely controlled energy.

KAREN GIVENS, 35, scrapes the charcoal off a piece of burnt toast. Small and feisty, she punches way above her weight. Her sarcastic tongue can cause more damage than most registered weapons.

She is dressed in a nurse's uniform.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN

I still can't believe you bought a new printer!

RAY

I have to print out my draft - you know I can't edit on screen.

KAREN

We can't afford to pay the rent, let alone -

RAY

I know how broke we are - I'm the one who has to hide behind the couch when the debt collectors come knocking.

KAREN

Hide behind your daughter more like! You usually send Lucy to make excuses for you.

RAY

You think I like living like this?

KAREN

So take that job Jerry offered you!

RAY

A 9 to 5 desk job writing articles about insurance? That's not a job, it's a death sentence!

KAREN

Yeah? Well so is running and hiding every time there's a bill to be paid!

LUCY GIVENS, 12, skips into the room in her school uniform. She's skinny, with a mop of brown hair like her mother.

LUCY

Are you two arguing again?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAY

No, sweetie. We were just talking politics.

Lucy sits down at the table, pours herself some cereal.

LUCY

It sure sounded like arguing.

KAREN

What do you want for lunch, honey?

Before Lucy can answer, the doorbell rings. They all look at each other.

RAY

Probably Mrs. Roberts lost her cat again...

LUCY

It's probably Mr. Marquez wanting the rent money again!

She stands up.

LUCY (CONT'D)

What do you want me to tell him?

Karen gives Ray a sharp look.

RAY

I'll take care of it...

KAREN

This is what you call taking care of your family?

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY. DAY.

Ray opens the door. A large man in a stained T-shirt fills the doorway.

MARQUEZ

Where's your daughter today, Givens?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ray shoves Marquez back into the hallway, closes the door behind him.

RAY

What do you want?

Marquez is pissed, ready for an argument.

MARQUEZ

How about the past four months' rent?

RAY

You know I don't have four months' rent.

MARQUEZ

And you know I don't have no more patience?

Ray rubs his face, looks past Marquez at the dingy hallway.

RAY

I'm starting a new job next week, my first paycheck is yours.

Marquez just shakes his head.

MARQUEZ

No can do.

RAY

What do you mean, no? That's what you want, isn't it?

Marquez shoves a paper in his hands.

MARQUEZ

Not no more. All I want now is you out by the end of the month.

RAY

What?

Marquez turns and heads towards the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARQUEZ

Got new tenants moving in - you
need to be gone by the end of the
month.

Ray storms after him, grabs his shoulder.

RAY

Hey!

Marquez turns around fast, shoves Ray against the wall.

MARQUEZ

Keep your hands off me!

Ray's face blackens. He grabs Marquez's arm, twists it
around, shoves Marquez backwards towards the stairs. He
stumbles, grabs the rail.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

Let go of me or I'll call the
cops!

For a moment Ray holds him, anger boiling up inside, then
finally controls it, releases Marquez.

He looks at Ray a moment, rubs his wrist, then turns and
heads down the stairs.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

End of the month!

Ray watches him, then turns back towards his apartment.

MR. WILLIS, 54, a small, grey man in round glasses and a
cheap suit, lurks by Ray's apartment door. He holds a
large envelope in his hand.

MR WILLIS

That's quite a temper you've got
there, Mr. Givens.

RAY

You've got the wrong person.
Givens moved out last year.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

An old lady, MRS. ROBERTS, 74, shuffles down the hall towards them in her flannel robe and carpet slippers.

MR WILLIS

I have some very important papers here for a Mr. Ray Givens.

RAY

Wish I could help you -

Mrs. Roberts looks up as she passes.

MRS ROBERTS

Morning Ray.

RAY

Morning, Mrs. Roberts...

Willis holds out an envelope for Ray.

MR WILLIS

As I said, I have some very important papers for you...

EXT. LAW FIRM. DAY.

The outside of a lawyers office, a brass plaque reads "Mainwaring and Simpson, Attorneys at Law".

INT. LAW FIRM. DAY.

A large office is dominated by a huge oak desk. On one side of the desk sits MR. MAINWARING, 62, well-dressed, avuncular.

Ray and Karen look uncomfortable perched in large leather chairs the other side of the desk. Ray peers at a sheaf of papers, Karen looks over his shoulder.

KAREN

What's a 'peppercorn rent'?

MAINWARING

It's a nominal amount, in this case a dollar a year.

Karen looks at a photo of a beautiful farmhouse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN

Who on earth would want to rent
us a house for a dollar a year?

MAINWARING

There's more. Upon the death of
your benefactor, you inherit the
house and all the land.

RAY

Land?

Mainwaring peers at his papers.

MAINWARING

Four hundred and thirty five
acres...

Ray and Karen look at each other in amazement.

KAREN

That's got to be worth a bit...

RAY

There must be some mistake. Who
would leave us -

MAINWARING

I'm acting on the instructions of
a Ms. Margaret Givens.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Ray lies awake in bed, gazes up at the ceiling. He turns
as the bedroom door opens, Karen walks in. She looks sad,
has red eyes.

RAY

Sweetheart?

KAREN

I...

She can't find the words, sits on the bed crying. Ray
wraps his arms around her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY

It's OK, it's OK.

He holds her while she cries.

KAREN

I know you love Lucy - but I know how much it means to you to have a child of our own...

RAY

We will, we will...

KAREN

This is my third miscarriage, Ray - I'm not getting any younger.

Ray wipes the tears from her cheeks.

RAY

That's why we should take this offer, move to the house...

KAREN

What about my job?

RAY

You'll find another job - there's always demand for nurses.

KAREN

We don't know anything about this place - the area, the schools, nothing.

RAY

It's got to be better than this.

Karen looks at him carefully.

KAREN

Are you ever going to stop running away, Ray?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAY

This isn't running away - it's the chance of a fresh start, away from the city - somewhere Lucy can play and grow up safely - somewhere we can settle down and really be a family...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY.

Ray and Karen strap a tarpaulin tight over the roof rack of Ray's car.

EXT. RAY'S CAR. NIGHT.

Ray's car rolls down the freeway. A sign reads "Welcome to Montana".

EXT. GIVENS' HOUSE. DAY.

Ray's car pulls up by the side of the road.

INT. RAY'S CAR. DAY.

Lucy wakes up bleary-eyed, peers at the house.

LUCY

Are we there?

Ray and Karen look at the photo of the house, compare it.

RAY

That's it.

LUCY

It's pretty - just like a picture in a book.

Ray squeezes Karen's hand. She smiles.

KAREN

It is beautiful...

As they sit and admire the house, a policeman walks out onto the front porch, lights a cigarette. Karen looks at Ray, questioning, demanding.

Ray peers through the windscreen at the cop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY
Welcoming committee?

EXT. GIVENS' HOUSE. DAY.

Ray parks the car in front of the house, climbs out.

COP
Can I help you, sir?

RAY
This Miss Givens' place?

The cop nods. Ray indicates his family in the car.

RAY (CONT'D)
We're due to move in here today.

Another cop steps onto the porch. SHERIFF REEVES, 52, is lean, with thin silver hair, a weak jaw-line, quick eyes.

SHERIFF REEVES
What you got there, Lester?

COP
This feller says he's due to move
in here today.

SHERIFF REEVES
What's your name, son?

RAY
Givens, Ray Givens.

The cops exchange a glance.

SHERIFF REEVES
You better come inside and talk.

INT. GIVENS HOUSE. DAY.

Ray looks around the empty living room. Sheriff Reeves hangs up the phone, hands a sheaf of papers to Ray.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERIFF REEVES

Well that's all in order - attorney confirms Miss Givens instructed him to rent the house to you. How you related to her?

RAY

No idea. My father was adopted, but he told me that Givens was his real family name. (Beat) Is she here?

SHERIFF REEVES

That's why we're here - she'd rented herself a little place in town, retirement community, but seems she didn't show up.

RAY

Is she...

SHERIFF REEVES

Right now we don't know where she is - she's missing is all. But as she can't walk far, don't drive, and there's signs of a struggle, we're treating it as suspicious.

RAY

And the house?

SHERIFF REEVES

We're all done here - I guess you're free to move in...

INT. JOHNSON HOUSE. DAY.

The house is a cluttered mess of thrift shop furniture and empty beer cans. OLD MAN JOHNSON, 66, sits on the couch and cleans his shotgun. A massive physical presence, bearded and swathed in a long coat even in the house, he is clearly used to being the biggest, baddest man in any room. Two of his sons, CLAY and FLOYD watch TV.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAY, 32, is the oldest and the biggest. He's a mean son-of-a-bitch who you'd back one on one against a grizzly. He's also the only one with any morals or scruples.

FLOYD, 29, is the hell-raiser in the family. Fighting, fucking and falling down drunk would feature highly in his list of favorite activities.

WADE JOHNSON, 22, comes running in from outside, bursting to get his words out. Wade is the baby of the family. By the time he was made, all the brains, good looks and common sense had been used up.

WADE

Pa! Pa! There's someone moving
into the Givens' house!

Johnson sets his shotgun down, looks around at his boys.

JOHNSON

That cunning old bitch!

CLAY

Let it rest.

Johnson looks at him for a moment.

JOHNSON

You know, Clay, I don't think I
will. (Beat) Floyd? I think you
need to pay our new neighbors a
visit, make sure they feel at
home...

EXT. GIVENS HOUSE. DAY.

A small delivery truck is backed up to the house. Ray and the driver manhandle a large sofa onto the porch.

Ray looks up as a battered pick-up pulls onto the gravel. The driver stays in the truck, so Ray walks over to the truck.

RAY

Howdy!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLOYD

You pretty brave.

RAY

How's that?

FLOYD

Old lady died in that house - I
wouldn't want to live there.

RAY

Miss Givens is dead? I thought
she was just missing?

FLOYD

You kin of hers?

RAY

Name's Ray Givens.

Ray holds out his hand. Floyd makes no move to shake
hands.

FLOYD

You don't want to live here, city
boy, only bad things can come of
it...

He puts the truck in drive, accelerates away, slinging a
shower of gravel at Ray.

THREE MONTHS LATER

INT. RAY'S STUDY. DAY.

The study looks out onto the pine forest behind the house,
the snow-clad mountains beyond. There's several different
color test patches of paint on the faded wallpaper.

Ray sits and reads from the PC screen. He is focused,
concentrating hard, doesn't notice as Karen walks in.

KAREN

Seen the forecast? Winter's on
its way - we could get up to a
foot of snow tonight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ray leans back in his chair and stretches.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Are you stuck?

Ray sits up, his body language instantly changed.

RAY

No, I'm not stuck - I was just thinking.

KAREN

It's OK - all writers get stuck sometimes - you'll soon -

RAY

Not all writers get stuck, and not all writers get dumped by their publishers!

Ray switches off the monitor, stands up. Karen reaches out a hand to rub his shoulder.

KAREN

I was thinking of taking Lucy into town to look at some wallpaper. You want to come?

RAY

You want to spend more money?

KAREN

I've got to do something to brighten up this house - it gives me the creeps.

RAY

And what if this book is a flop?

KAREN

Then you might have to get a job!

Ray turns and stares out the window at the sky.

RAY

I'm going for a run.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAREN

Great - run away when I talk to
you!

EXT. RAY'S YARD. DAY.

Ray steps out onto the porch, looks around. West, towards the mountains, the low winter sun is running out of time, trapped between the sharp teeth of the snow covered peaks below and the dark purple clouds above.

A pick-up truck sits by the side of the house, the hood propped half-open by a metal tool box.

Lucy is on a swing, slowly swinging back and forth, eyes closed, the golden beams bathing her face.

Ray steps off the porch onto the gravel. Lucy hears the sound of his footsteps, opens her eyes.

LUCY

You trying to sneak up on me?

Ray walks over to the swing and wraps his arms around her.

RAY

No sneaking up on you sweetheart!

LUCY

Can you give me a push?

Ray looks over towards the mountains as the sun disappears behind the dark clouds.

RAY

Just for a minute, then I've got
to go run before this snow hits.

He pushes the swing, Lucy leans back and enjoys the motion.

LUCY

Remember you promised -

RAY

To play chess with you - I
remember.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gives the swing a bigger push and Lucy squeals in fear and delight. Karen steps onto the porch.

KAREN

Why don't you come into town with us, Ray, help us choose -

RAY

The house is fine as it is.

KAREN

Just a few cans of paint and some wallpaper for the spare room.

LUCY

Faster!

Ray gives her a shove.

RAY

People can push too hard, you know.

LUCY

I want to go over the top!

Karen sits down on the edge of the porch.

KAREN

Sometimes you have to push.

Ray gives Lucy one last shove.

RAY

I've got to go, sweetie. Get mom to push you - she's good at it.

Ray takes off across the yard towards the trees.

KAREN

And you're good at running!

LUCY

Are you guys having a fight?

KAREN

No honey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Karen stands up, gives Lucy a push.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I push, your father runs. It's
just what we do...

EXT. FOREST. DAY.

Ray runs along the edge of the woods on a narrow trail, trees to his right, a barbed-wire fence to his left. His face is streaked with sweat, the front of his shirt soaked.

The sun is behind the clouds, the light failing, a few light snow flakes swirling in the air.

Ray's in the zone, running at a steady pace, but when a heavy snow flake lands on his face, he stops.

The wind blows the snow towards him. Ray smiles as the flakes swirl against his face, closes his eyes, smiles.

Suddenly his expression changes, his face clouds. Faint but clear comes the sound of a chain saw. Ray tries to trace the sound, finally continues running, away from home.

As he moves forward the noise grows louder, the motor screaming as it strains against a tree. Ray reaches the end of the woods, stops, a look of shock on his face.

EXT. CLEAR-CUT AREA. DAY.

Ray comes out from the trees to a scene of utter devastation - the ground is torn up, downed trees all around. In the background a huge truck is half loaded with massive cut logs.

As Ray watches, another tree comes down. Ray jogs out into the middle of this maelstrom, shouts, waves his arms.

RAY

Hey! Hey!

One of the loggers spots him, tugs at the sleeve of the others. They turn the machinery off. Silence.

RAY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There are three guys, wearing plaid shirts and dirty jeans - the Johnson brothers. They look from one to another. Wade gives a silly giggle.

FLOYD

We're doing a bit of logging,
what the hell does it look like?

Wade giggles some more.

WADE

Bit of logging...

RAY

There must be some kind of
misunderstanding - this is Ms.
Givens' land.

The brothers look from one to another. Wade grins, trying to pick up the mood from his brothers.

FLOYD

I don't see no signs.

WADE

No signs...

They move towards Ray. He looks at them uncertainly.

RAY

We need to talk about
reparations. Why don't you give
me your address and phone
number...

They are close now, in a small semi-circle around Ray.

FLOYD

Miss Givens ain't around, why
should you care?

RAY

Well it's her land - and when she
dies it's mine...

Clay looks away at the shattered forest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLAY

Been here five minutes and
already he's laying claim to the
land!

FLOYD

You want something? I'll give
you something, city boy!

BAM! Without warning, Floyd hits Ray hard in the face.

Ray falls to the ground, scrambles to get up, but they are
on him, a swirl of kicking boots and flying fists and
bearded faces. Ray curls into a ball to protect himself.

Everything is becoming a blur when suddenly the beating
stops. Clay pulls his brothers off.

CLAY

Enough!

Floyd delivers one more kick, backs up. He turns, pulls
his ax from a tree stump.

FLOYD

We could finish this right now!

Clay grabs the ax handle, the two brothers wrestle for a
moment, eyeball to eyeball. Floyd suddenly lets go, gives
a weak grin.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

I was only kidding!

He steps over Ray, who is barely conscious, lifts him by
his t-shirt.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

You got a nice little family -
two cute women there. You might
want to think about leaving
before something happens to
them...

He drops Ray to the ground. Ray passes out.

EXT. CLEAR CUT AREA. NIGHT.

The snow falls thick and heavy, blankets the ground. Under the dark, cloudy sky, the torn ground is a field of black stumps.

