

CUT BANK

by

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OPEN TO:

A VINTAGE TIN LUNCHBOX

Sitting alone on an expansive wooden table.

A faded floral pattern of yellow, red and green covers the box. Like wallpaper from a 1950's middle class home.

It's addressed to:

Derby Milton
4 Woolly Walnut Trail
Cut Bank, MT 59427

There's no return address.

FOOTSTEPS in the dark background CRESCENDO near.

A thin hand holding a smoking cigarette enters frame and grabs the surprisingly heavy box.

We follow the cig up to dry lips and whiskery stubble.
PULL BACK to see GEORGIE WITS, 50, bony and hunched over.

His mailman uniform hangs loosely from his spindly frame.
His hat trumps over his ears and beady head.

CLACK. CLACK. CLACK. His boots echo down a long dark hallway. His faint smile could be a sneer as he passes from shadow to shadow, beneath light after light.

He reaches the door. Opens it to BLINDING DAYLIGHT.

EXT. US POST OFFICE - DAY

The sun makes Georgie's unnerving expression soften to an innocuous smile. He waves to someone a good ways away:

GEORGIE

This's the last of it. Back 'round six.

Georgie dumps the lunchbox in the back of the USPS truck beside bundles of mail. Gets in. Starts the engine.

Bill Haley's classic, "SEE YOU LATER ALLIGATOR" comes on. This song will play throughout Georgie's deliveries.

MRS. MARGARET, 62, double-chinned, mini-mullet, a gaudy peacock tail brooch pinned to her cardigan, passes by.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

Very pretty brooch there, Mrs. Margaret.

MRS. MARGARET

Aren't you so kind! You have yourself a lovely day, Mr. Georgie Wits.

GEORGIE

In'it funny that you're the respected senior 'tween the two of us, and yet I still get the title of Mister?

MRS. MARGARET

I guess kindness *is* funny if you think on it too long.

She chuckles endearingly. Georgie rolls up his window. Raises an inhaler to his mouth. Sucks in a hit.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

A bar, a barber shop, the post office, and a pharmacy.

There is also a 27 FOOT TALL BLUE PENGUIN holding a sign: "WELCOME TO CUT BANK, THE COLDEST SPOT IN THE NATION."

The USPS truck idles beside the barber shop. Georgie unlocks a street-side blue USPS mailbox. Grabs the mail.

MR. RANDALL, 70, sits in a rocking chair outside his barbershop, pipe in hand. He tips his newsboy cap.

MR. RANDALL

You bring me the good news or the bad?

GEORGIE

Presume the same kind as yesterday.

Mr. Randall smiles and chuckles to himself.

MR. RANDALL

Then I remain.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY

Georgie drives the long lonely expanse between houses.

EXT. QUAIN HOUSE - DAY

From afar, we watch as Georgie plods across a wide lawn, mail in hand. No neighbors in sight. Just fields.

A sweet OLD LADY opens the door, holding a pie. Georgie smiles warmly and refuses with his hands. She shoves it into his chest. Georgie takes it and nods his thanks.

On his way back to the truck he throws the pie in the lady's garbage can beside the street.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The USPS truck idles behind a fence beside the bleachers. Two YOUNG BOYS toss a football in the distance.

Georgie looks out his open window. Eating a sandwich and swigging from a flask. He raises BINOCULARS to his eyes.

INSERT BINOCULARS POV

High school CHEERLEADERS practice routines on the field.

END POV

Binoculars still raised, Georgie takes a bite of his sandwich, when a loud *BAM!* rocks the truck. He reacts.

A CHUBBY BOY runs up to grab the football beside the truck. Laughing. His SLIM BUDDY close behind.

GEORGIE

Can't you little shits see that there's a whole wide field to play on?

CHUBBY BOY

Yeah, but ain't you pervin' right now?

Georgie puts the truck into gear. As he drives off, the boys start MIMICKING JACKING OFF at him while HOLDING IMAGINARY BINOCULARS to their eyes. Georgie boils.

INT. USPS TRUCK - DUSK

Georgie drives through a forest towards A WIDE CLEARING. Mumbling along to the Bill Haley tune.

GEORGIE / BILL HALEY

*See you later, Alligator
After a while, Crocodile.
Can't you see you're in my way now?
Don't you know you cramp my style?*

CUT TO:

EXT. AN EXPANSIVE WHEAT FIELD - SUNSET

INSERT VIDEO CAMERA POV FOOTAGE of the expanse.

A remarkable orange-purple sky with full cotton clouds.
The silhouetted Rockies back a forever wheat field.

CASSANDRA STEELE, 19, adorable, stands at center frame,
wearing a short skirt and a tight, busty turtleneck,
conspicuously cut off at the belly button.

The red "REC" dot comes on. Cassandra takes a deep
breath. Then beams a heart-warming smile.

CASSANDRA

Hi! Welcome to But Cank, Montana!

She sulks. Talks to someone BEHIND THE CAMERA.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

I messed up, Dwayne! I trip and switch
letters like that when I'm nervous!

Dwayne's voice is soft and terse, with strong authority.

DWAYNE (O.S.)

C'mon. Give it another go. Video's on.

CASSANDRA

Not yet, Dwayne! I need a rehearsal.

DWAYNE (O.S.)

No time for rehearsals. Sun's fallin'.

CASSANDRA

I feel stupid, Dwayne.

DWAYNE (O.S.)

Well, you look like a starlet.

CASSANDRA

Really?

DWAYNE

Just like Natalie Wood. Think on it like
it's just you and me practicing in your
room. I'll video the rehearsal.

Cassandra closes her eyes. Exhales, reassured. Smiles.

This is all very rehearsed and delivered much like an
overly dramatic lead in an elementary school play would.

CASSANDRA

Hi! Welcome to Cut Bank, Montana, where
the Rockies meet the Plains!

Cassandra bounces a bit at her botch-free intro.

In the background behind her, Georgie's USPS truck enters
frame on the right and crosses on the road to the left.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

My name's Cassandra Steeley, and I'd like
to show you my town full a' cheer and
wonted kindness. Here, we're surrounded
by miles and miles of wheat fields--

The CAMERA REACTS to a MAN in the background, emerging
from the forest on the left. He walks towards the truck.

Cassandra waves her hand above her head like a rainbow.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

-- and soooaring mountains. We got a
Blackfoot Indian Reservation close by
that gives us rich cultural diversity.

The Man POINTS A PISTOL AT THE TRUCK. It stops. The
video ZOOMS IN PAST CASSANDRA onto the background action.

CLOSE NOW, we can make out a massive MASKED MAN. The
bony Georgie Wits gets off the truck, arms raised.

CASSANDRA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Cut Bank's a treasure from a bygone time.
When things weren't so complicated and
living was, well-- just nice.

POW! The Masked Man fires one point blank into Georgie's
chest. He goes down. Cassandra yelps.

DWAYNE (O.S.)

Get down!

The VIDEO FOOTAGE shakes nauseatingly as Dwayne drops
down, but regains focus and control from the ground. The
Masked Man stands over the Mailman and--

POW! Fires another. The Masked Man lugs Georgie's limp
body into the truck, gets in and drives off.

Cassandra's face is buried in the wheat. She shivers.
As she looks up frightened INTO CAMERA we--

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Dwayne's red '85 Jimmy RIPS down the quiet main artery.

EXT. STEELEY HOME - NIGHT

WIDE: The Jimmy winds across the massive spread of frigid grass to a quaint, warm house atop a hill. It pulls to a stop and the headlights shut off.

INT. STEELEY HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Arts and crafts style ornaments and paint-by-numbers paintings adorn the walls. A very inviting room.

TIGHT ON: DWAYNE MCCLAREN, 21, bomber hat, jeans and a knit sweater, intently rapt on a large cubic TV.

Beside him sits Cassandra, face red with tears.

BIG STAN STEELEY, 56, a bald barrel of a man, towers over the sofa where Dwayne and Cassandra sit. Remote in hand. Sipping from a mug that reads "#1 DAD."

As the video plays we remain fixed on their REACTIONS. Cassandra's INTRO SPEECH begins.

BIG STAN

Why in all sanctimony you cut that fine
turtle neck into a harlot's garb?

CASSANDRA

It's for the advert modelin' an' actin'
schools. They like the sex appeal for
the prime time pretty commercial girls.

BIG STAN

That was a present from your nanny.

The first GUN SHOT comes. Big Stan turns off the TV.

DWAYNE

That ain't it. He shoots 'im again--

BIG STAN

Imaginin' suits me. Already more
disappointing than I'd like to think on.

MRS. STEELEY (O.S.)
 (from the other room)
 Dinner's ready!

Big Stan rounds the sofa and faces the young couple.

BIG STAN
 That was a present from your nanny, girl.
 (before Cassandra can retort)
 And that, Dwayne, is all you'll find in
 the city. Death and disorder. A failed
 modus operand-I. Not like here. We got
 a fine system here. A neighborly one.

DWAYNE
 We should call Sheriff Vogel.

CASSANDRA
 Like, this instant!

DWAYNE
 Sooner rather than later at any rate.
 Should we drive over to see him?

BIG STAN
 Now, just a second--

MRS. STEELEY, 45 and frail, pops her head through a door.

MRS. STEELEY
 Dinner's ready.

BIG STAN
 Alright! We're coming!

She returns inside the kitchen like a chastised puppy.

BIG STAN (CONT'D)
 Anyhow, it's his job to come here.

CASSANDRA
 But, Daddy, we just seen a manslaughter!

BIG STAN
 You're in the dog house, young lady!
 (beat, sigh) Sit yourselves down to eat.
 I'll phone the Sheriff.

DWAYNE
 Thank you, Big Steeley.

BIG STAN

Call me sir. And I don't want a mere mention of this over the table. You, an' me, an' the Sheriff'll talk a 'bout this when he comes. Cassandra, you're grounded for cuttin' your dead nanny's gift. You an' me'll share words later.

All the blood drains from Cassandra's face.

INT. STEELEY HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Big Stan, Cassandra, Dwayne, Mrs. Steeley, and ROSIE, 9, sit at the dinner table. The warm normalcy of the family comes with strained effort. Thick tension pervades every second of this picturesque snapshot of Americana.

MRS. STEELEY

I saw that Patty and Harriet signed up for the Miss Cut Bank Pageant. You thought of signin' up yet, Cassandra?

BIG STAN

A great tradition. You're the prettiest girl in town. I wouldn't be prouder.

MRS. STEELEY

Winner gets a shot at Miss Montana. Winner of that competes in Miss America!

Cassandra shrugs. Silence and chewing.

BIG STAN

You know my lot over yonder by the Filban's out place? Big junk heap I keep for spare parts?

DWAYNE

Yes, sir.

ROSIE

(mimicking, annoying)
Yes, sir.

BIG STAN

I'm sellin' it off to Marty Corcoran.

Dwayne coughs on his food.

DWAYNE

If I may, sir, that's a gold mine.

ROSIE

If I may, sir, that's a gold mine.

Cassandra kicks Rosie under the table. Rosie tries to start crying.

MRS. STEELEY

Uh-uh. Big girl, now. Eat your peas.

BIG STAN

Indeed it is. But what's a gold mine for if you don't got foragers foragin' for the damn mineral?

All the females recoil at the mention of "damn."

BIG STAN (CONT'D)

Neither you or me or Match or none of us been out there in years for it to be worth the taxes I cough up. Now, Marty's priced it at a mean dollar. Reckon more'n it ought to get. So I'm promotin' you out there to forage 'round for the parts we can clean up and use at the shop 'fore the deal's done. How's Assistant Manager peal in your ear?

Dwayne's face deadens. Not the expected reaction.

BIG STAN (CONT'D)

Don't answer that seein' as I just called to mind-- Where in the hell was Match today?

Cassandra and Rosie grow fearful at the mention of "hell" and turn to Mrs. Steeley, who smiles thinly.

BIG STAN (CONT'D)

Don't answer that neither. I don't care if you're Assistant Manager or the wunderkind savior of my enterprise. His absence is on your watch, son. You got to start takin' responsibility for your colleagues. First lesson of leadership.

Big Stan shovels a hunk of meatloaf into his mouth. Tension at the table. Finally:

CASSANDRA

Mr. Assistant Manager!

ROSIE

Mih wah-wah wih-wah mah-wah-wah.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

BIG STAN
Myself and Dwayne are excused.

INT. STEELEY HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Big Stan opens the door to SHERIFF VOGEL, 56, a once-burly, now thin and worn man in jeans and flannel. Heavy eyelids hang over his eyes. A grave countenance.

He flips his key ring around his finger incessantly. On the key ring is a DIRTY GRAY-BROWN RABBIT FOOT.

SHERIFF VOGEL
Big Stan.

BIG STAN
Roland.

There's no love lost between these two.

SHERIFF VOGEL
Ought I insist once and again you call me Sheriff Vogel? Or you old of the ear?

BIG STAN
I see you're still fingerin' that fairy furry thing.

Mrs. Steeley enters.

MRS. STEELEY
Hiya, Sheriff Vogel.

Sheriff Vogel tips his cowboy hat.

SHERIFF VOGEL
Evenin', Barb.

MRS. STEELEY
Can I get you men some pie?

BIG STAN
That ain't necessary.

SHERIFF VOGEL
I'd appreciate some.

MRS. STEELEY
Dwayne?

DWAYNE

Thank you, ma'am.

She leaves again. Sheriff Vogel turns to Dwayne.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Mr. Dwayne McClaren. How're ya, son?

Sheriff Vogel lets himself in.

DWAYNE

Okay, sir.

SHERIFF VOGEL

How's your daddy?

DWAYNE

He's a fighter, sir.

Mrs. Steeley returns with three plates of pie.

SHERIFF VOGEL

A fighter, alright. I ever tell you 'bout when your daddy saved me from gettin' whooped by Fred and George Little? Made me look like a champ in front of Celine Towers.

As Mrs. Steeley hands a plate to Dwayne, she stops at Celine's name. Forces a smile. Glances at Big Stan.

MRS. STEELEY

Celine was very pretty.

Mrs. Steeley's smile fades as quick as she stops talking. She hands out the rest of the plates and shuffles away.

SHERIFF VOGEL

He gave me the grit to ask Celine out after that. A good man. (beat) Pass along my best to him, will you?

DWAYNE

Yes, sir.

Big Stan glares at Sheriff Vogel for a tense beat. Sheriff Vogel exhales a long, feeble sigh.

SHERIFF VOGEL

So we got us a video of a murder.

DWAYNE

Yes, sir.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Alright, then.

Dwayne presses play on the VCR. We remain on the men, slowly MOVING IN on Sheriff Vogel.

SILENCE but for Cassandra's speech.

All the gruff manliness in Sheriff Vogel's face drains away to sheer sadness and horror. His lip jerks ever so slightly when each shot is fired.

Silence sustains for a long beat after the video ends. Then, slowly, contemplatively, IN SHOCK:

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

That indeed was the taking of human life.
First murder this town's ever seen.

Sheriff Vogel stares at the ground and flips his keys. His chest rising and falling.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

Excuse me just a second.

INT. STEELEY HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sheriff Vogel storms in and dry heaves into the toilet. He takes a breath, then dry heaves again.

He splashes water on his face. Studies himself in the mirror, his eyes and face red. He gags again, but just BELCHES loudly.

He pulls out a handkerchief that reads "SHERIFF VOGEL, ELKS MAN OF THE YEAR." He folds it and wipes his mouth.

LIVING ROOM

DWAYNE

You alright, Sheriff Vogel?

SHERIFF VOGEL

Dinner ain't sittin' well inside is all.
(beat) That was Georgie Wits?

Sheriff Vogel nods at his own question and sits.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

Mailman and beloved town acquaintance.

BIG STAN

Hell, I never knew 'im, but he was awfully friendly.

DWAYNE

Think this tape'll help in any way?

SHERIFF VOGEL

Indeed. I'm gonna need to take it.

DWAYNE

Yes, sir.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Speakin' on, I do believe there's some kinda pecuniary reward you may be entitled to from the post office for evidence like this.

BIG STAN

It ain't the done thing to discuss matters of profit in the face of the deceased. Anyhow, that's just luck.

SHERIFF VOGEL

You ought to visit the post office to inquire further, son. Mimi'll dub me a copy so you can show this to Mrs. Margaret. Ought to be ready by morning.

Big Stan and Sheriff Vogel stare at each other defiantly.

