

**in case of rapture**

written by  
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I don't want to talk about Jesus,  
I just want to see his face.

- *Rapture (Sweet Rapture)*, A.A. Bondy

INT. TRUCK - MORNING

ROY (50) drives along a rural highway in a '63 Chevy pickup, windows down. His smile is genuine, his skin the texture of well-worn leather. A CROSS dangles from the rearview mirror.

He sings along with "Born Again" by The Louvin' Brothers.

EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

The pickup pulls into a gravel parking lot, LITTLE WHITE CHURCH behind it. A FADED MARQUEE out front proclaims: "Free Trips to Heaven! Details Inside."

Roy exits the truck, greets a BOY on the steps, walks into --

INT. CHURCH - MORNING - CONT.

A RURAL SANCTUARY. Rows of folding chairs. Music stand acting as a podium. To one side, a SMALL CHOIR sing a hymn along with an elderly piano player (MRS. CALDWELL, 70s).

Roy slides into a seat next to JIM (50, sheriff's uniform) and BERNADETTE (40s, pretty and plain). They exchange quiet 'hellos' as the PASTOR greets the crowd.

PASTOR

Well, good morning.

CONGREGATION

Good morning!

PASTOR

What a joy it is to have you join us on such a beautiful day. The Lord is good, is he not?

The congregation applaud.

CLOSE ON - ROY'S BIBLE. Earmarked pages filled with notes and highlighted passages.

PASTOR (O.S.)

Let's start this morning by telling our Father just how much we love him. Let us pray.

Roy bows his head in prayer. HOLD.

PASTOR (O.S.)

Father, we come to you this morning just to say 'thank you.' Thank you for our blessings that you have bestowed upon us. Thank you for the sunshine, but more importantly, thank you for the rain that we know is coming...

CHURCH KITCHEN - AN HOUR LATER

Roy and Jim stand at a table with CARAFES of coffee and homemade snacks. TWO KIDS chase each other. Jim shoots them a look, his uniform intimidating enough. The kids run off.

Across the room, Bernadette and other churchgoers hug EUGENE & CLAUDIA FREEMAN (40s).

JIM

Know how much he sold it for?

ROY

Not enough.

JIM

Getting too familiar...Potluck for small group this week, right?

ROY

That's right.

JIM

I'll have to tie another string around Dale's finger, make sure he don't forget to cover for me. Bernie's probably bringing meat loaf again.

ROY

Won't complain about that.

Bernadette motions to Jim, signalling that it's time to go.

JIM

See you at Eugene's?

ROY

I'll be there.

Jim and Bernie exit. Roy pours coffee into a Styrofoam cup and stirs. Mrs. Caldwell approaches him, muffin in hand.

MRS. CALDWELL

Roy!

She leans into him with a big hug, coming up to his chest.

MRS. CALDWELL

It's a hot one, ain't it?

ROY

Indeed.

MRS. CALDWELL

My Lord. Can't tell you the last time I sweated this much. Feel just like a sticky bun. Only supposed to get hotter, too, from what I hear.

ROY

That's what they say.

MRS. CALDWELL

Lord have mercy.

Roy takes a sip of coffee. Thinks of what to say.

ROY

Music sounded good this morning.

MRS. CALDWELL

(smiling coyly)

You ain't gotta lie.

ROY

Won't hear any lies coming out of this mouth.

MRS. CALDWELL

Well thank you, sugar, but we both know I ain't nowhere near as good as Emily.

(holding up her hands)

Arthritis just makes it so hard for me to keep up. Doctor I been seein over in Carrolton? Got me on twenty pills a day and my fingers feel the same as they did before.

He gives a smile of admittance.

MRS. CALDWELL

How's your wife, by the way? Keep meaning to stop by and see how she's doing...but...well, getting around ain't as easy as it used to be.

Roy stares down into his coffee.

ROY

I understand. She's...she's good.

MRS. CALDWELL

Tell her I said hello, wontcha? And that I'm praying for her?

ROY

Sure will.

MRS. CALDWELL

And tell her whenever she's ready to come back, my fingers would love to take a week off.

INT./EXT. TRUCK - VARIOUS

Roy drives through a SMALL RURAL FARM TOWN. Half the stores are boarded up, others read "Closed" (it is Sunday, after all). Above one store's threshold, a sign reads: "What Have You Done For The Lord Lately?"

Outside of town, Roy cruises along, passing fields of YELLOW PLANTS and DEAD GRASS.

As the truck crosses a bridge, we TILT down and land a DRIED-UP CREEK BED...

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Roy's pickup turns onto a gravel driveway, kicking up dust. An old TWO-STORY FARMHOUSE with its shutters barely hanging on sits a hundred yards from the road. A BARN and a RUSTED TRUCK ON BLOCKS complete the scenery.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Roy pushes his way through a screen door, loosening his tie.

ROY

Back.

EMILY (48) stands at the stove. Roy crosses to her and tries to peek over her shoulder at what she's cooking. She slinks away, taking the pot with her.

ROY

Missed a good service this morning.  
Everybody's asking bout you,  
wanting to know how you're doing.  
Bernie told me she's gonna --

EMILY

Lunch is ready.

MOMENTS LATER -

They sit at the table, silent. Roy closes his eyes.

ROY

Dear Lord, thank you for this food...

Emily ignores the offer and loads up her plate. After 'Amen', Roy opens his eyes and sees his wife already eating. He grabs a biscuit and butters it. BEAT.

ROY

Music was good today. Not as good  
as when you played. Know that don't  
mean much coming from me...Alice  
can't keep up with em half the  
time...Said she'd love to have you  
back, whenever you're ready.

He says this almost as a question, but she doesn't bite.

EMILY

I'm gonna go to Atlanta tomorrow.  
See my mom.  
(then)  
Woulda asked if you wanted to come,  
but I figured I knew what you'd say.

ROY

Got work to do round here.

EMILY

That's what I thought.

ROY

How long you gonna be gone?

EMILY  
 Couple of days.  
 (then)  
 You need to check the truck before  
 I get gone. Every time I drive it,  
 damn clutch keeps getting stuck.

ROY  
 Em --

EMILY  
 Sorry. *Darn* clutch.

BEAT.

ROY  
 Freemans are heading out this  
 afternoon. Gonna come with me?

EMILY  
 I need to pack.

ROY  
 Right...Have you thought about it  
 at all?

EMILY  
 What?

ROY  
 Playing again. You were so good.

She drops her fork and leaves the room in a huff. Roy sits by himself, then grabs another biscuit.

INT./EXT. FREEMAN HOUSE - EVENING

Roy stands in the doorway of an EMPTY HOUSE, holding a cardboard box. One more glance inside, then he carries the box to a TRUCK parked in the driveway.

CHURCH MEMBERS stand around, tying down bags in the truck bed. Roy crosses to Eugene, who's admiring the house.

EUGENE FREEMAN  
 Daddy sure would hate to see this.

ROY  
 Your daddy'd be real proud. Ran it  
 as long as you could.

EUGENE FREEMAN

Wish I coulda gotten more for it,  
though.

ROY

You take care of yourself.

The pastor puts his hands on Eugene's shoulders and the rest of the congregation join him as he starts to pray...

INT. FARMHOUSE - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Roy peers through an open bedroom door, SEES - Emily asleep in a TWIN BED.

Down the hallway, he enters a second bedroom with an IDENTICAL TWIN BED and shuts the door behind him.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY - THE NEXT MORNING

Roy stands with his head buried in the hood of his truck.

TOMMY (13, with a mop of messy hair) rides his bicycle up the driveway, BASEBALL CARD stuck in the spokes. Roy gives him a wave as we hear the front house DOOR SLAM.

Emily struggles to the truck with TWO SUITCASES.

TOMMY

Morning, Ms. Emily.

EMILY

(unenthusiastically)  
Hey, Tommy.

TOMMY

Let me get those.

Tommy takes the bags, but struggles, surprised by the weight.

TOMMY

Taking a trip?

She ignores him. Roy shuts the hood, wipes his hands.

ROY

Alright, should be all set. Clutch is still a little sticky, but ain't nothing serious. Just take it easy til you get into fourth.

EMILY

I know how to drive.

ROY

That's not what I meant --

EMILY

Tommy, I don't want you working too long today, ya hear?

Roy walks to the truck bed and helps Tommy secure the bags.

EMILY

Supposed to be a hundred-and-five, and I don't need your folks calling me worrying bout your health, so when you get tired, I want you to call it a day and head on home.

TOMMY

Yes ma'am.

Roy makes a face at Tommy and the boy laughs.

Emily notes the CROSS hanging from the rear view mirror and shoves it in the glove compartment. Roy leans in through the open window.

ROY

Drive safe. I'll be praying for you.

EMILY

Might want to stop wasting them on me and start using them to ask for some rain around here. Savings ain't gonna last forever.

She puts the truck in reverse. Roy follows as she backs up.

ROY

Lord's gonna provide, Em. He won't abandon us when we need him most. You just got to have a little faith, is all.

EMILY

I'll believe it when I see it.

She PEELS AWAY, dust cloud forming behind the truck. Roy and Tommy watch her drive out of sight...

AN HOUR LATER -

Roy and Tommy work on digging a ditch.

AN HOUR LATER -

Roy stands in his field, ROTTED CORN CROPS surrounding him. He kneels down, picks up a small amount of red dirt and rubs it between his fingers.

He places his hands together and closes his eyes. Prays.

AN HOUR LATER -

Roy and Tommy admire their work, both drenched in sweat. Roy puts his hand on the boy's shoulder, pleased.

A FEW MINUTES LATER -

Tommy waves to Roy as he pedals away on his bike.

AN HOUR LATER -

Sounds of DIGGING/HEAVY BREATHING. CLOSE ON - a mound of dirt. A red clump lands on top of the mound. Then another.

We TILT UP and find Roy standing in a HOLE up to his chest.

EDGE OF THE DRIVEWAY - THAT MOMENT

A pair of SHINY LOAFERS enter the frame, farmhouse in the b.g. CAMERA TRACKS with shoes as they walk forward...

AT THE HOLE -

Roy stops digging and leans over the shovel to catch his breath. He wipes his brow -- and is COVERED WITH SHADE.

A man stands as a SILHOUETTE in front of him. Roy lifts his arm to block the sun.

The man is short. Maybe five-four on a good day. He wears an EXPENSIVE BLACK SUIT, his ears are too big for his head, and a MASSIVE GAP sits between his two front teeth.

ROY

Howdy.

STRANGER

Hello.

A BEAT as both men consider what to say next.

STRANGER

That's quite a hole you got there.

ROY

You should see it when I get done with it.

STRANGER

If you don't mind me asking, what is the purpose of your digging?

ROY

Man gotta have a reason?

STRANGER

Suppose not. I just assumed it must be important to get you out in the heat on a day like today.

Roy plants the shovel in the dirt.

ROY

Reckon I could say the same about you in that suit.

STRANGER

Pardon?

ROY

Don't know many folks round here who'd wear a suit in July if they could help it. Specially if they knew how the weather's been.

STRANGER

That so?

ROY

Worst drought I seen in my lifetime.

(then)

This hole here is gonna be a new well, God-willing. Gotta be some more fresh water down there...I'll keep digging til I find it.

STRANGER

I see.

ROY

Where you coming from?

STRANGER

Oh, I come from many places. My father blessed me with a travelling heart.