A quiet moan. A slight movement. One of the stumps groans and sits up - it is Ray.

He looks around, disoriented. His back is covered in a light dusting of snow. He has lain unconscious for a while. Ray shivers, blows on his frozen hands.

A streak of blood runs from a cut over his eye, down his cheek. Ray wipes at the blood, tries to stand, but a sharp pain stops him, he clutches his ribs and sits back down.

A large, black crow sits on a stump, watches Ray. He looks at it for a moment, then tries to stand once more.

This time Ray rolls over onto his hands and knees, manages to get slowly to his feet.

The crow looks at him, then with a flap of its wings takes off, disappears into the darkness of the trees.

With a slow, limping gait, one hand clutching his side, Ray shuffles across the devastated ground towards his house.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN. NIGHT.

There are no lights on in the house. A lantern stands on the kitchen table, lighting the room.

Karen has a small gas burner on the counter top, a coffee pot on it. She glances up at the clock, walks over and picks up the phone, listens - no dial tone.

There's a noise from outside - Karen looks up as she hears the door rattle, her face a mix of hope and fear - the door opens and Ray staggers in. The snow swirls in through the door with him.

Karen sees his bloodied face, rushes forward and half catches him as he stumbles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN

Oh my God!

She leads him to a chair, eases him into it, gently turns it to the light. One eye is half-closed, his nose is bloodied, he has several other cuts, bumps and bruises.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Sweetheart...

Ray pulls his face from her hand, shivers.

KAREN (CONT'D)

You're freezing!

She grabs a coat, wraps it around him.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I was frantic - didn't know who to call! What happened?

Ray pulls the coat tight around him. Karen pours him a coffee, gently places it in his shaking hand.

RAY

I ran into some guys cutting trees on the back forty. They didn't seem to think they should pay for the timber they'd cut...

KAREN

Oh my god! We need to call the police!

She picks up her cell phone, peers at it - no signal.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Damn this place! The phones and power are down from this storm, and you can never get a signal out here!

RAY

Welcome to the mountains...

Ray sips at his coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAY (CONT'D)

Don't worry - I'll go talk to the
sheriff tomorrow.

Karen stares out the window at the snowy darkness, shivers.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN. DAY.

Ray hobbles into the kitchen - Karen grimaces at him. His
face is bruised, swollen, one eye dark purple.

KAREN

Hey old man!

Ray slowly lowers himself gingerly into a chair.

RAY

Cut the old man jokes and get me
a coffee, wench!

Karen pours a coffee, sets it on the table in front of him.

KAREN

You're lucky I don't hit old men.

RAY

I'm going into town, talk to the
sheriff.

KAREN

Good - you can pick up that
steering rack for my truck.

Karen comes over and wraps her arms around him.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I hope you're feeling better
later. We have work to do...

She suddenly gives him a passionate kiss. At first he
responds, then suddenly pulls away with a grimace.

KAREN (CONT'D)

What's up?

RAY

I'm not feeling up to it...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN

The thermometer says tonight's
the night!

RAY

Maybe in a day or so.

KAREN

It's OK, I'll be gentle, old man!

EXT. ROAD. DAY.

Ray's car heads away from the house, picks up speed as he heads past a frozen lake, dazzling in the bright sunshine.

EXT. MAIN STREET. DAY.

Ray cruises slowly down Main Street. The road is clear of snow, the sidewalks swept. There's a small cafe, a boarded up department store, the "For Sale" sign hanging half off.

Ray pulls up outside the Sheriff's Office, climbs out slowly, hobbles up onto the sidewalk. A loud honking makes him look up - a long 'V' of geese pass overhead, their strong wing beats carrying them away south. An old man stops beside Ray, looks up with him.

OLD MAN

Look like it's time to leave!

RAY

It's a beautiful day.

OLD MAN

There's a lot worse to come...

The birds are moving fast, already almost out sight. Ray turns to say something to the old man, but he has already shuffled off down the street.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE. DAY

Reeves stands beside a cluttered desk, talking to a small elderly lady. On the desk is a large fruit cake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERIFF REEVES

I'll be sure to share it with all
the boys ma'am.

He ferries her towards the door, past Ray.

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

And you keep a good eye on that
cat of yours, OK?

He closes the door behind her, turns to Ray.

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

If I have to get her cat out that
tree one more time...

Ray smiles. Reeves offers his hand.

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

How can I help you, Mr. Givens?

Reeves drops into the chair behind the desk.

RAY

Any word on Miss Givens?

SHERIFF REEVES

She's just plain vanished. Woman
of that age, I'm afraid we won't
be seeing her again...

He peers at Ray's battered face, half hidden under sun
glasses and a baseball cap.

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

What happened to you? Fall off
that mountain bike of yours?

Ray slowly removes his cap and glasses.

RAY

Last night I found three guys
logging the backside of the
property - when I asked them to
quit, they did this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHERIFF REEVES

They worked you over good. Any idea who it was?

RAY

That's what I was hoping you could tell me.

SHERIFF REEVES

You get a good look at them?

RAY

Looked like brothers. I'd recognize them if I saw them again.

SHERIFF REEVES

That's good.

He stands up, turns to the locked gun case behind his desk.

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

You'll let me know if you see any of them boys around, then?

RAY

That's it?

Reeves unlocks the gun case, pulls out a shotgun, a cleaning kit. He lays the gun carefully on the desk.

SHERIFF REEVES

I'll make some enquiries. Anything comes up, I'll call you.

Reeves stands, ushers Ray towards the door.

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

Don't you worry - I'll get to the bottom of this.

RAY

I'll expect your call.

Ray closes the door behind him. Reeves watches him for a moment, then picks up the phone, dials.

INT. RAY'S STUDY. DAY

Ray sits at his PC, reads the screen. The headline reads:
"Illegal logging on the rise in Rocky Mountain States."

Lucy bounces into the room, Karen right behind her.

LUCY

3:00 O'clock - you said we'd play
at 3:00 O'clock!

RAY

I did, didn't I?

Ray points at the screen.

RAY (CONT'D)

Look at this K - turns out
illegal logging is pretty common.
Up to 90% of it goes unreported.

KAREN

I'll look at it later.

Lucy comes over to look.

LUCY

What is it dad?

RAY

Just something for my work. Why
don't you go set up the chess
board? I'll be right down.

LUCY

You bet!

She sprints from the room.

RAY

I'm not going to let them get
away with this.

KAREN

The sheriff's dealing with it.

RAY

It can't hurt to do a bit myself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN

Don't stir up trouble Ray.

RAY

I won't. I just want to be sure
it's not forgotten.

KAREN

Let it rest - you're not a
fighter.

RAY

I'm not going to run away again.
I swore after Philadelphia -

KAREN

This is nothing like
Philadelphia!

RAY

It's exactly the same!

KAREN

That was an angry, violent,
abusive neighbor - he threatened
us. This is a bunch of rednecks
cutting down a few trees -

RAY

Then beating the shit out of me.

KAREN

Don't cause trouble, Ray. We're
outsiders here - I can see it in
the way everyone looks at us.

He stands up and hugs her, arms enveloping her.

RAY

I'm not going to cause any
trouble - I just want to make
sure it doesn't happen again.

Karen looks up at him. Her face softens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAREN

I guess you're right - we
shouldn't let a bunch of thugs
run us off...

EXT. MAIN STREET. DAY.

Ray staples a flyer to a telephone pole. Karen stands
beside him holding a stack of flyers. They read:

"Illegal Logging - Are You A Victim? Town Meeting,
Tuesday, 8:00 p.m."

Ray finishes stapling, moves on to the next telephone pole.
As he pulls another flyer out of his bag he notices a man
on the far side of road watching them.

TROY, 56, is tall and skinny, a gaunt face, cigarette
hanging from his lip. When Ray spots him he turns and
limps away down the street.

KAREN

Who's that?

RAY

Don't know. I've seen him
before, watching me.

Ray watches him until he is out of sight, turns to find
Sheriff Reeves behind them. He tips his cap to Karen.

SHERIFF REEVES

Mr. Givens, Ma'am.

He reads the flyer.

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

Think that's a good idea?

KAREN

We figure we're not the only ones
round here who've had this
problem.

SHERIFF REEVES

You should leave this to me.
People are touchy...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ray slams another staple in.

RAY

So what have you found out?

SHERIFF REEVES

I'm making some discreet enquiries.

RAY

That's what you said when I called you yesterday.

He drops the stapler into his bag, heads for the next telephone pole. The sheriff reaches out and stops him.

SHERIFF REEVES

I'm just suggesting that you slow down, give me some time -

RAY

Not sure I can wait that long, Sheriff...

KAREN

We're just trying to raise a little attention - that's not illegal, is it?

Ray forces his way past the sheriff, crosses the road to his car. Reeves watches him walk away, turns to Karen.

SHERIFF REEVES

You bang on a hornets nest hard enough, them hornets will come on out. And once they're out, well, they're gonna start looking for someone to sting - you understand what I'm saying?

Karen nods, crosses the road, looking thoughtful. Ray pulls a folded note from under his car's wipers.

KAREN

What you got there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ray unfolds the flyer. Scrawled across it are the words "Dead Man".

KAREN (CONT'D)

Seems like the hornets are
already out...

EXT. MISS WILSON'S GARDEN. DAY.

A middle-aged woman, JEAN, leads Ray through a beautifully tended flower garden.

MISS WILSON, 88, kneels on a small mat, tending some flowers. She is very small, with snow white hair. Her hands are busy in the soil.

JEAN

Miss Wilson? This is the
gentleman who called - about Miss
Givens?

Miss Wilson looks up. Her eyes are bright, lively, as she surveys Ray. Jean leaves.

MISS WILSON

Givens you say?

RAY

Yes ma'm.

He drops down on the grass beside her. She peers at him.

MISS WILSON

You look like Margaret - it's the
eyes. How are you related?

RAY

That's what I was hoping you
could tell me - all I know about
Miss Givens is that we share a
name, and she left me her house.

MISS WILSON

Margaret never spoke of family.
As far as I knew, she had none...

She reaches up and turns Ray's face to look at him better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY

Did she ever have a child?

MISS WILSON

Margaret? Goodness no. We used to joke about it - a pair of old spinsters we were.

RAY

What about out of wedlock?

Miss Wilson flashes him a look, but he continues.

RAY (CONT'D)

The reason I ask - my father was adopted. His adopted parents died when he was in college, and he took the name of Givens. I always wondered why he did that?

Miss Wilson suddenly becomes busy with her gardening.

MISS WILSON

I'm sure I don't know.

But there is something in her tone. Ray sits silent, just watches her. Her face has changed, a sad memory intruding.

MISS WILSON (CONT'D)

There was an unpleasant incident...

She tamps the soil around a small plant, won't look at Ray.

MISS WILSON (CONT'D)

There was a rumor - nothing more - an uncouth young man...forced himself upon Margaret.

RAY

He raped her?

MISS WILSON

It was all hearsay. But soon after, she went away east - was gone for a year.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She reaches up, straightens a wisp of loose hair.

MISS WILSON (CONT'D)

When she returned, she was
different. Some of the life had
drained out of her.

She slips her gloves back on, begins working once more.

MISS WILSON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry - I can't help you more
than that, Mr. Givens.

RAY

Who was the man, Miss Wilson?
What was his name?

She says nothing, continues working as though he wasn't
there. Ray looks at the side of her face - she is
distressed. Slowly he climbs to his feet.

RAY (CONT'D)

Thank you for your time.

He turns and walks away. Miss Wilson turns her head to
watch him leave. Suddenly she calls out.

MISS WILSON

Hoss! They called him Hoss!

INT. MEETING HALL. NIGHT.

Ray stands on a small stage, a microphone in his hand.
About thirty people are scattered throughout the hall. Ray
coughs to get attention. The hall falls quiet.

RAY

Thanks for coming out on a cold
night.

Eyes are fixed on him, faces blank. It's hard to read if
people are sympathetic or not.

RAY (CONT'D)

For those who don't know me -
which is probably most of you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gives a nervous laugh.

RAY (CONT'D)

My name's Ray Givens, I live in
Margaret Givens' house out on
county road 368.

He steps forward, into a bright light.

RAY (CONT'D)

Right now my face doesn't look
quite as good as it once did...

His battered face, black eye, show up clearly.

RAY (CONT'D)

This was done by three guys I
caught illegally logging my land.

A low murmur runs around the room, people lean in to get a
better look.

RAY (CONT'D)

Sheriff Reeves says he's making
some discreet enquiries. In fact
they're so discreet he hasn't
found anything out yet!

Several people laugh, nod knowingly.

RAY (CONT'D)

But I understand that this isn't
the first time people have had
trees cut like this.

There are low murmurs of assent.

A sudden noise makes everyone turn. The double doors at
the back of the room fly open. Old Man Johnson enters,
strides down the center aisle to the front row. He looks
around the room, a big grin on his face, then up at Ray.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Hope I didn't miss anything
important. Go ahead, Mr. Givens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The mood in the room has changed - curiosity has been replaced by anxiety, fear.

RAY

As I was saying, Sheriff Reeves doesn't want to take it any further, so I figure we need to go to the FBI.

Ray picks a sheet of paper off the chair, holds it up.

RAY (CONT'D)

I have a petition here. I reckon if we can get a few names, send it to the FBI in Great Falls, they'll have to get involved.

He steps down off the stage, holds the paper up. No one moves. The silence stretches on. Ray waves the paper.

RAY (CONT'D)

Even a handful of signatures would get their attention.

As he walks past Johnson, the old man stops Ray.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Lemme see that thing!

He takes the petition from Ray, reads it, his hand shaking as he holds the paper. He turns and faces the crowd.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Mighty fine piece of writing this! So who's going to sign it?

He waves it to the audience.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Who wants them federal spooks sniffing around our town, peering under rocks, disturbing the dust in old closets?

He scans the crowd. As his eyes roam across the faces, people look down, avoid his gaze. He turns back to Ray.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Sorry, Mr. Givens, looks like
you're on your own on this one.

Ray grabs the paper back, his face a mix of anger and frustration. He walks along the front row to where a group of four or five people sit clustered together.

RAY

Will you sign this?

They all look away. Ray points the paper at Johnson.

RAY (CONT'D)

Don't you see what he's doing?
He's here to intimidate us. Are
we going to just roll over and
let this continue?

Silence. Ray looks back over to Johnson.

RAY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I don't know your
name?

Johnson looks at him for a moment, then suddenly laughs.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Hell, everyone in town knows my
name - how come you don't?

He gives a look of fake confusion, then revelation.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Oh, I remember - you're new here!

He turns his back on Ray to look out over the crowd.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Isn't this great folks? Mr.
Givens here flies in from New
York, he's been here a week,
already he's telling us how to
run our town!

RAY

Chicago. I'm from Chicago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Johnson looks at him.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Chicago? Is that right? (Pause)
Mr. Givens, do you think anyone
here gives a damn where you're
from? Hell, most of us can trace
our family back to the gold rush
of 1860. We've all been here a
while, put down roots, invested
in the community.

He turns to the crowd. Some nod in agreement, others sit
stony faced.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

We got a way of life, a way of
doing things, and it's worked for
damn near a hundred and fifty
years. We believe that when a
man's got a problem, he takes
care of it himself.

He looks hard at the audience.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

If we got a problem in this town,
we deal with ourselves, don't we
folks?

Several of the older men look guilty - look down at their
feet, turn away. Johnson throws his arms wide in a
theatrical gesture.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

So if you don't like the way we
do things, well we got a saying
for you. Yankee go home!

He laughs hard, and several others join in. Ray waits for
the laughter to die down.

RAY

I may have ^(MORE) only been here for a
few months, but this is my home
now - I'm not going anywhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

RAY (CONT'D)

Just because a thing's been done
a certain way for a while doesn't
mean that -

He breaks off as the trill of a cell phone breaks the air.
Ray looks down, realizes it's his phone.

RAY (CONT'D)

Excuse me. (Beat) Karen? I'm in
the middle of -(Pause) Oh shit!