EXT. STEELEY HOME - NIGHT

Dwayne crosses to and leans on his Jimmy. He pulls out a red can of Copenhagen Long Cut and finger-snaps the side.

His thumb flicks open the lid. His pointer and the middle fingers grab a fat pinch of dip. He inserts it into his lower lip. Licks his fingers. Spits the rest. He snaps the lid shut and returns the can to his pocket.

All with one hand. All in one motion. Cooler than cool.

In the distance, a group of children play FLASHLIGHT TAG in a neighbor's front yard. Laughing. Innocent.

Dwayne watches on with his beady hawk eyes. Spits a wad. Ruffles his chilled reddened nose. Sighs a long exhale.

INT. U-STORE-IT GARAGE - NIGHT

TIGHT ON: A PAIR OF COLOSSAL WORK BOOTS. Sparks fly into frame as the SCREECH of a saw on metal dies down to OFF.

A huge hand with BLACK-PAINTED FINGERS dangles a CIRCULAR SAW in one hand and a TRUCK BUMPER in the other.

We follow the massive boots as they walk to the open back hatch of a HOODED PICKUP. The hands toss the bumper and the circular saw inside, atop a big mound of:

Sheets of black metal, side, back, and rearview mirrors, an engine block, and other CUT UP TRUCK PARTS.

The large painted hands SLAM the back hatch shut.

EXT. U-STORE-IT GARAGE - NIGHT

Two rows of storage garages. Middle of nowhere. One of the large garage doors with a "7" painted on it OPENS. The hooded pickup pulls out and IDLES outside.

As light illuminates the inside of the dark garage, we see:

A BARE TRUCK CHASSIS, A STACK OF TIRES, A TRUCK SEAT and a MOUND OF MAIL, in which is the VINTAGE TIN LUNCHBOX.

As the massive boots step out from the truck, we PAN UP to see MATCH TASUNKE, 35, an enormous Blackfoot Indian with a crew cut. Also, HE'S A MUTE.

Match slides a card into a thin slot in the wall. The garage door SLAMS down.

He locks the door at the bottom with a LITTLE GOLD KEY. A network of CLANKS and BOLTS sound where the garage meets the floor. Match steps away.

We remain on the garage door 7 as his truck door SLAMS shut, the engine SWITCHES GEARS, REVS, and FADES AWAY.

EXT. MCCLAREN HOME - NIGHT

A quaint two-story home at the dead end of a long road lined with fields. Forest surrounds the back yard.

Dwayne's Jimmy pulls to a stop on the outside. He shuts off the lights and remains sitting in the car for a beat.

Dwayne pulls the sheets up to Orson's chin, when the vent begins CLICKING and breathing out of its rhythm. Orson's chest rises and falls irregularly. Alarmingly.

Dwayne crosses to the vent, calm as a monk. He opens the control door and maneuvers something. The vent returns to its normal HISSING.

Dwayne crosses to the door, when ORSON'S EYES SHOOT WIDE OPEN staring at the ceiling.

Dwayne sighs. Pulls a chair to the bed and sits. By the bed are tons of magazines in a rack. Dwayne grabs two.

DWAYNE

What's it tonight? Guns 'N Ammo or
Outdoor Living? Got new issues of both.

Silence. He puts down the Outdoor Living and begins flipping through the pages of Guns 'N Ammo.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

Article in here looked interestin'.
Tribute to Bucky Holmes. (beat) Got
promoted at work. Assistant Manager.
Fixin' me up on fiscal responsibility.

Dwayne gets to the page. He glances briefly at a FRAMED PICTURE on the night stand on which WE REMAIN:

A young and able Orson, kissing Dwayne's MOTHER, a sweet beauty, and a young Dwayne between the two, under Orson's arm. All smiles. Happy.

DWAYNE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

"Anyone on a range with Bucky 'Sherlock'
Holmes knows to follow in the man's
shadow. None track trophy buck better--"

EXT. JUNK LOT - NIGHT

An UNLOCKED CHAIN PADLOCK hangs from the gate. Inside is a dark graveyard of smashed up cars beside a dark office.

Match's enormous SILHOUETTE tosses bumpers and other sheets of metal into the metallic wasteland.

In the now-empty back hatch of his hooded pickup, sits only the circular saw. Match grabs it. Closes the door.

We follow his Paul Bunyan boots to the office. It's pitch black. No light on inside either.

His boots GRATE past the front door and around to the BACK DOOR. He opens it slowly and enters into--

INT. JUNK LOT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The lights remain off. He puts down the saw.

He grabs a flashlight, hits it on his knee until it turns on. Shines it around the room. It's completely empty.

A CREAK in the wood floor comes from the corner. Match spotlights the area. Steps towards it, when--

A MASKED MAN STEPS INTO THE LIGHT BEAM. He pushes Match against the wall. Points and cocks a pistol--

POW! The pistol fires with a flash. Match buckles over.

The Masked Man removes his mask to reveal--

Georgie Wits, still in his baggy mailman uniform. Laughing uncontrollably. He tosses the mask at Match.

GEORGIE

Damn thing suits you better.

Georgie turns on a lamp as Match massages his black-painted hand, burned from the blank.

Then he GRABS GEORGIE BY THE NECK and lifts him against the wall. Georgie chokes for air. After a beat, Match drops him to the floor.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

Jesus, Match!

Georgie grabs his inhaler out of his pocket. Sucks in a hit. Georgie, too, has black paint all over his fingers.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

It was just a damn joke! I'm sorry, man!
I didn't mean to burn you. But fuckin'
A! Practice some self-control! Come on,
man, friends joke.

Match turns off his flashlight. Georgie rises and grabs a can of beer from the mini-fridge. Tosses one to Match, who cools his gnarly burn with the icy can.

Georgie turns on a tiny TV to a hockey game. He sits on a stool. Grabs a slice of pizza from a pie on the desk.

Match turns off the lamp. Stares at Georgie.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)
We're 15 miles beside town! Who in
hell's gonna see us?

Georgie turns it on. Match turns it off.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)
How 'bout we read each other's minds?

Georgie sips on his beer. He sees Match staring at him.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)
You gonna drink that?

Match takes out a small pad and draws a money sign.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)
I thought we could deal later, but fuck.

Georgie rounds to the mahogany desk. The name plate reads BIG STAN STEELEY. He sits in the plush chair like a Don. Reveals a wad of hundreds and flips through them.

Georgie pulls out Match's pay, searches all the drawers of the desk for an envelope until he finds one.

EMBOSSED in the corner of the envelope is the BIG STAN STEELEY'S BODY SHOP LOGO.

With a black permanent marker he marks out the logo. Puts the cash in the envelope and folds it.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)
Truck make it to the garage alright?

Match holds up the LITTLE GOLD KEY and the CARD from the garage.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)
No one saw you?

Match hands them to Georgie. Shakes his head, "No."

GEORGIE (CONT'D)
What about the paint cans? You dispose
of them properly?

Match nods.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

I watched you out back. Seems you cut that truck up real nice. What's left?

Match writes on his pad: "CHASSIS TIRES SEAT MAIL."

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

The mail? Uh-oh. You were supposed to torch the mail. Unfortunately that was part of the deal. I'm sorry, pal.

Match steps to him. PALMS GEORGIE'S HEAD AND SQUEEZES. Georgie crosses his eyes in pain.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

Still, I ain't one to go back on a deal. No, sir. We're friends after all, right?

Match releases his grip. Takes the money envelope. Georgie massages his temples. Lights a smoke.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

Look, I'm sorry again 'bout the hand. It was just a joke. We're friends. Friends do that sort of thing. Joke, I mean. Well, seems like this is good-bye.

Georgie extends his arms for a hug. Match pauses, then FAKES A QUICK JAB to the jaw. Georgie flinches, falls, and hits his ass hard on the ground.

Match leaves. Georgie rises and turns on the lamp.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

Fuckin' Native.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Dwayne walks down the sidewalk. He passes the same two Boys that threw the football into Georgie's truck. They're tossing a football again.

Dwayne pays them no heed. They see and chase after him.

SLIM BOY

Mr. Dwayne!

CHUBBY BOY

It true you're leavin'?

SLIM BOY

Goin' to the Big City?

CHUBBY BOY

Are you gettin' millions?

SLIM BOY
From your murder video?

CHUBBY BOY
You takin' Cassandra?

SLIM BOY
Why do you wanna leave?

CHUBBY BOY
Nothin' but fun here.

SLIM BOY
Nothin' but fun in Cut Bank.
(beat) He loves Cassandra.

CHUBBY BOY
No I don't!

DWAYNE
Lemme see that thing.

Slim hands him the football.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
Who's faster?

SLIM BOY
Me.

CHUBBY BOY
I am.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
Let's see it. Set. Hut!

The Boys take off running as fast as they can. Dwayne LAUNCHES the ball way farther than what they can run. Still, they chase after it with their lives.

Dwayne returns to his gait. His face grows serious.

He comes to the Post Office across the street. Dwayne stares at the door in the frigid snowless summer air.

He pulls out the videotape from his jacket pocket. Looks both ways down the street. Not a car in sight.

He bends his knee back hard, kicking his own ass. Again, harder. Mr. Randall unlocks the Barber shop behind him.

MR. RANDALL
Son, if I didn't know better, it seems
you're kickin' your own ass.

DWAYNE
Yes, sir.

Dwayne nods. Then crosses the street.

INT. US POST OFFICE - DAY

Mrs. Margaret unlocks the front door for Dwayne.

MRS. MARGARET

Dwayne! Sheriff Vogel alerted me this morning! It's awful, ain't it! Just awful! It's sure as shootin' gonna be busy here today. I alerted Postal Inspection Services in our nation's capital immediately. Never even knew we had a rewards practice till this here event. Oh, I've just been frazzled!

Dwayne sees the "USPS NOTICE OF REWARD SIGN" on the wall.

CLOSE ON: "EVIDENCE AS TO THE UNLAWFUL KILLING OF ANY OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE" and "\$100,000" beside it.

MRS. MARGARET (CONT'D)

I had to read it verbatim to the kind man. It don't feel fitting, but protocol is protocol, and the book says I need to verify the evidence, even though I already called it in. But, I ain't one to break rules, so give it here.

Dwayne hands her the video. Mrs. Margaret takes it back into her office. She shuts the door.

Dwayne waits, staring at the sign. Suddenly two ear-piercing SHRIEKS come from inside the closed door.

She emerges trembling. Eyes red with tears.

MRS. MARGARET (CONT'D)

Was that-- Georgie Wits?

DWAYNE

Yes, ma'am.

She begins to weep. Dwayne remains impassive.

MRS. MARGARET

(between sobs)

Why would someone do something like that? Georgie Wits was a nice man. Harmless. Canadian, even.

DWAYNE

What do I need to do?

She shows him an "APPLICATION FOR REWARDS" form that is already filled out.

MRS. MARGARET

I took care of it. Oh, that just troubles my heart so deeply. A woman my age ain't meant to carry that.

She grabs his hand for dear life and stomachs another wave of tears. Dwayne watches her cry.

DWAYNE

How long you think this takes?

MRS. MARGARET

They said Postal Inspection Services should arrive before week's end. That there is straight from Beelzebub 'imself.

Mrs. Margaret begins another contraction of tears.

MRS. MARGARET (CONT'D)

And you know what turns me the most? That someone would do such a thing to the *mail*, the most hallowed and long-standing institution in our nation's history!

Mrs. Margaret hangs her head sobbing. Still clutching Dwayne's hand. He pulls his hand free. Turns to leave.

Two more PREOCCUPIED TOWN FOLK enter as he exits.

EXT. US POST OFFICE - DAY

Dwayne comes out as a SMALL CROWD OF CONCERNED TOWN FOLK enter the Post Office, chattering about Georgie.

Dwayne gets in his Jimmy and takes off--

JUST AS an '82 SILVER CUTLASS with a HIGH-PITCHED WHIR turns into the parking spot that Dwayne just left.

The two Boy's previously throwing the football now sit on the curb with ice cream cones. Suddenly Chubby's eyes grow wide and frightened. He swallows hard and hits Slim.

CHUBBY BOY

(pointing)

Old man Milton!

INT. STEELEY HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Cassandra finishes wrapping a pair of sandwiches in cling wrap. She places them in a cooler when Big Stan enters.

BIG STAN
Workin' today?

CASSANDRA
Mmm-hmm.

BIG STAN
What're you fixin' there?

CASSANDRA
Lunch.

A beat as Big Stan glares at her. She continues packing the sandwiches uncomfortably.

BIG STAN
Somethin' you wanna tell me?

Cassandra shakes her head.

BIG STAN (CONT'D)
Harvey showed me your schedule. You ain't on till tomorrow. Ain't you?

Cassandra stops. Hangs her head. Grows nervous.

CASSANDRA
I'm sorry. I'll go back up now.

BIG STAN
Not just yet, 'cause this here taradiddle makes me think you got planned a date with Dwayne. And that don't bode well for me since I was up all night thinkin' on the coincidental nature of that video. How you and Dwayne were there right on cue. How Dwayne now gets his lottery pick of a ripe sum a' money 'cause he was pointin' his video camera at you at the right da-gone time?!

CASSANDRA
That's a vile thought!

Cassandra turns to head up the stairs.

BIG STAN

Get back here an' *si'* down! I don't like my little girl totin' about with that boy. 'Cause even if he ain't got nothin' to do with nothin', trouble follows him.

CASSANDRA

He got lucky.

Big Stan, red, gets in her face. Spitting as he yells.

BIG STAN

Let me tell you something about lucky. It don't exist. Lucky's just poor work ethic. Don't nothin' worth a damn come but by long hard work. How d'you think you get to go to the movies? Get around in your damn car?! Uh-uh. Lucky ain't got no place in the workin' man. Lucky ain't got no place in Dwayne McClaren. Hell, lucky ain't got no place in Cut Bank. (beat) Now, go to your room!

Cassandra walks upstairs with the cooler.

INT. STEELEY HOME - CASSANDRA'S ROOM - DAY

A quaint room, laden with frilly curtains and sheets. Lining the walls are framed posters of Hollywood's golden age starlets: Natalie Wood, Ingrid Bergman, etc.

Cassandra crosses to the window and sees Dwayne's Jimmy in the distant forest. She opens the window. Steps out.

INT. US POST OFFICE - DAY

The place is a small frenetic circus of town folk in line chattering about Georgie. Mr. Randall is at the counter.

DERBY MILTON, 45, waits next in line. He's hunched over, with quarter-inch thick circular glasses, taped in the middle, that make his eyes look disconcertingly tiny.

He's got thin stringy hair covering a bald spot and wears a flannel shirt and cords, both ragged and moth-eaten.

He quietly cleans his glasses with his shirt.

MRS. MARGARET

Your granddaughter ought to take the insurance confirmation to the post office. She can get reimbursed for it and make you a new album at no extra cost.

MR. RANDALL

The insurance confirmation?

MRS. MARGARET

All she needs is that piece of paper.

MR. RANDALL

A sad condition here that we're wearin'.

Mr. Randall hobbles out past Derby. Turns to him.

MR. RANDALL (CONT'D)

How now! Derby Milton? That you? I thought you was dead, son!

Derby barely looks up. Mr. Randall smells him.

MR. RANDALL (CONT'D)

Y'ought t' wash that cabin boy costume more. Smells like medicines and insects.

Mr. Randall exits. Derby continues to the counter.

His eyes flit from Mrs. Margaret's two chins to the counter, never looking her in the eyes.

MRS. MARGARET

Why, Derby! Ain't you become ever so handsome!

Derby cracks a fleeting smile and immediately returns to his discomfiting studious gaze.

MRS. MARGARET (CONT'D)

What can I do for you?

Derby mumbles and stutters softly, almost unintelligibly.

DERBY

I'm waiting on a p- parcel.

Mrs. Margaret's face reddens. Her eyes water.

MRS. MARGARET

You ain't heard? They murdered the mailman.

Derby begins tapping his foot quickly. His face shakes as he taps. His expression remains fixed on her chins.

MRS. MARGARET (CONT'D)
Out there on Highway 358.

DERBY
Where's the m- mail?

MRS. MARGARET
Lord knows. They kidnapped it! No sign of Georgie. No mail. No truck! Why would someone treat the system like that?

The tapping speed increases until *BAM!* Derby knees the counter hard. The room grows SILENT. Mrs. Margaret pretends not to notice.