(looking around)

It's a nice place you have here.

ROY

Ah, we're doing alright...Would be a lot better off if I could get the corn to grow...keep asking for rain, but, well, the Lord ain't seem fit to answer me yet.

STRANGER

'Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more valuable than they?'

ROY

Matthew 6:26.

A smile creeps across the stranger's face.

STRANGER

You know your scripture.

ROY

Momma stressed it on me as a boy.

STRANGER

Wise woman.

They stand silently for a BEAT. Then --

ROY

Can I get you something to drink? Maybe a sit inside to cool off --

STRANGER

I appreciate the generosity, but no. I don't want to waste any more of your time...If I can be completely honest, I've come to talk to you about something very important.

Roy picks up his shovel. He's heard this spiel before.

ROY

Ain't got the money to be buying  
nothing right now.

STRANGER

I'm not selling anything that money  
can buy.

Roy looks at the man, intrigued, then climbs out of the hole.

ROY

Alright.

STRANGER

How is your heart, friend?

ROY

How's that?

STRANGER

You seem to be a God-fearing man,  
but in your heart of hearts, are  
you truly prepared for the return  
of our Lord and savior?

Roy starts to say something, but the man continues.

STRANGER

It could happen at any time! There  
is no time to be doubting. THE LORD  
IS NEAR!

The stranger bends down and grabs a fistful of clay from the  
ground. He opens his hand, blows and sends RED DUST FLYING.

STRANGER

WE ARE NOTHING MORE THAN THIS!  
FROM DUST WE WERE CREATED, AND TO  
DUST WE SHALL GO! It's time to  
ready our souls for the return of  
the Lord. We toil with our worldly  
possessions, believing that they  
will fill a void in our sinning  
hearts, but they are worth nothing  
in the end. Recall the parable of  
the rich man who believed his life  
to be complete after yielding an  
abundant harvest: God said to him,  
'You fool! This very night your  
life will be demanded from you.

(MORE)

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' He is risen, and He is coming again, perhaps this very night, to take those that belong with him to sit at the right hand of the Father. We must be ever ready. 'Behold, I come like a thief in the night! Blessed is he that stays awake and watches.' THE WORD OF THE LORD!

The stranger takes a deep breath and runs a handkerchief over his forehead, smiles, then walks away.

Roy watches the man leave. His eyes drift to the ground...

A WHITE BUSINESS CARD sits where the stranger stood. Roy bends down and picks it up. The card reads:

*Sunnybrook Ministries: Preparing Our Hearts  
For The Day He Returns.*

He turns the card over. In tiny italics, the back reads:

*Are you ready?*

Roy's gaze shifts to the sky, the blue almost unbearable. He looks back to the stranger.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A group of married couples sit in a circle in Roy's living room. This is MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY.

Roy stares silently down at the BIBLE in his lap. The BUSINESS CARD sits on top of an opened page. HOLD on Roy's face as the group talks...

JIM (O.S.)

Alright, how about we ask for prayer requests for this week? Who wants to go first? Amanda?

AMANDA (O.S.)

Well, I'm sure y'all know, but my daddy had a stroke couple weeks back...Thought he was gonna be taken from us, but the tests came back ok, and the doc cleared him on Saturday, so he should be back at home this week.

A few scattered voices whisper, "Praise the Lord".

AMANDA (O.S.)

So, just keep him and my momma in  
your prayers as he recovers.

JIM (O.S.)

Of course. Personally speaking, I  
gotta make my quota in tickets for  
the month by end of this week, so  
don't none of y'all be speeding on  
95. Don't want my answered prayer  
to have to come at your expense.

The group laughs.

JIM (O.S.)

Anyone else?  
(then)  
Roy?

Roy looks up, startled, and quickly shuts the Bible.

ROY

What?

JIM

Any prayer requests?

BEAT. He looks at the Bible, then back up at Jim.

ROY

Pray for my doubt.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER -

Roy watches the group members leave, FORCING A SMILE. Jim  
walks up, puts a hand on Roy's shoulder.

JIM

Good group.  
(Roy nods)  
Where's Em?

ROY

Lorraine's.

JIM

You guys fighting again?

ROY

Not really.

JIM

You need anything, you let me know.

Roy starts to protest, but sees Bernadette crossing to him. She holds up an empty casserole dish.

BERNADETTE

Shame nobody liked the meatloaf.

Roy gives her a vapid smile. She takes the hint.

BERNADETTE

Alright, well, good night, Roy.  
Thanks so much for having us.

JIM

See you on Sunday.

HALLWAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

WIDE SHOT, looking down the hallway. Roy stands in the kitchen on the phone. He paces back and forth, the phone cord STRETCHING AND CONTRACTING as he talks.

ROY

...Well, can you put her on the phone for just a minute...No, I'm sure she's fine, but I never heard from her is all...Lorraine...Cause I need to talk to her about something...Well, maybe I want to hear her voice...

WE PAN and land on a faded piece of PEELING WALLPAPER. HOLD.

ROY (O.S.)

...Of course I know what my wife sounds like, that ain't what I'm saying...She say anything about when she gonna come back?...Fine, just have her call me when she feels up to it.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Roy sits on Emily's bed, scanning the room. His eyes shift to the closet. He crosses and slides opens the door. It's EMPTY. ALL OF EMILY'S CLOTHES ARE GONE...

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Roy sits at an UPRIGHT PIANO, Bible on the bench beside him. He grazes his hand over the keys. Picks up dust and rubs it dust between his fingers...

He presses down on a white key. A LOUD NOTE RINGS OUT.

Roy notes the Bible, the BUSINESS CARD sticking out like a bookmark. He opens to the marked page.

The card reads: *Are you ready?*

He moves the card to read the verse underneath. Matthew 25: 13 - *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or hour of my return."*

Roy's face changes. He stands and RUNS --

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONT.

Outside, down the porch steps. FIREFLIES dance around him. He hits the dirt and stops, looking out at the empty field.

He swings his head around to the farmhouse...

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

WIPE across a door frame and find Roy kneeling in prayer... CAMERA TRACKS, we WIPE and we're in another room of the house. This time, Roy shuffles furniture.

Past another door frame, Roy shoves things into LUGGAGE BAGS. When we get to the fourth or fifth frame, we --

WIPE TO BLACK.

The sound of a SPINNING BICYCLE TIRE brings us to -

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING

Tommy turns onto Roy's driveway. He glides...then his face GOES COLD. He sits up straight, stops pedalling. He coasts...then HITS A RUT and falls down.

He quickly hops back on and pedals toward the road.

EXT. JIM'S HOUSE - MORNING

LONG SHOT of a modest single-story rancher, POLICE CRUISER parked in the driveway. Tommy drops his bike, sprints.

He knocks violently on the front door until Bernadette answers. Tommy says something to her MOS. She yells --

BERNADETTE

Jim!

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING

The cruiser stops in front of Roy's farmhouse. Jim and Bernadette stare through the windshield in disbelief. They exit the car, eyes wide, and walk slowly up the driveway. CAMERA SWINGS AROUND...

And we SEE - the front yard is filled with Roy's possessions: chairs, clothes, books, all haphazardly strewn about.

Jim and Bernadette cross to EVELYN and HARRIET (60s), who stand looking up at something. Bernie's eyes match the women's gaze, LOOKING UP...UP...UP...

Bernie reaches out to touch her husband, but misses.

BERNADETTE

Jim.

She points and Jim lifts his head to match.

There, on the ROOF OF HIS BARN, reading a Bible, is Roy. A brown PAPER BAG sits next to him. The group stare silently up at the farmer, never dropping their gaze as they talk.

JIM

How long's he been up there?

EVELYN

Least an hour. Maybe longer.

BERNADETTE

What...what happened?

HARRIET

The devil done got a hold of him.

EVELYN

Uh huh.

BERNADETTE

(low, to Jim)

Reckon he's been drinking?

JIM

I ain't ever seen him drink. You?

Bernadette shrugs, unsure.

EVELYN

First time for everything.

HARRIET

Specially when you get messed up  
with Satan.

EVELYN

Mmm hmm.

Jim steps forward.

JIM

Roy! Hey, Roy! You alright?

ROY

(not looking up)

Fine.

JIM

You sure?

ROY

Yep.

JIM

Em kick you out?

(Roy shakes his head)

Okay, well, what's all your stuff  
doing out here, then?

ROY

Don't need it.

JIM

You selling?

ROY

Nope.

JIM

So, what? You giving it away?

ROY

Yep.

The group looks at each other with confusion.

BERNADETTE

Roy, this is...this looks like everything you got. You giving away *everything*?

ROY

Yep.

BERNADETTE

What for?

ROY

Lord's coming back. Take whatever you want.

EVELYN

Oh, he done lost his mind.

HARRIET

I told you. Went and got himself a demon. Ain't no Godly man gonna go do something that foolish. Makes me feel bad for that wife of his.

EVELYN

You said it.

Jim dismisses the gossipy women and shakes his head, trying to figure all of this out. A larger group of NEIGHBORS have now arrived, watching the show from the b.g.

JIM

Roy, I...I don't get it. Why are you on the roof?

ROY

Just getting ready.

BERNADETTE

Why don't you come down and talk about this? You're scaring everybody.

ROY

Don't need to be scared. I ain't afraid of it.

JIM  
Ain't afraid of what?

ROY  
The end.

HARRIET  
Oh, good God in heaven, he's gonna  
kill himself!

Jim turns to Harriet, points an angry finger.

JIM  
You shut up, Harriet.

BERNADETTE  
Jim!

JIM  
He wouldn't do nothing that stupid.

EVELYN  
You hear how's he talking, dontcha?  
(to Harriet)  
Think we oughta call the Pastor.

Harriet nods, and the two older women exit.

Jim and Bernadette look at Roy in silence, both trying to figure out what to do.

A MALE NEIGHBOR steps forward from the group in the b.g. He looks over a table approvingly. Yells up to Roy.

NEIGHBOR  
Hey Roy, how much you want for this  
table?

ROY  
Just take it.

NEIGHBOR  
What can I give you for it, though?  
Don't feel right just taking it.

ROY  
Nothing.

BEAT as the man decides what to do. He shrugs, lifts the table and starts to move it.

NEIGHBOR  
Much obliged, Roy!

Another MAN, following the lead, puts his hand on a dresser.

GERALD

How bout this here armoire, Roy?

Jim steps forward, hand raised like a traffic guard.

JIM

Hang on a second, Gerald.

GERALD

What? He said we could take em.  
Ain't that right, Roy?...See?

JIM

Just wait, alright? Obviously  
something ain't right with him this  
morning, so let's all just hold off  
til we figure this out.

GERALD

You can figure it out while I pack  
this in my truck.

Jim sighs, looks to his wife. She frowns, unsure. A few more  
people step forward and start to grab items for themselves.

From the roof, Roy starts to SING...

ROY

*Glory, I'm saved! Glory, I'm saved!  
My sins are all pardoned, my guilt  
is all gone!/ Glory, I'm saved!  
Glory, I'm saved!/ I'm saved by the  
blood of the Crucified One!*

BERNADETTE

(low)

He's scaring me.

Jim nods in agreement. Still looking at the roof, he says:

JIM

Better call Emily.

Bernadette runs to the house.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - A MINUTE LATER

Bernie lifts the phone, dials. Waiting for the other end to  
pick up, her eyes wander and land on the FRIDGE:

A NOTE marked "Emily" is taped to the fridge door...