EXT. RAY'S YARD. NIGHT.

The night is lit with a garish orange light as the flames
leap up from Ray's burning barn. A fire truck pours water
on to little effect.

Further back stand a small group of firemen and onlookers.
Karen and Lucy stand alone to one side, Karen's arm around
Lucy's shoulders.

Ray's car approaches fast, pulls up onto the driveway,
stops in a spray of gravel.

The door opens and Ray leaps out. Karen and Lucy hurry
over to him. He envelopes them in a huge embrace as they
stand with the light playing on their faces.

KAREN

It was already hopeless when they
arrived...

RAY

What started it?

KAREN

I thought I heard a car
earlier...

One of the firemen walks up to them.

WALKER

You Ray Givens?

Ray nods. WALKER, 39, a burly fireman, holds out his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALKER (CONT'D)

Jim Walker. Not much we can do
I'm afraid. She was burning
pretty good when we arrived...
You have any idea what might have
started it?

RAY

I was going to ask you the same
thing.

WALKER

No way of knowing right now.

RAY

I know how it started.

WALKER

You do?

RAY

It was arson.

KAREN

Honey!

WALKER

How'd you know that?

RAY

We've been having some trouble
lately - this is a warning.

KAREN

You don't know that Ray.

RAY

What? You think it's a
coincidence the barn catches fire
while I'm in town at that
meeting?

WALKER

So you know who started it?

RAY

I've got a pretty good idea.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAREN

You said you didn't know -

RAY

Will you investigate?

Walker scratches his chin.

WALKER

Wouldn't normally...

There's a sudden bright glow as the timber frame of the barn collapses inwards, sending a shower of glowing orange sparks high into the dark night sky.

RAY

But now that you know it's
arson...

KAREN

I wish you wouldn't say that.

Walker looks back and forth between the two of them.

WALKER

I'll talk to Sheriff Reeves in
the morning -

RAY

Oh, great! And he'll make some
discreet enquiries!

Walker gives him a look.

WALKER

Well, you folks have a good
night.

He turns and walks towards the fire truck. Ray starts after him, but Karen grabs his arm, holds him back.

KAREN

Ray! You might want to try
making a few friends around here!

RAY

You're saying this is my fault?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KAREN

I'm just saying that if you treat
everyone as your enemy, well,
soon enough they will be...

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE. DAY.

Ray climbs out of his car, looks around at the quiet main street. He steps up to the sheriff's door, shoves. It doesn't open.

Ray sees a note stuck to the inside of the door - "Back in 30 mins." A passer-by pauses.

MAN

Looking for the sheriff? He'll
be over yonder.

He points to the coffee shop across the street.

INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY.

Ray walks into the coffee shop. It's busy, but people look up, pause their conversations when they see Ray.

Sheriff Reeves sits at the counter chatting to the waitress. He sees Ray, his face falls.

Ray strides over, plumps down on the stool next to Reeves.

SHERIFF REEVES

Why do I have a bad feeling you
were looking for me?

The waitress, EVIE, 46, looks trim and friendly in her red checked apron.

EVIE

Coffee, honey?

RAY

Black please.

She turns round and starts to fix his coffee.

RAY (CONT'D)

Walker talk to you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERIFF REEVES

He called me this morning.

RAY

So what have you found out?

Evie turns around and slides his coffee to him.

EVIE

There you go honey.

RAY

Thanks.

SHERIFF REEVES

I'm on it.

Ray takes a sip of his coffee.

RAY

On it? You're at the coffee shop!

SHERIFF REEVES

I'm on my coffee break right now. You want to talk to me, I'll be back in my office in ten minutes.

RAY

Maybe if you spent less time drinking coffee and more time in your office you might actually get something done!

Evie raises her eyebrows. Reeves sets his coffee cup down.

SHERIFF REEVES

Evie? Can we use your office for a minute?

EVIE

Sure, hon. Help yourself.

Without a word to Ray, Reeves stands up and heads towards the back of the restaurant. He pauses at a side door marked "Office", holds the door open for Ray.

INT. EVIE'S OFFICE. DAY.

Ray squeezes into the tiny office. There's a cluttered desk, a battered chair, a safe in the corner of the room.

Ray stands by the desk as the Sheriff closes the door. He turns around to Ray, gets right in his face, forces him back into the corner.

SHERIFF REEVES

Who the hell you think you are,
coming in here and hassling me in
a public place!

RAY

I've been attacked, had my barn
burned down, and from what I can
see you're doing Jack Shit!

SHERIFF REEVES

You don't know what you're
getting into here.

RAY

So why don't you tell me?

SHERIFF REEVES

These people you're messing with -
they don't play around.

RAY

So this isn't the first time?

SHERIFF REEVES

I'm not saying that...

RAY

The hell you aren't. Johnson's
got you as scared as everyone
else.

SHERIFF REEVES

What I'm saying is we all got to
live together. Everyone knows
everyone, knows what they do,
where they live - catch my drift?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He opens the door, turns to leave, but Ray grabs his arm.

RAY

I catch your drift - now you
catch mine. I'm not quitting
here - and I expect you to do
your job.

The sheriff pulls away, shakes his head.

SHERIFF REEVES

Son, if you don't lighten up,
it's gonna to be a long, cold
winter...

EXT. MAIN STREET. DAY.

Ray steps out of the cafe, walks to his car - there's a
paper tucked under the wiper - a hand written note reads -
"Meet me behind the old feed store on route 45. A friend".

Ray looks around, sees no one. He scrunches up the note,
crams it in his pocket, climbs in his car.

He backs up, pulls away down Main Street. A few seconds
later, an old pick-up pulls out and follows him.

EXT. ROAD. DAY.

Ray's car turns onto a quiet two lane, route 45.

INT. RAY'S CAR. DAY.

Ray peers through the window at a large abandoned building.
The fading sign reads "Tri-county Feed".

Ray turns onto a rough gravel driveway, pulls into a dirt
parking lot behind the building.

EXT. FEEDSTORE. DAY.

Ray climbs from his car, looks up at the old building.
Most the windows are smashed, the large loading doors
rotten and broken. Wind whips trash across the deserted
parking lot.

The old pick-up pulls into the parking lot, stops a few
feet from Ray.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The sun shines brightly on the driver's window, Ray can't see who is in the truck. Ray looks ready to turn and run.

The driver lowers the truck window. It's Troy, the man Ray saw watching him on Main Street.

TROY

I was hoping you wouldn't come.

RAY

You've been following me.

TROY

You allow yourself to get lured somewhere like this...

Ray says nothing, looks around warily.

TROY (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I ain't here to hurt you. I'm just suggesting you back off, stay out of this.

RAY

You're threatening me?

TROY

No, you fool! I'm trying to help you!

Ray's anger is rising.

RAY

It's my land - why should I turn tail and run?

TROY

'Cause there's some people you just don't want to mess with.

Troy puts his truck in gear and starts to pull forward. Ray steps forward, grabs his arm.

RAY

Whoa! Just a minute! Is this anything to do with the old man who stood up at the meeting?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TROY

Can't say - this is a small town.

RAY

What's his name? Johnson?

Troy sighs, puts the truck into park, pulls his arm free from Ray, cuts the engine, climbs out.

TROY

Yeah. Old Man Johnson.

RAY

Is he behind the illegal logging?

TROY

This ain't the first time.

RAY

I knew it!

TROY

Well know this - the last fellow who tried to make a deal of this - well, it didn't turn out so good.

RAY

They ran him off?

Troy turns and opens the door of his truck.

TROY

You just be careful.

RAY

What? They killed him?

TROY

I gotta go.

He climbs in, slams the door.

RAY

Where can I find Johnson?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TROY

That ain't hard - he owns a sawmill out on 65. But I wouldn't go out there...

RAY

I figure as long as I'm in a public place -

TROY

That ain't no public place - that's his own little kingdom.

RAY

The sheriff knows about this.

TROY

"Look The Other Way" Reeves? Johnson owns him.

RAY

I just want to talk to Johnson.

TROY

He ain't real big on talking, prefers direct action - seems to be something of a family trait.

The truck starts to roll forward.

TROY (CONT'D)

You gonna take on the Johnsons you better be a whole lot tougher than you look!

INT. RAY'S CAR. DAY.

Ray sits in his car, hands clenched on the wheel, stares at an arched entry way marked "Johnson Mill".

KAREN (V.O.)

We shouldn't let a bunch of thugs run us off...

EXT. SAWMILL. DAY.

Ray drives slowly beneath the arched gateway, past a sign that reads "Danger - Heavy Machinery", parks outside the building, behind Floyd's battered pick-up.

Ray steps out of the car. All is quiet. The sun is just dropping below the line of the trees, flocks of birds swoop and twist on the still, cold air.

A small hand-painted sign reads "Office", has an arrow pointing up a flight of rickety external stairs. Ray slowly climbs the creaking stairs.

INT. JOHNSON'S OFFICE. DAY.

Ray stops on the threshold, peers into the darkened office.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

The activist!

Ray steps over the threshold, tentative. The old man sits behind his desk, a king on his throne.

Through a large window at the back of the office can be seen the interior of the mill. The setting sun lights the sharp teeth of the massive blades.

RAY

Hi, Mr. Johnson.

Ray walks to the desk, holds out his hand. The old man makes no effort to return the hand shake, just stares at Ray, challenging. Ray's hand drops to his side, limp.

RAY (CONT'D)

I was told you might know
something about illegal logging -
yours is the only mill around...

OLD MAN JOHNSON

A tree is just a tree to me. As
long as the wood is sound...

He pulls a thick cigar from his top pocket, strikes a match. His hands shake as he lights the cigar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY

This has happened a lot. I figure anyone around here with any timber would come to you.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

There's no way for me to know where wood comes from.

RAY

Oh come on! You of anyone must know what's happening!

The old man pushes his chair back, climbs to his feet, comes around the desk, gets close to Ray.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

You accusing me?

He stabs at Ray with his cigar for emphasis.

RAY

No! But surely you know -

OLD MAN JOHNSON

I'll tell you what I know. I know that I used to employ twenty seven men - twenty local families with jobs that put food on their tables, clothes on their kids' backs because of this mill!

He turns and spits on the floor.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Thanks to Yankee tree-huggers like you, there's just me and my boys trying to keep this damn mill open!

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE. DAY.

Reeves looks up from his desk as his door opens - Troy sticks his head in the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROY

You might want to pay a visit to
Johnson's Mill...

SHERIFF REEVES

What's going on?

TROY

That hot-head Givens is on his
way over there. So unless you
want to see history repeat
itself...

SHERIFF REEVES

Shit!

Reeves stands up, grabs his hat.

EXT. SAWMILL. DAY.

Two figures emerge from the shadows - the two younger
brothers, Wade and Floyd - look at Ray's car.

Wade holds a rusty metal crowbar in his hand. As they walk
past the car he runs the crowbar along the side of the car,
across the hood, leaves a deep scratch in the paint.

INT. JOHNSON'S OFFICE. DAY.

Ray looks up as he hears the sound. He peers over his
shoulder, sees nothing. When he looks back, the old man is
even closer to him, almost in his face.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

I think you need to mind your own
damn business, Mr. Ray Givens.

Ray backs up to the doorway. Johnson suddenly reaches out
and grabs Ray's upper arm, squeezes it.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

You're a tough little son of a
bitch, aren't you? Must have
some good blood in you
somewheres!

Ray wrenches his arm free.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY

You hear anything, you let me know?

OLD MAN JOHNSON

It's late. I'm going home.

He turns back to his desk. Ray looks at his mute back, turns and heads down the stairs.

EXT. SAWMILL. DAY.

Ray trots down the stairs, suddenly catches sight of the scratch on his car. He hurries over, runs his hand across the scratched hood.

RAY

Shit!

There's a noise from inside the mill.

RAY (CONT'D)

Who's there?

Laughter sounds in reply. Ray looks around for a moment, then peers in through the huge double doors of the mill.

INT. SAWMILL. DAY.

No lights are on, just a few streaks of pale light come in through the high windows. There's a long work bench with loose tools on it, axes and saws on the wall behind it.

Ray steps over to the giant machine, runs his fingers along the edge of the blade. It could rip a man in two.

EXT. SAWMILL. DAY.

Wade emerges from a side door, crowbar in hand - slowly, almost tenderly, he runs the crowbar down the other side of Ray's car, leaves a second deep scratch.

INT. SAWMILL. DAY.

Ray hears the noise, stops, strains to catch the direction. Suddenly he realizes it's from outside. He turns and runs back out of the sawmill.

EXT. SAWMILL. DAY.

Ray runs out, no one is there. He sees the second scratch, bangs on the roof of his car in frustration.

FLOYD (O.S.)
Shouldn't do that - might leave a
dent in that lovely paint work!

WADE (O.S.)
Might leave a dent!

Ray spins around, tries to figure where the voices are coming from. Laughter greets his efforts.

He walks towards the entrance of the sawmill, peers inside. The brothers lurk to one side, hidden in the shadows. Wade has the crowbar in his hand, Floyd holds an axe.

RAY
I'm not scared of you!

But his voice betrays the lie.

FLOYD (O.S.)
You should be!

Ray hears footsteps from above, turns and looks up, sees the old man at the top of the stairs, looking down.

OLD MAN JOHNSON
You should go home, Mr. Givens.

Ray steps back to his car, looks up at the old man.

RAY
You're not going to run me off as
easily as you did the last guy.

OLD MAN JOHNSON
If you know anything about the
past, then you'll know you should
be packing your bags.

Ray turns around, finds the two brothers have come silently up behind him. His eyes take in the crowbar, the axe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY

People know I'm here...

The brothers step closer.

FLOYD

You in way over your head, son.

Floyd rests the axe head on the roof of Ray's car.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

Nice car...

Wade looks at Floyd, giggles.

WADE

Real nice!

Floyd and Wade circle Ray, weapons at the ready.

FLOYD

We should of finished you off
last time!

He swings the axe, Ray dodges, the blade bounces of the car. Wade takes a swing, catches Ray across the legs. He stumbles, falls to his knees.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

If you're gone, someone's gonna
have to take care of them women
of yours!

He raises his weapon once more.

CLAY (O.S.)

That's enough!

Floyd pauses as Clay steps out of the mill.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Back off, Floyd! Givens is going
home - he's developed a better
understanding of local issues.

No one moves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FLOYD

Who the hell's side you on Clay?

Floyd looks up at their father, standing like a Roman emperor on the balcony.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

Pa? We gonna let Clay interfere in this?

Johnson looks at his two sons, thinking.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

You heard Clay - go on home.

FLOYD

What!

Ray scrambles to his feet, gets into his car.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

We'll talk about this later.

INT. RAY'S CAR. DAY.

Ray cranks the car, backs up. Floyd gives Clay a look of disgust, steps forward, points at Ray with the axe.

FLOYD

You're a dead man!

Ray hears it, stops. He looks at the two brothers, half in the shadows, weapons visible in their hands.

They suddenly run forward, begin pounding on his car with their weapons. Ray floors the throttle, spins out of the lumber yard in a cloud of dust and gravel, Floyd and Wade chasing after him, whooping and hollering and waving their weapons above their heads.

INT. RAY'S STUDY. DAY.

Ray sits at his desk, gazes out the window at the distant mountains. He speaks into a small digital voice recorder.

RAY

She stepped barefoot across the grass, silent, graceful -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A noise from outside startles him, he stops the machine.

RAY (CONT'D)

Goddamit! How can I get any work
done!

He peers out the window. Lucy is in the snowy garden,
throwing snow balls at the house. She turns, sees a line
of dark crows sitting on the fence watching her.

Lucy packs together a good snowball, takes careful aim,
throws it at the crows. It's a good shot, right through the
middle of the line, but the crows don't budge.

One of them takes off, flies towards Lucy, lands on the top
of Karen's broken down pick-up, just a few feet from Lucy.

She looks at it warily, then jumps towards it, tries to
startle it. The bird doesn't move.

Ray smiles, but his grin quickly fades - Floyd's battered
pick-up cruises slowly past the house.