MRS. MARGARET (CONT'D)
You can have the sender take the insurance confirmation receipt and--

DERBY
Wasn't ins- sured.

The ambient CHATTER returns slowly. Mrs. Margaret places her hand on his. We see Derby's LONG YELLOWED NAILS.

MRS. MARGARET
It might come tomorrow. I'm sorry.

Derby's gaze darts down to the skin on skin contact. He SQUEEZES HER HAND a little too hard, then slowly looks up, wide-eyed for the first time INTO HER EYES.

She tries to pull her hand back, but has to make an extra effort to do so. Bright red now, Derby nods and leaves.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Derby exits the Post Office. Outside Sheriff Vogel's Office down the street is a small CROWD OF PEOPLE.

The Chubby and Slim Boys peer into Derby's Cutlass. They see Derby and scam. Derby begins toward the crowd.

INT. SHERIFF VOGEL'S OFFICE - DAY

The phone is RINGING in the other room NON-STOP.

MIMI (O.S.)

I promise he'll return your call, Mrs. Margaret. No need to keep callin'.

As quick as she HANGS UP, the phone RINGS again.

MIMI, 44, appears at the doorway. Hands him a paper.

MIMI (CONT'D)

I need you to sign this. Press release. News station's been callin' all mornin'.

SHERIFF VOGEL

That video might be the most inhumane, haphazard creation I ever seen.

MIMI

A devil's work, no doubt.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Makes me sick, but I reckon there's something sicker 'neath it all.

Sheriff Vogel peers out his window at the crowd. He SEES DERBY amid the people.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

I'll be-- When you seen Derby Milton last?

MIMI

Derby Milton? Might be at his mother's funeral, oh, eight years now. Didn't know he was still livin' here.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Yep. Stoppin' the mail shakes even the recluses from their homes. I got to head out to the murder site still and compile a list of the biggest men in this town. Maybe you can start helpin' me with that.

MIMI

Get a chance and call Mrs. Margaret. Been askin' on the progress of the case all day. Oh, and your wife called. You left your lunch pack at home again.

SHERIFF VOGEL

I did, didn't I.

The two exit the office. Through the window, we see Sheriff Vogel emerge onto the steps before the small crowd. He holds his hands up and takes a deep breath.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The Cutlass is parked on the grass beside the road where Match "shot" Georgie. Out steps Derby, cleaning his glasses. He puts them on and walks beside the road.

He sees stretched tire marks from a skidded halt.

He looks back from where the USPS truck came, and ahead to the forest, from where Match came.

He sees a trail of massive footsteps in the dirt of the road's shoulder a short ways down.

He bends to them. There are SMALL TRIANGULAR MOUNDS inside each footprint.

He places his shoe beside one of the large footprints. Marks the dirt where his foot ends, then places his heel on the mark.

Derby DRAWS A MARK with his nail on the leather of his boot where the footprint ends.

He looks up. The footprints came from the forest ahead. He begins dragging his foot over the footprints, wiping them away as he walks into the forest.

There, he sees are six tire marks where the footsteps end. Two up front, and two pairs in back.

He wipes away the LAST FOOTPRINT, but NOT THE TIRE MARKS.

A few miles off in the wheat field sits Dwayne's Jimmy. Just a small red dot.

Derby returns to his CUTLASS walking on the road. Grabs his binoculars from inside his car.

INSERT BINOCULARS POV

Dwayne and Cassandra's legs dangle out the open back hatch, FACING AWAY, so we can't see their faces.

END POV

Derby lowers the binoculars. Stares at the Jimmy for a long beat.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY

Dwayne and Cassandra eat sandwiches and drink beer.

CASSANDRA

I added banana peppers this time. Do you like it?

Dwayne takes a large bite, and nods stoically.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

I tossed all night an' I didn't even see it. You must be all kinds of shaken up. That's why you're actin' funny.

Dwayne chugs a little from his beer. There's no sipping with Dwayne. He either chugs a little or he chugs a lot.

DWAYNE

I ain't actin' funny.

CASSANDRA

Can't believe it happened on our spot. I might can still use some of the intro. Wonder what they'll think of my tape.

Cassandra takes a bite.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Are you really gonna get all that money?

DWAYNE

Postal Inspector's coming from the nation's capital to give it to me.

CASSANDRA

How much is it?

DWAYNE

A lifetime's.

CASSANDRA

What do you wanna do with it?

DWAYNE

Remember when you was a sophomore, I promised I'd wait till you graduated to skirt on off together? You been out a year now. We're still here.

CASSANDRA

But you been takin' care of your daddy.

DWAYNE

Can I tell you something without you thinkin' on me as wayward? Sometimes I wish I can put him into one of them homes and make my peace with him.

CASSANDRA

That's okay, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

Ain't okay when everyone's smilin'. Just about 3,000 people here. I know 'em all. By face, at least. They all smile at me carin' on my daddy. Wonder if they'll smile when they hear I wanna stop.

CASSANDRA

Everybody's in everybody's business.

DWAYNE

That's just it. Ain't nobody here who frowns. What if I don't want to smile.

Cassandra hugs him around the neck.

CASSANDRA

Ain't no sin in being sad, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

I ain't sad. I'm bothered. Like I got ants in my trousers. This whole place is like a puzzle I finished three years ago. Ain't no more pieces to it.

Dwayne pulls away and looks at Cassandra. Earnestly.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

I got this thing in me. Wanting to make my own in this world. Pioneer us to new lands. Like an explorer. (beat) We ought to move way down to California. Kick start your modelin' career there. I can start my own body shop.

CASSANDRA

Startin' a business is hard.

DWAYNE

I'm good for it. May not know how they do in the city yet, but I sure as hell know how to fix cars. Want me workin' for your daddy the rest of our lives?

Cassandra ducks her head as she chews and shakes it "No."

CASSANDRA

Daddy thinks your video's too
coincidental to not be suspicious on.
He's stupid. I think it's a blessing.

DWAYNE

Guess a man's entitled to his opinion.

Dwayne stares at the distant Rockies. Cassandra gazes at him.

CASSANDRA

I signed me up for the Miss Cut Bank
Pageant. Found out winner gets a
thousand bucks. Figure I got a good
chance. I can maybe help us out, too.

Dwayne turns to Cassandra, who now stares at the Rockies.
He puts his arm around her.

DWAYNE

Let's go soon. When I get the money.
(beat) Look at me.

She snaps out of her gaze. Turns to him.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

I'm proud of you. Just me and Miss Cut
Bank. Chasin' it.

She beams a smile. They kiss. Youthful bliss.

INT. STEELEY HOME - CASSANDRA'S ROOM - DUSK

Cassandra and Dwayne lay on her bed watching a movie on
TV: *THE LAST PICTURE SHOW*.

Cassandra sleeps in Dwayne's arms. Dwayne looks out the
window. He kisses her forehead and slips his arm out.
Crosses to the window and climbs out.

EXT. STEELEY HOME / FOREST - DAY

Dwayne jumps to a small awning, then down to the ground.

We STAY ON DWAYNE'S FACE as he walks a ways INTO a nearby
forest. Impassive. Distracted. Staring down.

After some trees in, he finds his red Jimmy in a small clearing where beaten tire tracks lead out to a field. He's snuck out like this a hundred times. He gets in.

INT. DWAYNE'S JIMMY - DAY

Johnny Cash's "THE LONG BLACK VEIL" plays on the radio.

Dwayne throws in a one-handed dip. Spits into a cup in the cup holder every now and then. He stares at the road unblinking. The speedometer doesn't waver from 65.

We remain on his face. Studying it. His softness. Charm. Peach fuzz. The dark shadows beneath his eyes.

He is lit by infrequent oncoming headlights. The moon keeps his face awash in its discomfiting blue glow.

Dwayne hums the tune. Then sings along:

DWAYNE / JOHNNY CASH
*She walks these hills in a long black
 veil / She visits my grave when the night
 winds wail / Nobody knows. Nobody sees.
 Nobody knows but me.*

EXT. JUNK LOT - EVENING

Dwayne's Jimmy slows to a stop outside the fence.

With the car still IDLING, he gets out and approaches the lot's closed gate, keys DANGLING in his hand. He finds the UNLOCKED CHAIN PADLOCK hanging from the gate.

Dwayne studies it a beat, nudges it with his foot, and looks up to the office. It's dimly lit inside.

He quietly pushes the gate open, gets back into his Jimmy and rolls in. He closes the gate, and locks it.

He tiptoes to the office. His boots SCRAPE with each step. He strains up to peer through the window.

INSERT POV THROUGH WINDOW BLINDS

Beer cans all over. Georgie snores on Big Stan's chair, one hand in his pants, the other holding a .44 MAGNUM. The desk lamp on. A phonograph plays classic Paul Desmond JAZZ.

END POV

A beat. Dwayne leans on the wall, beside the window.

He turns to the door. Soundlessly crosses to it and up the stairs. He turns the door knob. Locked. He reveals a key. Inserts it very slowly. Turns it.

He softly opens the door to--

INT. JUNK LOT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dwayne remains perfectly still as he opens the door. It CREAKS a bit. Georgie stirs.

Dwayne sneaks ever so carefully to the desk. Reaches slowly across Georgie. Again, Georgie stirs.

Dwayne freezes. Then continues reaching for THE MAGNUM.

He grabs the barrel. Softly WIGGLES IT out of Georgie's grip. He slides the gun to the edge of the desk.

Dwayne grips it. Points it at Georgie. Takes a deep breath. Then, yelling:

DWAYNE

What in fuckin' hell are you up to here?!

Georgie jumps up. Wipes drool off his chin. Raises his arms in the air.

GEORGIE

Jesus! Dwayne! Fuck! I just had a fucking heart attack. I thought you were the God-forbid.

DWAYNE

I am the goddamn God-forbid! 'Cause, guess what? One, the gate's unlocked. You talk about professionalism. That's J fuckin' V. Two, I come over to tell you this place is hot now. Tell you that Big Stan's turning his head to make a dollar off the lot, and he's gonna be passin' by with Marty Corcoran. And here you are, off in the land of Nod in his very seat, with the jazzy playin' and beer cans all about! Fingering his precious point 44!

GEORGIE

Marty Corcoran. Whitefish, Marty Corcoran? Prick.

A beat. Gun still raised, Dwayne stares at Georgie.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

Can you stop pointing that fucking hand
cannon at me? I found it in the drawer.
I'll put it back. Jesus! My heart!

Dwayne lowers the gun. Hands it to Georgie. He puts it
back in the bottom drawer.

DWAYNE

Big Stan's got me here foragin' for parts
in the mean.

Dwayne begins to pick up beer cans and empty pizza boxes.
Turns off the jazz. Georgie thinks a beat.

GEORGIE

Well, there's some consolation. With you
here, we can play us off okay.

Dwayne crosses to Georgie, fire in his eyes. Turns the
lamp off. Now, dark, he grabs Georgie's collar.

DWAYNE

That ain't any consolation, Georgie!
That's a fuckin' monkey wrench grabbin'
hold a' my innards. (beat) You gotta be
more professional! Lock the damn gate!
No lights! Stick to the plan!

GEORGIE

Can we just breath a second, here?! Just
relax and assess for one fuckin' second?!

Dwayne shoves him back. Runs his hands through his hair.

Georgie lights a cig. Dwayne snatches it. Puts it out.

DWAYNE

You gotta be the most fat-headed ass!

GEORGIE

You visit Mrs. Margaret?

DWAYNE

Postal Inspector should be here any day.

GEORGIE

Good. That's good. That means we only
need us a week tops. That's time we can
afford, updated circumstances considered.
Now I need you to relax.

Dwayne looks up.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

Match didn't torch the mail. It's all still in the garage.

DWAYNE

Can't do it. I need to be seen workin'. That's on you, Mailman. You're dead.

Georgie's eyes narrow. He grabs a beer from the fridge.

GEORGIE

Listen here and closely, Dwayne. There ain't you or me in this. It's us. We. Concerted effort. You don't comply, I show myself. Push the power button and all's over. You need to be seen alive. And I need to not be seen dead. So you take care of it.

Georgie slides him the LITTLE GOLD KEY and the CARD to the garage. Dwayne takes them. Rises.

DWAYNE

God to honest, Georgie. You keep this place tidy. No beer cans. No lights. And no smokin'. Am I still the only one with the number to your prepaid?

Georgie pulls out a blocky RED CELL PHONE. Nods.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

I'll call you if whatever.

Dwayne exits. Georgie grabs his inhaler. Takes a hit.

EXT. JUNK LOT - DAY

Dwayne's Jimmy idles outside the gate. As DWAYNE LOCKS THE PADLOCK shut--

CUT TO:

A 10,000 PIECE PUZZLE OF TWO BUCKS ON THEIR HIND LEGS, THEIR RACKS INTERTWINED, MOUNTED ON THE WALL. We're in--

INT. DERBY'S CABIN - DAY

A HORSEFLY lands on the puzzle as we begin to PAN around the room. The BUZZ of the fly REMAINS THROUGHOUT.

We see taxidermy mountings of bucks, bears, rabbits with antlers, a deer's ass with eyes around the tail. The room obsessive compulsively ordered and tidy.

Short RIPS, perhaps of fabric, begin sounding off screen.

We PAN to a stairwell that leads down to a basement. The RIPS get louder. We approach the stairwell.

The BUZZ of the horsefly remains as we descend into--

INT. DERBY'S CABIN - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

A dim lamp lights Derby's work desk on which lies--

A PINK HALF-SKINNED DEER. It's ripped-off hide is still connected and folded over, and it's face is still intact.

With an Exact-O knife he cuts up the deer's spine to the base of the skull. He LIFTS the hide from the pink muscled body with a CROWBAR.

He then digs his fingers into the red slice and grips the hide. He has disproportionately MASSIVE MITS for hands.

TIGHT ON: DERBY'S FACE as he rips. Eyes utterly focused. Face stoic, belying the force of the rips.

The HORSEFLY lands on his arm. Crawls around, then BITES HIM. Not so much as a jerk from Derby, who continues to skin the deer as the Horsefly SUCKS HIS ARM.

Suddenly, Derby's eyes DART UP THE STAIRWELL.

EXT. DERBY'S CABIN - DAY

The NEW MAILMAN returns to his USPS truck.

Derby exits and strides to his mailbox. He pulls out the mail to find ads and product offers. Junk.

His fierce eyes look up from the mail to the New Mailman, now in the truck. The New Mailman waves and smiles.

NEW MAILMAN

'Lo. They got me runnin' the routes now.

DERBY

Sure you ain't got a p- parcel for me?

The New Mailman ducks back into his truck and reemerges smiling after a beat.

NEW MAILMAN

Nothin'.

Derby remains. Nostrils barely flaring with each breath. Either he's calm, or he's about to attack and strangle.

Instead, he waves. And turns back to the house.

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. DERBY'S CABIN - DAY

CLANK! CLANK! CLANK! Derby locks a series of locks on his front door, ending in a MASSIVE TURN DIAL BOLT LOCK. He closes the screen door and locks it with a key.

He crosses to his Cutlass. Unlocks the car door with a key from his MASSIVE KEY RING. Starts the car.

Chopin's eerie *Nocturnes* play from a cassette deck for a beat as he sits still in the driver seat.

He opens the glove compartment to find A ROLL OF DUCT TAPE. He considers something for a beat. Then turns the car off and crosses back to the cabin.

He goes through his ritual of unlocking the six locks on his front door.

INT. DERBY'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Derby walks to the stairwell door. Unlocks three locks with three different keys and descends into--

THE BASEMENT

The skinned deer carcass is zipped up in a table-long clear plastic tent, beneath a large UV lamp.

The zippers of the tent are locked with a tiny lock. He unlocks it with a tiny key and unzips a tiny opening.

On the table, beside a can of Polytranspar Degreaser, lies the CROWBAR. He reaches his arm in and grabs it.

EXT. DERBY'S CABIN - DAY

We wait by the door as the CLANKING OF KEYS and LOCKING OF BOLTS comes from inside the house. Derby exits, goes through his locking ritual and drives off.

INT. SHOE STORE - DAY

Derby stands before a WALL DISPLAY of WORK BOOTS.

The place is empty but for an employee, CHANCE, late 20's, reading a comic book.

CHANCE

Say, ain't you Derby Milton? I 'member you. My grandmami and your mami used to lawn bowl together with the 4H gals. It's me, Chance Stable. 'Member they used to take us all them Saturdays just to watch? Heck, now. Ain't this somethin'! I thought you was dead! Well, you findin' everything okay?