BERNADETTE

Em! Hey, it's Bernie. How soon can you come home?

EXT. FARMHOUSE - TWO HOURS LATER

DOLLY across MULTIPLE CARS pulling into the driveway, people exiting/pointing up/talking to each other. We DRIFT to Tommy, sitting on the front porch. He watched Jim and Bernadette lean converse quietly with the Pastor.

Tommy stands and crosses to the barn. He notes a LADDER leaning against the wall, then climbs.

BARN ROOF - CONT.

Tommy's head appears. His eyes look around and find Roy.

TOMMY

Mr. Roy?

ROY

Hey, Tommy.

TOMMY

Want me to sit with you? Gotta be home for supper, but I can probably stay til then.

ROY

That's alright, son.

TOMMY

I was looking through some of your stuff...sorry, I was just curious, I wasn't trying to be a snoop or nothing...And I found this in a box...it's a Lou Gehrig rookie card. You giving this away, too?

Without looking, Roy nods.

TOMMY

It's worth a lot of money.

ROY

Maybe.

Tommy looks at the card. He starts to descend, but STOPS.

TOMMY

Are you up here cause of Ms. Emily?

ROY

No...This is...this is something  
between me and Jesus.

TOMMY

Really think he's coming back?

Roy nods. Slowly, but deliberately.

Tommy looks at the baseball card, then pockets it. He takes a DOLLAR and places it between the shingles on the roof, then drops out of frame.

YARD - A FEW HOURS LATER

A LARGER GROUP OF PEOPLE have arrived. Some hold items up to others, wanting approval. Fewer stop to look up at Roy.

The pastor stands off to the side in a circle with four or five other people, heads bowed in prayer.

Jim and Bernadette watch TWO MEN TUSSLE over an object.

BERNADETTE

Vultures. Every single one of them.

A car pulls up and a MARRIED COUPLE (40s) get out. They walk toward Jim and Bernadette, then stare up at Roy.

MARRIED MAN

Saw all the cars from the road.  
Pretty serious yard sale.

JIM

He ain't selling nothing.

MARRIED WOMAN

Sure looks like folks are taking --

BERNADETTE

He's giving it away.

MARRIED WOMAN

For free?

BERNADETTE

For free.

MARRIED MAN

Everything?

JIM

That's right.

MARRIED WOMAN

How come?

BERNADETTE

Said the world's gonna end.

MARRIED WOMAN

Hmm.

BEAT.

MARRIED MAN

He got anything good?

Jim shoots him a look. The MARRIED COUPLE head for the yard.

YARD - A FEW HOURS LATER

The sun hangs low in the sky. Most of Roy's things are gone. Resting on the hood of the cruiser, Bernadette notices something and SITS UP. She slaps Jim on the arm.

BERNADETTE

Look!

Heads turn. Whispers spread. Roy stands, silhouette against the orange sky. He holds a roll and a glass of water.

HARRIET

He's gonna do it. He's gonna jump!

EVELYN

Oh, precious Jesus, be with us.

A HUSH goes over the crowd. Roy reads from the Bible:

ROY

'And Jesus said, take this. This is my body, broken for you.'

Roy takes a bite of the roll. People start asking questions: What was that?/What is he doing?

ROY

'And then He said, take this. This is my blood, poured out for you.'

Roy takes a sip, then pours the remaining liquid down a shingle to the ground below. He stretches and sits back down.

The crowd stands silent, unsure, then return to "shopping."

AN HOUR LATER -

VARIOUS: people PILING INTO CARS/DRIVING AWAY/LOOKING UP.

Jim and Bernadette give one final glance at Roy, then enter the cruiser and drive away. On the roof, Roy hums to himself.

YARD - NIGHT

WIDE SHOT of the barn. A cloudless night, stars everywhere. The '63 pickup pulls up. Emily gets out, runs toward the house, disappears inside. A LONG BEAT before she reappears.

EMILY

Roy Everett! What...  
(holding up the note)  
What is this?

Roy doesn't look up. She starts to read aloud.

EMILY

'I care for you deeply, but I'm worried about your *soul*?...I pray that we can be together for eternity...' What...what in the *hell* are you doing up there?

Roy remains buried in his Bible.

ROY

Getting ready.

EMILY

Ready? Ready for what?

ROY

For the Lord to come back.

EMILY

What in God's name are you talking about? Get down here this instant!

ROY

No.

EMILY

No?

ROY

I ain't coming down til my Father comes to get me.

EMILY

Want me to come up there and send you to him?! Be more than happy to oblige!

ROY

I'm preparing my heart, Em. You should be doing the same.

EMILY

Ugh, you're out of your damn mind.

ROY

Reckon we'll find out soon enough. Lord's coming back.

EMILY

Open your eyes and look at what's around you, Roy. For just a damn minute! The Lord ain't been around here for a long time now...Stuck in the middle of a drought, half of our crops got the blight, rest of em won't grow. Got enough savings to maybe last through the fall, but what about after that? And now my husband's gone and given away everything we sweated for. What about *any* of that makes you think God's anywhere close? Face it, Roy, you ain't one of his chosen people.

Roy looks at her and recites:

ROY

"For He has said, 'I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.' Hebrews 13:5.

EMILY

Dammit, Roy! Those were my things, too!

(a pause, then)

Roy Everett, you get down here right now...or...I'm leaving you.

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

(then)

Do you hear me? Roy? Roy?!

Emily fumes back to the pickup. She peels away. Roy SINGS.

ROY

*On that day when freed from sinning,  
I shall see Thy lovely face;  
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry,  
Take my ransomed soul away;  
Send thine angels now to carry,  
Me to realms of endless day.*

He stops. The SOUND OF CICADAS break through the silence. Roy's eyes stare straight into the CAMERA. HOLD.

MATCH DISSOLVE:

THREE DAYS LATER -

Roy's still staring into the CAMERA. His face is SUNBURNED, his lips chapped. The sun continues to beat down...

A distant RUMBLE OF THUNDER. There's a slight recognition in Roy's eyes, but he doesn't move.

A CLAP OF THUNDER. Louder this time.

Roy cranes his head up. HOLD.

CUT TO BLACK.

We HOLD in the darkness for several uncomfortable moments, then we slowly FADE IN on --

EXT. FIELD - DAY

An empty farm. Cows mingling in a pasture. Wind blowing through the trees...

A loud HUMMING brings us to --

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A C.U. of a Sears-style family portrait: an UGLY MAN with a lazy eye stands next to an ugly woman and child.

We RACK to a MAN seated behind a metal desk, the same man from the photo. This is GARY (45), a bald sloucher who wears glasses low on his nose. He lifts his gaze O.S.

GARY

So, you ever stocked before? No?  
 (checking a paper)  
 And you've never worked in a  
 warehouse of any kind? Running a  
 forklift, anything like that?

He pushes the paper aside, leans back in his chair.

GARY

I'm gonna be honest with you. What  
 I'm all about here is efficiency.  
 That's what I take pride in, that's  
 what our company prides itself in  
 being: efficient. I bring on fellas  
 that know what they're doing and we  
 get things done, plain and simple.  
 From day one, you're in or you're  
 out...Now, looking at this, I gotta  
 be honest, I don't see it. I got a  
 dozen applications sitting here --

He picks up a stack of papers that look BLANK --

GARY

-- most of which are from guys who  
 have done this kind of work before,  
 fellas that would kill for this  
 kind of opportunity, and I mean  
*kill*. I gotta tell you, they're  
 looking a hell of a lot better than  
 you. So...why should I hire you?

REVEAL ROY, in a tiny folding chair, his face badly sunburned  
 and unshaven. He leans forward, takes a breath.

ROY

Well, I, uh...I think I *need* this  
 job more than anyone else...sir.

It pains him to say "sir" because he's the older of the two.

We SLOWLY PUSH IN ON ROY.

ROY

See, I was...I was out working on my farm couple days ago, and this little fella, well, he came up to me and had me convinced that the world was gonna end...Sounds silly saying it now, but I figured if the Lord had sent this man to me I shouldn't take it lightly...So I gave away everything I got, climbed up on my barn and waited for the Lord to come back. Course He didn't, otherwise I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you...My stuff's gone, my wife left me, took all the savings out of our bank account and ran off...Drought's killed most of my crops. Couldn't get a loan now if I tried. Whole town thinks...well...Won't nobody over there look at me, and I had to walk five miles just to get here. I need to find some way to get my life back together...reckoned this would be a good start.

Gary stares across the desk, eyes wide with curiosity.

GARY

No shit.

He stands up, sticks out a hand.

GARY

Let's get you a uniform.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

WE TRACK with Roy as he walks through a parking lot, uniform in hand, HEAT RISING from the asphalt.

As we continue to pull back, the building behind him comes into view: it's a PIGGLY WIGGLY.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Roy walks along a rural highway. A few CARS slow as they pass, folks taking a good, hard look at him...

EXT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING

Roy walks up his gravel driveway, looks at the few remaining things in his yard no one bothered to take.

INT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING

He enters the empty house and stops, crosses to the living room. He SEES - the UPRIGHT PIANO, still in the corner.

He moves to the kitchen, regards the PHONE. He picks it up, punches the first three buttons, then hangs up.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Roy mingles through his things in the yard. He finds a SLEEPING BAG and carries it toward the house.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - THAT MOMENT

Jim and Bernie sit in Jim's police cruiser across the street, both pair of eyes locked on Roy's house.

BERNADETTE

Should we be worried?

JIM

Bout what?

BERNADETTE

You know. That he might...

JIM

Nah. If he didn't kill himself yet, I say he ain't gonna do it. Think he's been through the worst of it already.

BERNADETTE

Maybe Dale could come over? Keep watch?

JIM

Over somebody ain't dangerous? County would have my ass.

BEAT.

BERNADETTE

I should make him some food.

JIM

Let me advise against the tuna  
casserole.

BERNADETTE

I thought you liked my tuna  
casserole.

JIM

(low)  
Nobody likes tuna casserole.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

Roy stands at the end of the driveway, dressed in his new  
uniform: khakis, dress shirt, tie, apron.

He looks both ways down the road, sighs, then starts walking.

EXT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - MORNING

Roy waits outside the grocery store, shifting uncomfortably.  
A TUBBY MAN with a shaved head approaches (DONALD, 30s). He  
spots Roy but doesn't say anything.

Donald unlocks the front door and enters, not holding it  
open. Roy jumps to catch the door and walks into --

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - CONT.

A half-lit, completely dead grocery store in need of a  
remodel: yellowed floors, burnt-out fluorescents, terrible  
70s music playing through the speakers.

Two employees walk in (TRISTAN and CHAD, 30s) and pass Roy  
without so much as a glance.

A BEAT later, Gary enters, waves, then disappears into an  
office. Roy waits, unsure.

Through the front glass, Roy SEES - a police car pull up. A  
LARGE OFFICER exits, opens the back door, and a kid (BAILEY,  
17, IN HANDCUFFS) emerges.

The officer leads Bailey inside, where Roy gets a closer  
look: bleached blonde hair, pants four sizes too big, shoes  
missing their laces, teeth the color of mustard.

The officer removes the handcuffs and Bailey smiles.

BAILEY

Thanks, man.

OFFICER PARKS

4:30, sharp. Don't make me wait for you again.

BAILEY

So don't wait. Ain't gonna hurt my feelings none.