Ray watches until the truck is out of sight, then turns and
rummages on his bookshelves for the yellow pages.

He turns back to the window, and with one eye on Lucy leafs
through the phone book.

INT. SAWMILL. NIGHT.

Old Man Johnson leads the way into the main mill room,
turns on the big overhead lights as he comes in.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Bring him on in.

Floyd follows, dragging Troy as easily as you'd drag a
child, Wade right behind, face full of feral excitement.

Troy's face is battered, one eye closed, blood running from
his nose and mouth. Floyd throws him on the floor.
Johnson steps over to him, rolls him over with his boot.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Thought you'd learned your
lesson.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Troy looks up at Johnson for a moment, then looks away. Clay follows, watchful, but Floyd and Wade close in, peer down at Troy. Floyd kicks Troy.

FLOYD

You answer when pa speaks!

Wade also gives him a half-hearted kick.

WADE

Answer when pa speaks.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Easy boys.

He kneels down beside Troy, peers at his battered face.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Looks like you boys already had some fun.

FLOYD

Stubborn little son of a bitch didn't want to come with us!

Troy closes his eyes again, but Johnson shakes his shoulder and he looks up at the old man.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

You've gone and got that New York boy all riled up - says he's going to call in the FBI!

Troy licks his bloodied lips, speaks in a quiet voice.

TROY

Didn't rile him up - I told him to leave it be.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

You tried to warn him off? That's our job!

He looks up at the boys and laughs, they join in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Reeves says you been leaving notes for Givens, even met up with him...

TROY

Don't make no difference what I say, does it? You already done made up your mind.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Damn right we have.

He climbs to his feet, looks at Clay.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Fire her up.

CLAY

I ain't being a part of this again.

The old man grabs his sleeve.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

You damn well do what I tell you!

Clay pulls free.

CLAY

I won't be party to murder!

Johnson eyes him for a moment, then turns and nods to Floyd. Floyd reaches out and flicks on a big power switch. There's a quiet whirring sound as the bed saw powers up.

Clay turns and walks out. Floyd's eyes follow him, then turn back to his father.

The giant blade whirs into life, the sharp teeth glinting in the harsh overhead lights as it spins, slow at first, then quickly accelerates into a silver blur. Troy watches the spinning blade in grim fascination.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TROY

Givens has got steel in him - you
ain't gonna scare him like you do
folks around here.

Floyd and Wade haul Troy to his feet, struggling hard.
Johnson shouts over the noise of the saw.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Looks like we need to soften you
up a bit first!

As his sons hold Troy tight, Johnson begins beating him,
again and again...

EXT. RAY'S YARD. DAY.

Two large trucks are parked on the road outside Ray's
house. Workmen dig holes, put in tall fence posts.

Ray unloads two large dogs from the back of his car. Lucy
watches from the porch, a concerned look on her face.
Suddenly she turns and runs inside.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN. DAY

Lucy runs into the kitchen. Karen is fixing lunch.

KAREN

Is dad back?

Lucy says nothing, sits at the table. Karen sets a plate
in front of Lucy - sees her troubled expression.

KAREN (CONT'D)

What's up honey?

Before Lucy can answer, Karen hears loud barking.

EXT. RAY'S FRONT PORCH. DAY.

Karen runs onto the porch just as Ray climbs the steps.
She sees the dogs, the fence builders.

KAREN

Ray?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY

Hi honey.

He leans in to kiss her but she pulls away.

KAREN

You go into town to get a steering rack for my truck, you come back with -

RAY

We need a little more security.

KAREN

You said this was nothing to worry about!

RAY

It's not! It's just -

KAREN

Look, I supported you with the flyers, the meeting - but this has gone too far - you've become public enemy number one!

She spins him around, makes him look towards the road, at the tall fence posts going up.

KAREN (CONT'D)

It will look like a prison camp!
We'd be safer back in Chicago!

RAY

Aw, come on, it's not that bad!

KAREN

I don't want to live under siege!

RAY

They're not driving me out! I won't leave!

A noise makes them turn around. Lucy has come out onto the porch. The dogs start barking, Lucy huddles against Karen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUCY

Those dogs scare me.

Ray reaches out, strokes her hair back from her face.

RAY

Go inside, sweetheart. It's too cold to play outside.

Lucy looks up at her mom, who nods for her to obey. As soon as she is inside, Karen is back on the offensive.

KAREN

You said we'd be safe here -
raise a family you said. Right
now the only thing I want to do
is leave!

INT. RAY'S GARAGE. NIGHT.

Ray works out - sweat soaks his body as he cranks out pull-ups. Karen stands by the door, watches him.

Fierce intensity is etched on his face as he pushes himself to the point of pain and beyond. Finally he drops from the bar, eyes closed from the pain and effort.

KAREN

Can we talk?

Ray wipes his face on a towel, heads for the bench.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Don't shut me out, Ray.

Ray lifts the bar, begins cranking out the reps.

KAREN (CONT'D)

We're city folk, Ray - people are
different around here.

Ray pauses, speaks without looking at Karen.

RAY

I know exactly what they're like -
they're bullies.

He finishes, sits up and looks at her for the first time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY (CONT'D)

Believe me, I know the mind of a
bully.

Suddenly he stops, his shoulders begin to heave, tears
stream down his face. He buries his face in a towel.
Karen reaches over, hugs him.

RAY (CONT'D)

For years I watched my father
beat my mother, never lifted a
finger.

He pulls away from her, stands up.

RAY (CONT'D)

I ran away - went to college,
left her alone with him.

He walks to the pull up bar, reaches up and grasps it
tightly.

RAY (CONT'D)

So don't ask me to quit, because
I won't do it.

His back to Karen, he resumes punishing his body.

EXT. BREAKERS' YARD. DAY.

Ray drives through the gates of a breakers' yard. A large
German Shepherd is chained up outside, barks furiously. A
teenage grease monkey emerges from a dilapidated office,
pets it till it quiets down.

RAY

I'm looking for a steering rack,
'93 F-150.

The kid points down a long row of wrecked vehicles.

TEENAGER

Head down there a ways you'll
find an old guy - my grandpa.
He'll know if'n we got one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ray walks down the line of crushed, dismembered cars and trucks. There's a banging, the sound of a voice cursing.

CURTIS (O.S.)

Come on you somfabitch!

Ray turns a corner, sees a scrawny old man in a grease-covered blue overall half inside the hood of a truck.

RAY

Hey!

The old man stops his pounding and cursing, looks up. CURTIS, 76, is bald as a coot, missing most of his teeth, but his forearms are like knotted tree roots, his hands massive, covered in grease and scars. He spits a stream of tobacco onto the ground beside him, wipes his chin.

CURTIS

Hey son. Watcha looking for?

RAY

Steering rack. '93 F-150.

Curtis stands tall, stretches, then heads off through the maze of wrecked vehicles, Ray trailing behind him.

CURTIS

You that writer feller, livin' in Margaret's house, ain't you?

Curtis stops at the end of a row, looks around, spits.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

Remember her when she was just a lass. Beautiful girl, was Miss Givens, but not for the touching if you know what I mean?

Curtis takes off to his left, deeper into the maze.

RAY

You must know just about everyone round here?

CURTIS

Lived here all my life...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAY

You ever hear of a man called
Hoss?

Curtis snorts, shakes his head.

CURTIS

Meanest somfabitch ever lived
around these parts! Called him
Hoss cause he killed a horse with
a single punch!

Curtis stops and leans on the hood of a battered truck,
wipes his shiny forehead with a greasy rag.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

Now where the hell's that F-150?

RAY

Did Hoss have any family?

Curtis pulls out his old wad of tobacco from inside his
lip, throws it on the ground.

CURTIS

Sure. Had a son. Wife died in
childbirth, so he raised the boy
hissself. A real wild one.

RAY

How's that?

CURTIS

Legend is, when he was eight, old
man took the boy thirty miles
from home, dumped him in the
woods, told him not to come back
till the next full moon.

Curtis produces a tin of tobacco from somewhere inside his
coveralls, peels off a wad and fits it into his bottom lip.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

Paid old Hoss out though.

Curtis suddenly stands up, marches off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CURTIS (CONT'D)

She's down here.

He turns down between two trucks, points at a Ford pick-up.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

There she is!

Curtis drops down on the ground, rolls over onto his back, sticks his head under the truck.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

Looks good. Can have it for you
this afternoon if that's OK?

RAY.

That'll be fine.

Curtis wriggles back out, sits up.

RAY. (CONT'D)

So what happened to Hoss?

CURTIS

Disappeared. Never found his
body.

He hauls himself to his feet, leans in towards Ray,
conspiratorial.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

But everyone know'd his son
killed him - used to boast about
it!

He spits, looks around.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

Now where the hell'd I leave my
toolbox?

RAY.

You were working on a Chevy over
yonder.

CURTIS

Right you are.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

He turns and starts to head back towards the Chevy.

RAY.

So Hoss's son?

CURTIS

Mean and violent. You know the way it is, like father like son.

RAY.

He still around?

CURTIS

Hell yeah. Randolph's his given name, but these days everyone calls him Old Man Johnson!

Ray stops, stares at Curtis's back as he trudges off.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Ray walks into the living room, two cups of coffee in his hands. Karen sits at a small table, sewing a dress.

RAY

I didn't know you could sew!

KAREN

What the hell else am I supposed to do around here?

RAY

You could try getting to know some people?

KAREN

That's easy for you to say - you want to be here!

RAY

Come on Karen - you agreed it would be a great place to raise a family...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN

I came because I thought it would be a new start, that you would have a chance to really get to grips with your writing.

Ray says nothing. Karen stands up and stretches, looks around at the old fashioned living room.

KAREN (CONT'D)

This house gives me the creeps - Miss Givens died here.

RAY

We don't know that for sure. She's missing -

KAREN

Presumed dead.

Karen looks troubled, something is on her mind.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I talked to Sophie this morning.

Ray looks up sharply.

KAREN (CONT'D)

She said there's a supervisor's position just opened up in Radiology - she said I'd be a shoo in with my -

RAY

Back to Chicago? You lectured me about running away!

KAREN

Ray! It's a good job! A real career opportunity for me - right now I'm working the graveyard shift at A&E - that's not what I went through four years of nursing school for!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAY

We have to give it time Karen -
this little problem will soon end
and then -

KAREN

Little problem?

Ray suddenly cocks his head to one side, listens.

RAY

Sounds like Lucy's home.

He steps over to the window, peers outside - there's no school bus. Instead Ray sees the fencing guys loading up their trucks. Ray looks at his watch.

RAY (CONT'D)

What are they playing at?

EXT. RAY'S YARD. DAY.

Ray strides out of his house, across the yard.

RAY

Packing up early, aren't you?

Three guys are busy loading up the trucks - they look up, exchange uneasy looks. The boss, MIKE, 57, steps forward.

MIKE

We're all through here.

RAY

At three O'clock? You'll never
finish by the end of the week!

MIKE

Not finished for the day -
finished period. (Pause) Reckon
our business might suffer if we
finish this job.

RAY

You've been threatened? Tell me
who it was - like I don't know -
I'll call Sheriff Reeves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike turns around, continues packing up the truck.

MIKE

Mister, you live around here, you learn there's three things you don't mess with - God, Montana winters, and the Johnsons.

RAY

What is it with people around here?

MIKE

You're stirring up bad memories - things people would rather forget.

RAY

Like what?

Mike says nothing, starts to get in the truck.

RAY (CONT'D)

Hey! You tell the Johnsons I don't scare that easily!

MIKE

You can tell them yourself.

He slams the truck door. Ray looks across the road - Floyd sits on the hood of his truck, a grin on his face.

EXT. ROAD. DAY.

Ray strides across the road as the fencing trucks pull away.

RAY

What the hell you grinning about?

FLOYD

Guess them boys don't like the working conditions round here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY

The hell with you! You think you
can bully me like you bully the
locals around here?

Floyd slides down off the truck, gets in Ray's face.

FLOYD

Y'know, I actually think I can do
pretty much as I please - what
you gonna do about it?

They stand face to face for a moment.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

That's what I thought.

He turns to get in his truck, and Ray suddenly explodes.

RAY

Fuck you!

He grabs Floyd's shoulder, spins him around, hits him hard
in the face. Floyd stumbles backwards, turns back and
faces Ray. He reaches up and wipes a trickle of blood from
the corner of his mouth.

FLOYD

You growing some balls, city boy?
(Beat) Then let's get it on!

Without warning he rushes Ray, wraps him up in a tackle
that sends them both sprawling on the ground.

Floyd gets in a couple of hits while Ray is recovering, but
Ray fights back, throws Floyd off, scrambles to his feet.

They circle each other, breathing hard. Floyd moves in,
takes a swing at Ray, but he dodges, hits Floyd hard, once
in the guts, once in the face.

Floyd blinks hard, looks at Ray a little differently.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

You starting to try my patience!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Once again he rushes Ray, once again Ray picks him off, a sharp punch to the side of the head that sends him sprawling to the ground next to his truck.

Ray looks down on him with loathing.

RAY

Stay away from me and my family!

Floyd climbs slowly to his feet, leans on his truck for support. Ray turns and heads across the road.

Floyd reaches into the back of his truck, emerges with a wooden axe handle.

Ray sees him too late as he charges ray from behind, brings the axe handle down across Ray's back. Ray falls, rolls over as Floyd swipes at him again.

Ray tries to get to his feet, but Floyd hits him again, two, three times across his back.

Ray looks finished, but suddenly he manages to get a grip on Floyd's leg, brings him tumbling to the ground.

They grapple for a moment, fists swinging, till Ray manages to get on top of Floyd.

With Floyd beneath him Ray unloads, two, three, four, five punishing blows to the face.

Floyd is half unconscious, his face battered. Ray looks down on him, his face full of hatred, is about to deliver another blow, suddenly stops himself.

Breathing hard, Ray climbs to his feet, staggers away, leaves Floyd sprawled out in the dirt road.

As Ray reaches his porch, Floyd manages to sit up.

FLOYD

You just signed your own death
warrant, Givens!

Ray leans on the porch rail, looks down at his blood covered hands, vomits hard into the grass.

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Ray sits on the edge of his bed, wearing his pajama bottoms. The bruises from his fight are vivid on his back.

He reaches back for his top, but as he does so Karen grabs the other end. They have a brief tug of war, and she drags him backwards on the bed.

Suddenly they are all over each other, kissing, caressing, Karen's hands exploring Ray's body, his hands pulling her nightdress up over her head - Ray pushes Karen down on the bed, kisses her - her face, her neck, her breasts.

Karen responds by tugging Ray's pyjamas down, pulling him in towards her. She coils her legs around his waist, starts to move against him.

Suddenly Ray stops, rolls off of her. She looks up at him, wondering what he's doing. He reaches over to the bedside table, opens the drawer and rummages through it.

KAREN

You don't need that honey...

He grabs a condom, tears open the package. Karen rolls over, half on top of him, gently takes his hand, stops him.

KAREN (CONT'D)

We've got a baby to make,
remember?

Ray frowns, pulls his hand from her grasp.

RAY

I'm just not sure this is such a
good time...

KAREN

You keep saying this is the place
for us, but then -

RAY

I know what I said!

He rolls out from beneath her, sits up on the edge of the bed, puts his head in his hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY (CONT'D)

Things have changed.

Karen watches him for a moment, then comes and sits beside him, drapes an arm around his shoulder.

RAY (CONT'D)

There's something I need to tell you. It's not coincidence the Johnsons were logging our land.

KAREN

I don't -

RAY

I'm related to them, Karen. Ms. Givens was my grandmother - my father was Old Man Johnson's illegitimate half brother!

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Ray stands alone in the darkened kitchen in pyjamas and slippers. He opens the fridge, stares inside.

Finally he pulls out a carton of chocolate milk. As he takes a sip there is the sound of breaking glass from the living room.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Ray runs into the living room. The window is broken, the curtains flap in the wind - in the middle of the room lies a flaming bottle.