Derby stares. Silence. Chance returns to his reading.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

I'm right here if you need anything.

Derby grabs a boot. Turns it upside down-- A wavy pattern. He puts it back. Grabs another-- A straight pattern. He puts it back.

As he continues looking through the different shoe soles:

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Say, you still got that big ol' magnifyin' glass you used to burn them masterpieces into trees with? I 'member once you made a real pretty picture of a boy an' a girl sitting 'round a campfire. You know, I learned that lesson of nature from you. 'Ventually got me one of them glasses too, and hoo-wee, I'd set upon torturin' poor little ants and their families with the sun's fire.

Derby grabs a pair and stops. This one's got SMALL TRIANGULAR INDENTATIONS.

Derby places his boot on a SHOE SIZE MEASURE.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

I can help you with that.

Derby looks up to Chance's chest. Shakes his head.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

I 'member you was always quiet. Real smart too-- Derby Milton.

The top of his boot goes up to SIZE 11. He places his heel on the 11. The MARK ON HIS BOOT reaches to SIZE 16.

Derby takes the boot and approaches the counter.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Come to think, I ain't seen you since your incident with them bears at the National Park. Must be 25 years now. Whatever did happen--

DERBY

(interrupting)

You have these in s- size 16?

CHANCE

What you need a size 16 for? Bet you're an 11. Anyhow, we don't carry anything above a 14.

DERBY

Anyb- body buy a s- size 16 here?

CHANCE

Not to my knowledge. We'd have t' order a 16 from the manufacturer. I'll check our log for you. Not much in there.

Chance runs back. Derby waits. He looks up to the ceiling fan. *WHOOSH. WHOOSH. WHOOSH.*

Derby begins to hum and tap his finger on the table along to the whooshing of the fan's blades. We zero in on the fan, spinning opposite the blades.

The door SLAMS. Derby snaps out of his dizzy gaze.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Ain't nobody ordered a size 16 in the past year. But I called our sister store way south beside the reservation. They got a size 16 a' those in their log from seven months back.

DERBY

Th- Thank you.

Derby ducks away. Exits the door.

CHANCE

Take it you don't need the 11's or what?

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Sheriff Vogel leans out of his cruiser staring at the SCREECH MARKS of the USPS truck.

Beside them is a wipe mark that used to be a footprint.

The WIPE MARK is fanned out PERPENDICULAR TO THE ROAD. The rest of the dirt is parallel to the road.

Sheriff Vogel looks ahead. More wipe marks instead of footprints. He follows the marks slowly. Leading to--

THE FOREST

Where the last wipe mark stands before the same set of six tire tracks that Match stood before the day prior.

He gets out and stares at them. Flips his keys.

INT. POLICE OFFICE - DAY

Sheriff Vogel enters and strides to his office.

MIMI

Mrs. Tilla called to see if it's safe to go about her gardenin' in the daytime.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Crime scene's been tampered with. Killer's drivin' a small truck with two pair a' wheels in back. Probably a simple ol' F-150. Damn travesty.

He strides into--

SHERIFF VOGEL'S OFFICE

He leans back in his chair, spinning his keys round his finger. Grabs his phone, dials and waits.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

Only reason to put six tires on a truck
a' that size is-- I can't imagine one.
Testosterone, I speculate.

Into the phone:

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

Mrs. Tilla! To what do I owe this
pleasure?-- Yes, ma'am, everything's
under control-- Oh, no, ma'am. No, no--
On my word, it's safe to keep up your
daytime gardenin'-- Yes ma'am-- And how
are the Azaleas blooming? Now, that's
wonderful-- You betcha-- And give my
best to Bernard-- Okay, then.

Mimi comes to the door. Hands him a paper.

MIMI

Sheriff Vogel, there's a Postal Inspector
from the capital here to visit with you.

Just then, a pushy voice booms from outside:

BARRET (O.S.)

Gimme five bills on the Jags within the
spread. And how's Dom's kid pitching?--

SHERIFF VOGEL

Nation's capital?

Mimi nods. Sheriff Vogel stares at the paper. A list of
ten handwritten names. On it is "BIG STAN STEELEY."

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

What's this?

MIMI

Preliminary list of large men I know.

Sheriff Vogel nods obligingly and furrows his brow.

BARRET (O.S.)

Jesus! 35 already?

SHERIFF VOGEL

Did he just take the Lord's name?

Mimi nods. He waves for her to send him in.

In struts US Postal Inspector JOE BARRET, 50, aggressive and large. Slicked hair, slacks, leather boots, sleek button up and a fur parka. Bluetooth in ear.

He holds a finger up to Sheriff Vogel. "Just a sec."

BARRET
 (into Bluetooth)
 So it depends on how fat he is-- Pretty fat? Really?-- Really.-- Really!-- Really? Gimme a full zip on Dom's team.

Barret pushes his Bluetooth and hangs up.

BARRET (CONT'D)
 Isn't this supposed to be the coldest town in the nation? I'm sweating like a whore in church.

SHERIFF VOGEL
 Temperature here moderates in the summer.

BARRET
 You eat lunch yet?

SHERIFF VOGEL
 Forgot it at home again.

BARRET
 What's the best steak house you got. I need a beer.

EXT. JORRY'S BAR - DAY

Cassandra, in jeans, a cut off and a waitress apron, leans on a wall beside two friends, both 18: PATTY, chubby, and HARRIET, buck-toothed. They're eating popsicles.

PATTY
 Then he took me in the closet.

HARRIET
 Right then and there?

PATTY
 Uh-huh. But you can't tell anyone.

CASSANDRA
 Dwayne and I only make love on a bed.

PATTY

Well, I figure we can start somewhere.
Not all of us been goin' three years.

CASSANDRA

I guess.

HARRIET

So's Dwayne gettin' all that money?

Cassandra shrugs, blasé.

CASSANDRA

Either way, he loves me. But a
lifetime's sum a money never hurt.

Cassandra and Harriet giggle. Patty rolls her eyes.

HARVEY the bartender of JORRY'S peeks out.

HARVEY

We got customers. Break's over early.

CASSANDRA

What about Gretchin?

HARVEY

I ain't debatin'.

CASSANDRA

I'll see y'all later.

INT. JORRY'S BAR - DAY

Cassandra sets two plates of thick steak, seemingly cut
straight from the cow, before Sheriff Vogel and Barret.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Thank ya, darlin'.

BARRET

Yes, thank you, darling. United States
Postal Inspector Joe Barret. A pleasure.

Joe juts out his hand. Cassandra shakes it.

CASSANDRA

Enjoy, Sheriff Vogel. 'Spector Joe.

Barret checks her out as she goes. Makes eyes to Sheriff
Vogel. Barret looks around. Takes in the dive.

BARRET

I appreciate understated establishments.
Best meals, always found in the
unlikeliest of places.

Barret dives into his steak. It's bloody, practically still throbbing. He chews exaggeratedly, either disgusted by it, or savoring it in a weird way.

BARRET (CONT'D)

Best fuckin' steak I ever had.
(he points to his steak)
This one.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Harvey's known to be a grill master.

BARRET

Harvey, Harvey? The bartender / owner?
And a grill master? I love you people.
You're efficient. A lean society. If
there were an Olympics of societies from
around the world, I'd put money on Cut
Bank medalling in the five or ten K.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Ain't much of a bettin' man.

BARRET

Speaking of. I got this thing back home.

SHERIFF VOGEL

In our nation's capital?

BARRET

Bethesda. The neighbor town. Anyway,
this thing-- You have kids, Sheriff?

A beat. Sheriff puts his fork and knife down and hangs his head. A sore subject.

SHERIFF VOGEL

No, sir.

BARRET

Please. You're the Sheriff, I'm the
Inspector. We're two in the same. Call
me Joe. I'll call you--

SHERIFF VOGEL

Sheriff Vogel.

BARRET
That a first and last name?

SHERIFF VOGEL
Just my name.

Barret sits back. He's still chewing the same piece.

BARRET
Am I offending you somehow?

SHERIFF VOGEL
No, sir-- Joe.

A beat. Barret grows stern.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)
Don't mean to be wooden. I'm just at a loss on your purpose here, Joe. I got a town full a' concerned folk, and a puzzle of a case that needs piecin' together, so if I appear wooden, Joe, it's 'cause I got big timer duties to get back to.

BARRET
I'll be brief. There's this engagement I've got back home at the week's end. A once a year kind of thing.

SHERIFF VOGEL
Sounds pressing.

BARRET
Indeed. My company heard there's a video tape of one of our employees getting murdered so they sent me to pass along a large reward to the creator of that video. My hope is to work together expeditiously to get this deal done, so we can all get along with our pressing matters. What say you?

A beat. Sheriff Vogel nods.

BARRET (CONT'D)
A reasonable man. I like you, Sheriff Vogel. Now, have you seen this video?

SHERIFF VOGEL
Yes, sir-- Joe.

BARRET
Does your mailman get murdered in it?

Sheriff Vogel grows stiff. He nods.

BARRET (CONT'D)

That's evidence for a court.

SHERIFF VOGEL

It's leadin' evidence for a police case.

Barret tosses three twenties on the table from his wallet. Holds out his card between two fingers.

BARRET

I just need to see the dead mailman's body and we're set. I'm at the Glacier Gateway Inn. A pleasure, Sheriff Vogel.

Barret swallows the steak piece down. He struts out, leaving the rest of his steak.

AT THE BAR

Cassandra sips on a coke. GRETCHIN, 40, the aged embodiment of 80's 'hair-band' rock, sucks on a cigarette. She wears an apron too.

GRETCHIN

(deep smoker's voice)

Did I hear right that you're competin' in the Miss Cut Bank Pageant? Bet you didn't know I was Miss Cut Bank.

Gretchin pulls out another cigarette and lights the new one with the butt of her old one. She takes a drag.

GRETCHIN (CONT'D)

Yep. 1987.

Gretchin takes out a wallet-sized photo of her in 1987, wearing a Miss Cut Bank sash and tiara. She looks EXACTLY THE SAME, save the wrinkles.

GRETCHIN (CONT'D)

And I'll tell you this because, 'tween you an me, you got good chances a' winnin'. It's one of the most important days you'll live. Like enterin' the gates of Mt. Olympics.

CASSANDRA

I'm into the reward money. 1,000 bucks.

GRETCHIN

Money comes an' goes, but that crown--
That crown endures. I been surfen' on
this wave of success ever since. You
ever been surfen'?

Cassandra shakes her head.

GRETCHIN (CONT'D)

Been doin it everyday. My life's been
nothin' but awesome. Lotta popular guys
been chasin' me.

Harvey slaps her jiggly ass. Gretchin giggles. Raises
her eyebrows up and down at Cassandra.

HARVEY

(to Casssandra)

Sheriff Vogel's finished. Clean 'im up
and you're cut. Big Steeley wants you
home early. Seems you're grounded.

Cassandra rolls her eyes. Harvey takes a drag from
Gretchin's cigarette.

INT. CASINO - DAY

A few rows of slot machines, two tables of Black Jack.
It's COMPLETELY EMPTY.

Match sits in a fold out chair along a wall by a door.
Picking the crud from beneath his blackened nails.

A TUBBY MAN with a mushroom cut and a mustache exits the
door. He gestures for Match to go inside.

INT. CASINO - RORY'S OFFICE - DAY

Match enters. RORY LIGHTFOOT, 50, dark-skinned, sits
behind a desk and a pair of massive aviator glasses.

Match approaches Rory's desk. Slides the envelope with
the embossed "Big Stan Steeley's Body Shop" marked out.

On the envelope is scribbled: "SORRY FOR THE DELAY."
Rory nods at Match. Pulls out the money and counts it.

RORY

I got a dirty little trigger finger. You
pull this kind of shit again--

Rory shrugs. Stares at Match. He suddenly stands up and pulls a revolver from his jeans. Points it at Match. The Tubby Man by the door points his pistol at Match too.

RORY (CONT'D)

What d'you say?!

Rory collapses laughing like a weasel. The Tubby Man giggles quietly. The laughing lasts uncomfortably long.

It eventually dies down. Then, Rory suddenly points his revolver again, as does the Tubby Man.

RORY (CONT'D)

Whoreson, I dare you to talk back again!

More laughter. Finally, he sits and grows serious.

He counts out five bills. Puts them back in the envelope and holds it out. Match doesn't take it.

RORY (CONT'D)

Ain't a loan. Signing bonus. We'll talk tomorrow about when you'll start.

Match grabs the envelope. Rory doesn't let go.

RORY (CONT'D)

Listen to me. Never again.

Rory releases his grip. As Match walks away:

RORY (CONT'D)

What was that?

Rory bangs his head on his desk laughing. The Tubby Man giggles quietly again.

EXT. CASINO - DAY

Across the small road there is a park. A group of tan Blackfoot children play tag in the distance.

He doesn't notice that the children have huddled together and are staring at him intermittently and giggling.

Match continues away from the kids when a little TOMBOY GIRL splits from the group and chases after him.

TOMBOY GIRL

'Scuse me, Mister Match. We was wonderin' if you can be 'it.'

Match smiles. He holds up his fingers one by one, counting. One. Two. Three--

The Tomboy Girl's eyes light up. She turns and screams in a high-pitched tone.

TOMBOY GIRL (CONT'D)

He's counting!!!

The children scream and scramble. Match reaches ten, then holds his two hands out like bear claws.

He begins for the Children. Running slowly, playing tag. They love it.

EXT. MATCH'S HOME - EVENING

An austere cubic adobe house with one window. Match's pickup with a hooded back hatch is parked outside.

Through the window we see Match throwing knives by the blade at a dart board. Some hit it, some hit the wall around it. He swigs from a handle of whiskey.

The HIGH-PITCHED WHIR of Derby's silver Cutlass crescendoes before it enters frame and SHUTS OFF.

Out step two thin brown corduroy pant legs. We follow them as they walk undaunted to the front door.

A soft *KNOCK KNOCK* comes at the door. Match opens it to Derby cleaning his thick circular glasses with his shirt.

He puts them on and looks down at Match's massive bare feet. He peers inside to see *MATCH'S BOOTS* laying about on the floor. Derby enters past Match into--

INT. MATCH'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

A small room. Just a bed and a bathroom.

Derby grabs a boot and looks at it's sole. It's got *SMALL TRIANGULAR INDENTATIONS*. Derby rises and talks to Match's chest, never his face.

DERBY

P- Perhaps you can show me the mail truck.

Match grabs his pad and pencil. Scribbles "AINT YOU DERBY MILTON?"

DERBY (CONT'D)

P- Parcel in there belongs to me.
Perhaps you s- saw it.

Derby begins to tap his foot and massage the soft nervy flesh between his pointer and thumb.

Match writes: "THOUGHT YOU WAS DEAD."

DERBY (CONT'D)

Perh- haps your accomplice- ces may know
where I can find my p- parcel.

Match writes something on the pad and tears the paper off and shows it to Derby. The tapping instantly stops.

Derby's tiny black sociopathic eyes look up INTO Match's eyes. A beat. Bear vs. Beagle.

Suddenly, Derby SNATCHES Match's windpipe with his massive hand and SQUEEZES it like a Twinkie.

DERBY (CONT'D)

I would appreciate if you t- told me
where I can find my p- parcel.

Match tries to pull Derby's hand down to no avail. Match's tracheal cartilage CRACKS and CRUNCHES under Derby's grip. He brings his fist down on Derby's face. *POW!* Derby doesn't flinch from the bulldozer.

Match turns purple from Derby's clutch. Derby's nails PUNCTURE HIS SKIN drawing blood.

Another STRIKE to Derby's face sends him down to the floor, his glasses flying. Derby recovers them just as Match plows him in the chest with his foot.

BAM! Again in the ribs. *BAM!*

No reaction in Derby's face, just forced exhales. He rolls away and SIDE KICKS Match's knee. It SNAPS and buckles sideways into the other knee.

Match's expression silently screams. The giant falls.

Derby struggles up. The paper in Match's hand flutters to the ground. It reads: "FUCK OFF CABIN BOY."

Just out of Match's reach is a gun under his bed. He fingers the gun over. Grabs it, when *THUD!* Derby stabs Match's gun hand to the floor with a knife from the dart board. Match reacts in silent pain.