OFFICER PARKS

Like I said, 4:30 sharp.

BAILEY

Whatever.

The officer exits. Bailey passes Roy with a whistle. Gary emerges from his office and locks the door behind him.

GARY

Work release. When he ain't here, he's back at the detention center. Little deal they struck up. Makes my life a lotta fun, let me tell ya.

Gary holds out a BOX CUTTER.

GARY

Only tool you'll need. Follow me.

Roy takes the box cutter, turns it over in his hands.

EXT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - MORNING

The stock crew unload boxes from a SEMI-TRUCK parked outside.

TRISTAN

So, what's your story, old man?  
(then)  
What? Don't wanna talk to us?

Roy carries his stack of boxes inside to --

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - BACK ROOM - CONT.

The warehouse. BOXES stacked high. ORANGE CARTS loaded up. Roy grabs the last cart, drags it and notes a SQUEALING. He stops, and the squealing stops. Starts again, and it's back.

He looks down, sees a wheel slightly askew, watches it as it squeals. The crew laugh.

AISLE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Roy brings the squealing cart to a stop in an aisle and clumsily cuts open a container: boxes of cereal.

A commercial comes over the RADIO -- a spokesman talking so fast it's hard to decipher. Roy looks around, spots Tristan.

ROY  
What'd he say?

TRISTAN  
Don't worry. You'll hear it a  
hundred times before the day's out.

The commercial dissolves into the store's theme song:

SINGING VOICE (O.S.)  
*Down home, down the street/ It's the  
place to go where you'll always know/  
We're gonna treat you right...*

Roy stares up at the CEILING SPEAKER. The 70s music resumes.

A SHUFFLING SOUND behind him. Roy turns to see his cart now stacked even higher with more boxes. He looks around, bewildered. The crew guys laugh at the end of the aisle.

TRISTAN  
Watch your back, old man!

They disappear. Roy sighs and opens another box.

BACK ROOM - LATER

Roy eats tuna from a can, sitting alone in the break room.

Bailey and SARA (18, skinny, faded highlights) push through the SWINGING DOOR, hands all over each other, tongues in each other's mouths. They slam into a wall and keep going.

Roy stares unconsciously. Sara spots Roy, stops kissing Bailey, and rushes out. Bailey throws his hands up.

BAILEY  
What the hell, man?

Roy doesn't even have time to respond before the rest of the stock crew push through the swinging door.

TRISTAN  
Smoke break!

Bailey smiles and falls in. He motions for Roy to follow.

EXT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Outside, the crew sit on MILK CRATES. Roy finds one, follows the lead. Tristan offers him a cigarette, but Roy declines.

TRISTAN  
I know about you, man. Yeah, I heard. You was the one up on the roof, wasn't you? Over in Ashbury?

The other crew guys look at Roy, silent.

TRISTAN  
Preaching and yelling and all that. Gave away all your shit. Said the world was gonna end.

Roy stares off at nothing.

TRISTAN  
And it did, didn't it?

Roy looks back to Tristan, confused.

TRISTAN  
Oh, you didn't hear? Yeah, man. God damn. The world ended...cause now you're in hell with all of us!

Tristan laughs, slaps some crew members' hands.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Roy fumbles with a time card. He hears WHISTLING, turns and SEES - Bailey, back in handcuffs, being led outside by the large officer. Roy watches the cruiser pull away.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - EVENING

Roy straddles the WHITE LINE along the side of the road.

EXT. CHURCH - EVENING

Roy walks past his CHURCH with the gravel parking lot.

A WOMAN out front holds a pile of MARQUEE LETTERS, spelling out something we can't read. She spots Roy. They exchange a quiet look, then she looks away and returns to work.

INT./EXT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING

Roy lays on his sleeping bag. A KNOCK on the door. Bernadette and Amanda stand outside, holding CASSEROLE DISHES. He doesn't move. Just stares at the ceiling.

BERNADETTE

Roy?

Bernie knocks again, then resigns. The women place the dishes on the stoop and leave. BEAT. Roy opens the door, grabs the dishes. He opens one and eats right out of the pan...

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Roy sets up a CARDBOARD CUTOUT of the Piggly Wiggly mascot. Donald walks by, snorts like a pig and laughs. VOICES come through the aisle. Roy stops.

HARRIET (O.S.)

You know he's in tight with the devil now, for sure. Done completely forgone the scriptures.

EVELYN (O.S.)

It ain't right.

HARRIET (O.S.)

Sure ain't. And what he done to his poor wife, making her run off like that. Well...it just ain't *Godly*.

Roy abandons his cart and follows the voices, listening through the wall of groceries.

EVELYN (O.S.)

I bet he's got a demon. Maybe more than one. Lord help us, he ain't no good Christian anymore.

HARRIET (O.S.)

Certainly not.

Roy pops around the corner, surprising them. They gasp and stare at him like he's got a disease. He offers a grin.

The stock crew appear behind Roy, laughing. Donald reaches out, taps Roy on the shoulder.

DONALD  
Come on, old man.

Roy nods at the ladies, then silently follows the stock crew.

PRODUCE SECTION - A MINUTE LATER

The stock crew stand circled around Bailey. Roy watches from the back, peeking over shoulders to get a good look.

BAILEY  
Not a big one.

TRISTAN  
I get to pick it out.

BAILEY  
I ain't doing a big one.

Tristan picks up a large HABANERO PEPPER.

BAILEY  
Come on, man, that's too big.

TRISTAN  
It's five bucks. I ain't letting you do a small one.

Bailey takes the pepper, worried.

ROY  
(to Donald)  
What's going on?

DONALD  
Tristan bet him five dollars he wouldn't eat one of them hot peppers. Dumbass is gonna eat a whole habanero for chump change.

CHAD  
Come on, baby boy, get on with it.

BAILEY  
Where's my money?

Tristan reaches into his pocket and pulls out a five.

TRISTAN

You get it after you swallow.

BAILEY

I want it first.

CHAD

Quit stalling.

TRISTAN

Come on, before Gary sees.

Bailey takes a breath and eats the entire pepper in one mouthful. His face goes RED.

BAILEY

Shit!

The crew laugh. Bailey looks for somewhere to throw up.

TRISTAN

Don't spit it out. Ya gotta swallow it or you don't get the money.

Bailey starts coughing uncontrollably.

BAILEY

Holy shit! I can't breathe!

He runs off. The crew laugh and congratulate each other, then chase after him. Donald turns and looks at Roy.

DONALD

Cheapest fun since masturbation.

Donald exits, running after the crew.

A RUMBLE OF THUNDER in the distance. Roy stops, confused.

It comes again, but it sounds metallic, like it's coming from inside the store. Roy turns and spots it: the produce getting watered by MISTERS.

He walks closer, reaches his hand under the mister and lets water pool in his palm. He looks up, notes a tiny SPEAKER above the produce...the thunder nothing but a SOUND EFFECT.

EXT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Roy puts a quarter into an RC Cola vending machine, hits a button. Nothing. He taps the machine, but still nothing.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - BACK ROOM - DAY

Roy sits in a booth in the back room. Puts his hands together to pray over his food, closes his eyes...

When Bailey busts in with his arm around Sara. They cozy up in the booth across from Roy, smiling, exchanging kisses.

BAILEY

What's up, old man? Ain't heard two words out of ya since you been here.

ROY

Not much to say, I suppose.

BAILEY

(to Sara)

Damn. My tongue's still on fire.

SARA

I think I could help.

BAILEY

I bet you could.

They kiss. Roy looks away. Sara puts her finger on Bailey's mouth, saying 'stop'. She eyes Roy with curiosity.

SARA

So, you married?

Roy looks down at his RING, spins it with his other hand.

ROY

Yeah.

SARA

How long?

ROY

Thirty-two years.

BAILEY

Damn.

SARA

How old were you?

ROY  
Eighteen...

His words trail off as his mind wanders.

SARA  
Bailey's gonna get me a ring. When he gets out for good. Ain't that right?

BAILEY  
Maybe from the gum ball machine.

SARA  
No, you promised a real one!

BAILEY  
I was joking, girl. Hush.

He kisses her and she giggles. Roy looks away again.

BAILEY  
I gotta piss.

Bailey exits, leaving Sara and Roy in an uncomfortable silence. Sara eyes Roy's food.

SARA  
You gonna eat that?

Without approval, she scarfs it down, then quickly leaves. Roy looks up, notes a PHONE sitting on the wall...

MOMENTS LATER -

Roy holds the phone to his ear, takes a deep breath.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Hello?

ROY  
Em?

VOICE (O.S.)  
Who is this?

ROY  
Em, it's me.

The line goes dead. He stares at the receiver, then hangs up.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Roy punches his time card, tosses his apron over his shoulder. Gary waves from behind the cigarette counter.

GARY

Have a good weekend, Roy.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

TWO BOYS (both 12) cruise along on their BIKES, shirts wrapped around their waists. Tommy pedals silently behind.

MAX

Telling ya, man, she likes me.  
She passed me a note at church.

KYLE

And?

MAX

And it said she liked me.

KYLE

Surprised you could read it.

MAX

Shut up.

KYLE

Bet she didn't even write it.

MAX

Why would she give me a note she  
didn't write saying she liked me?

KYLE

She's a girl. Who knows why they do  
the things they do.

The boys spot Roy up ahead. They pedal past, laughing and making noises. As they pass, Tommy turns his bike around.

TOMMY

I'll catch y'all later.

The other two don't stop, but yell after him.

MAX

Watch out, Tommy. Stupid rubs off  
on ya!

Tommy coasts along next to Roy, waiting, then hops off and starts to walk the bike. BEAT. Roy sighs.

ROY

Hey, Tommy.

TOMMY

Hey, Mr. Roy. How's it going?  
(then, after no response)  
So, Mr. Roy, I been meaning to ask  
you. How come...I mean, why'd you  
think the Lord was coming back?

ROY

Got myself worked up, is all.

TOMMY

But there wasn't no truth to it?

ROY

Sure don't seem that way.

TOMMY

I believed you, ya know? When I was  
up there on the roof asking you  
about it, I wasn't sure, but I went  
home and prayed you was right.

ROY

I did, too.

TOMMY

Could still happen, dontcha think?

ROY

One day, maybe.

TOMMY

Dad says you're crazy. That right?

Roy stops and looks at the boy.

ROY

What do you think?

Tommy shrugs. Roy smiles and starts walking again.

ROY

I guess that makes two of us.

TOMMY

Has Ms. Emily come back yet?  
Sorry...Was it cause you gave all  
the stuff away?...You should just  
ask for it back. Sure folks would  
understand.

ROY

World don't work that way.

Tommy, waits, thinking Roy might offer more, then resigns.

TOMMY

Well, gotta get home for supper.  
You want a ride?

ROY

I like the walking.

TOMMY

Alright. See ya, Mr. Roy.

Tommy pedals away.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING

Roy stares out at his yard, littered with the few things  
nobody took. He looks to the BARN...

YARD - AN HOUR LATER

Roy exits the barn, sweating. He grabs some items, then  
disappears back inside.

The SOUND OF A CAR crunching down the driveway makes him  
stick his head out the barn door. Jim's cruiser pulls up.  
He rolls down the window.

JIM

Busy?

Roy looks around, shrugs. Jim nods for him to get in.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Roy and Jim sit on the bleachers of an OLD BASEBALL FIELD:  
high yellow grass, scoreboard missing, no outfield fence Jim  
pulls out a travel mug, pours coffee and hands a cup to Roy.