As Ray stares in shock, the tail lights of a vehicle peel away from the house. The carton of milk falls from Ray's hand, spills across the floor, the milk trickling from the half-open spout.

The flames from the Molotov cocktail creep across the floor towards Ray's feet - finally he springs into life. He jumps back, looks around the room, grabs a blanket off the couch, drops it on the flames, stomps on them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The flames creep through the thin blanket. Ray grabs the fallen milk carton, opens the spout all the way, pours it on the flames.

Still the flames won't die. Ray stamps viciously on them, frantic, pulls cushions from the couch, finally gets the fire out.

Ray stands with a look of shock on his face, the cold wind whipping the curtains into the room, a flurry of snow flakes swirling and twisting on the wind.

He staggers forward, leans out the window and shouts at the bleak night.

RAY

I won't quit!

EXT. MAIN STREET. DAY.

Ray runs along the sidewalk to catch up to Sheriff Reeves, who is getting into his car. He looks up when he sees Ray, continues to climb into the car.

SHERIFF REEVES

Don't have any news for you.

He starts to shut the door, but Ray grabs it.

RAY

I've got news for you.

SHERIFF REEVES

You know who cut your trees?

RAY

Shit! The whole town knows it was the Johnsons.

SHERIFF REEVES

You got proof?

RAY

Of course I don't.

The sheriff grabs the door back from Ray.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERIFF REEVES

Then we got nothing to talk
about.

He slams the door, but Ray manages to get his foot in the door, stops it. The sheriff looks up, angry.

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

You're beginning to piss me off!

RAY

Good. Then maybe you'll pull
your damn finger out and find out
who threw a petrol bomb through
my window last night.

The sheriff looks at him carefully, then shoves his door open, climbs out. He walks forward, forces Ray back into the car parked next them, pokes his finger into Ray's chest.

SHERIFF REEVES

How does that feel? You like
that?

His face is close to Ray's, his breath steams in the cold.

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

See what happens is, you push
people too far, they push back.

The two are eyeball to eyeball.

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

You want to get me out your way,
don't you? Out of your face?

He steps back, sighs.

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

People round here, they're
desperate. Folks like you come
along, take good land, let it lie
idle, it rankles.

He turns away, opens his car door. Ray straightens up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHERIFF REEVES (CONT'D)

They're fighting for their homes,
their land, their way of life.

RAY

And they're fighting illegally.
You going to investigate Johnson
or not?

SHERIFF REEVES

Johnson, he's watched the logging
industry die, laid off men he's
worked with for decades - seen
them move out, commit suicide -
hell, he's fed and clothed whole
families himself. He's fighting
for the only thing he's still got
- his family.

RAY

Yeah? Well so am I!

INT. BAR. DAY.

Ray walks into the bar, nods to the barman. About ten
people are dotted around the gloomy interior.

RAY

Gimme a beer.

The barman pops the top, slides a bottle along the bar to
him. Ray picks it up, glugs half of it down.

BARMAN

Still butting heads with Reeves?

RAY

News travels fast around here.

BARMAN

That's coz there's so little of
it.

He looks around, moves a little closer to Ray.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARMAN (CONT'D)

I wouldn't set my hopes on getting too much help out of Superman.

RAY

Superman?

BARMAN

Reeves. He's made a career out of ignoring what the Johnsons do.

RAY

Figures.

BARMAN

You got a tiger by the tail taking them on - you might want to run before that tiger turns around.

He wanders off down the bar to serve another customer.

Ray finishes his beer, slides the empty back down the bar. He stands, looks around - everyone's watching him.

RAY

(To the crowd) Why does everybody keep telling me to run?

He walks to the middle of the room.

RAY (CONT'D)

Is that what people do around here? Run from trouble?

An old guy sitting in a booth speaks up.

OLD GUY

Three things you don't mess with - God, the Montana winters -

(MORE)

RAY

And the Johnsons. Yeah, I heard that one before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAY(CONT'D)

First two I got no problem with,
but the third...Why should they
bully their way around here, do
as they please?

PATRON 1

Some of us still get pick-up work
at the mill. Gotta have jobs.

PATRON 2

Folks have learned it's better to
keep your head down.

Ray pulls a sheaf of papers from of his pocket.

RAY

You may have heard about this
petition - I'm trying to get the
FBI down here - make it better
for everyone.

He goes to a table, lays the paper down, spreads it flat.

RAY (CONT'D)

What if everyone in here were to
sign this, right now?

He pulls out a pen, lays it down on the table.

RAY (CONT'D)

If everyone signs, we're all
protected. FBI comes in,
resolves this.

He looks around. No one moves.

RAY (CONT'D)

Come on! It just takes one of
you with the courage to be the
first!

He goes to the booth where the old guy sits.

RAY (CONT'D)

How about you? I'll bet you
don't work at the mill these
days.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He holds the paper out to him. The old guy stands up, walks away. Ray moves on to another table.

RAY (CONT'D)

What about you guys?

No one moves. Ray stands in the center of the room.

RAY (CONT'D)

I've got a wife, little girl.
You going to let me face this
alone?

Silence. Ray lays the paper down on an empty table.

RAY (CONT'D)

I'm going to leave this paper on
the table while I go to the
restroom - any of you want to
sign it, go ahead...

Ray heads to the bathroom. The barman shakes his head.

BARMAN

Tiger by the tail...

He turns as the front door opens, looks shocked. Clay stands in the doorway.

CLAY

Where's Givens?

INT. BAR RESTROOM. DAY.

Ray finishes peeing, turns to wash his hands, finds Clay standing watching him.

CLAY

You worked Floyd over good.

Ray looks up at Clay - he's big.

RAY

So what now? He sends his big
brother over for payback?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAY

That fool had it coming... (Beat)
You're none too smart, are you?

RAY

What's your point?

CLAY

Folks are scared.

RAY

I can see that - What the hell
happened in this town?

CLAY

About twenty years ago this eco
tree hugger came through.
College kid, smart assed and
ballsy. Spent a few days snooping
around, pissing people off.

RAY

And?

CLAY

One night I was in the bar with
my dad, tree-hugger comes in,
says he's got an announcement...

FLASHBACK

INT. BAR. NIGHT.

A group of locals sit in the bar, drinking. Among them is
the younger Old Man Johnson, 46, with his son, Clay, 16. A
younger Troy is also there.

The door opens and JIMMY WILSON, 21, hurries in, his North
Face parka and woolly hat covered in snow. He brushes the
snow from his coat as he makes for the bar.

WILSON

Gimme a beer.

The barman opens a bottle, slides it down the bar towards
him. Before it reaches him, Johnson reaches out and
intercepts it. The bar falls silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD MAN JOHNSON

We've been talking -

He indicates everyone in the room.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

- you've worn out your welcome,
tree hugger.

WILSON

Gimme my beer - I've been working
all day.

Johnson gives a harsh laugh.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Work you call it? Scuttling
round the forest with your
notebook and your binoculars?
You want to see some real work,
come by the mill.

There are more nods, murmurs of agreement.

WILSON

Yeah, that precious mill of
yours...(Beat) You might want to
think of learning a new trade.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

What's that supposed to mean?

WILSON

By the time I finish delivering
my report, you'll be lucky to
stay out of jail, let alone keep
the mill open.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Is that right?

WILSON

You're cutting old growth,
protected areas, you name it...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OLD MAN JOHNSON

So when are you delivering your report?

WILSON

I'm out of here tomorrow - be back in DC Thursday...

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Interesting...

Without warning he lashes out with Wilson's beer bottle, smashes it against the side of his head.

Wilson reels across the floor, lands in a heap in the middle of the room. He looks up in amazement and fear, reaches up and feels the blood running down his face.

WILSON

Are you fucking crazy?

He sees Sheriff Reeves sitting at the end of the bar.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Sheriff? You going to arrest this man?

Before Reeves can speak, Johnson takes centre stage, looms over Wilson, the broken bottle in his hand.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

We let this shit walk out of here alive, it's the end of this town.

He looks around the room.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Y'all need to choose sides, fast.

Reeves stands up, puts his hat on.

SHERIFF REEVES

I need to go finish up some paperwork.

WILSON

Sheriff!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Reeves just walks past Wilson and Johnson, on out the door. Wilson struggles to his feet.

WILSON (CONT'D)

For God's sake!

As Johnson advances, Wilson backs up. Several other men climb to their feet, close him off.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

It ends here...

The circle closes - suddenly there's a frenzy of punching, kicking. Wilson goes down, but the beating continues, boots and fists raining in.

Seated at the bar, young Clay looks on, flinches with each blow that rains down on the helpless Wilson.

Finally the group wears itself out - they step back, look down at the bloody pulp on the floor.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

He was never here. We never saw him, we never mention him again - understood? (Beat) Anyone ever breaks that silence, they wind up like that piece of shit.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BAR RESTROOM. DAY.

Ray looks in horror at Clay.

CLAY

There's only so much I can do to protect you...

RAY

You know I'm not going to run, don't you?

CLAY

I was afraid of that...

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN. DAY.

Ray is dressed for running. He picks up a small digital camera from the table, slips it into his jacket pocket.

KAREN

This is a stupid idea.

Ray slips on a pair of gloves.

RAY

I just want to get a few photos,
show the cut trees and so on.

KAREN

Well at least take those stupid
dogs with you - they need a run.

EXT. FOREST. DAY.

Ray runs through the woods, the dogs alongside him. He slows down, calls them to them. They come bounding up.

RAY

Good boys, good boys!

Ray removes a short piece of twine from his pocket, ties it to one dog's collar, loops it around a small tree, then ties it to the other collar.

RAY (CONT'D)

You stay right there!

He moves off slowly, peers through the trees. The dogs watch him for a moment, then begin to whimper and strain at the small rope.

Ray creeps through the trees, close now to the logged area. The sound of voices makes him duck behind a tree. He peers out, across the clear cut area. Light snow falls on the clearing.

EXT. CLEAR-CUT AREA. DAY/EXT. FOREST. DAY.

On the far side is the Johnson's big logging truck - Floyd and Wade are loading a log.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ray creeps a little closer, right to the edge of the trees, pulls the camera from his pocket.

He raises the camera, takes a couple of photos, then creeps around the edge of the woods to get closer.

Away behind him the dogs strain at the rope, pulling hard - the knot starts to slip.

Ray is closer to the brothers. He zooms the camera in on the licence plates, takes a couple more photos. Suddenly the sound of barking rings out through the woods. The brothers stop working, look around.

FLOYD

Where the hell's that coming
from?

Floyd and Wade scan the woods. The barking continues.

The dogs strain at the rope. Suddenly the knot gives and they take off running towards Ray.

Wade looks right towards Ray. Suddenly he points.

WADE

What's that?

FLOYD

Givens? Is that you?

He starts towards Ray. Ray watches for a moment, suddenly breaks cover, runs along the edge of the woods.

WADE

There he is!

Wade runs after Ray. As Ray runs along the edge of the woods, the barking gets louder.

The dogs suddenly bound up to Ray, excited, barking. Ray tries to grab them but they've seen something else - Wade running towards them.

They run past Ray and towards Wade. Wade takes one look at the dogs and turns tail to run - but though he has a head start, the dogs gain fast over the broken ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Suddenly Wade trips, lands hard on the frozen ground. In seconds the two dogs are upon him. They are looking to play, but Wade misinterprets their intentions, starts screaming and lashing out.

One of the dogs playfully tugs at his trouser leg, the other tries to lick his face.

Ray stops at the edge of the woods, can't help but laugh as he sees Wade go down, the dogs all over him.

Suddenly there's the crack of a rifle shot, a whimper, and the dog licking Wade's face crumples to the ground.

Ray looks in surprise. Floyd stands by his truck, hunting rifle in his hand. He re-loads, takes aim.

RAY

Hey! They're just playing!

FLOYD

Well I ain't!

The rifle cracks again and the second dog yelps, falls, starts to writhe in pain. Calm as can be, Floyd re-loads. Crack! The second dog lies still.

RAY

Jeez! You killed my dogs!

Floyd jogs over to Wade, who is just sitting up.

WADE

Twisted my ankle.

Ray sees Floyd reload, raise the rifle, take aim - just in time Ray ducks behind a tree. The rifle cracks, a bullet pings the tree right by Ray's head.

RAY

Are you fucking crazy!

Floyd calmly re-loads.

FLOYD

Get your rifle, Wade! We're huntin' city boy!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Wade limps to the truck. Ray turns and runs through the woods, trips and stumbles in his panic.

Another shot rings out, a bullet hits a tree near Ray's head. He crawls, hides behind a fallen tree, peeks out through the bare branches.

The snow starts to fall faster as Wade moves slowly towards Ray, rifle raised, scanning back and forth. Floyd has his rifle and limps off to Ray's right, to outflank him.

Ray ducks back behind the tree, catches his breath for a moment, then crawls away through a low tangle of branches. He presses himself into the ground, down among the pine needles and the snow, tries to remain unseen.

Breathless from fear, Ray crawls deeper into a pile of leaves and bracken - suddenly his hand strikes something. He pulls his hand back, stares in horror at the half-decomposed body of an old lady - it's Margaret Givens.

Her skin is grey, peeling, half eaten away by scavengers. Her empty eye sockets stare up at him. Ray backs up, frantic, then turns and throws up into the pine needles.

Floyd is just visible in the woods off to his right, Wade still moves towards him.

WADE

Where the hell'd he go?

FLOYD

Shut the hell up, Wade!

Ray glances again at Margaret's decomposing corpse, looks around, fixes the location in his mind, then climbs to his feet and scurries away towards another large tree.

As he ducks behind the tree he steps on a twig, there's a quiet snap. Floyd spins around, instantly alert, peers through the blowing snow for a glimpse of Ray.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

I hear ya, Givens!

Wade creeps forward, closer and closer. He's barely ten yards away when there's another noise, off to Ray's right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Ray looks up - standing not twenty yards away is a large deer, looking directly at him. Its expression is almost quizzical as it stares at him, its large eyes unblinking.

Suddenly it breaks, leaps off through the woods to Ray's right, towards Wade, full of power and grace.

Wade sees it, acts on hunter's instinct - he instantly takes aim, fires. It seems he's missed - the deer takes three more bounding leaps towards him, but then it stumbles, falls in a crumpled heap in front of him.

WADE

Whoo-wee! How 'bout that!

He runs towards the downed deer, whooping and hollering. Floyd looks over in disgust at Wade, who stands triumphantly over the deer, grinning.

WADE (CONT'D)

You see that?

Ray slides out from behind the tree, stays low and dodges from tree to tree away from the brothers.

FLOYD

There's our real prey, you damn fool!

Ray moves fast, dodges through the cover of the trees. With a last wistful look at the dead deer, Wade follows Floyd in his pursuit of Ray.

Ray throws caution to the wind, figures his best bet is to outpace the brothers, half hidden in the fast falling snow.

Another shot whistles past him as he dodges and weaves among the trees. He glances back, sees Wade jogging towards him - Floyd is closer, stops, takes aim.

As the shot rings out Ray dives forward into a maze of tangled undergrowth. The shot misses, but Ray gets tangled - the brambles tear at his clothes, his skin. It seems the more he struggles, the tighter he is held.

Like a soldier tangled on the barbed wire of a World War I battlefield, he is held fast as his pursuers close in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Suddenly Floyd spots him. He's still about fifty metres away. He peers through the blowing snow at Ray.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

Well lookie here!

They both stop, look at Ray as he struggles to free himself from the tangle of undergrowth. Calmly, Floyd opens his rifle, loads another bullet. He snaps it shut.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

Anything you want to say, city
boy?

Ray wriggles and squirms, sweat running down his face.

RAY

Fuck you!

As he says it the shot rings out, and at the same time Ray breaks free. The bullet grazes his forehead, smacks into the tree behind him.

Ray stumbles free, loses his footing, tumbles, out of control, down a steep slope.

Over and over he falls, through the bushes, finally tumbles out onto a road at the bottom of the hill.

EXT. ROAD. DAY.

Ray rolls out onto the road, looks up - a huge logging truck rolls towards him.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. DAY.