Derby, one fist behind his neck and the other gripping Match's collar, picks the brute's heavy body up and leans him against the wall, when he sees something:

THE ENVELOPE IN MATCH'S BACK POCKET.

Match looks down at the envelope and back up to Derby.

BAM! Derby JAMS Match's head hard against the wall. Match's face contorts. Then relaxes. His head falls forward, revealing a knife firmly planted into his neck.

Match, dead.

Derby takes the envelope, which has "Sorry for the delay" written on in. He opens it, sees the cash.

Although the embossed BIG STAN STEELEY'S BODY SHOP logo is marked out in black, the letters are still visible and can be read backwards from the inside of the envelope.

He stares at the REVERSE EMBOSSED LETTERS for a beat. Derby tosses the cash onto Match's body.

He grabs Match's pad and leaves, not noticing that the paper with "FUCK OFF CABIN BOY" remains on the floor.

INT. BIG STAN STEELEY'S BODY SHOP - DAY

TIGHT ON: A DOOR. A TOILET FLUSHES and out steps Dwayne zipping up his fly

He saunters out beneath a tire-less old Volvo raised high on a hydraulic platform, when he stops with a startle. Ahead, Sheriff Vogel exits his cruiser.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Hiya, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

Sheriff Vogel-- Hiya.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Slow business today?

DWAYNE

We're closed here. Big Steeley's got me at the junk lot foragin' for useable parts. Fixin' to sell the lot to a man named Corcoran. Marty Corcoran. Just came by to pick up my gear and head on.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Good fella, that Corcoran. Lives just beside Whitefish. Boss ain't in then?

DWAYNE

No, sir. I can help you for anything, though.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Perhaps, then. Just some canvasin' questions. Say, you visit Mrs. Margaret?

Dwayne nods. Sheriff nods.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

Alright, then. You seen a truck 'bout the size of a F-150 in town with a two pair out back?

DWAYNE

No, sir. Ain't no reason to put two pair in back of a F-150.

SHERIFF VOGEL

You're the only one Big Steeley's got workin' at the shop?

DWAYNE

Me and the--

Dwayne pauses.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Who, now?

DWAYNE

The Native.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Where's he?

DWAYNE

The Native?

SHERIFF VOGEL

What's his name?

DWAYNE

Match.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Match what?

DWAYNE
Match Tasunke.

SHERIFF VOGEL
An' where's Match?

DWAYNE
Ain't seen him since a few days back.

SHERIFF VOGEL
Much obliged. How's Big Steeley's girl?

DWAYNE
Good, sir.

SHERIFF VOGEL
She's a plum. You take good care of her.

Sheriff Vogel returns to his cruiser. Looks left. Sees what looks like a pair of tires behind a building.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)
Mind if I take a peek out here?

DWAYNE
Help yourself, sir. My casa's all yours.

Sheriff Vogel's boots GRATE on the dirt as we follow him behind a garage to find a--

RUSTED OUT FORD F-150 WITH TWO PAIRS OF TIRES IN BACK.

He flips his keys. Begins counting paces beside it.

BACK ON DWAYNE. He places a box full of turpentine and WD-40 cans in his trunk. Sits on the back bumper. Biting his nails. Waits. When Sheriff Vogel emerges.

SHERIFF VOGEL
You know you gotta six-wheeled F-150 right here?

Dwayne winces. Bangs his fist on his forehead.

DWAYNE
That's right! Slipped my mind!

As he talks, Dwayne pulls out his Copenhagen Long Cut and tosses in a one-handed dip.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
Big Steeley's kept that thing back there since I started high school.
(MORE)

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

Used to use it for towing back when he offered them services. My apologies, sir. Guess I grown used to that truck sittin' there.

Sheriff Vogel stops. Stares. A beat.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, sir. Wasn't trying to withhold nothin'. Just slipped my mind.

SHERIFF VOGEL

You ain't into any trouble, son.

DWAYNE

No, sir.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Match ain't been 'round since how long?

DWAYNE

Three days.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Tow truck'll come by later for this. You see Big Steeley, tell 'im I need a word.

DWAYNE

Yes, sir.

Sheriff Vogel gets in his car and peels out. Dwayne remains paralyzed. Heart beating out of his chest.

He looks at the F-150, then at the raised tire-less Volvo. When the cruiser is long gone, Dwayne BOLTS INTO--

INT. BIG STAN STEELEY'S BODY SHOP - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dwayne grabs the phone. Starts dialing but stops. He hangs up. Runs out the door to his car, and peels out.

INT. STEELEY HOME - CASSANDRA'S ROOM - DAY

In a white tank top, underwear and knee-highs, Cassandra grips a marker as a microphone and faces her reflection in the framed poster of Natalie Wood.

The stereo behind her blares Marvin Gay and Tammy Terrel's "AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH."

CASSANDRA

My name is Cassandra Steeley--

She bounces her hips cutely to the beat.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
 --and I think I'd make a good Miss Cut
 Bank because--

Now she begins singing fairly good and dancing along.

CASSANDRA / MARVIN GAYE
*I'll be there when you want me / some
 way, some how. / 'Cause baby there
 ain't no mountain high enough. / Ain't no
 valley low enough--*

She jumps on her bed and waves her arms high and low.

A faint *KNOCK* comes from downstairs. Cassandra lowers the volume. Another louder *KNOCK*.

CASSANDRA
 Coming!

EXT. STEELEY HOME - DAY

Sheriff Vogel stands at the door, flipping his keys. Cassandra, now dressed, opens it. Rosie in the background dances by, singing the Marvin Gaye tune.

CASSANDRA
 I keep running into you, Sheriff Vogel!

SHERIFF VOGEL
 Don't it seem. Your daddy here?

CASSANDRA
 Nope.

SHERIFF VOGEL
 Wasn't at the office neither.

CASSANDRA
 Might 'a gone to Great Falls on business.

SHERIFF VOGEL
 He ain't pickin' up his phone.

CASSANDRA
 Must be with a client. He don't pick up
 when he's with clients. Everything okay?

SHERIFF VOGEL
 Yeah, everything's okay.

CASSANDRA
He ain't in trouble, is he?

SHERIFF VOGEL
Oh, no. Just wanted to inquire on some details relatin' to his shop. I'll see 'im when I do. 'Preciate your kindness.

CASSANDRA
Sure, Sheriff Vogel.

EXT. PAY PHONE AT A HIGHWAY REST STOP - DAY

The Jimmy skids to a halt. Dwayne jumps out. Runs to the pay phone, puts in change and dials.

INT. MATCH'S HOME - DAY

TIGHT ON: MATCH'S MASSIVE BOOT SITTING IN A POOL OF BLOOD

Through the window Sheriff Vogel's cruiser nears on a dirt road in the distance, a cloud of smoke behind it.

On the shelf before the window, a phone begins to RING.

Sheriff Vogel parks. RING. Exits his cruiser and flips his keys. RING. He crosses to the door. He KNOCKS.

The Answering Machine answers.

ANSWERING MACHINE
You've reached the Answering Machine of
[silence]. Please leave--

EXT. PAY PHONE AT A HIGHWAY REST STOP - DAY

Dwayne holds the phone to his ear.

ANSWERING MACHINE
-- your message after the beep.

BEEP. Dwayne opens his mouth to speak. Then pauses. Looks at the phone.

INT. MATCH'S HOME - DAY

Silence on the Answering Machine.

SHERIFF VOGEL (O.S.)
Mr. Tasunke. It's the po--

The door swings open from Sheriff Vogel's knock. He slowly pushes the door open. Enters, gun raised.

PAY PHONE

Dwayne holds the phone a beat. Then hangs up. Defeated.

MATCH'S HOME

Sheriff Vogel's footstep's GRATE on the adobe floor.

The Answering Machine CLICKS off. Sheriff Vogel doesn't notice. His eyes are trained below on an unseen Match.

He bends down to see the little paper with "FUCK OFF CABIN BOY" scribbled on it. He picks it up.

EXT. MATCH'S HOME - DAY

WIDE ON: THE ADOBE HOUSE. A beat. Then Sheriff Vogel BURSTS OUT. He stands on the door step. Stares down.

He bends over and DRY HEAVES. Once more, with vomit.

He rises. Spits. Pulls out his handkerchief and wipes his mouth. Crosses to his car. Grabs his two-way radio.

SHERIFF VOGEL
Mimi, you copy?

MIMI
Copy.

SHERIFF VOGEL
We're in for somethin' real bad here, and I need time to think things through. So for now this stays real quiet. (beat)
Our body count just doubled.

INT. JUNK LOT OFFICE - DAY

Dim. All the window blinds are shut. The place is tidy. A phonograph plays The Dave Brubeck Quartet jazz.

Georgie eats a slice of cold pizza and drinks a beer as he watches the news on the small tube.

The murder video plays. He laughs when the gun GOES OFF.

INT. DWAYNE'S JIMMY - DAY

The long empty stretch of road extends outside the windshield. The Allman Brothers' "JESSICA" plays.

Dwayne drives preoccupied, when he sees something. He SITS UP and slows down.

Two miles ahead, at the gate outside the junk lot is a TAHOE and a SUBARU HATCHBACK. Dwayne FLOORS the pedal.

INT. JUNK LOT OFFICE - DAY

Georgie hears a car engine APPROACH and SHUT OFF.

He turns off the TV, lifts the needle from the phonograph and runs to the window.

Big Stan unlocks the gate. Returns to his Tahoe. Pulls into the yard. The Subaru follows. Big Stan gets out, "#1 DAD" mug in hand. MARTY CORCORAN exits the Subaru.

Georgie's eyes grow wide. He can only hear muffled bits and pieces.

MARTY CORCORAN

It's a swell plot, Big Steeley.

Georgie looks around. Sees the lamp and the stool in the middle of the room. PANIC on Georgie's face.

BIG STAN

Let's deal inside.

Georgie repositions the lamp by the desk and the stool in the corner and runs out the back door.

It SLAMS shut just as the front door OPENS. The men enter. Big Stan sees the phonograph spinning.

BIG STAN (CONT'D)

Now, come on! Kid doesn't appreciate vintage when he sees it.

Marty looks in a trash can. It's FULL OF BEER CANS.

MARTY CORCORAN

Certainly appreciates the funny nectar.

BIG STAN

Apologies 'bout the state here, Marty.

INT. DWAYNE'S JIMMY - DAY

Dwayne pulls to a stop outside the office and bolts out.

EXT. JUNK LOT OFFICE - DAY

Georgie begins to WHEEZE. He looks through the window.

INSERT POV THROUGH A CRACK IN THE BLINDS

Georgie's INHALER IS ON THE TV. Big Stan and Marty negotiate at the desk. We can only hear muffled words. In walks Dwayne. Big Stan turns to him when--

END POV

Georgie slides down against the side of the house weakly. He turns pale at his wheezing. Beside Georgie is a blue tarp. He lifts it to find a shovel, and chain cutters.

The floor begins to CREAK with footsteps. He rises to see the men inside shaking hands, saying goodbye.

INT. JUNK LOT OFFICE - DAY

Marty exits. Big Stan faces out the door, mug in hand.

BIG STAN

Give my best to Sherry. Talk soon, pal.

Big Stan towers over Dwayne. Georgie's WHEEZING can be heard softly from outside. Big Stan kicks the trash can.

BIG STAN (CONT'D)

What in hell's name is going on here?
Your promotion ain't no license to be a
dumbass sally on my property.

DWAYNE

Yes, sir.

BIG STAN

I ain't askin' for agreement. (beat) I
come in here with my prospective buyer
and you make me out to be an imbecile
with the record player on and the blinds
all gothic and closed and enough beer to
support a three day binge. And what the
fuck is that damn wheezin'?!
!

Dwayne spots Georgie's inhaler on the TV.

DWAYNE

Won't happen again, sir.

BIG STAN

Damn right. Give thanks I don't turn your ass to unemployment!

DWAYNE

Thank you, sir.

BIG STAN

I want you back at the shop. (beat) I'm on to you, son.

DWAYNE

Sir?

BIG STAN

'Bout the lucky nature of your video. I don't buy it.

DWAYNE

Buy what, sir?

BIG STAN

Of all the places you can point a camera at my daughter, you point it at the scene of a money makin' crime. You're either a lucky bastard or a deceptive bastard, and I know lucky don't run in your blood.

Dwayne forces a swallow. Begins to sweat. Turns red. Big Stan drinks the last from his "#1 DAD" mug and sets it down on the coffee table.

DWAYNE

It'd take perfect execution to pull off that kinda ploy. I ain't smart for that.

BIG STAN

Your brow turnin' wet, son?

Dwayne sees a pale ghostly Georgie through the small break in the blinds. He has a finger over his mouth.

DWAYNE

No, sir.

BIG STAN

Who you lookin' at? I'm right here!

DWAYNE

No one, sir. You, sir.

Big Stan turns to the window. Crosses to it and opens the blinds. He sees tons of footprints in the dirt.

BIG STAN

Who in hell we got here?

DWAYNE

I been cleaning them parts out back like you said. Please. I'm sorry for my conduct with the beer. Just let me get back to my job.

Big Stan grabs Dwayne by the shirt and pulls him to the front door. He opens it. Throws him out. Dwayne falls.

BIG STAN

Them usable parts got a marginal net value of the crud on my boot heel. Now, your squirrely ass and me don't wanna see what'll happen if you stick around. (beat) I'm mighty disappointed in you, son. You abused my trust. Thought you was better.

Dwayne pants for air in the dirt, as though that were a heavy punch to the gut, his world deflating around him.

DWAYNE

Big Stan, please--

EXT. JUNK LOT - NOOK BENEATH THE OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

TIGHT ON: GEORGIE CROUCHING. Shaking. Eyes fluttering.

BIG STAN (O.S.)

Get! And don't make me tell you a third!

We hear Dwayne's Jimmy TURN ON. The Allman Brothers song comes back on faintly. The Jimmy REVS AWAY.

Footsteps CREAK above. Georgie follows them with his eyes across the office to the back door, when--

IT BUSTS OPEN. The FOOTSTEPS continue down the back stairs. Georgie begins to wheeze uncontrollably loudly.

Big Stan's shadow nears the nook opening. He bends down. Sees Georgie. Without hesitation, he reaches in and grabs his leg.

EXT. JUNK LOT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Big Stan pulls out Georgie's shaking body like a rag.

BIG STAN

You tweaked out on some drugs? Stand up!

Georgie stands and begins to run away as fast as his wheezing allows. Big Stan stops and squints his eyes.

BIG STAN (CONT'D)

I'll be-- Ain't you Georgie Wits?

Georgie, 20 yards off, stops. Turns around. Pale blue.

Big Stan returns inside with haste. Georgie pathetically chases after him.

INT. JUNK LOT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Big Stan picks up the phone. Dials. When Georgie appears at the doorway. CHAIN CUTTERS in hand.

He CHUCKS THEM. They fly across the room like knives and COLLIDE WITH BIG STAN'S SKULL with a gut-churning CRACK.

Big Stan falls instantly. Drops the phone.

Georgie grabs his inhaler off the TV. Sucks in a long hit. Collapses into Big Stan's chair.

He looks at BIG STAN'S UNMOVING BODY. Blood pools by his head. The phone clutched in his hand RINGS softly.

Georgie sucks in another hit. When--

MIMI

(on the phone)

911. Is this an emergency?-- Hello?

Georgie wrestles the phone out of Stan's unconscious grip and hangs up.

INT. DWAYNE'S JIMMY - DAY

The Allman Brothers "JESSICA" still plays. Dwayne pulls over. Sees the junk lot in the rear view.

A beat. Then he BANGS THE SHIT OUT OF HIS STEERING WHEEL OVER AND OVER AGAIN to the happy tune. The Jimmy HONKS with hits. He stops. And continues down the road.

EXT. JUNK LOT OFFICE - DAY

The blue tarp is splayed out on the ground.

Georgie drags a face-down Big Stan with all his might DOWN THE THREE STAIRS, his head banging on each step.

Then through the dirt and ONTO THE BLUE TARP. Georgie begins to roll Big Stan up in the tarp.

Panting, he finishes the job and starts DRAGGING the body away by the feet's end when--

COLD BREATH COMES IN SMALL CLOUDS FROM THE HEAD'S END.

INT. MCCLAREN HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dark. TV highlights wash Orson and the Samoan's faces. A fishing tournament is on TV.

The Samoan is knitting and drinking a Molson. Orson is in his chair, stiff as a board.