JIM  
 How you holding up?  
 (Roy shrugs)  
 We got an empty room at our place,  
 you ever want to stay over. Ain't  
 too big or nothing...well, you seen  
 it...Oh! Here we go!

On the shoulder beside the ball field, Jim's cruiser sits hidden behind a sign, looking like a SPEED TRAP...

A car speeds past, then SLAMS on its brakes, not knowing the cruiser's empty. Jim laughs and slaps Roy's arm.

JIM  
 Every time! Hot damn.  
 (then)  
 So, you wanna tell me about it?

ROY  
 Bout what?

JIM  
 Well...How about what made you get  
 up on that roof? Start with that.

Roy thinks, then just shakes his head.

ROY  
 Just being foolish.

Another car gets tricked by the speed trap. Jim laughs again. A SQUAWK comes over Jim's walkie, calling for the sheriff.

JIM  
 10-4. I'll swing by after lunch.  
 (to Roy)  
 Feel like getting a bite?

EXT. RUSTY'S DINER - DAY

The cruiser parks in front of "Rusty's", a brick diner that used to be a body shop. A GROUP OF OLD MEN smoke outside the diner, staring at Jim and Roy as they walk inside.

INT. RUSTY'S DINER - CONT.

Jim smiles at Bernadette behind the counter and points to a booth. EYES FOLLOW Roy as he sits. Bernie brings menus.

BERNADETTE  
Whatcha know good, sheriff?

JIM  
Not enough.

She gives him a kiss, then looks across the table.

BERNADETTE  
You keeping him outta trouble, Roy?

ROY  
Doing what I can.

BERNADETTE  
Hard work, I know. Try living with him.

Jim SEES - a MAN PASSED OUT in a corner booth.

JIM  
Little early for Randall, ain't it?

BERNADETTE  
(looks at the clock)  
Seems right on time to me.

She leans in close to Roy, puts a hand on his shoulder.

BERNADETTE  
It's good to see you. Been praying  
for ya.

JIM  
How bout some greasy burgers and  
fries, if you get the chance?

BERNADETTE  
Only if you leave me a big tip.

She smiles and leaves. The OLD MEN outside stare through the window. Roy looks around the diner.

ROY  
They're loving this, ain't they?

JIM  
Ah, some folks just like to know  
they're standing taller than the  
man next to em.

ROY  
Think everybody's standing taller  
than me right now.

JIM

Give em a week, they'll talk bout something else...What's the plan?

ROY

What do ya mean?

JIM

I mean, how long you gonna stay working at that grocery store?

ROY

Gotta stay afloat somehow.

JIM

Thought about selling?

ROY

You know I ain't got the crops --

JIM

I meant the farm.

Roy looks away, the option obviously not welcome.

ROY

And going where?

JIM

I dunno. More to this world than Ashbury...

Roy twiddles with a fork.

ROY

Can I ask you something?

JIM

Shoot.

ROY

You know anything bout a kid named Bailey? Works at the Piggly Wiggly?

JIM

The Reece kid? Sure. I know most folks round here who cause trouble. Why?

ROY

Just curious.

JIM

He don't come from good stock, let me put it that way. Been in and out of juvie since he was fourteen. Both of his parents are up in state for...distribution, I think. He was living with a grandmother over in the trailer park at one point, but I think she's deceased now...I was the one who took him in his first time. Was out huffing tail pipes at Eugene's, tried to sneak through a fence to tip some cows -- real juvenile stuff, ya know. Eugene calls me out there, he's got one hand on the cordless phone, the other on his shotgun pointed at the kid, threatening to shoot him for trespassing.

Another SQUAWK comes through Jim's radio.

JIM

Dammit.

(standing up)

Bernie? Looks like we gonna have to get ours to go.

INT./EXT. POLICE CRUISER - FARMHOUSE - DAY

The cruiser stops in front of Roy's farmhouse. Roy gets out and Jim hands him a paper bag with his food.

JIM

Looks like Bernie gave you extra.

Roy opens the bag, sees three hamburgers, two sets of fries.

JIM

She's sneaky like that. Pick you up, bout what, 8:30?

ROY

For what?

JIM

Church.

(Roy laughs)

What?

ROY

Come on. Don't nobody want me there.

JIM

Why? Cause you made a mistake?  
Hell, who round here ain't done  
that...Now ain't the time to go  
giving up on the Lord. He ain't  
given up on you.

Roy watches Jim drive off. He turns, notes the BARN...

BARN - A MINUTE LATER

Roy stares at the LADDER, thinking. He looks up, towards the  
roof of the barn. The climb seems infinite.

He sighs and slowly puts a foot on the bottom rung...

BARN ROOF - A MINUTE LATER

Roy spots his Bible lying on the roof. He picks it up, notes  
the BUSINESS CARD sticking out...

We hear the CLICKING SOUND of Tommy's bike. Roy watches from  
the roof as the boy rides up to the house, hops off. Tommy  
looks around, grabs a shovel, and starts digging. BEAT.

ROY

Hey! What are you doing?

Tommy stops, startled, looks and finds Roy on the roof.

TOMMY

Well...I started this with you, I'm  
gonna help you finish it.

ROY

Can't work here anymore. I ain't  
got the money to pay you.

TOMMY

So don't pay me.

Tommy returns to his work. Roy watches, then sighs...

AN HOUR LATER -

Roy and Tommy dig, working on the trench.

AN HOUR LATER -

Roy and Tommy sit in the ditch and eat greasy diner burgers.

A FEW HOURS LATER -

The two relax on the porch as the sun sets. Tommy stands.

TOMMY

See ya at church tomorrow?

Roy thinks about it, then nods. Tommy rides off.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

Roy stands on his porch, nervous. Jim's cruiser pulls up. Through the windshield, Bernadette smiles at Roy and waves.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Roy rides in the back as Bernadette HUMS along to the radio.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY

Jim opens the back door and lets Roy out. Bernie takes Roy's arm, guiding. CAMERA FOLLOWS them inside --

INT. CHURCH - CONT.

The sanctuary. They find seats in the back. Around the room, heads turn. Tommy spots Roy and waves. Up front, a GIRL (10) sings a hymn while Mrs. Caldwell plays along on the piano.

A BOY (7) in front of Roy turns around and stares. Roy tries to avoid him, but the boy keeps staring. Finally --

CURIOUS BOY

Momma says you got a demon.

ROY

That right?

The boy nods. His mom hurriedly turns him back around. The hymn ends and the crowd applauds.

PASTOR

Thank you, Mary Beth. Now, if you'll take our your Bibles...

Bernie nudges Roy and holds open her Bible so he can read along. He tries to follow, but he can't concentrate. All around him, people look up from reading to catch a glimpse.

WE PUSH in on him as eyes bear down.

INT. GARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Roy pokes his head through the door. Gary looks up from paperwork, waves Roy in.

GARY

Hey Roy. What can I do you for?

ROY

I was...I was wondering if I could pick up an extra shift on Sundays?

GARY

How come?

ROY

Well...I need the money.

GARY

Oh, right...Well, if you can talk one of the other guys out of working on a Sunday morning, I reckon it'd be alright. But I can't pay you overtime. You know that, right? I know that puts you over forty hours for the week, but it's company policy. Understand?

ROY

Sure, sure. I appreciate it.

Roy moves to leave.

GARY

Roy?

(Roy stops)

You doing okay? The job, I mean?  
You getting around okay?

ROY

Fine.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Roy bags groceries for Sara, his BEARD OBVIOUSLY LONGER. She chats away. Roy spots Mrs. Caldwell at the end of the line. She sees him and pushes her cart to the next line.

Roy bags in silence, visibly hurt.

All checked out, Mrs. Caldwell pushes her cart towards the door. Gary puts up a hand to stop her.

GARY

Hold on, ma'am. Roy, you mind helping this woman with her groceries?

MRS. CALDWELL

Oh, no, that's not necessary.

GARY

Nonsense. Roy?

MRS. CALDWELL

Really, I'm fine.

GARY

Please, I insist.

Roy grabs Mrs. Caldwell's cart, pushes it outside.

GARY

Have a good day, ma'am. Thanks for shopping with us.

EXT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Roy and Mrs. Caldwell walk silently to her car. She opens the trunk and Roy starts to unload the bags.

ROY

Didn't know you shopped over here.

MRS. CALDWELL

'Joe's' was out of a couple things.

Roy shuts the trunk. Mrs. Caldwell walks back to him, holds out A FEW DOLLARS. Roy shakes her off.

MRS. CALDWELL

I'm gonna say my peace, and that's gonna be the end of it...It's just...a shame.

ROY

What's that?

MRS. CALDWELL

I always thought there was so much good in you, sugar. You and Emily both, but especially you. Don't ask me why. But I ain't seen you at church in weeks, and frankly, I'm afraid what's become of you. I'm afraid the great manipulator done got his grasp on you, and once he's done that, it's hard to get free.

ROY

I appreciate the concern.

MRS. CALDWELL

I hope one day you'll find your way back to us. Now I better get gone.

Roy watches her get in the car.

ROY

If it means anything, I always liked hearing you play.

She drives off. Roy hears SOUNDS OF CHEERING coming from behind the store. He walks around back --

LOADING RAMP - CONT.

And finds the crew crowded around Bailey, SLAPPING him on the butt like they're a sports team.

CHAD

To Baby Boy!

BAILEY

Third time's a charm, fellas!

ROY

What's goin on?

TRISTAN

Baby Boy here is a free man again.

ROY

Oh yeah?

BAILEY

Hell yeah, man. On Friday! Time off  
for good behavior, I guess.

Chad wraps an arm around Bailey, hands the boy a cigarette.

CHAD

Extra ten minutes on break today.  
On us. Gary won't even know.

The crew exits. Roy smiles at Bailey and follows them inside.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY BACK ROOM - CONT.

Roy closes the door, looks back at Bailey THROUGH THE GLASS.

CHAD

Next time he gets out, you can give  
him some of your smokes.

ROY

What's that?

TRISTAN

Just a matter of time til he's back  
in there...I give it a week.

CHAD

Shit, I say he don't last two days.

TRISTAN

Wanna put money on it?

They walk off, discussing the bet. Roy looks out at Bailey  
smoking. Something connects with him and his face changes...

EXT. JIM'S HOUSE - DAY

Roy stands on Jim's stoop, pacing. He looks up, reads the  
PLAQUE above the door: "As For Me And My House, We Will Serve  
The Lord." Bernie answers the door with a smile.

BERNADETTE

Well, hey, Roy! This sure is a nice  
surprise. Got supper on the table.  
World famous pot pie...

ROY

That's alright. Jim here?

BERNADETTE

Sure, sure. Come on in.

ROY

I'll wait.

Jim peeks his head around the door.

JIM

I coulda given you a ride if I knew  
you wanted to come over.

(then)

What's going on?

ROY

I got a crazy idea.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Roy watches as the Jim's cruiser pulls up the gravel  
driveway. Jim circles round back, opens the door, and Bailey  
exits, holding a DUFFEL BAG...

Bailey walks silently to the farmhouse and enters. Jim  
crosses to Roy, both of them staring at the house.

JIM

Sure you're alright with this?

ROY

What's he gonna do, steal from me?

JIM

He gets out of hand, you know where  
to find me. One whiff of trouble,  
they'll send him to county. Ain't  
gonna be seventeen forever.