The driver looks in amazement as Ray appears out of the blizzard into the road in front of him.

DRIVER

Shit!

He slams his foot on the brake.

EXT. ROAD. DAY.

Ray is frozen in fear as the truck bears down on him, tires smoking, fishtailing on the wet, icy road.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Closer and closer it comes, losing speed, but looming ever larger. It finally stops, the bumper almost touching Ray's head.

There's a moment of silence, then the door of the truck flies open and the driver jumps out, storms round, looks down at Ray.

DRIVER

Are you fucking crazy?!

Ray says nothing, too traumatized. The driver notices Ray's torn clothes, fearful look.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

You OK? You look like you've seen a bear or something.

Ray glances up the slope, sees Floyd and Wade appear among the trees at the top of the slope.

RAY

Big mother-fucking bear!

DRIVER

Shit! Get in!

He throws the passenger door open for Ray, glances fearfully around through the snow as he runs round to climb in the driver's door.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. DAY.

The driver slams his door, jams the truck into gear. It slowly starts to roll forwards.

Ray peers out the window at the forest, sees Floyd and Wade standing on the ridge, waving at him.

DRIVER

You one lucky son of a bitch -
them mother-fuckers don't usually
let their prey get away from
them!

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Ray pounds on the kitchen table.

RAY

I found her body, Karen!

KAREN

They tried to kill you! We're leaving - tonight!

RAY

And going where?

KAREN

Anywhere!

RAY

You told me not to run away!

KAREN

This is different!

RAY

You're right - this is the first time I've had anything that was mine, my family's...

Ray reaches out, takes Karen's hand.

RAY (CONT'D)

She was my grandmother, Karen - I found her body, left in the woods to be eaten by scavengers. I finally have a family, a heritage, and these bastards are tearing it all down. I'm not running away from this!

Karen looks at him, slowly nods.

KAREN

So what do we do?

Ray pulls out his camera.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY

I got some good photos of the logging.

Karen looks over his shoulder at the photos.

KAREN

They could be just about anywhere.

Ray gazes out the window into the darkness. A slight movement in the yard catches his eye. Ray whips the curtains closed, moves away from the window.

RAY

If I could just catch them in the act...

KAREN

And in the meantime? We wait for them to come pick you off?

RAY

Shit, I don't know! (Beat) Maybe I should try and talk to them? Call the old man -

KAREN

Yeah, right. Why don't you pop over there right now and say "Hi uncle, I was just - "

Ray jumps up, starts searching the kitchen counter.

KAREN (CONT'D)

What?

He turns around, holds up his small digital recorder.

RAY

You're right! If I can get him to talk to me - admit to something - that and the photos...

He grabs his car keys. Karen looks at him in horror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAREN

You're going over there?

Ray steps to the back door, starts pulling his shoes on.

RAY

It'll be fine - I'll stay in the car, keep the engine running. First sign of trouble I'll be out of there like a bat out of hell!

KAREN

That's crazy!

Ray straightens up, pulls Karen into his arms.

RAY

I found Ms. Givens body, Karen. She was my grandmother, and they killed her. I owe it to her to prove they did it.

KAREN

I'm pregnant.

Ray stops in his tracks, turns slowly and looks at Karen.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I'm leaving - tonight.

RAY

You think I don't want to run?

KAREN

Then let's do it!

RAY

I've been running my whole life, Karen. It's time to stop and fight for something I believe in.

Karen looks up at him.

KAREN

What do you believe in?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RAY

My family.

Karen sighs, shakes her head.

KAREN

An hour. I'll give you an hour.
If you're not back by then, Lucy
and I are gone.

EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

The night is dark, the snow blowing hard, as Ray's car glides past the frozen lake.

EXT. JOHNSON'S YARD. NIGHT.

Ray pulls into the Johnson's yard. Bright lights burn inside the large, two story farmhouse.

Ray stops parallel to the long front porch, blows the horn. After a moment the porch light flicks on, Floyd sticks his head out the door, sees Ray's car.

FLOYD

Pa? It's Givens!

Ray lowers his window. The front door opens and Old Man Johnson ambles onto the porch, buried in his long coat, eases himself into a rocking chair. He gestures to the chair beside him.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

It's a beautiful Montana evening.
Why don't you come sit a spell,
Mr. Givens?

Ray smiles, peers up at the blizzard swirling around them. He turns on the recorder in his lap.

RAY

Appreciate the offer, but I think
I'll just stay here in the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD MAN JOHNSON

See, that's what city living does for you, Mr. Givens - makes you suspicious.

RAY

No, that's what being beaten by your sons does for me, Mr. Johnson.

Now it's the old man's turn to laugh.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Suit yourself. So what can we do for you, Mr. Givens?

As he speaks, Wade slides out of the shadows at the end of the house, circles round behind Ray's car.

RAY

We have some issues we need to resolve.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Can't think of any issues myself.

RAY

Well let's see - your boys cut down my trees. They beat me. They burned down my barn. They threw a fire bomb through my window. They threatened my family. Oh, and y'all murdered Miss Givens.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

That's quite a list of accusations you got there, Mr. Givens. I sure hope you can back them up.

RAY

Some yes, some no - but that's not what I'm here about.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Wade creeps behind a huge tree in the middle of the yard, a gun in his hand. He's hidden by the darkness and the falling snow.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Go ahead, I'm listening.

RAY

I want it to end, now.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

How's that going to happen?

RAY

I want payment for the cut trees,
and I want your word that you'll
stay away from me and my family.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

That's a lot to ask, Mr. Givens.

RAY

Oh I'm prepared to be a good
neighbor, to share.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Share?

RAY

Sure. I'll share the photos I
have of the logging - oh, and
I've found Miss Givens' body.

Johnson looks at him sharply, stands up. Wade creeps closer, behind the car.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Want to know what I think? I
think you got quite a nerve.

He steps down off the porch, makes deep footprints in the snow, takes Ray's attention away as Wade slides along the side of the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Coming out to my house to give me
an ultimatum - who the hell you
think you are?

RAY

I just want -

OLD MAN JOHNSON

How about I tell you my
ultimatum?

Wade stands up, puts the gun to Ray's temple. There's a
loud click as he cocks the hammer.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Get out the car!

Ray slips the recorder into his pocket as Wade opens the
door, then slowly climbs out.

RAY

I've already called the FBI.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Great. They'll be right on the
spot to look into your
disappearance.

RAY

You're going to murder me?

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Murder you? You make it sound so
premeditated!

RAY

You murdered Miss Givens.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Old bitch wouldn't listen to me -
I just put her out of her misery.
Take him into the house.

Wade jabs the gun into Ray's back to make him walk
forwards. Ray climbs onto the porch. Floyd stands
waiting, his face battered and bruised.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

RAY

You don't look so good, Floyd.

FLOYD

It's payback time, you son of a bitch!

He hits Ray hard in the guts, catches him as he doubles over, shoves him into the house.

INT. JOHNSON'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Ray stumbles into the middle of the room - Floyd kicks his legs out from under him and he drops to the floor. Clay sits quietly in an old recliner, says nothing.

RAY

You can't just -

Floyd kicks him hard in the ribs.

FLOYD

We can do whatever we want!

He kicks him again and Ray slumps to the floor, face down, groans. Floyd circles, on his toes like a boxer.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

Come on tough guy, I'm ready whenever you are!

He kicks him again, leans down and pounds him in the face. Clay watches as Floyd beats Ray, the blood spraying from Ray's face. Finally he steps between them, shoves Floyd out of the way.

CLAY

Enough!

Floyd looks across at Johnson.

FLOYD

Pa!

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Clay's right. There'll be plenty of time for fun later.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Johnson grabs Ray's hair and yanks his head up.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

You shoulda left when we warned
you. Now you've gone and got
people all stirred up in town.

He drops Ray's head to the floor with a thump. Ray groans,
tries to roll back up onto his hands and knees.

Wade stands by the door, jingles Ray's keys.

WADE

Look what we got - car keys -
house keys too!

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Floyd - go get his wife and kid -
take his car so's she don't
suspect nothing.

FLOYD

She's real pretty his wife...

He leans down over Ray, gets right in his face.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

Reckon I'll have me some fun!

WADE

Daughter's cute too!

Ray manages to get up onto his hands and knees.

RAY

She's only twelve, you sick
bastard!

Floyd kicks Ray again, and he crashes over onto his back.

CLAY

You don't need the women - deal
with Givens, then it's all over.

They all turn and look at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Your conscience is becoming a
pain in the ass, son - it's
beginning to cloud your judgement
- they'll know where he is. Go
get the women Floyd.

Floyd grins at Clay. Clay turns and heads up the stairs.

FLOYD

Clay may be turning gay on us,
but I reckon we should put on a
show with them girls. What d'you
say pa?

Johnson watches as Clay climbs the stairs.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

As long as they're all three in
the ground by morning I don't
care what you do with them.

Floyd comes and stands above Ray, legs astride him.

FLOYD

Do you like to watch, city boy?

He starts grinding his hips.

RAY

I'll kill you, you son of a
bitch!

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Get out of here. And keep your
pants zipped till you get back!

Floyd turns and heads for the door, grabs the keys from
Wade and waves them tauntingly at Ray.

FLOYD

I'll do my best pa. But if they
start coming on to me...

He slams the door behind him. Johnson picks up a chair and
sits down beside Ray.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Pa bragged to me more than once that he'd raped Margaret Givens - I kinda hoped the old witch would leave the house to my boys, but she wouldn't listen.

RAY

So you killed her?

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Damn right! With her missing, it's a year before she can be declared dead - we can get a lot of wood out of there in a year...

Johnson suddenly stands up, turns to Wade.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Put your cousin in the back bedroom.

Wade leans over Ray, grabs his arm and hauls him to his feet. Ray grunts in pain and clutches his ribs as Wade half carries him out of the living room.

INT. JOHNSON'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Wade leads Ray into the bedroom. It's sparse - a large wood frame bed, a small bedside table, an old dresser, a chair by the bed. Wade shoves Ray into the chair.

WADE

Sit tight!

Johnson pitches a roll of duct tape to Wade.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Make sure it's tight.

Wade kneels down behind Ray, tapes his wrists, one either side of the chair back. Ray looks half unconscious, head lolling on his chest, eyes closed.

Wade straightens up, pulls off a last strip of tape. He lifts Ray's head by the hair. Their eyes meet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WADE

Don't want you making no noise
and disturbing my fun with your
little girl!

He clamps the piece of tape across Ray's mouth, throws the roll on the bed. Ray's head slumps back on his chest.

WADE (CONT'D)

Be good now!

He gives a silly giggle, leaves the room.

INT. RAY'S CAR. NIGHT.

Floyd drives Ray's car fast through the snow, music blasting out. He puts his head back and lets out a whoop.

FLOYD

I'm a comin' girls, I'm a comin'!

INT. JOHNSON'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Ray sits up, scans the room. He pulls a few times at his wrists, but they're not coming loose.

There's not much in the room, but Ray's eyes focus on an empty beer glass on the bedside table.

He looks over towards the door. It's not quite closed - the sound of a football game comes from the TV.

Ray slowly stands, leans forward, picks the chair up behind him. Like an overgrown turtle he shuffles over to the bedside table, turns around and picks up the glass.

He sits the chair back down, lets go of the glass, watches as it rolls under the bed.

Ray sighs in frustration, picks up the chair and scoots forward, manages to roll the glass out from under the bed with his foot. Then he carefully crunches it beneath the heel of his shoe.

The glass breaks. Ray peers down at the pieces. There's several good sized pieces. He pinches a couple of chunks between his feet, lifts them up and drops them on the bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A sudden noise stops Ray. Footsteps. He quickly lifts the chair, moves back to his original position.

The door opens and Wade pops his head in. Ray is where he left him, head slumped. Wade glances around, sees nothing amiss, leaves. This time he leaves the door half open.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Karen sits in a large armchair reading a book to Lucy, who sits in her lap.

Darkness suddenly falls over the room. Lucy gives a little scream.

LUCY

Mom! What's happening!

KAREN

It's OK sweetie. The power's gone out.

Karen moves through the shadows. There's the sound of a match striking, then Karen appears, standing by the window, lighting a candle.

KAREN (CONT'D)

The storm must have brought the power lines down.

She walks over to Lucy, sets the candle on the table.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Come on, let's finish your book - dad will be home soon.

INT. JOHNSON'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Ray stands up, scoots over to the bed, sits the chair down with his hands towards the bed.

He fumbles around with his hands, finds a large chunk of glass, tries to pick it up. He nicks his fingers once or twice, but finally gets a good grip on it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ray turns the glass in his hands, starts to work it against the tape. He cuts his arm the first time, but then gets the glass lined up - with just a few slices the tape parts.

Ray drops the glass, pulls his hands free. Grimacing, he pulls the tape from his mouth. He creeps over to the door, peers through the crack - Wade sits on the couch watching TV. Johnson stands looking out the window.

Ray scans the bedroom - the only other way out is the window. Ray steps quietly to the window, gently pulls the curtains out the way.

It's an old sash window, looks as though it hasn't been opened in decades. Ray reaches down and takes the handle, gently tugs upwards. Nothing happens.

Ray changes his grip, pulls harder. His face is locked in a grimace with the effort, but the window won't budge.

Ray shakes out his hands, once more grips the handle. Just as he starts to tug at the window he hears footsteps. Ray moves quickly across to hide behind the door, his hands resting lightly on the back of the chair.

The door opens and Wade steps in. He looks to where Ray was sitting - his face registers surprise.

WADE

Now where the -

Before he can say any more Ray swings the chair hard up towards his head. Wade doesn't see it coming, can't get his arms up. The chair catches him flush across the face, sends him flying back out the room.

INT. JOHNSON'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Johnson turns away from the window as he hears a noise - sees Wade come exploding back across the floor to land in a heap at his feet.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Son of a bitch!

INT. JOHNSON'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Ray turns, heaves the chair through the window.

Without a backwards glance he jumps up onto the bed, leaps through the shattered glass out into the deep snow.

EXT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Ray comes flying through the broken window, lands on the snowy ground and rolls forwards. He is instantly up on his feet, runs off into the darkness.

INT. JOHNSON'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Johnson bursts through the door - a glance shows him what has happened. He strides over to the window, peers out.

EXT. JOHNSON'S YARD. NIGHT.

Ray runs away from the house.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

You won't get far!

Ray looks around. A dark shape looms up ahead - a run-down barn. Ray scuttles over to it, disappears into the shadows at the side of the barn.

INT. JOHNSON'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Johnson pulls two shotguns out of a dresser, cracks them open and loads them with shells. Wade sits on the floor, nurses his battered face. The old man strides over to him.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

On your feet!

WADE

Pa! He whacked me with a chair!

Johnson reaches down, offers him a hand, hauls him to his feet. He grabs his battered face, fixes his gaze upon him.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

You want to play with them girls,
you got to go hunt Givens down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wade gulps, tries not to grimace where his father has his hands clamped on his bruised cheek.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

OK, son?

Wade nods. Johnson hands him a shotgun.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Good boy. Let's go find him.

EXT. JOHNSON'S YARD. NIGHT.

Ray crouches in the shadow of the barn. Johnson and Wade walk around the side of the house, both carrying shotguns. Johnson peels off to the left, moves cautiously along the back of the house. Wade heads towards the barn.

Ray sinks into the shadows, backs down the side of the barn as Wade approaches. He ducks down beside an old washing machine, looks round for some kind of a weapon.

Ray's hands find a length of pipe, wrap around it. He lifts it, poised, as Wade approaches.

Wade comes closer and closer, half crouched as he walks, shotgun out in front. As he draws level with Ray, Ray pulls his arm back, ready to strike.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (O.S.)

Hey, Wade?

Ray presses into the shadows. Wade turns to his father.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Come here a minute, son.

Wade trots across the yard towards his father. They meet in the middle of the yard, put their heads together.

Ray watches as Johnson says something to Wade, points towards the barn. Ray slides back further along the side of the barn, runs his hands along the wall. Suddenly his hands find a gap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ray glances back - Johnson heads towards him, Wade circles round to the other side. Ray squeezes against the crack, forces two rotting boards apart, slips into the barn.