Dwayne unlocks and enters the door. He sits on the couch. Nods at the Samoan, who nods back.

DWAYNE

You mind givin' us a minute.

SAMOAN

My shift's over at nine tonight.

DWAYNE

I got events underway that are makin' my time hard. I'd appreciate if you'd draw your line in the sand tomorrow.

The Samoan glares at Dwayne, grabs his beer, and leaves.

A beat of silence. Dwayne begins to heave in air. Chest rising and falling. He turns to the TV.

ON TV: A Fisherman reels in an ENORMOUS Mahi-mahi. He STICKS IT in the side of the head with a hook and pulls it onto the boat. The fish flaps blood everywhere, then the Fisherman CLUBS ITS HEAD. It stops flapping.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
 (staring at the TV)
 I got somethin' that's on my chest. And
 I'm gonna say it, if it's okay. That
 business you seen on the news about the
 mailman? I set everyone up on that.

Orson's ventilator HISSES at it's all too REGULAR RATE.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
 I did it. And I'm sorry, daddy. Never
 wanted to let you down. So, in case I
 did, I just wanted you to know in honest.

ON TV: A fisherman fights a strong catch. In the
 distance, the camera zooms in on a spectacular 10 foot
 sailfish jumping out of the water, flapping wildly.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
 People been gettin' suspicious. Closin'
 in on me. An' it ain't right to get
 caught-- I'm gonna turn myself in.

Orson remains staring ahead. Non-responsive. Tears form
 in Dwayne's eyes. He grabs Orson's hand.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
 I ruined everything, Daddy. I'm sorry.

Dwayne kisses Orson's head, rises, and leaves.

EXT. JUNK LOT - DUSK

The HIGH-PITCHED WHIR of the Cutlass crescendoes and
 turns off. A car door OPENS and CLOSES. FOOTSTEPS near,
 until Derby's hand, gripping the CROWBAR, enters frame.

INT. JUNK LOT - DUSK

Georgie sits against a wall picking his nails when he
 sees the FRONT DOOR HANDLE JIGGLE. PANIC on his face.
 He rises. The door UNLOCKS and calmly OPENS. There
 stands Derby.

GEORGIE
 Derby Milton?

Georgie eyes the crowbar. Derby crosses to Georgie.

DERBY
 Thought y- you was dead.

Georgie backs up into a couch. Falls into it. Derby grabs the stool. Sits on it. Nonthreatening.

DERBY (CONT'D)

I'm lookin' for my p- parcel. Reckon you stole'd it. Was addressed to 4 Woolly Walnut Trail.

GEORGIE

Cabin 20 miles north on 358. Up in the boonies. I deliver a package to you once a year in June. You know how many tires I've blown getting to you? Yeah, I know where your package is. But what gives, man. You operate on a weird mail cycle.

DERBY

I ain't got p- patience.

GEORGIE

Well, patience is a fuckin' virtue. You ought to get some.

DERBY

Gonna g- gimme hitches like the Injin?

GEORGIE

So you threatened the Native too? Bet he told you a lot.

Derby shakes his head "No." A beat.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

You know, I don't like your tone. That shit you're doing right now, with the crowbar-- and your tone? Makes me feel threatened. I don't like it. What gives with the handy tool anyway? You come to threaten me? Pry your parcel out of me? Very fuckin' clever. (beat) I'm starting to think you're an asshole. It doesn't have to be like this, you know. You can talk to me like a civilized fucking human being. Jesus H. C.!

Georgie sees Big Stan's "#1 DAD" mug on the coffee table.

DERBY

Just want my p- parcel.

GEORGIE

You know what? Fuck you, man. I got other news for you.

(MORE)

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

Your's ain't the way shit works. You can't just come prancin' up in here, and knock me around for your own agenda. I got my own agenda. Does that ever get respected? No way, José. Know what else? You're the virus of this job. Come threaten me. A forest child fuckin' mongoloid.

Derby sits quietly. Emotionless. Almost sympathetic.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

What? Am I supposed to smile at you like a good mailman? "Thank you, creepy fuck nuts, for showing me your shiny lever." No, you know what? All day it's "Good morning, ma'am," "Hi to the kids, sir." All this fuckin' pleasantries that's demanded of me, well, now I say fuck it. Fuck them. Fuck you.

Georgie grabs the mug, rises and CHUCKS IT AT DERBY.

THUD! It SLAMS INTO THE BRIDGE OF HIS NOSE leaving a deep gash, then shatters on the floor.

Derby rises. Calmly crosses to Georgie. Georgie cowers.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I was kidding. Friends joke, man! What do you want to know? I'll tell you anything. We're friends.

SMASH TO:

EXT. TOOL SHED - DUSK

Rickety. We move in on a crack between two wood beams near the floor. Close now, we can discern SMALL CLOUDS OF COLD BREATH coming from inside.

CUT TO:

INSERT POV FROM INSIDE THE TWO VERTICAL WOOD BEAMS

A thin sliver of sight. The junk lot office is a hundred yards off. Through the large window, Derby's face can be seen clearly as he WALLS on an unseen GEORGIE.

A Man (Big Stan) GRUNTS in forced strains of short nose breaths as though there were tape over his mouth.

Georgie's FAINT SCREAMS AND SQUEALS echo into the dusk.

INT. SHERIFF VOGEL'S OFFICE - DUSK

Sheriff Vogel holds an empty whiskey glass. He puts his head down on the desk. Then rises. Grabs his coat.

EXT. SHERIFF VOGEL'S OFFICE - DUSK

Dwayne's Jimmy pulls to a stop beside the building. Dwayne shuts off the truck. Takes a deep breath and gets out as Sheriff Vogel exits the office flustered.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Dwayne! Just the man I needed to see!
So you seen Big Stan or what?

DWAYNE

Yes, sir.

SHERIFF VOGEL

You tell him I need a word?

DWAYNE

I didn't get a chance to get a word in,
sir. See, somethin' happened--

SHERIFF VOGEL

When d'you see him?

DWAYNE

Midday. Was transactin' a deal with
Marty Corcoran at the junk lot.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Figured as much. Ain't been able to get
a hold a' him all day.

Silence. Dwayne begins to pant. Shake. Tear. He opens his mouth to spew out what we all hope he doesn't. When--

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

Ain't nothin' makin' sense to me. This might be the most dissapointin' day of my life, barring of course the news a' my wife's sterility 30 odd years ago. You know what I seen today? Match Tasunke, murdered. Drove on up after our visit. Second murder on this case. First I seen in person. An' it felt like I lost part of me right then an' there. This here's turned itself into a somethin' real bad.

(MORE)

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)
Ten years ago, I dreamt on cases like
this, but now-- This here's real bad.

Dwayne looks down. Sighs.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry son. I ought to have been more
kindly about that news. (beat) Then I
get a phone call from Mrs. Steeley
worried stiff that her husband ain't
called or come home tonight. I'm tellin'
you, I been feelin' like my mind ain't
cut out for this. Ten years ago, though--

Sheriff Vogel lets out a long sigh.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)
Maybe it ain't about takin' life on when
you think you're ready for it, but life
takin' you on when it knows you're ready.
So better I man up on this an' trust that
life knows what it's talkin' about.

Sheriff Vogel takes out his wallet. Sifts through it.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)
Seems Big Steeley may be up in Great
Falls. Highway Patrol ain't reported
nothin' 'tween here an' there, so
presumably nothing bad ain't happen. I
don't want word gettin' out on this. Not
till mornin', anyhow. These things tend
to play out quietly more often than not.

Sheriff Vogel pulls out a twenty. Holds it out. Dwayne
refuses with his hands.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)
You give Cassandra a good time tonight.
She's your responsibility. She don't
know nothin' 'bout this mess. Take her
dancin'. Make like all's well. You got
her mama's blessin'. Told Mrs. Steeley
to have a pizza movie night with the
young'en. Can I trust you?

Sheriff Vogel raises the money. Dwayne nods and
reluctantly grabs the twenty.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)
Good, son. Mimi got a call from
Steeley's junk lot that got cut off.
I'm off to poke 'round there.

Chills run through Dwayne's apprehensive face.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)
 Nothin' ain't makin' any sense. (beat, to himself) Anything else I'm missing?

DWAYNE
 No, sir.

SHERIFF VOGEL
 What's that?

DWAYNE
 Nothin'.

INT. JORRY'S BAR - NIGHT

Dwayne stands by a pay phone with the phone to his ear. He's beside himself and trying not to show it.

INT. DERBY'S CUTLASS - NIGHT

Chopin's *Nocturnes* play. Derby is driving into the U-Store-It garages.

TIGHT ON: GEORGIE'S BLOCKY RED CELL PHONE and USPS ID BADGE on the passenger seat. The phone BUZZES with an incoming call.

Derby stares at the phone. It stops ringing. He picks it up with his bloody hands and calls the number back.

INT. JORRY'S BAR - NIGHT

Dwayne hangs up defeated. Crosses to the bar. Harvey pours him a beer. Dwayne's every action is FORCED.

Behind him and beneath the MUSIC, Dwayne doesn't hear the PAY PHONE RING. A DRUNKARD crosses to it and picks up.

DRUNKARD
 Y-ello-- Nope. This's Jorry's.

Dwayne watches a group of LIQUORED UP PEOPLE crowd around Cassandra and KENNY, 30's, checker board between the two. Cassandra moves one last piece.

CASSANDRA

I do believe an army full a' kings wins
the war. Any other time you wanna get to
double or nothin', Kenny, I'm right here.

The Crowd claps. Kenny, pissed, hands her some cash.
Cassandra stumbles to the jukebox and plays Van
Morrison's "INTO THE MYSTIC."

She begins to slink from side to side, hands above her
head, super sexy, for a full verse. She beckons Dwayne
to her with her finger. Dwayne rises and the two meet.

VAN MORRISON / CASSANDRA

(along with the chorus)

I wanna rock your gypsy soul.

Dwayne finally cracks a smile as they dance tête a tête.
Other couples speckle the dance floor. We stay on Dwayne
and Cassandra as they swirl together.

Gretchin watches on from the bar, teary-eyed, as the song
comes to a close.

DWAYNE

I gotta sit down.

They cross to the bar. Cassandra sits on Dwayne's lap
and adulates him with her tipsy eyes.

CASSANDRA

Dwayne?

The TV's "BREAKING NEWS" lead-in graphics catch Dwayne's
attention. Cassandra hiccups. Dwayne sips his beer.

HARVEY

You good?

CASSANDRA

Dwayne?

DWAYNE

Tab. And turn that up?

HARVEY

Gretchin!

Gretchin crosses the TV glaring at Harvey. She strains
to reach the TV. Harvey stares at her ass. Raises his
eyebrows at Dwayne. Gretchin turns it up.

CASSANDRA

Dwayne?

Dwayne's eyes are glued to the TV.

DWAYNE

Yeah, Hummin'bird?

CASSANDRA

I love you.

HARVEY

I'll be damned. They found Georgie Wits.

All the blood DRAINS from Dwayne's face. Everyone in the place crowds around Dwayne at the bar, staring up at the TV. Dwayne buries his face down in his hands.

CASSANDRA

I love you so much, Dwayne.

Cassandra nestles into his neck.

INT. JUNK LOT - LATE NIGHT

Ambulance, cop cruisers, and a news van all outside. Cops scurry in and out of the taped-off office.

LOW ANGLE UP ON: Sheriff Vogel, staring down. Pale. He wipes some vomit from his chin with his handkerchief.

Below him lies Georgie's body covered up to the shoulders. And it is *fucked* up. Pieces from the shattered "#1 DAD" mug beside him.

Nail shaped bloody cuts along side his esophagus. His right eye bludgeoned in, purpled and swollen. Two horizontal gashes lie just above his collar bone.

Sheriff Vogel remains lost in thought. Flipping his keys. Barret crosses to them.

BARRET

So, he's dead?

Barret sees the mess that Georgie's body is. A PARAMEDIC looks up at Barret contemptuously.

BARRET (CONT'D)

Hmm. What happened beside the neck?

PARAMEDIC

I only seen gashes like these once before. Homicide I worked back in Missoula years past now. Fella torturin' another fella for somethin' or other. Digs a crowbar 'neath his collar bone. Each minute of restrained information, fella pries the bone a tad harder till either the sucker talks or snaps. Seems here the sucker talked.

SHERIFF VOGEL

(sotto)

What they torture Georgie on?

The Paramedic covers Georgie's head with the sheet.

PARAMEDIC

He'll be in the freezer.

Sheriff Vogel nods. The Paramedic pushes the body away. Barret claps his hands and rubs them together.

BARRET

I got my body. Now I just need the hero.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Georgie Wits appears dead, right here on Big Stan's plot, while Big Stan up and disappears. That ain't a puzzle to you?

BARRET

Who the fuck is Big Stan?

YOUNG COP (O.S.)

(yelling from a ways away)

Sheriff Vogel? I got somethin'.

INT. TOOL SHED - CONTINUOUS

A YOUNG COP stares, wide-eyed, at something. Sheriff Vogel and Barret enter. They stare, wide-eyed as well.

The bald top of Big Stan's head sticks out of one end of the rolled-up tarp. Sheriff Vogel crosses to Big Stan.

BARRET

Who's that?

YOUNG COP

That's Big Stan.

BARRET
Would you look at that!

EXT. U-STORE-IT GARAGE - NIGHT

Derby eyes a KEYHOLE by the floor on garage door 7. He tries to pry it open with his crowbar.

SIDEBURNS GUARD (O.S.)
N' I help, you?

A SPOTLIGHT shines on him. SIDEBURNS GUARD enters frame, maglite unrelentingly trained on Derby's face.

SIDEBURNS GUARD (CONT'D)
This your garage?

No response. Sideburns steps up to him.

SIDEBURNS GUARD (CONT'D)
You gotta key or some ID?

No response. Just Derby's unflinching and unsettling stare. He begins to tap his foot and massages the fleshy part of his hand. Sideburns sees this and cowers back.

SIDEBURNS GUARD (CONT'D)
Listen, sir, there ain't nothin' for nothin' I can do. That's reinforced concrete all around. 'Neath the door's a whole complicated system of bolts. We ain't got ventilation in there, so air ain't even gettin' by. Reckon not even a dog can live in there without ass-phyxiatin' pretty quick. Only way's with a key and a card. And sir--

Sideburns looks up behind Derby. Derby turns. A SECURITY CAMERA scans across their location.

SIDEBURNS GUARD (CONT'D)
We got'em all over recording on DVDs. It's a felony to try an' break in there, but none need to know 'bout this if we're square.

We hold on Derby's face. Not so much as a flinch. Derby extends his hand. Sideburns hesitates, then shakes it.

INT. CUTLASS - NIGHT

A stack of surveillance DVDs sit on the passenger seat. Chopin's *Nocturnes* continue to linger. Derby's stern face is intermittently lit by oncoming headlights.

INT. DWAYNE'S JIMMY - NIGHT

Dwayne drives, impassive. Cassandra sits passenger humming along to annoying Boy Band POP on the radio.

CASSANDRA

I can't wait to emancipate and actualize outta here. That's what we're doin'. Emancipatin' and actualizin'. Read it in one a' mom's female magazines.

Dwayne nods. Remains stoic.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

With Georgie being murdered and all, just seems like things are gettin' unhinged. Like the time's right. Don't it?

DWAYNE

Yep.

CASSANDRA

(sincerely concerned)

Dwayne? You ain't yourself right now.

DWAYNE

I'm me, ain't I? I'm right here.

CASSANDRA

But you ain't actin' like you. There ain't something you wanna talk about?

DWAYNE

There's a murdered man in our town, which means there's a murderer huntin' people. Ain't much to talk about.

Dwayne hits the power button on the radio.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

Can't stand that shit.

CASSANDRA

See?

DWAYNE

Look, I don't got nothing to talk about.
Which means I don't got nothing to say.
Stop pointin' your finger at me.

CASSANDRA

You don't gotta yell, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

Why're you talkin'? You don't gotta keep
talkin'! Please, for once!

CASSANDRA

Maybe my daddy's right, and you're just
frettin' 'cause you're getting money you
didn't earn. Just 'cause you're lucky.

Dwayne pulls a hard left. Slams the brakes and puts it
in park. They are in the driveway of--

EXT. THE STEELEY HOME - CONTINUOUS

He gets out. Rounds the car and opens her door.