ROY

I think I can handle him.

JIM

Roy...why are you doing this?

ROY

Said it yourself, he ain't got no  
other family. Who else is gonna  
look out for him? Something's  
telling me this is what I need to  
be doing right now.

JIM

By any chance, this *something*...  
that the same something that told  
you to climb up on that roof?

Roy doesn't respond. Jim resigns, gets back in the cruiser.

JIM

Well, put him to work, long as you  
got him. Maybe you can finish up  
that ditch for when the rain comes.

INT. FARMHOUSE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Roy finds Bailey wandering the kitchen. Bailey nods toward  
the piano in the living room.

BAILEY

You play?

ROY

My wife does...Did.

Bailey turns around, taking in the nearby kitchen.

BAILEY

Didn't wanna give away the fridge?

ROY

Couldn't get it out the door by myself.  
Ain't as young as I used to be.

Bailey looks around, shrugs, then hops up on the counter.

BAILEY

Well, beats juvie...So you and the  
sheriff, you two are pretty buddy-  
buddy, huh?

ROY

Since we were kids. His daddy was  
sheriff before him. Looks just like  
him, too...There's two bedrooms  
upstairs. You can sleep in either one  
of em, don't matter to me.

BAILEY

Where do you sleep?

(Roy nods outside)

What, like on the ground?

ROY  
I got a sleeping bag.

BAILEY  
You ain't worried about it raining  
on you?

ROY  
I pray every night that it does.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Roy tosses in his sleeping bag. We hear the SOUND of PIANO  
PLAYING coming from the house...

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT - CONT.

In the living room, Roy SEES - Bailey banging on the keys.

BAILEY  
Sorry, man. I wake you up?

ROY  
Was awake already.

BAILEY  
New place, kinda hard to sleep...  
Got any books? Reading puts me  
right out...Probably why my grades  
weren't so good, ya know?

Roy locates the BIBLE, hands it to Bailey.

ROY  
Don't know if it's your cup of tea.

Bailey gives it a glance, nods 'thank you', then hits a few  
more notes on the piano as Roy exits.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

Along the road, Roy and Bailey walk to work. Bailey holds a  
CARDBOARD BOX over his head, shading himself from the sun.

ROY  
Read any of that book?

BAILEY  
 Tried. Couldn't understand a damn  
 thing, though, man...What's  
 Sunnybrook Ministries?

Roy stops, startled by the words.

ROY  
 What?

BAILEY  
 There was a card in there, said  
 something about Sunny...Brook? Or  
 Lane? Something like that. That the  
 church you go to?  
 (Roy shakes his head)  
 What is it?

ROY  
 A long story.

A TRUCK approaches and stops on the opposite side of the  
 road. A BEARDED MAN (50) stares out. There's a long beat as  
 they all wait, no one saying anything. Finally --

BAILEY  
 It's ten dollars if you wanna touch!

Bearded Man audibly huffs, appalled, and drives off.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Down an aisle, Roy SEES - Bailey getting teased by the crew.  
 Something catches Roy's eye. He turns, SEES - a WOMAN pushing  
 a cart, wearing a familiar-looking blouse...

Roy follows her as she turns down another aisle. He stops,  
 peeks his head around the corner. She reaches to grab  
 something off the shelf, her back turned to him.

He inches closer when the woman suddenly turns and JUMPS,  
 afraid. IT'S NOT EMILY...

Roy silently apologizes and she quickly pushes her cart away.

PIGGLY WIGGLY - LATER

Bailey opens an envelope and pulls out a CHECK. Behind him,  
 the rest of the crew wait in line in front of Gary's office.

TRISTAN

Don't spend it all in one place,  
jailbait.

The crew laughs. Bailey flips them off, then looks at Roy.

BAILEY

Where's the closest place to buy a  
free man some smokes?

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Inside a small convenience store, Bailey opens a drink cooler, shoves his head inside and lets out a long sigh. Roy grabs white bread and peanut butter, crosses to the cooler. Bailey hands Roy some cash.

BAILEY

Get me a pack of Marlboros...no,  
wait...better make it a carton.

ROY

You're right here.

BAILEY

Yeah, but man, they ain't gonna  
sell em to me. I ain't technically  
legal, ya know?

Roy sighs, takes the money and turns for the register.

BAILEY

Oh! And a lotto ticket, too. One of  
the scratch-offs.

ROY

Waste of money.

BAILEY

Don't say that, man! You don't  
know. We could win millions! And  
I'll split it with ya, fifty-  
fifty...Come on, maybe it's like,  
fate, ya know? Like, maybe the  
universe or something had this  
whole thing planned out where I  
come to live with you, all so we  
can go buy that winning  
ticket...Think about it, man. You  
could buy your stuff back.

Roy's shoulders slump. He walks to the counter. A BURLY  
CASHIER puts down his paper and looks up at the groceries.

BURLY CASHIER  
Anything else?

ROY  
One of the scratch-offs.

The cashier grabs a ticket, rings it up.

BURLY CASHIER  
And the chips?

ROY  
Chips?

BURLY CASHIER  
(nodding at Bailey)  
The ones stuffed down his pants.

Roy turns, looks at Bailey, shoots the boy a stern look.

BAILEY  
What? I ain't got no chips.

The cashier reaches out of sight behind the counter --

BURLY CASHIER  
Wanna test me?

ROY  
No, don't need to do that. Bailey,  
put em up here, we'll pay for em.

BAILEY  
I ain't go no chips, I swear.

The cashier raises his hand and he's holding a PHONE. He places it to his ear.

BURLY CASHIER  
I'll call the sheriff.

BAILEY  
Go ahead. Call em. Ain't gonna find  
nothing. No sir. Not on Bailey.  
Nope. Won't find a damn thing.

EXT. GAS STATION - AN HOUR LATER

Roy stares at Bailey sitting in the back of a police cruiser.  
Jim and the burly cashier exit the gas station.

ROY  
Real sorry bout this.

STORE CASHIER

I don't wanna see you or that kid  
in this store again.

Roy nods shamefully and the cashier returns inside.

JIM

Don't worry, he ain't gonna press  
charges...but, you better be glad  
it was me that was on this side of  
town. Anybody else, they'd have  
locked him up.

Jim lets Bailey out of the car, then gets in and drives off.  
Bailey opens his smokes, lights up, looks at Roy.

BAILEY

What?

Roy shakes his head, looks down at the LOTTO TICKET. He takes  
a coin and scratches, then holds it up for Bailey to see.

BAILEY

Guess it wasn't meant to be, man.

Roy crosses to a TRASH CAN and drops the ticket inside.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bernadette places a few CASSEROLES in the fridge. In the  
b.g., Bailey plunks away terribly on the piano.

BERNADETTE

Make sure that lasts y'all a couple  
days. Got a few double shifts  
coming up this week...don't know  
when I'll be able to cook more.

ROY

Think we can make do. Really  
appreciate it, Bernie.

BERNADETTE

Had the other ladies from group  
helping out before, but...well,  
they can't really understand you  
having the kid here...

ROY

Sure.

(then)

By chance, you ain't heard from Em,  
have you?

Bernadette smiles sadly, shakes her head.

BERNADETTE  
She'll come around.

INT./EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Roy can't sleep. An ENGINE RUMBLES outside. He sits up, looks out the barn door and sees a BUSTED-UP STATION WAGON parked in front of the house, four or five guys inside.

A passenger hands Bailey something, then the station wagon drives off...

Roy exits the barn and crosses to the porch.

ROY  
Who was that?

BAILEY  
Just some friends.

Bailey holds up a SIX-PACK. He cracks open a beer, downs it, burps, then opens another one. He offers one to Roy, who declines. Bailey opens a CASSEROLE and eats out of the pan.

BAILEY  
Let me ask you something, old man.  
Why'd you think the world was ending?

ROY  
Thought God sent me a message.

BAILEY  
Does he do that?

ROY  
From time to time.

BAILEY  
Like how?

ROY  
Well..I reckon you being here is a good example...figure it's his way of saying life ain't just about me. That if I can help somebody out who may be worse off than me, I should.

BAILEY  
Me? Shit, man, you seen this place?  
You're the one ain't got nothing.

Bailey takes a few more bites from the casserole.

BAILEY  
When'd you start on all this  
religion stuff?

ROY  
Can't remember not doing it.

BAILEY  
And your old lady...she into the  
whole church thing, too?

ROY  
She was.

BAILEY  
But not no more?

ROY  
Not for a while.

BAILEY  
How come?

ROY  
You'd have to ask her yourself.

BAILEY  
You lived here your whole life?

ROY  
Born and raised.

BAILEY  
Damn.

Bailey hands the dish to Roy, who takes a bite.

ROY  
Met her at church. She was playing  
the piano and I couldn't stop  
looking at her. We were eighteen  
when we got married. Didn't have  
any money so we lived here. She'd  
cook and work round the house with  
my momma while me and Daddy'd tend  
the fields. Lived like that til my  
folks passed within a week of each  
other. Both of em are buried back  
there, near those trees.

BAILEY

No way I'm gonna be buried round here, man. No offense, but as soon as I got me a car...see ya! Maybe to...Texas or something.

Roy passes the casserole back to Bailey.

ROY

How come you stole those chips?

BEAT. Bailey take a bite, thinks about it, then shrugs.

BAILEY

Habit...I don't know what it is, man. I feel like I got the bad in my blood. Can't shake it. Every where I go, people always reminding me of what I come from. 'Your daddy done this, your momma done that.' Like they don't expect no different from me...If I could get outta this hell hole where folks didn't know nothing about me or my dumbass parents, maybe I could get right. Maybe buy me a body shop or something...

(then)

It's bullshit, though. I feel like, even if I could get outta here, maybe the bad would just follow me around...

Roy stares at Bailey, surprised by the boy's confession. Bailey takes another bite, then changes the subject.

BAILEY

Telling ya, man, that Bernadette? Damn fine cook. Mmm. Not too bad looking either, am I right?...

Bailey cracks open another beer, leans back.

BAILEY

So what are we gonna do tomorrow? We got the day off.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Drenched in sweat, Bailey drops a pile of tools, exhausted.

BAILEY

This ain't what I call a day off.

He lights a cigarette, then disappears into the barn. Tommy and Roy work on the ditch.

TOMMY  
How long's he gonna be staying here?

ROY  
Dunno. Long as it takes, I reckon.

TOMMY  
Long as it takes for what?

ROY  
A very good question.

Bailey reemerges from the barn, claps and yells at Tommy.

BAILEY  
That's right, son! Put your back into it!

He laughs at himself, then clumsily handles a tool. A TRUCK SPEEDS down the driveway, kicking up dust. VERN (40s, rough neck) gets out, leaving the engine running.

VERN  
Tommy, get in the truck.

Tommy and Roy stop working and look up at Vern.

TOMMY  
What?

VERN  
I said get in the truck!

ROY  
Vern, what's all this --

VERN  
Shut up, Roy. Don't say another word...Tommy!

Tommy obliges. Vern shuts the door and crosses to Roy.

VERN  
Stay away from my boy, hear? Bad enough he's been hanging around you, but now you got...*that one* staying here...

Bailey gestures to say, "Who, me?" Tommy shrugs apologetically as the truck drives away.

BAILEY

I take it he ain't a fan.

Roy goes back to work.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - GARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Harriet and Evelyn sit across from Gary, fanning themselves.