EXT. RAY'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Ray's car pulls up outside his house.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Karen looks up she hears the car outside. They jump up and run to the window. Karen pulls the curtain aside, peers out through the snow, sees Ray's car. A look of relief floods her face.

LUCY

Daddy's home!

EXT. RAY'S PORCH. NIGHT.

Lucy skips out onto the porch, Karen follows. Lucy waves.

LUCY

Daddy!

The car door opens, Floyd jumps out, a gun in his hand.

FLOYD

Hi ladies! Y'all are looking lovely tonight!

INT. JOHNSON'S BARN. NIGHT.

Ray gropes his way through the dark barn, bumps into something large - the Johnson's huge logging truck.

He feels his way along the passenger side to the front of the truck. Suddenly he freezes - there's the sound of footsteps outside.

Ray listens for a moment then keeps moving, round the front of the truck. Moonlight beams in through a high window to shine on the driver's door. Ray finds the handle, gently squeezes and opens the door.

As the door opens it creaks - it's not loud, but in the utter silence it's a sharp grating sound.

EXT. JOHNSON'S YARD. NIGHT.

Wade hears the sound of the door opening, freezes.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

He's in the barn!

WADE

Got it!

He turns and heads towards the front of the barn.

INT. JOHNSON'S BARN. NIGHT.

Ray hears Wade's voice, realizes the time for caution is gone. He hauls on the huge steering wheel to get himself up into the cab of the truck.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

In the darkened cab Ray feels around the steering column for the keys - there are none.

EXT. JOHNSON'S YARD. NIGHT.

Wade comes around to the front of the barn.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

Ray flips down the visor - the keys drop into his lap. He grabs them, fumbles to fit the key into the ignition.

EXT. JOHNSON'S YARD. NIGHT.

Wade sets down his shotgun, grabs the heavy two by four that holds the huge double doors shut, pulls at it.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

The key slots into the ignition. Ray turns it and the truck roars into life. In one movement Ray slams it into gear and mashes down on the accelerator.

EXT. JOHNSON'S YARD. NIGHT.

Wade looks up as the truck roars into life. His hands are still on the doors as they explode outwards, the truck crashing through them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wade is crushed beneath the truck as it roars out of the barn and across the yard.

Johnson comes running from around the side of the barn, shotgun raised, takes aim, fires.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

Ray grips the steering wheel tight as the truck bounces across the yard, through the swirling snow.

There's a crash of glass as Johnson's shotgun blast rips through the passenger window, sprays Ray with broken glass. But he's not for stopping - he rounds the corner of the house, heads for the road.

EXT. JOHNSON'S YARD. NIGHT.

Clay comes running out as the logging truck passes the house.

CLAY

What the fuck is going on?

The truck speeds off into the dark, snowy night.

EXT. RAY'S PORCH. NIGHT.

Floyd dances round the porch like a maniac, waving the gun.

FLOYD

You in the mood for a party,
girls?

Lucy huddles up to Karen. Floyd peers at them.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

I can see it's gonna take a
little to get you two in the
mood. In the car, little one!

LUCY

Mom!

KAREN

Leave her here - it's me you
really want.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLOYD

You right about that lady...

He leers at her, then suddenly points the gun at them.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

In the car!

Lucy glances at Karen, who nods. Lucy darts past Floyd, climbs in the back of the car. Karen starts to follow, but Floyd grabs her wrist and pulls her close, kisses her. She pulls away, takes a swing at him.

KAREN

Keep your hands off me, you
filthy son of a bitch!

He slaps her, grabs her by her hair and pulls her face in close to his. He puts out his tongue and licks her face.

FLOYD

You and me's gonna have fun
tonight...

The hand with the gun slides across her breast, and he grinds his hips into hers, kisses her hard. Finally he shoves her off the porch towards the car.

INT. RAY'S CAR. NIGHT.

Floyd jumps into the car, looks back at Lucy and Karen.

FLOYD

Them leather seats look mighty
comfortable - maybe we should do
it right here in the car?

KAREN

Buckle up sweetheart.

FLOYD

That's it - better buckle up -
wouldn't want anything bad to
happen to you, would we?

INT. JOHNSON'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

The door flies open. Clay leads the way, Johnson right behind him, Wade draped across his arms - blood runs down his face, his limbs flop.

Clay clears the couch with one sweep of his arm. Johnson kneels down, gently lays Wade on the couch.

Johnson's face is a mask. He lays two fingers across Wade's neck to feel for a pulse, leans his cheek close to Wade's face to detect any breathing.

Johnson's eyes are closed, he holds his breath. Finally he exhales, straightens up. He strokes Wade's hair, wipes the blood from his face with his bare hand.

Still he says nothing, still Clay watches him. Finally the old man climbs to his feet.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Son of a bitch killed our Wade...

He reaches up and rubs his eyes, smears a streak of Wade's blood across his face.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I remember the day mother brought him home from the hospital - scrawny little thing with chicken legs. Floyd wanted to kill him right from the get go, but you always looked out for him...

His voice breaks, and for a second it looks like he might fall. He turns away from Clay, leans on the table. A strangled sob escapes him, his shoulders heave one time, then he straightens up.

When he turns back to Clay his face has changed, hardened.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I'm going to kill that bastard Givens, I'm going to kill his family, and I'm gonna burn his house to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He strides over to the dresser, pulls out a shotgun, a case of shells, turns to look at Clay.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

There ain't no middle ground no
more son - you've got to decide
whose side you're on...

Clay shakes his head sadly.

CLAY

That goddam New York boy should
have left when he had the chance.

Johnson throws a shotgun and a box of shells to Clay, grabs more shells, crams them in his pocket.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

No one fucks with my family!

He strides across the room Clay on his heels.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

It's killing time!

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

Ray drives fast along the icy roads, peers hard to see through the blizzard, listens to the recorder.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (ON TAPE)

Murder you? You make it sound so
premeditated!

RAY (ON TAPE)

You murdered Miss Givens.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (ON TAPE)

Old bitch wouldn't listen to me -
I just put her out of her misery.

RAY

Perfect!

He looks up, sees car lights coming towards him.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

Two vehicles head towards each other, past the frozen lake - the logging truck and Ray's car.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

Ray peers through the dirty screen at the headlights approaching - recognizes his own car. He drops the recorder on the seat, grips the wheel with both hands.

RAY

Shit!

Closer and closer they come. Suddenly Ray slams on the brakes of the truck.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

The truck's wheels lock up and it slides on the icy road. For a second it remains straight, then it jack-knifes, sideways across both lanes, straight towards Ray's car.

INT. RAY'S CAR. NIGHT.

Floyd leans forward as the truck suddenly jack-knifes towards them.

FLOYD

What the -

Karen looks up, sees the logging truck slide towards them. She throws a protective arm across Lucy, braces herself. Floyd slams on the brakes - too late!

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

Ray fights frantically with the wheel, looks out in horror as the truck slides towards his own car.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

Ray's car starts to slide. The two vehicles collide - in a spray of sparks Ray's car bounces off the logging truck, slides towards the lake.

INT. RAY'S CAR. NIGHT.

As the vehicles collide Floyd, without a seat belt, hurls forward and smashes into the windshield - blood spurts from his face as he flops around the front of the car.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

The truck slides on, losing speed fast, the front fender bent in against the tire - with a loud bang the tire explodes, the truck slaloms across the road towards the trees.

Behind it Ray's car flips over, once, twice, then slides upside down towards the edge of the lake, the roof bringing up a shower of sparks from the road.

Spinning slowly it slides towards the lake, finally stops, teetering on the edge. Then slowly it tips over the lip, slides down the short bank into the ice, nose first.

INT. RAY'S CAR. NIGHT.

Floyd slumps in the front of the car, not moving - blood covers his smashed face, his shirt. Karen and Lucy hang upside down from their seat belts, Lucy screaming, as the car slides into the lake.

Karen reaches up with one hand to brace herself against the roof, then unbuckles her seat belt, drops onto the ceiling of the upside down car. She grabs Lucy's shoulders.

KAREN

Lucy! Lucy!

Lucy pauses for breath and Karen clamps a hand over her mouth. She looks at her mother in surprise.

Karen slowly uncovers her mouth, strokes her cheek. Lucy takes a great gasping breath, stares at her mother.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Unbuckle yourself.

Karen holds Lucy while she unbuckles. Lucy tumbles down beside her mother, who reaches out and hugs her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN (CONT'D)

We're getting out of here, OK?

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

The truck slams into a tree, shudders to a halt, steam pouring from the front. The door flies open and Ray leaps out. He runs full tilt back towards the sinking car, his feet scrambling for purchase on the frozen road, holding his ribs in pain, his breathing harsh and erratic.

INT. RAY'S CAR. NIGHT.

Karen pulls on the door handle, but the door won't open. She tries again, same result. Frantic now she tugs and tugs, but it doesn't move. Lucy peers out the window at the rising waters.

LUCY

Mom! Do something!

Karen continues to tug at the door handle without success.

KAREN

I'm trying honey! It won't open!

LUCY

It's locked, mom!

Karen stops tugging, looks at Lucy.

KAREN

Smart girl!

She leans forward and pulls on the door lock. There's a reassuring click and the door locks rise up.

Karen leans back, grabs her door handle. Lucy also tries her door. They're stuck, not budging.

LUCY

But you unlocked them!

Karen looks out the window. The car has sunk enough that half the doors are under the water.

KAREN

It's the water pressure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's a lurch and the car sinks further - the water completely covers the windows. Lucy sobs pitifully.

Karen clicks on the window buttons, nothing happens. Lucy begins to wail uncontrollably, thrash against the windows.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

The car gives a sudden lurch, slips further into the water. Ray wades in, tries to grab the rear bumper. His hands scrabble desperately as the car slides in deeper.

Ray drops to his knees and peers inside - for just a second he glimpses Karen and Lucy's faces pushed against the glass, screaming at him.

RAY

Karen! Luce!

Then the dark waters swallow the car. Ray dives in.

INT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

Ray slides down the side of the car, his strokes fast and frantic in the dark, frigid water. Suddenly a light comes on inside the car. Karen has turned on the interior light.

Ray hammers on the window. The two faces turn towards him, surge to the window, scream soundlessly.

Ray grabs the rear door handle, tugs furiously. Karen shakes her head. He tugs some more, gives up, reaches down and grabs the front door handle.

As Ray pulls frantically at the handle, his face contorted from holding his breath, his jacket flares out and the pocket catches on the door mirror.

Ray finally lets go of the door handle and kicks for the surface. The jacket catches and he is held. He flails upward, goes nowhere.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

Ray's hand claws frantically at the surface of the lake. Bubbles rise up in a rush as he exhales. The eerie light of the car is just visible beneath the dark waters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ray's hand disappears. The waters still, the bubbles stop.

With a burst Ray breaks the surface, gasps a huge lung full of air, scrambles to the shore, chest heaving for air, coughing and spluttering.

He collapses on the bank, takes two deep breaths, then is on his feet, running towards the truck. He slips on the ice, falls to his knees, but is instantly back up running.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

Ray scrabbles in the truck, searches behind the seat for some tools. He shakes with cold, teeth chattering.

INT. RAY'S CAR. NIGHT.

Karen and Lucy huddle together. Lucy is frantic, looks all around at the dark lake.

LUCY

Where is he? He's drowned!

The car gives a sudden lurch, sinks further. Lucy gives a scream - water is seeping into the car, has silently crept up to their feet. It's rising fast, even as they look.

Floyd suddenly bobs up on the water, his bloody smashed face fixed in a grinning rictus. Lucy screams hysterically, lashes out with her hands and feet.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

Ray pulls out some jumper cables, a can of gas, hurls them on the ground - then his fingers wrap around a tire iron.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

Ray runs back to the lake. Just a faint light shows from the dark depths of the lake as Ray dives in, the tire iron held tight in his hand.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

Ray swims down to the car, taps on the window. Karen and Lucy look up, Lucy's face torn by her frantic screams as she beats on the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ray waves the tire iron, indicates for them to move back. Karen grabs Lucy, drags her back from the window. The rising water is up past their chests.

Ray pounds on the rear glass with the tire iron. He swings hard, but the water takes all his force.

Again and again he tries, but he's barely tapping on the glass. His face contorted, he kicks up to the surface.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

Ray explodes from the lake, struggles to the shore.

RAY

Fuck! Fuck!

He takes three deep breaths, turns and dives back in.

INT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

Karen and Lucy are pushed up against the back window, their contorted faces in the last tiny pocket of air. Ray taps on the window, gives them the thumbs up, but their faces are blank, all hope gone.

Ray puts the end of the tire iron under the lid of the trunk, cranks on it with all his might.

For a second nothing happens, then suddenly the trunk pops open. A surge of air sends a stream of bubbles racing past Ray's face as he forces himself into the trunk.

INT. RAY'S CAR. NIGHT.

As the trunk opens it sucks the remaining air from the car. All air gone, Karen and Lucy flail inside, scrabbling mutely against the rear window, eyes wide with fear.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

Working desperately Ray jimmies the tire iron against the top of the back seat. With a jerk the seat pops. Ray kicks hard and it folds down into the back of the car.

INT. RAY'S CAR. NIGHT.

Ray reaches in, grabs Lucy's arm, drags her out. Karen looks in surprise as Lucy is dragged away from her, sees her disappear out through the trunk.

As Lucy disappears, limp in Ray's grasp, Karen kicks hard, out through the trunk and towards the surface, her face contorted in pain and fear.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE. NIGHT.

Ray drags Lucy from the water, carries her to the shore. He's shaking from the cold, his teeth chattering. He drops to his knees, still cradling her in his arms.

Karen breaks the surface, cries out in animal fear.

KAREN

Lucy! Lucy!

Ray strokes Lucy's hair. She opens her eyes, looks up, begins coughing and spluttering.

RAY

She's OK!

Karen staggers from the water, drops to her knees beside Ray, gently strokes Lucy's face. Ray shakes uncontrollably from the cold, can barely speak, but he scoops Lucy up, climbs to his feet.

RAY (CONT'D)

G-g-get to the house...

EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

Ray stumbles along the dark road, Lucy in his arms, the blizzard blowing in his face. Karen jogs beside him.

The frozen lake lies behind them, their darkened house a quarter mile ahead.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Ray, Karen and Lucy hurry into the kitchen. Ray lowers Lucy into a chair, Karen emerges from the laundry room with an armful of towels.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They each grab towels, wrap themselves up, begin vigorously towelling. Karen pulls a lantern from the cupboard, lights it.

Ray's face is white, his lips blue.

RAY

Upstairs!

He urges Lucy up out of the chair.

KAREN

What are you doing?

RAY

Upstairs - have to get you hidden.

KAREN

You think they'll come here?

RAY

Don't th-th-think it, know it.

INT. RAY'S STAIRS. NIGHT.

Ray hurries Lucy up the stairs, Karen at his heels. She hisses at him in an urgent whisper.

KAREN

What happened back there?

RAY

I'll tell you in a minute.

Lucy suddenly stops, half way up the stairs.

LUCY

I'm not a baby, you can tell me.

RAY

OK. I went to the house - they kidnapped me, came for you.

He pauses, unsure how to continue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY (CONT'D)

I escaped, stole their truck.
One of the brothers tried to stop
me, got in front of the truck...

His voice tails off. Karen looks at him in horror.

KAREN

You killed him?

Ray suddenly starts back up the stairs, dragging Lucy.

RAY

Like I said - they'll be coming
here for sure.

INT. RAY'S BATHROOM. NIGHT.

The three crowd in, Lucy starts to towel off.

LUCY

What's going to happen, dad?

RAY

You and mom are going to hide -
whatever you hear, stay hidden
till I come get you - OK?

Lucy nods. Ray turns to Karen.

RAY (CONT'D)

You too.

Karen looks at him for a second, then nods for him to step
away a minute.

RAY (CONT'D)

Lucy? Get some dry clothes on.