CASSANDRA

I'm sorry. I didn't mean it.

DWAYNE

I don't abide by your daddy. He's wrong
about me. And if you want to be just
like every other goddamn person in this
town, you can walk yourself to the door.

Mrs. Steeley opens the door and runs to them frantically.

MRS. STEELEY

I been callin' and callin'! We gotta go!

CASSANDRA

Where?

Mrs. Steeley begins to cry as she stares at Dwayne.

MRS. STEELEY

He ain't woke up yet. But he's alive.

INT. JORRY'S BAR - NIGHT

Gretchin wipes down the bar. Harvey, drunk, pounds a
shot with Kenny, the last customer. A bottle of whiskey
between them on the bar.

HARVEY

It ain't a question of reds or blacks or whites. Its the question of facts. I ain't a racist. In fact, there ain't no such thing as racism. It's just social science. A person keeps to his own. Racism's like callin' bears violent. Are bear's violent? Fuck yeah! Fact. Doesn't mean they're bad. Well, maybe. But they ain't racist in any case.

Derby enters and scuttlers to the stool beside Kenny.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

We're closed.

DERBY

I'm lookin' for D- Dwayne McClaren.

HARVEY

(re: Derby's gashed nose)

Shit. Let me guess. I should see the other guy, right?

No response. Harvey chuckles smugly with Kenny. Gretchin lights a cig.

GRETCHIN

Took off with his girly. God knows what they're doin' and where they're doin' it.

HARVEY

What business you got with that boy?

DERBY

Need to reclaim somethin' he took fr- from me.

HARVEY

Well, like what?

Silence. Harvey cracks up.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

It's a secret! Careful, now.

Harvey leans in close to Derby.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

Ain't you that cabin boy re-cluse?

KENNY

I been thinkin' he was dead for years.

HARVEY

You know I served in Fallujah. I got secrets too. 'Bout killin' and fire bombin'. Fuckin' shit up. Boom!

The men laugh. Derby begins to tap his foot. Gretchin leans on the bar, showing some wrinkly cleavage.

GRETCHIN

Easy, Harvey. He's been nothin' but gentlemanly here. You know, Dwayne's girly's competin' in the Miss Cut Bank Pageant tomorrow. Don't know if you 'member, but I was Miss Cut Bank. I 'member you. Starin' at me from a ways. Kinda like right now.

HARVEY

Gretchin, *shut up!* Our own Cabin Boy. Back from the dead. If you ain't gonna tell us what business you got with Dwayne McClaren, you can get the fuck on out.

Derby rises.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

That's right, Mothball! Crawl back away!

Suddenly Derby jabs his open grip into Harvey's neck. PULLS HIM BY THE THROAT over the bar and ONTO THE FLOOR.

Derby grabs the bottle of whiskey from the bar.

He bends down and takes Harvey's head between his wrist and his chest, shoves the mouth of the bottle down his throat and pours a sick amount of whiskey in.

He pulls the bottle out and forces Harvey's mouth shut with his grip. Harvey gags and swallows it all.

Kenny watches on in fear, Gretchin in arousal. Harvey breaths tensely through his nostrils.

DERBY

Was h- he here earlier?

Harvey nods.

DERBY (CONT'D)

You gonna tell me wh-where he lives?

Harvey nods. Derby lets him go, rises.

INT. HOSPITAL FOOD COURT - NIGHT

Dwayne sits before a cup of coffee. Tired and lost in tormenting thoughts.

He looks through a doorway at a hospital room. Through the door window he sees Cassandra crying on Mrs. Steeley.

Barret plops down before Dwayne's view, peach cobbler in hand.

BARRET

So, this is *the* Dwayne McClaren. Here, got you a peach cobbler. Little known fact, but the best peach cobblers in the world are found in hospital food courts. You're not gonna eat all that, are you?

Barret takes a bite of it. Savors it. Grunts.

BARRET (CONT'D)

Best fuckin' cobbler I ever had.

He points to his plate dramatically. He flicks out his business card.

BARRET (CONT'D)

USPI Joe Barret.

Dwayne takes the card. Barret remains staring at Dwayne.

BARRET (CONT'D)

I have information you want to hear. Four things in total. The rest of your cobbler says you'll like two of them.

DWAYNE

Who says I don't like 'em all?

BARRET

Bet you're not a betting man.

DWAYNE

I ain't.

He holds out his pointer finger.

BARRET

First. Your reward money. One thousand Benji's. Second is a ticket to the Atlantic Coast Little League Championships.

(MORE)

BARRET (CONT'D)

Best baseball in the world. Third, in line with the second. A plane ride in 24 hours to see said contest. And fourth is a little rubber stamp that reads "CASE CLOSED," which I plan to ink and stamp on my folder labelled "Cut Bank".

DWAYNE

Don't like baseball. Never been on a plane.

Barret takes a HUGE bite of the cobbler.

BARRET

Bet against the house and be sure you'll lose. But that's beside the point. Congrats, kid. Get you a check as soon as the Sheriff finishes the paper work.

Dwayne nods. A beat.

DWAYNE

Can I ask you something?

Barret shovels Dwayne's cobbler into his mouth.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

What's the capital like?

BARRET

D.C.?

DWAYNE

The big city.

Barret swallows.

BARRET

Dirty, stressful, angry, impersonal, lonely, corrupt, unfair, and expensive.

DWAYNE

Do you like it?

BARRET

Love it.

Dwayne rises. Shakes Barret's hand.

DWAYNE

Thank you, sir.

BARRET

I'll be in touch.

Barret winks. Dwayne crosses to the hospital room.
Barret finishes the last of the cobbler.

EXT. MCCLAREN HOME - NIGHT

Quiet. Then the HIGH-PITCHED WHIR of the Cutlass nears.

INT. MCCLAREN HOME - NIGHT

TIGHT ON: THE FRONT DOOR LOCK. FOOTSTEPS on the grass
outside crescendo. The lock jiggles, then TURNS TO THE
LEFT.

INT. MCCLAREN HOME - ORSON'S ROOM - NIGHT

The vent's HISS breaths steadily. Orson lies still.

Outside the open door, a shadow creeps up the hallway
floor. It grows until Derby's silhouette, holding the
crowbar, fills the door frame.

He steps inside the room. Pulls up a chair. Stares at a
sleeping Orson for a beat then takes off his glasses.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

A banner at the back of the stage reads, "MISS CUT BANK
PAGEANT".

A spotlight is on Patty, Cassandra's chubby friend, in a
crimped 1700's PURITAN OUTFIT, high heels and white
gloves. Everything about her screams awkward.

Before the stage sit three JUDGES, one of them is Mrs.
Margaret. SPECTATORS speckle the dark audience.

Patty holds up a construction paper torch in her hand
like the Statue of Liberty.

PATTY

We, the people-- In order to form a more
perfect union-- Establish justice--
(beat, sigh) Can I start over?

Mrs. Margaret nods with a big smile.

PATTY (CONT'D)

We, the people-- In order to form a more
perfect union-- Establish justice-- Uh--

She seamlessly transitions to singing the national anthem. Terribly.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Oh, say, can you see--

Mrs. Margaret enthusiastically bobs her head to the song as the poor girl keeps singing.

MRS. MARGARET

She's just dearly.

BACK STAGE

It sounds like a chicken den in here. Twenty CONTESTANTS fix their dresses and put on makeup. Harriet, Cassandra's buck-toothed friend, is among them. Gretchin holds a clip board, yelling out who's next.

Patty, in a spasmodic cry, strides through.

HARRIET

How'd it go?

PATTY

(between sobs)

I forgot and sang the nation's anthem instead!

We follow her into--

INT. THE GIRL'S BATHROOM - DAY

She finds Cassandra, looking unbelievable in a dress, crying beside Dwayne. Patty looks at them in horror.

PATTY

(sobbing, unintelligibly)

There's no boys allowed in here!!!

Patty turns away. Slamming the door.

DWAYNE

Come on. Dry them tears. You're the prettiest girl here. Your daddy won't be prouder. Said it himself. (singing)
Ain't no mountain high enough. Ain't no valley low enough-- How's it go?

CASSANDRA

I can't go up like this. I ain't ready.

Dwayne grabs her shoulders. She pulls away coldly.

DWAYNE

Look at me. It ain't about you bein' ready for things. It doesn't work that way. Things take you on when they know you're ready. It's how life works. An' hummin'bird, you're ready. You're gonna do swell.

CASSANDRA

It just don't seem right with all and what not.

DWAYNE

We just seen him. Nurse said your daddy'll wake up soon enough an' be A+.

CASSANDRA

Why are you even here!?

A beat. Dwayne grows penitent.

DWAYNE

Came to apologize about last night. You're right. I haven't been myself.

CASSANDRA

Well, now ain't the time. You need to leave me alone.

STAGE-SIDE

Cassandra walks on stage. Back to her glowing self. Dwayne leans against a wall looking on from the side.

"AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH" begins:

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

My name is Cassandra Steeley and I think I'd make a good Miss Cut Bank because--

Cassandra begins to sing. Her dance is full of exaggerated expressions and overt moves. A Youtube video waiting to happen.

Gretchin crosses to Dwayne. They whisper.

GRETCHIN

She's gonna win. Prettier than all the others by miles. Reminds me of me back when.

Dwayne acknowledges her. Looks out to the audience. We PAN across all the faces, smiling ahead. We pass Rosie and her young friends enamored with Cassandra.

GRETCHIN (CONT'D)

So, what's this secret business you got with Derby Milton?

Just then, we PASS DERBY in the corner, STARING RIGHT AT DWAYNE. His nose wearing a scabbed-over gash.

DWAYNE

The recluse?

Dwayne double takes back to Derby. He's GONE. Dwayne rubs his eyes. Ghastly nervous now.

GRETCHIN

Yep. Stopped by Jorry's last night after hours askin' 'bout you. Sayin' you took somethin' a' his. Wouldn't say what. Whooped up Harvey and got your address. Figured he paid you a visit last night.

DWAYNE

So it's Derby Milton.

Gretchin shrugs and leaves. Eyes on Cassandra, Dwayne crouches down revealing--

Derby, right BEHIND HIM in the shadows, cleaning his glasses on his shirt. Derby puts them on. Inches towards Dwayne, when Harriet runs up beside him.

Her eyes widen when she sees Cassandra. She turns back to the chicken den of girls. Excitedly waves them over.

HARRIET

(whispering loudly)
Cassandra's on!

Derby retreats into the shadows as a gaggle of girls crowd by Dwayne.

Cassandra finishes. Everyone explodes in a standing ovation.

INT. DERBY'S CUTLASS - DAY

INSERT POV THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

Chopin lingers over the WHIR of the IDLING engine.

Cassandra, wearing a Miss Cut Bank sash and a tiara, exits with Dwayne to the parking lot. Rosie is close behind.

She strides ahead of him, annoyed. Turns and says something. And huffs off. Dwayne gets into his Jimmy.

Derby's hand enters frame and puts the Cutlass into DRIVE.

INT. SHERIFF VOGEL'S CRUISER - DAY

Sheriff Vogel in his cruiser, on his two-way. Through it we hear Mimi's voice, heavily filtered:

MIMI

Nope. Hasn't called. You did get a call from the hospital. (beat) Ooh, you'll--

Crackle.

SHERIFF VOGEL

I didn't copy.

MIMI

I said: Ooh, you'll wanna hear this.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Well?

MIMI

Big Stan Steeley's woke up. Message says he needs to see you. Nurse sounded urgent for seemin' sweet and timid.

Sheriff Vogel's face grows tense.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Thank you, Mimi. Go home now and enjoy the rest a' your Saturday.

MIMI

You betcha.

Sheriff Vogel throws down the two-way and pulls a taught U-turn.

EXT. MCCLAREN HOME - DUSK

Dwayne unlocks and opens the front door. He enters without noticing the LIFTED WOOD AROUND THE DOOR'S EDGE.

INT. MCCLAREN HOME - DAY

He re-locks the door and looks into the living room. He peers into the kitchen. Stands still.

Orson's vent can be heard HISSING down the hall.

DWAYNE

Hello?

Silence but for the vent.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

Damn Samoan.

INT. MCCLAREN HOME - ORSON'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Orson lies still, eyes open, staring at the ceiling fan.

Dwayne notices the bedside chair that Derby sat in the night prior.

DWAYNE

Still here, Daddy.

Dwayne pats Orson's hand gently. When he FREEZES. Turns his ear. Listens.

The CRACKING of wood and the JIGGLING of metal. Dwayne turns to the wall. The WINCHESTER RIFLE is missing.

The SQUEAK of a door opening. Then calm FOOTSTEPS and CREAKING floor boards crescendo.

Dwayne strains to peek out the window. Too frightened to move. Sees the hood of Derby's Cutlass.

The barrel of the Winchester extends into the doorway, followed by the rest of Derby. Hunched over. Beaten up. Emotionless as ever. Rifle pointed at Dwayne.

Silence but for Orson's HISS. Both stare.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

You visit the others?

Derby nods.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

So you're huntin' me now?

DERBY

Huntin' for my p- parcel.

Derby grabs the other chair. Sits in it. Rifle still trained across the bed at Dwayne. Orson between them.

Derby stutters throughout.

DERBY (CONT'D)

Spent last night sittin' right here.
Orson and me used to be colleagues.

DWAYNE

(dryly, scared shitless)
Really?

DERBY

Both us worked at the National Park.
Orson was a waiter. I rode 'round with
the rangers and took care a' things.

DWAYNE

Didn't know he ever left.

DERBY

He did two summers. Got me thinkin' on a
time back then. Outside the Red Lion
Lodge where Orson worked there was a mama
bear and two babies come out in the open
lawn one day. People was all excited,
takin' photos. People loved 'em.

EXT. DWAYNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Cassandra pulls up in her Civic and gets out.

ORSON'S ROOM

Derby looks at Dwayne's eyes, on which he remains.

DERBY

Bears didn't mind the people neither.
People was feedin' 'em and leavin' 'em
treats. So bears come back night after
night. Get to be a nocturnal attraction.
Ranger and me would come an' take 'em
back to their home in the forest. An',
still, bears come back for the food.
Soon, park rangers enforced the no
feedin' policy. So the food stopped.

Derby sets the rifle on his lap, still pointed at Dwayne.
Begins to tap his foot.

DERBY (CONT'D)

But the bears kept comin' back. One mornin', Orson, here, finds the kitchen a mess. Seems mama bear got frustrated and broke in. Same night, her two babies find the dumpster and climb on in for dinner. Problem was, the door shut. Baby bears could get in, but not out.

BACK WITH CASSANDRA

At the front door. She turns the knob. It's open.

ORSON'S ROOM

Derby begins to massage the nervy flesh on his hand.
Dwayne remains stiff.

DERBY (CONT'D)

I 'member clearly that mornin', pullin' up to work, seein' four little bear paws pushin' an' pawin' about the dumpster door. What them babies didn't know was that rangers decided mama had crossed the line. Become a threat to public safety. Ranger and me picked them up, take 'em into the woods like normal. But this time, Ranger hands me a shotgun.

A beat. Stops tapping.

DERBY (CONT'D)

Like I was sacrificing a lamb so people could smile and take pictures. Ain't been able to see people but for talkin' bobble heads that don't listen since. Reckon the darkness came first that fall. Hiker stumbled upon my place. Perturbed me. So I snatched his neck.

Dwayne stares at Orson. A beat.

DERBY (CONT'D)

I need that p- parcel.

DWAYNE

I'll give you the keys to the garage.

DERBY

Uh-uh. I need you to t- take me.

CASSANDRA

Dwayne?

HALLWAY

Cassandra approaches Orson's room.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Dwayne you there? Baby, I'm sorry.

She turns into Orson's room. Sees Dwayne in the chair.

Adrenaline FIRES through Dwayne's face. Suddenly, A SHOTGUN BARREL ENTERS FRAME AND TOUCHES HER EAR.

DERBY

Close y- your eyes. Open 'em and I'll shootcha. This must b- be the star of the video.

INT. DERBY'S CUTLASS - DUSK

Derby enters the passenger seat. Turns the knob to lower the window. He sticks out his elbow and points the Winchester at the driver seat as Dwayne gets in.

Dwayne stares ahead. Frightened. Guilty.

Cassandra sits bound and blindfolded in the back. Duct tape over her mouth, moaning, crying. Still wearing her tiara and sash.

Derby reaches over and turns on the car. Chopin's eerie piano returns.