HARRIET

And it's not just us. There's at least a dozen other folks who would stop coming.

EVELYN

Mmm hmm.

HARRIET

Good Christian folks who hate to see...well, excuse my language, sir, but such a *damnation* as this.

EVELYN

Lord, have mercy.

HARRIET

You can ignore the two of us all you want, but Mr. Hinkle, let me assure you, if you continue down this path, there is no end. You start walking toe-to-toe with the devil, soon enough you'll be long forgone, and not even Jesus will be able to save you --

Gary puts a hand up.

GARY

Ladies, I appreciate the concern, but what would you have me do?

HARRIET

Fire him.

EVELYN

Mmm hmm.

GARY

On what grounds?

HARRIET

I told you. He might have a demon. More than grounds enough in my book.

EVELYN

Good Lord, yes.

HARRIET

And now he's got that...that troublemaker living with him, who knows what's he's mixed up in...I hear the boy is a homosexual, which raises the question...

GARY

Ladies, I'm sorry, but this ain't a religious institution, and I ain't a Pentecostal, or whatever it is you ladies are --

HARRIET

We, sir, are good Christians, of the Baptist denomination.

GARY

However you want to put it. It ain't for me. Frankly, I don't give a damn whether the man's been killing cats and rubbing his face in their feces --

A gasp from both of the ladies.

GARY

-- he works hard, he keeps his mouth shut, and there ain't nothing else to it. Now, you wanna quit patronizing my store cause you got some qualms with the man, so be it.

He gets up, opens the door for them. They stand.

HARRIET

This doesn't end with us, Mr. Hinkle. If you won't listen to us, perhaps you'll listen to the Lord God Almighty when he brings His judgment upon your house. But I fear by then it'll be too late.

GARY

He got problems with my business, you have him call me.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - CONT.

Roy stocks groceries while Bernie stands behind him, writing in a note pad. Roy's BEARD LOOKS EVEN LONGER. He sees Evelyn and Harriet exit Gary's office and quickly walk outside. Bernadette looks up to match his gaze.

BERNADETTE

Wouldn't worry bout them. Just cranky old women, is all. Ain't got nothing better to do...I was thinking about doing a shepherd's pie. What do you think?

Roy shifts his squealing cart down the aisle. Bernie follows.

ROY

Sounds good.

BERNADETTE

If that's not good, we can do something else...

ROY

It's fine.

BERNADETTE

Think Bailey will like it?

Roy HEARS something. A FAMILIAR VOICE. He stops in the middle of the aisle, looks around, trying to find the source...

BERNADETTE

Roy?

Roy looks up at the CEILING SPEAKER. The familiar voice is coming from the radio...

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)

Hello friends, I'm Reverend Franklin Pointer. Let's face it, we're struggling through difficult times. Some days it feels like the pain and suffering will never end, that the hardships of life are too much to bear. Well, I and my friends at Sunnybrook Ministries want to let you know that you don't have to do it alone.

A FEMALE CUSTOMER walks up to Roy, pushing a cart.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Excuse me, can you tell me --

ROY

Shut up!

The customer huffs away. Bernie looks at Roy, shocked.

The voice continues, and we begin to recognize it as the STRANGER FROM THE FARM...

FRANKLIN POINTER (O.S.)  
 Join me every Tuesday and Thursday  
 night at 8pm for the word of Jesus  
 Christ, our Lord and Savior.  
 Whether you're a long-time believer  
 or just a curious soul, I believe  
 your life will be blessed. Only on  
 440 AM, WXBS. God bless you.

The 70s music resumes. Roy abandons his cart, running off.

BERNADETTE  
 Roy!

Roy rushes through the store --

EXT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - CONT.

Outside to the loading ramp. He paces, then PUNCHES the RC Cola Vending Machine. A can pops out. He walks --

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - BACK ROOM - CONT.

Back inside, picks up the PHONE on the wall, dials.

OPERATOR  
 City and state, please.

ROY  
 Sunnybrook Ministries.

OPERATOR  
 City and state, please.

ROY  
 Can you just look for any instances  
 of Sunnybrook Ministries?

OPERATOR  
 I'm sorry, sir, but we need a city  
 and state with which to search. Do  
 you know this information?

ROY  
 No...What about Mr. Franklin  
 Pointer? P-O-I-N-T-E-R.

OPERATOR  
What city and state?

ROY  
I don't know. Can't you --

OPERATOR  
I'm sorry, sir, but to look up anything in our system, I need to have a city and state to search. Is there anything else --

Roy SLAMS the phone down.

EXT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Roy runs through the parking lot toward the road.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Sweating like a pig, Roy stops to catch his breath. He looks down the road, turns, looks the opposite direction...

INT. DINER - DAY

Jim and DALE (40s) sit in a booth, eating burgers.

Roy runs by outside. Dale catches a glimpse and stops eating mid-bite. After a BEAT, Roy reappears, then enters.

He spots Jim and Dale, crosses to them, dripping sweat.

JIM  
Roy, what in the...you wanna have a heat stroke?

ROY  
Saw your cruiser out front.

Roy pulls out the BUSINESS CARD, hands it to Jim.

JIM  
What is this?

ROY  
You can look up addresses, right?  
Like in your computer?

JIM  
Yeah...

ROY  
Can you find out where that is?

JIM  
Maybe.

ROY  
Yes or no?

JIM  
Well hang on now, Roy. I can look into it, but I need to know what it's about first. If it's something criminal, then sure, I don't mind checking it out...is it?

Roy stands silent, breathing heavy. Dale holds up his GLASS OF WATER. Roy nods appreciatively and downs it.

JIM  
Alright, I'll look into it.

Roy turns to leave.

JIM  
Want a ride home?

Roy shakes his head "no" and exits.

INT. BARN - EVENING

Roy scrambles through a pile of junk. A car door slams O.S. After a BEAT, Bailey appears in the doorway.

BAILEY  
You alright? Whatcha looking for?

Roy doesn't answer. He angrily throws something at the barn wall, then sits down, giving up.

BAILEY  
It's cool, man, you know, leaving me at the store and all. I can take it. Tristan gave me a ride. He's a dick, but he's got a pretty bumping stereo in that truck...

Roy realizes something, gets up and runs past Bailey --

EXT. BARN - CONT.

-- outside. Roy stares at something O.S. Bailey exits the barn and meets the man's gaze. BEAT.

BAILEY

No offense, man, but that thing looks like somebody got mad at it. Like, just got...*all kinds* of mad all over it.

REVERSE. We see the RUSTED TRUCK ON BLOCKS.

BAILEY

Would be nice, though, not have to walk everywhere. Don't care how shitty it looks...Got any tires?

ROY

I only need the radio.

YARD - AN HOUR LATER

Roy's buried in the hood. Bailey lays smoking in the bed.

BAILEY

All's I'm saying, man, is if you want some tunes, just ask. Got a whole collection right here in my head. Whatcha wanna hear? Zeppelin? Skynard? I can probably make up some Christian songs if that's what you want.

Roy tries the engine. Nothing. Bailey improvises a song...

YARD - LATER

A DILAPIDATED JUNKER pulls up. Sara exits from the passenger side. An UGLY GIRL in the driver's seat yells out the window:

UGLY GIRL

Hey, dumbass!

Roy looks up.

UGLY GIRL

What do ya think? Should I wear my raincoat tomorrow?

(pointing to the barn)

(MORE)

UGLY GIRL (CONT'D)  
 Maybe you could climb up there and  
 let me know if you see any rainbows  
 or unicorns while you're at it.

BAILEY  
 Hey, shut up, Shotgun.

Sara slaps him. The Ugly Girl looks at Bailey.

UGLY GIRL  
 Better be glad I brought your  
 girlfriend over here, dickweed.  
 Sure as hell know you couldn't have  
 picked her up unless it was on the  
 way to your cell.

BAILEY  
 Go take another shell to the face.

She flips him off, throws her car in reverse and skids away.  
 Sara takes a cigarette from Bailey, smokes, then looks at Roy.

SARA  
 What's he doing?

BAILEY  
 Old man is trying to get his groove  
 on. Tired of listening to me sing.  
 Don't know why, though. I sing like  
 an angel, ain't that right?

SARA  
 Of course, baby.  
 (to Roy)  
 Hey, Mr. Roy!

BAILEY  
 Best not mess with him. I think  
 it's his time of the month.

SARA  
 I got something in my purse that  
 could help him with that.

She laughs, drags Bailey toward the farmhouse.

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Bailey and Sara lie on the floor, HALF NAKED. Sounds coming  
 from outside make Sara sit up and peek through the window.

SARA  
 What's he want the radio so bad for?

BAILEY

Don't matter. All that matters is  
you getting back down here.

She smiles, falls back on top of him.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Roy finally gets the engine to turn over. In the pickup's REARVIEW, he sees the STATION WAGON pull up to the farmhouse. Four guys exit the car, carrying beer. Bailey greets them and lets them inside.

Roy ignores them and turns the radio up.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - BACK ROOM - DAY

Roy eats a sandwich. Across from him, Bailey hangs his head down, moaning, his hangover obvious.

Franklin Pointer's COMMERCIAL comes on the radio. Roy closes his eyes and keeps eating.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - LATER

Roy bags groceries for Sara and Pointer's COMMERCIAL comes on again. He rushes off.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - BATHROOM - A MINUTE LATER

Roy locks himself inside a stall, thinking he's escaped. He looks up, notes a SPEAKER directly above him -- Pointer's voice is still there.

Roy balls up toilet paper and shoves it into his ears.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - LATER

Walking down an aisle, Roy hears the COMMERCIAL again. Eyes focused on the ceiling speaker, he SLIPS and TUMBLES. He tries to stand, but his ankle's busted up bad...

Around the corner, Donald and Chad emerge, mouths agape.

DONALD

Oh, shit.

CHAD

You alright, old man?

DONALD

Didn't you see I was mopping there?

Roy looks down, notes a PUDDLE all around him. Donald and Chad lift him up and sit him on a cart.

DONALD

Well, you ain't walking home today.

INT./EXT. TRISTAN'S TRUCK - DAY

Tristan drives with the MUSIC BLARING, open cooler in the passenger seat. Roy sits in the bed with Bailey and Sara.

BAILEY

Let me get two of those, man!

Tristan reaches through the rear window, passes Bailey TWO BEERS. Bailey hands one to Sara, then opens his.

Roy notices the truck is approaching his old CHURCH. Cars are pulling in for Wednesday night service. HE'S STUCK...

Roy tries to duck, but as the truck drives by, Bailey YELLS and holds up his beer. Several church members people turn and spot the truck. Roy shuts his eyes in disbelief.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING

Bailey and Sara make sandwiches on the porch while Roy sits in the rusted truck, listening to the radio. He whittles a stick with his BOX CUTTER.

FRANKLIN POINTER (O.S.)

If you are in need of prayer, call now and experience God's power in your life.

RADIO HOST (O.S.)

Just an update. Faye, in Woodstock. Two hundred dollars. Prays for healing. Greg, from Dalton, fifty dollars, needs healing for a family member. Larry, in Valdosta, five hundred dollars -- God bless you! -- asks for healing.

Bailey holds up a piece of bread, yells:

BAILEY

Old man! You want a sandwich?

Roy doesn't respond. Bailey shrugs, bites into it, then offers a piece to Sara from his mouth.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Roy and Gary stare through the front glass window. A CUSTOMER walks in, holding a PIECE OF PAPER. Gary holds out his hand.