Lucy leaves the room, Ray and Karen step into the hallway.

INT. RAY'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Ray and Karen speak in urgent whispers.

RAY

There's only one way Karen, only
one way this will end.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN

You can't fight them! You're not -

RAY

A fighter? What about my father?
Old Man Johnson?

KAREN

I understand - this violence,
you're afraid of it -

RAY

That's not what I'm afraid of.

A noise outside startles him. He hurries into his bedroom.

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Ray gazes out the window. Nothing moves outside.

RAY

The night my father died? I came
home from college - found my
mother beaten half to death, went
out looking for my dad...

FLASHBACK

EXT. BAR. NIGHT.

Young Ray stands outside a bar, snow swirling around him.

A drunken figure emerges from the bar, turns and staggers
up an alleyway. Ray follows.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. NIGHT.

The drunk, RAY GIVENS SENIOR, 46, stops to take a piss. He
hears a noise, pauses.

GIVENS SENIOR

Who's there?

RAY

It's me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIVENS SENIOR

College boy? What are you doing here?

RAY

I just saw mom...

GIVENS SENIOR

How is she?

RAY

You're not going to do that ever again.

GIVENS SENIOR

Says who?

RAY

Says me!

Without warning Ray hits his father. Givens Senior fights back, but he's too drunk, Ray is too strong. Ray hits him again and again and again...

END FLASHBACK

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Ray gazes out the window, lost in his memories.

RAY

I knew I was killing him, but I just couldn't stop myself...

Ray turns to Karen, looks straight in her eyes.

RAY (CONT'D)

I've been afraid of this my whole life, Karen - what if I'm like him - like Johnson? If I fight, can I control myself?

He steps to the window again.

RAY (CONT'D)

Get Lucy and get in the closet!

INT. RAY'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. NIGHT

Karen runs out, watches as Ray runs down the stairs. Lucy comes to her bedroom doorway.

LUCY

What's happening, mom?

KAREN

Dad's taking care of his family.

EXT. RAY'S YARD. NIGHT.

The moonlight glows bright on the snow. All is still, quiet. Karen's truck, the hood still up, stands by the side of the house, a taunting reminder to Ray.

There's a sudden movement - Ray runs across the yard, dodges from one patch of shadow to another.

He pauses in the shadow of a tree trunk, the only sound his ragged breathing, looks around. Finally he takes off down the frozen road towards the jack-knifed truck.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

Ray climbs into the truck. There is a shotgun on the rack behind the seats. Ray grabs the gun, fumbles with it, finally cracks it open, peers into two empty barrels.

RAY

Shit!

He looks around the truck, his gaze settles on the glove box. Ray leans down across the torn seat, wrenches the glove box open.

The glove box is broken, as Ray pulls it open it falls half off its hinges, spills a shower of shotgun shells across the floor of the cab.

They rattle as they land on the bare metal, roll off into the darkness. Ray groans, leans down and feels around on the floor for the shells.

He grasps one, reaches up and tucks it in his back pocket, finds another, carries on searching.

EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

A pair of lights appear in the distance, heading towards Ray and the logging truck.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

Ray scrabbles on the floor of the truck.

EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

The lights get closer.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK. NIGHT.

Ray's hand finds his digital recorder. He smiles and sits up, then pauses, listening. He looks round, sees the lights close to him.

Ray grabs the shotgun, jumps out of the truck.

EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

Ray tumbles out of the truck, slips and falls on the icy road. The lights are barely 100 yards away.

Ray doesn't wait to see who it is - he knows it's the Johnsons - takes off running along the edge of the road, in the shadow of the trees.

As he disappears around the curve, the vehicle stops - it is the Johnson's old pick-up truck. Clay and Old Man Johnson climb out, leave the truck running, lights on.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

What the fuck happened here?

Clay looks around, sees the skid marks where the car slid into the lake.

CLAY

Pa? Come here.

He scrambles down the bank, scans the water. Johnson stops on the bank above him.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

What do you see?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Clay peers into the lake. The dark shape of Ray's car is just visible in the shallow water.

CLAY

Givens' car!

Johnson turns and studies the crashed logging truck.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Looks like the son of a bitch ran
Floyd off the road.

Clay scrambles up beside his father, looks at the truck, then back down at the lake.

CLAY

So where's Floyd?

They both turn and look at the dark lake. Johnson looks into the cab of the truck, sees the empty gun rack.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Shotgun's gone.

CLAY

He's waiting for us...

Johnson slams the door of the logging truck.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

If the man's in a hurry to die,
let's not keep him waiting.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Ray moves silently through the darkened house, the shotgun in his hand. He stops, checks the recorder - the red record light blinks in the dark. He slips it in his pocket.

He moves on, into the kitchen.

EXT. RAY'S YARD. NIGHT.

Old Man Johnson and Clay creep across the dark yard towards Ray's house. They slip into the shadow of a large tree.

CLAY

How you want to play this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Johnson takes two shells from his pocket, loads them into his shotgun with shaking hands.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

I want to kill that son of a
bitch!

CLAY

You take the front - I'll head
round the back.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

A sudden blast shatters the front door.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Almost simultaneously there is a tinkle of breaking glass as Clay's shotgun butt smashes the glass on the back door. Clay reaches through and unlocks the door, slips inside.

Clay glides across the floor, eyes scanning the darkness. The moonlight beams in through the window as Clay moves across the room and out into the hall.

As Clay leaves the room Ray slips out of the pantry and ducks down behind the island in the middle of the room.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Johnson kicks open the front door, steps into the doorway. His massive frame fills the doorway, shotgun at the ready.

He scans the darkened room, then steps quickly across the floor and out into the hallway.

INT. RAY'S HALL. NIGHT.

The two meet in the hallway. The old man nods upstairs. Clay slowly creeps up the stairs, the old man turns and heads back towards the kitchen.

Ray crouches down behind the island. He sees the shadow of the old man creep into the room. Ray slides around the far side of the island, keeping it between them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Johnson looks around, picks up the stack of wet three towels, looks at them thoughtfully. As he does so Ray sneaks out into the hallway.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Hey Clay! Keep your wits about you! I reckon his wife and kid are here too!

INT. RAY'S HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Ray glimpses Clay upstairs, moving silently along the landing towards the bedrooms.

Ray creeps up the stairs, keeps low. He is about a third of the way up when Clay stops, glances back. Ray freezes in a patch of shadow.

INT. RAY'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Clay stops, quizzical, turns and glances back towards the downstairs hallway - sees nothing in the dark. Satisfied, he moves on, pushes open the door to Ray's bedroom.

INT. RAY'S STAIRS. NIGHT.

Ray moves on up the stairs.

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM - CLOSET. NIGHT.

Karen and Lucy huddle together in the closet. Karen hears faint footsteps, shrinks back, hugs Lucy tighter.

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Clay leans into the bathroom - it's empty. He moves fast and quiet across the bedroom floor, out into the hallway.

INT. RAY'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Ray reaches the top of the stairs, crouches against the wall. As he flattens himself against the wall, Clay comes out of Ray's bedroom, heads down the hall.

He stops at the next doorway - Lucy's room. The door is open. He backs up to the door, spins into the room.

Ray is up straight away, moves fast down the hall.

INT. LUCY'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Clay glances around the room. It's pure young girl - teddy bears line two shelves, others are on the flowery bedspread. There's a small dresser and a closet.

Clay turns towards the closet door. He looks at it for a moment, then creeps up to it.

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM - CLOSET. NIGHT.

Karen hears a noise - someone is moving in the room.

INT. LUCY'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Clay pauses, listens, then suddenly flicks the closet door open with his foot, shotgun at the ready.

INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM - CLOSET. NIGHT.

The closet door flies open. A figure with a gun is silhouetted against the window.

INT. LUCY'S ROOM. NIGHT.

As Clay opens the door a large teddy bear falls from the shelf. Clay lets fly with the shotgun, blasts the teddy to a million pieces.

A scream splits the air. The teddy disintegrates, fluff and stuffing fill the room. The dust hangs in the beams of moonlight.

Clay looks in horror at the blasted teddy bear, slowly bends and picks it up.

CLAY

Jesus! What are we doing?

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM - CLOSET. NIGHT.

Lucy's scream freezes as they see Ray silhouetted in the closet doorway, finger to his lips.

RAY

Quiet!

INT. LUCY'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Clay cracks his shotgun, loads another shell. Suddenly he freezes - hears a faint sound from the next room. He turns and ghosts from the room.

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Clay slips into the room. He scans the room, his eyes settle on the closet - the door is fractionally open. Clay tiptoes across the carpet, pauses outside the closet.

Slowly he reaches out, flicks the door open, raises his shotgun - the closet is empty.

CLAY

Givens?

RAY

Looking for me?

Clay spins around - the room is empty. He turns, side to side, scans the room. The doorway is behind him, dressing table with mirror to his left, bed straight ahead, empty closet to the right.

Too late he sees the movement - Ray is in the corner behind the dressing table, standing behind the large mirror.

As Clay turns towards the mirror Ray's shotgun blast greets him. The reflection shows his body fly backwards, his shotgun discharging harmlessly into the ceiling.

His body hits the ground hard, arms splayed, lies still.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Johnson freezes as he hears the double shotgun blast.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Clay?

Silence. Johnson moves towards the hallway.

INT. RAY'S HALL. NIGHT.

Johnson steps into the hallway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Clay? (Pause) Givens? You hear
me?

He moves to the bottom of the stairs, ducks down behind the
hallway dresser.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I know you can hear me, you son
of a bitch!

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Ray looks down at Clay. He coughs, blood runs from his
mouth.

CLAY

It didn't have to end this way...

RAY

Sure it did.

Clay gives a weak smile.

CLAY

Guess you're right...You know the
old man won't back down...

RAY

I know.

Clay lifts his head, looks around the room.

CLAY

Go out the window, come around on
him.

Ray looks at him, shocked, grateful.

CLAY (CONT'D)

You, your family - you're a good
man, you ain't done nothing
wrong.

He lays his head back down, slowly closes his eyes.

RAY

Thanks...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's no response. Clay is dead.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (O.S.)
Come on down!

Ray moves across to his bedroom window, peers outside.

RAY
Not sure that's such a good idea!

OLD MAN JOHNSON (O.S.)
You can trust me - we're family!

Ray slides the window open. A cold gust of air blows the curtains into his face.

RAY
Getting bushwhacked by you as I
walk down the stairs isn't my
idea of a family re-union!

OLD MAN JOHNSON (O.S.)
There's that suspicious city boy
talking again!

A metal drainpipe runs down the outside of the house. Ray opens the shotgun, slides the shells into his back pocket, then tosses his shotgun to land in a deep drift of snow.

RAY
Let me think on it a while!

Ray puts a leg out over the window ledge, reaches out and grabs the drainpipe. He slips slightly, scrabbles with his feet, finally gets a purchase.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (O.S.)
Well don't think too long. Five
minutes and I'm gonna start a
fire, flush you all out.

EXT. RAY'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Ray shimmies down the drainpipe, scrambles for grip. About halfway down his fingers lose their grip and he slides.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With a push he launches off and lands hard in the snow - the shotgun shells scatter from his pocket.

Ray rolls over, sits up, grimacing. He reaches down and rubs his ankle, flexes it, gingerly gets to his feet.

He looks around, sees the shotgun in the snow. He picks it up, reaches in his pocket for the shells - they're gone.

Ray scans the deep snow, desperate. He can see none. He drops to his knees, feels for any shells. Finally his fingers find one. He slides it into his pocket, gropes around some more, finds nothing.

Slowly he stands, loads the single shell into the shotgun, creeps round towards the front of the house.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Johnson opens drawers and cupboards - with a grin he finds a box of matches.

EXT. RAY'S PORCH. NIGHT.

Ray steps onto the porch, sees the shotgun blasted front door, half open. He silently steps inside.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Johnson opens another cupboard, finds a bottle of lighter fluid. He sets it on the counter, then freezes - a faint noise from the living room.

He steps forward, listens hard, then takes aim, lets blast through the wall with his shotgun.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

The blast tears through the wall as Ray is halfway across the floor, showers him with plaster and shards of trinkets from the bookshelf, cutting his face in a dozen places.

Ray stumbles, drops to his knees, half blinded by the dust and debris. The shotgun drops from his hand, and above him the bookshelf sways alarmingly.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (O.S.)

How'd you like that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ray scrabbles on the ground for the shotgun.

RAY

You're shooting blind - you've
lost your advantage!

The old man lets rip another blast through the wall. It's the final straw for the bookshelf - it topples slowly over, towards Ray. He tries to scramble out of the way, but is too slow. The shelf, its contents, crash down upon him.

Ray is flattened, his shotgun out of reach. He pushes against the shelf, but he's pinned.

He wipes the debris from his face, looks up. The old man strolls into the room.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Just hate that shooting blind,
don't you?

He stops, cracks open his shotgun.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Should have run while you had the
chance.

He pulls out two shells, but fumbles as he tries to load, drops one of them.

RAY

I told you. I don't run.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

Why don't you tell me where your
wife and kid are? They're family
- I'll take real good care of
them.

Ray struggles to get out from beneath the shelf. He moves clear inch by inch, but not fast enough. His shotgun is still out of reach.

RAY

They're not here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The old man looks down at the floor for the shell he dropped. He can't see it amongst the debris.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

You don't tell me, I'll just
torch the house, shoot 'em like
wild pigs when they come running
out.

He loads the single shell from his hand.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

One's all I need.

Ray has inched half way out from under the shelf.

With a snap the old man closes the shotgun. Ray reaches desperately with his fingers. Finally they wrap around the remote control for the TV.

The old man lifts his shotgun, takes aim.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Should have stayed in New York.

RAY

I'm from Chicago.

Ray presses the remote and the TV springs into life.

Instinctively, Johnson spins around, blasts the TV. He instantly realizes his mistake and turns back to Ray. He squeezes the trigger - nothing but a click.

Ray squirms free of the shelves, grabs his shotgun.

Johnson reaches in his pocket and pulls out another shell, looks up to see Ray taking aim.

RAY (CONT'D)

One's all I need!

The blast of Ray's shotgun sends the old man reeling back across the room. Somehow he stays on his feet, three, four steps backwards, eyes still fixed on Ray.

Amazingly, the old man isn't dead. Slowly he reaches into his pocket, pulls out another shell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

In almost frightening slow motion he cracks open his shotgun, tries to insert the shell, fumbles it.

Ray scrabbles on the floor, searches for a shell. Finally he sees the shell the old man dropped. Ray grabs the shell, cracks his shotgun, inserts the shell. He looks up just as Johnson does the same.

The two blasts ring out almost together, but Ray is already on the move as he fires, hurling himself across the room.

Johnson's shot misses the target, but Ray's aim is true. This time the old man can't stay on his feet. He crashes backwards into the wall, slumps down.

Ray picks up the second shell Johnson dropped, climbs slowly to his feet.

RAY (CONT'D)

Told you I don't run.

The old man looks up at him.

OLD MAN JOHNSON

No, you don't run - you kill.
Johnson blood runs strong in
you...

He spits a gobbet of blood at Ray's feet.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Better finish me off. I'll keep
on coming till I'm dead.

Ray looks at him for a moment, fingers the shell. Finally he loads it, snaps the gun shut. Johnson grins.

OLD MAN JOHNSON (CONT'D)

See - you're no different from me
when push comes to shove!

Ray raises the shotgun, points the barrel towards Johnson, stares down the sights at him for a long moment - finally he hoists it up over his shoulder.

RAY

You're wrong. I'm nothing like
you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Johnson watches him, then slowly his fingers lose their grip and his weapon drops to the floor with a clatter. His head rolls to the side, eyes close.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Ray slumps in a chair, the shotgun and recorder on the table. Lucy and Karen look at him, uncertain. Ray looks up at Karen.

RAY

I'll call Jerry, take the
job...we'll leave tomorrow.

Lucy rushes forward, buries herself in Ray's arms. Then, more slowly, Karen steps up behind him, wraps her arms around him.

FADE OUT.