DWAYNE

I'm here, hummin'bird. This'll all be square. I'm gonna make this right.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

TIGHT ON: A SMALL DOOR WINDOW

Inside the window we can see Big Stan, head bandaged, in bed. Sheriff Vogel is beside him. His back to us.

Big Stan finishes saying something. Sheriff Vogel turns immediately. Crosses to the door.

Exits and begins RUNNING DOWN THE HALLWAY.

INT. DERBY'S CUTLASS - NIGHT

Silence but for Chopin as they drive down the highway.

Derby readjusts his elbow as he holds the rifle. BARREL TRAINED ON DWAYNE.

Dwayne pulls out his Copenhagen Long Cut.

DERBY

Uh-uh.

DWAYNE

Just a pinch. Calms the nerves.

He opens it with one hand. There's enough for one more dip. He shows it to Derby.

DERBY

It'll k- kill ya.

Derby chuckles. Dwayne tosses the last bit into his lip.

DWAYNE

Mind if I, you know-- out the window?

No response. Dwayne lowers the window and spits. He CRUSHES THE LID in his hand and hangs it out.

DERBY

You a litterb- bug?

Dwayne TURNS THE VOLUME UP on Chopin. Leans in to whisper so Cassandra can't hear.

DWAYNE

She ain't got nothin' to do with this.
She don't know nothin'--

Derby points the barrel at the open window and *POW!*

Cassandra shrieks beneath the duct tape. Dwayne returns upright. Derby re-cocks the rifle.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)

No one's hurt. Just a mishap
hummin'bird. Old car. The pistons are
misfirin'. I'm right here. You're safe.

Dwayne glares at Derby.

Derby shoves the smoking barrel of the Winchester into Dwayne's thigh. It sings on his jeans. Dwayne reacts.

DERBY

No more t- talkin'.

TIGHT ON: DWAYNE'S HAND OUT THE WINDOW

The CRUSHED lid of the Copenhagen makes a sharp metal point. Dwayne thumbs the point.

He begins to SCRATCH A LINE INTO THE CUTLASS DOOR. The loudened music inside masks the SCRATCHING.

LATER

Out the windshield, we near the entrance gate to the U-Store-It Garage. Sideburns Guard is in the booth.

Dwayne pulls up to his side. Window down.

SIDEBURNS GUARD

We're closed.

DWAYNE

Just gotta get somethin' from seven.

Sideburns looks down at the car door. He SEES what Dwayne scratched in. However, WE DO NOT.

A beat. Sideburns' face drops. Grows serious.

He looks up again. Dwayne's eyes don't waver from Sideburns'. Sideburns nods them through.

INT. U-STORE-IT GARAGE 7 - NIGHT

BLACK.

The garage door opens, slowly illuminating the room: chassis, pile of tires, truck seat, and a mound of mail.

The Cutlass IDLES OUTSIDE. Chopin continues playing. The three exit the car. Dwayne helps Cassandra out.

Derby holds a ROLL OF DUCT TAPE. Raises the Winchester at him.

DERBY

You had this all f- figured out pretty good, friend.

Cassandra whimpers a few sobs behind the duct tape on her mouth. Dwayne turns to her.

DWAYNE
(whispering)
I know you're scared. I'm right in front of you, protectin' you. No one but me's gonna lay a finger on you. I'm not scared. (beat) You might feel better if you're sittin'.

Dwayne helps her down. She sits legs crossed.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
That feel better?

She nods.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
I gotta take care a' this, and we can't talk no more. You gotta trust that I'm right here. Can you do that for me?

Cassandra nods and says "I LOVE YOU" behind the duct tape. It's unintelligible, but we get what she says.

DWAYNE (CONT'D)
I love you too.

Dwayne kisses her cheek.

DERBY
C- Come here.

Derby binds Dwayne's hands and fastens them tightly to the truck chassis with the duct tape.

Dwayne begins singing "AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH" softly. Cassandra hums along between SNIFFLES.

TIGHT ON: THE VINTAGE TIN LUNCHBOX with the faded floral pattern beside the mound of mail.

Derby SEES the lunchbox. Walks to it, TOWARDS CAMERA.

He stands over it. Stares down on it for a beat. Kneels. Wipes the dust off. Opens it slowly.

Tears well in his tiny eyes. He takes off his glasses. Stares inside the box.

He closes the lunchbox. Picks it up and returns to the PASSENGER SIDE of the Cutlass. Sets the box on the seat.

He returns to Dwayne.

DERBY (CONT'D)
C- card and key.

DWAYNE
In my pocket.

Derby reaches in, pulls out the LITTLE GOLD KEY and a CARD. He tapes Dwayne's mouth shut.

DERBY
You been d- decent with me.

He returns to the DRIVER SIDE of the Cutlass. He opens the door when he SEES WHAT DWAYNE SCRATCHED.

We finally see too: "911 VOGEL NOW."

Chopin's piano suddenly becomes HECTIC, low, and dark.

Derby turns bright red. Begins to shake. He snaps his gaze over to Dwayne, who is staring right back at him.

Never running, Derby strides over to Dwayne. Crazy fire in his eyes.

He grabs a LARGE PRIORITY PADDED ENVELOPE. Tears it open. Dumps the mail out onto the floor.

He forces the large envelope OVER DWAYNE'S head. Then tapes the envelope down onto his neck with duct tape.

The envelope on his head expands and sucks in with his strained breaths. Dwayne SLOWLY CHOKES.

Muffled WHIMPERS come from the two.

Derby returns to the Cutlass. He stops before Cassandra for a beat, stares her over, then continues on.

Derby closes the garage. The LOCKS AND BOLTS clank where the garage meets the floor.

BLACK AGAIN.

INT. DERBY'S CUTLASS - NIGHT

Chopin is LOUD and FRENETIC.

SHERIFF VOGEL (O.S.)
Derby Milton! Freeze right there!

Sheriff Vogel stands a ways down by the guard booth.
Derby sees him and gets in his Cutlass, ignoring him.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)
Derby Milton! Don't move no further.

He suddenly steps back out with the rifle, aims, and *POW!*
Fires one at Sheriff Vogel.

Sheriff Vogel disappears in the distance. Derby remains
still for a beat. Then gets in and drives forward.

Through the windshield we see a nearing gate. Sheriff
Vogel is no where to be seen. Either dead or hiding.

TIGHT ON: DERBY'S PROFILE. A faint smile creeps over his
face. His arm hangs out the window, rifle aimed ahead.

Through the passenger window in the background, we're
passing garages 5, 4, 3. The gate nears.

The HECTIC PIANO dies down to a SINGLE SOFT NOTE.

Derby suddenly FLOORS THE CAR TOWARD THE GATE.

Sheriff Vogel emerges last minute and OPEN FIRES on the
Cutlass. It ZOOMS BY HIM and SLAMS INTO A TREE, it's
hind wheels still spinning.

Sheriff Vogel crosses to the car slowly. 9mm Glock
raised. His boots GRATING on the road with each step.

Through bloodied splintered cracks in the window, we
finally see Derby's head hanging limply forward.

CUT TO:

GARAGE DOOR 7 OPENING UP

Sheriff Vogel runs in. Sees Dwayne choking in the
envelope and Cassandra bound and crying.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. HOSPITAL - FOOD COURT - MORNING

Sheriff Vogel sits before Big Stan as he eats his lunch.
His head is bandaged.

A Kevlar vest sits on a chair beside them.

In the background, Barret paces back and forth talking intently into his Bluetooth.

BIG STAN

I came to the crossing line when I was in that tarpaulin. Was brought to it, like on a conveyor belt. Couldn't help myself from keeping forward.

SHERIFF VOGEL

It true 'bout flashing visions of your life and pearly gates?

Barret crosses to them. Gestures with his hand that the guy on the phone is talking too much. He shakes their hands and mouths, "GOTTA JET. WE'LL BE IN TOUCH."

BARRET

What?! You can't bring that father-son shit onto the field!

Barret walks away. Silence. Big Stan eats his Jello.

BIG STAN

Was at our fishin' hole from when we was kids. There was my daddy out on the lake. Standin' up in 'is boat. Lookin' at me. I knew all I had to do was jump in and that's it. I'd cross. But I didn't. Then he winked at me and rowed off is all.

Sheriff Vogel spins his keys.

BIG STAN (CONT'D)

'Fore he leaves I see the damnest thing in his hands. (beat) 'Fore he leaves I see him holding that rabbit foot you're twirlin' round your finger.

For the first time, Sheriff Vogel STOPS TWIRLING HIS KEYS. He catches the rabbit foot and clutches it.

BIG STAN (CONT'D)

That's it. That's what I saw at the line. My daddy holdin' that rabbit foot. Can't stop thinking on it.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Could a' been any rabbit foot.

BIG STAN

I 'member when Celine Towers gave that to you. Was right when she left town. But you didn't go with her. And she never came back. I never got that gesture. And I wanted it bad. Even after I met Barb, I wanted Celine to swoop back into town and ask me to go be with her, but she only had eyes for you. (beat) Damn rabbit's foot's what I see at the line.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Reckon you had your chance.

Big Stan nods. Stares at Sheriff Vogel.

BIG STAN

You ever wonder why after 43 years of marriage, you still finger that thing like you do?

SHERIFF VOGEL

Speculate it's habit at this point.

BIG STAN

Wonder if I'd a gone with her invitation. Guess I'll not talk about that again.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Seems for the best.

A long silence.

BIG STAN

Reckon I can't control the way things change. I ought to stop tryin'.

Sheriff Vogel nods. He checks his watch.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Dwayne pulls up in his Jimmy. Gets out. Crosses to the door and extends his hand to open it, just as--

Barret busts out the doors and walks toward an idling taxi. He stops when he sees Dwayne.

BARRET

(into Bluetooth)

Hold on one sec--

(to Dwayne, sincerely)

Sorry, kid.

Dwayne remains paralyzed, holding the door open.

He watches Barret's reflection in the glass of the door, as Barret crosses to the taxi, enters it, and speeds off.

A beat. Dwayne turns white. Stares at nothing. His hand begins to SHAKE, when--

OLD LADY (O.S.)

Why, thank you.

An OLD LADY exits the door and smiles at Dwayne for seemingly holding the door open for her.

INT. HOSPITAL - FOOD COURT - DAY

Dwayne crosses to the two men. Terrified.

SHERIFF VOGEL

Just some quick formalities is all. I know you been through too much.

BIG STAN

Cassandra told me a' your plans together.

DWAYNE

I wasn't gonna do nothing without your blessing, sir.

Big Stan looks at Sheriff Vogel, who is staring down on Dwayne. Sheriff Vogel grabs the Kevlar vest.

BIG STAN

Let's take a walk.

INT. HOSPITAL - BODY FREEZER - DAY

A normal body freezer would be a locker room of drawers. This one merely has a handful at the end of the room.

Dwayne enters. Big Stan and Sheriff Vogel, Kevlar vest in hand, behind him. Dwayne begins to tremble.

DWAYNE

Sheriff Vogel, ain't no formalities to take care of in a hospital.

Sheriff Vogel pulls open one drawer. Dwayne turns. Walks away. Tears forming in his eyes.

SHERIFF VOGEL

I ain't opened these drawers but two other times in my life and never for a murder. Takes a mean gut. But you have to see this, Dwayne.

Dwayne turns around. It's Georgie's corpse. Just like we saw him last, but frozen. No bullets in his chest.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

Nothin' in this past week ever made no sense. An' after this last puzzle piece, I stopped trying to reason.

Electricity runs through Dwayne's pale face, the terrible, *terrible* feeling of getting caught red handed.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

Last night I'm sleepin' an' I wake in a frenzy with the dumbest epiphany. 'Cause there's your slapdash video with Georgie Wits takin' two bullets to the chest.

Dwayne, shaking, opens his mouth to speak. But Sheriff Vogel cuts him off.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

If my imagination wanders, I could conjure up a situation where this all seemed like a big ruse gone wrong, what, with the reward an' all.

CUT TO:

TIGHT ON: DWAYNE'S FACE. Impassive. Slightly rocking side to side in what looks like a police car.

SHERIFF VOGEL (V.O.)

(CONT'D)

But for that to happen, I'd need screwy evidence like this body to even bring my imagination to come up with the ruse in the first place. People with that kind a' imagination I reckon can fare pretty well if they stayed honest.

BACK TO THE BODY FREEZER

Sheriff Vogel hands Dwayne the Kevlar vest. He puts his hands beneath Georgie's dead body. Lifts him up.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

Slide this under 'is back.

Dwayne does. Sheriff Vogel lays the body back down.

SHERIFF VOGEL (CONT'D)

Now, I know I ain't very resourceful. My expertise is in the simple. The logical. An' that ain't for everyone. Problem with me is I need to understand things. My mind don't stop. Not till I got no choice but to change the story in my head so I can carry on with some understandin' I can explain. How I turned out in life, sometimes the truth is more 'n I prefer. We got here one a' them situations.

CUT TO:

TIGHT ON: DWAYNE'S FACE still rocking side to side, a seeming prisoner in a police car.

His eyes, straight ahead. They follow something outside the car window left. Then look straight ahead. Then follow something left again.

BIG STAN (V.O.)

Son, if you need to leave, you ought to have left. I ain't got no problem trustin' that you can learn your way out there and take care a' my daughter.

BACK TO THE BODY FREEZER

BIG STAN (CONT'D)

But waitin' and plannin' on some lucky money is for sallies and lazies. You ain't neither.

Sheriff Vogel reveals a long SILENCER from his coat pocket. Begins to screw it on to his 9mm Glock. Big Stan sees this and pays no attention to it.

SHERIFF VOGEL

You ain't gettin' the reward money, son.

A beat. Dwayne tries to swallow but he can't.

BIG STAN

But you're gettin' the sweeter end of the stick. So, I'm firin' you. You been a loyal worker to me. Severance there ought to keep you floatin' for a spell.

Big Stan extends his hand. Dwayne shakes it. He finds a folded check in his hand.

DWAYNE
I'll pay you back, sir.

BIG STAN
Damn right. Roland and I'll take care a'
your Daddy. 'Bout time you had some
family help you out 'round here.

Sheriff Vogel points the Glock at Georgie's dead chest.

SHERIFF VOGEL
I reckon you can't get this kind a' pass
in the city, so don't ever need it again.

BIG STAN
And, son, not a word to Cassandra 'bout
this. You tell her what I told 'er
mother.

PFFFT! PFFFT! Two blue bullet holes in Georgie's chest.
Sheriff Vogel pulls his vest out from under Georgie.

SHERIFF VOGEL
First time I ever use my vest.

A beat as Dwayne stares at Georgie. Sheriff Vogel
extends his hand. Dwayne shakes it.

CUT TO:

DWAYNE'S FACE. Still rocking side to side. We PULL BACK
to reveal Dwayne driving. We're in--

INT. DWAYNE'S JIMMY - SUNSET

We CONTINUE BACK to reveal Cassandra sitting passenger.

CASSANDRA
It's okay we didn't get the reward money.
'Tween my pageant money and Daddy's
severance, we got enough.

In the rearview mirror, Dwayne sees the young boys, Slim
and Chubby, racing their bikes behind the Jimmy.

Cassandra is reading a Los Angeles guide book. The back
seat is replete with suitcases.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
D'you know a studio ain't just a place
where they make movies. It's also a home
with just one room.
(MORE)

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
 And the way this book paints it, that's
 the primary meaning of the word. Sounds
 nice don't it?

Dwayne's resolved face says it all: it sounds perfect.
 He grabs Cassandra's hand. Turns to her. And smiles.

EXT. ROAD - SUNSET

A big orange sun hangs above the horizon.

Dwayne's Jimmy flies down a lone road lined with wheat
 fields. Past a sign that reads "CUT BANK CITY LIMIT."

Slim and Chubby race close behind. They slide to a stop
 at the sign, waving. The Jimmy honks in the distance.

SLIM BOY
 I beat you.

CHUBBY BOY
 We wasn't racin'!

SLIM BOY
 'Course we was racin'.

CHUBBY BOY
 We was wavin' good bye. Gotta ask to
 race if it's gonna be a race.

SLIM BOY
 Race you home, then?

CHUBBY BOY
 K. Go!

Chubby takes off before Slim even gets that it's on.

As the Boys speed down a the empty road, comfortably
 within Cut Bank's city limits, we--

CUT TO BLACK

THE END