GARY

May I?

The customer hands Gary the paper; it's a FLYER TO PROTEST THE STORE. Gary hands it to Roy, then looks back up.

Outside, Evelyn and Harriet hand flyers to more customers.

ROY

Sorry bout all this.

GARY

Ah, forget it. Never saw em in here before you started, anyway. Heat'll get to em soon. How's the foot?

ROY

Better.

Gary exits, but Roy stays, watching the women.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

The diner's closed. Bernie brings Roy a piece of pie, then sits beside Jim. In the adjacent booth, Bailey lays down with his feet propped up on the seat, tossing something.

Roy stares at the CARD...an address is written on the back.

JIM

It's in Atlanta. Sounds like they started couple years ago in a small building, and just this month they moved to a bigger facility... He ain't done nothing illegal, Roy. Said it yourself, he didn't force you to give your stuff away.

ROY

But it's his fault.

BAILEY

Think it's your fault for doing it.

Roy lets the insult slide.

ROY  
So you ain't gonna help me?

JIM  
Help you do what?

ROY  
He's out there on the radio making  
all that money and I'm stuck here  
with nothing!

JIM  
And you want revenge.

ROY  
(slamming his fist down)  
Damn right I do!

A silence goes over them. Even Roy's surprised by his tone.  
He takes a deep breath to calm himself.

ROY  
If he wouldn't have walked onto my  
farm, none of this would have  
happened.

Bernie reaches out and takes Roy's hand.

BERNADETTE  
Roy, you know we love you. Always  
going to. But getting even ain't  
the answer. "Vengeance is mine,"  
says the Lord. Everything works out  
according to his timing, not ours.

JIM  
Think you just gotta let this go.

Roy picks the card up from the table.

ROY  
Thanks anyway.

He huffs off. They call after him, but he's not stopping...

EXT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING

Roy sits in the truck, BEARD EVEN LONGER, whittling angrily.  
On the dash sit figurines he's been carving.

FRANKLIN POINTER (O.S.)  
 I'm going to be taking a little  
 break for a few weeks. The good  
 people of Sunnybrook Ministries and  
 myself are going to be taking our  
 show on the road.

Roy reaches and turns the radio up.

FRANKLIN POINTER (O.S.)  
 If you're like me and want to  
 experience the Lord's love with  
 other like-minded folks, or if  
 you're just the curious type, make  
 sure to join us on one of our stops  
 along the way. Gabe here's going to  
 tell you all about them...

The host describes the details: cities, dates, etc. Roy opens  
 the dash, finds an OLD PEN, starts writing on his hand...

INT. FARMHOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Roy leans over the sink, slicking his hair down with water.  
 Bailey sits on the toilet seat next to him, tying his shoes.

BAILEY  
 Why I gotta go with you, though? I  
 ain't gonna do nothing.

ROY  
 I'm responsible for you.

BAILEY  
 So be responsible. But don't make  
 me go to this revival shit. I don't  
 need any of that.

There's a HONK outside.

ROY  
 Let's go.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT - A MINUTE LATER

Jim stands beside his cruiser, holding open the back door.  
 Roy enters the front passenger side.

BAILEY  
 Come on! At least let me sit in the  
 front!

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT [DRIVING]

The cruiser drives along, Bailey pouting in back.

JIM

So you just heard about this on the radio?

BAILEY

That's all he does, man. Every night. Listens to that stupid radio.

Jim glances over at Roy, smiles proudly.

Something catches in the HEADLIGHTS and Jim slows down. AN OLD JEEP sits on the shoulder, the driver leaning over the steering wheel. Jim shines a flashlight, sighs.

JIM

Randall...Roy, wanna give me a hand?

Jim and Roy exit and cross to the JEEP. Bailey watches as they lead the man back to the cruiser.

JIM

Scoot over, Bailey.

Bailey tries to protest, but Randall is shoved inside.

BAILEY

What the hell? God, man, did you piss yourself?

JIM

(on his walkie)

Station, pick up...got a Jeep needs towing. I-25, just past mile marker one-eighty-three...can you call Mike, ask him to bring his truck?...Get the tank ready.

Randall starts to TOPPLE in the backseat. Bailey pushes him.

JIM

Looks like I gotta work tonight. I'll drop you two off before I take him back, give him more time to sober up.

They drive off, Bailey fuming in the back, plugging his nose.

INT./EXT. POLICE CRUISER - FIELD - NIGHT

The cruiser pulls into a DIRT PARKING LOT. Behind the lot, in the middle of a pasture sits a TENT, a couple dozen people piling in underneath it, PIANO MUSIC faint in the BG.

BAILEY

I ain't riding back with you if he's still here. I'll walk all the way back, I don't give a shit.

JIM

Watch it.

Roy and Jim exit. Bailey pounds on the glass.

BAILEY

You gotta let me out! You know I can't open this from the inside.

Jim waits, smiling, but Roy stares off, focused only on the tent. BEAT. Jim laughs, finally opens the door.

BAILEY

That ain't funny, man. I could suffocate in there, you know.

Jim drives off. CAMERA follows behind Roy and Bailey under --

INT. REVIVAL TENT - NIGHT - CONT.

The tent, lit with CHRISTMAS LIGHTS. A greeter welcomes them and passes out fans. Music grows louder as they enter...

They find seats in the last row. Folks nod hello. Down front, a WOMAN stands behind a podium on a makeshift stage. The music ends and she greets the crowd.

REVIVAL WOMAN

Won't you give a warm welcome to our guest speaker tonight, all the way from Montgomery, Alabama, Reverend Franklin Pointer!

The crowd applauds. Roy sits up a little bit. From the side of the stage, Franklin Pointer limps up a set of stairs.

BAILEY

Sure is an ugly fucker.

An OLD WOMAN turns around and shoots Bailey a dirty look.

OLD WOMAN

You watch your mouth, young man.

BAILEY

Can't rightly do that, can I? See,  
my eyes can't look down that way...

Roy touches Bailey and shuts the boy up. Pointer motions for the crowd to stop applauding.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Good evening, my friends. What a  
pleasure to be in your great  
company, to be sitting here with  
you on the threshold of eternity!

A few scattered "Amens". Pointer wipes his brow.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Can you imagine meeting during the  
day? Let us be thankful the sun  
went down on that first day!

A few laughs from the audience, but Roy doesn't join them.

FRANKLIN POINTER

I come to you, friends, as a humble  
servant of the Lord. On my travels  
around this great region, I have  
heard the heavy hearts of many.  
Good folks, who, like yourselves,  
wonder when this depression will  
end. I have heard countless stories  
of homes beings lost, of children  
dying of hunger and thirst, of  
families being forced to sell their  
most prized possessions just to put  
food on the table. I have heard the  
plights of many, and have come to  
but one conclusion: that we, as a  
people, have turned our backs on  
the Lord God Almighty. We have  
forsaken Him, we have given  
strength to the devil within our  
midsts, and because of this the  
Lord has stricken down on this land  
with His mighty hand the spirit of  
drought and heat and dust, and it  
is to Him that we must return.

The crowd starts to nod. Roy leans forward in his chair.

## FRANKLIN POINTER

We must look inside ourselves and find the spirit of anger, of deceitfulness, of aggression and despair and selfishness, and we must cast them out! We must say to them, 'No, you are not welcome here!' We must stop asking the Lord, 'Why us' and start to realize that the *problem* is us!

A few more claps this time.

## FRANKLIN POINTER

If you can't tell, the Lord did not bless me with great physical attributes. While I was living in sin, I blamed Him for it. I cursed His name daily...But then, after a long and lonely road, I understood. The Lord blessed me in this way so that it may be my *voice* that demands attention...My friends, I was in the hands of the devil, his dark fingers wrapped around my very throat. I was lost like a ship on the ocean in the midst of a storm. But then, do you know what happened? I found the light.

He motions to VOLUNTEERS around the edges of the tent. As he speaks, they pass out DIXIE CUPS filled with water.

Roy's hands form a ball in his lap, KNUCKLES WHITE.

## FRANKLIN POINTER

I found the light. And that light's name was Jesus Christ. But He didn't save me just so I could be content with my life the way that it was. No, he saved me so that I might be here in front of you, testifying about His great love, so that you can come to know Him, too. There is no sin that He cannot forgive, no wrong that He cannot make right.

A smiling woman offers Roy a CUP OF WATER. He begrudgingly accepts. Roy stares into it, looking at his REFLECTION...

FRANKLIN POINTER

Does anyone here need a miracle tonight? Raise your hands.

The entire crowd raises their hands.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Amen! Well friends, the water that you're holding, I'm going to pray over that water for healing. I'm going to pray over that simple tap water so that you may drink and be restored from whatever it is that's ailing you, because let's be honest, something brought you here tonight. Some people say miracles don't happen anymore. I wonder what they'll say after they see this.

Pointer starts to pray. The crowd bows their heads.

HOLD ON ROY'S REFLECTION in the water as Pointer prays.

FRANKLIN POINTER (O.S.)

...and now take your cup that has been blessed by the Lord Most High, and invite Him in.

Roy looks around, shifts his eyes to the preacher. He slowly drinks, but never takes his eyes off Pointer.

People weep and cheer as Pointer smiles out at them.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Now I know some of you out there have just asked the Lord Jesus into your hearts. Am I right?

Sounds of agreeing from the crowd: "Uh huh. That's right."

FRANKLIN POINTER

I want to invite those of you who have decided to live your life for the Lord, who have decided that the Devil has his hold on you no longer, I want to invite you to come down here right now and join me. Come down and let us rejoice in your decision. Don't be shy.

TWO PEOPLE stand and start to make their way down front.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Amen! Let's hear it for them!

Applause. Bailey stands and crosses in front of Roy. Roy grabs the boy's arm.

ROY

Where you going?

Bailey turns, TEARS RUNNING DOWN HIS FACE, teeth forming a huge smile...Roy can't believe it. Bailey walks down front.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Why don't we gather down here together, lay hands on these precious human beings here tonight?

The rest of the crowd make their way toward the stage.

FRANKLIN POINTER

That's right, put your hands on them. I know it's hot, but we need to be close in the Lord's house.

The crowd form a circle around Bailey and three others kneeling down. Roy stays on the outside, focused on Pointer.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Would you pray with me?

Pointer raises his hands over those kneeling. Roy's gaze shifts from Pointer to Bailey, trying to find the boy's face in the crowd.

As Pointer continues to pray, Roy once again looks at the preacher, confusion plastered across the farmer's face.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Amen!

The crowd help the kneeling to their feet. Bailey stands in the middle of the circle, hugging people and laughing.

Bailey finds Roy's face in the crowd and smiles. Roy forces a smile, but the disbelief on his face is undeniable...

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT [DRIVING]

Jim drives in silence. Roy turns to look at the backseat: Bailey wears a huge grin, looking out the window.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Bailey waves as the cruiser drives off. Bailey pats Roy on the shoulder and heads off toward the farmhouse.

Roy watches the boy with curiosity. HOLD.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Bailey kneels in front of a PORCELAIN BATHTUB on the church's lawn, the pastor standing behind him.

PASTOR

And do you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal savior?

BAILEY

Yep...sorry. Yessir? I do?

The crowd laughs kindly as Bailey's DUNKED into the bathtub.

PASTOR

I'd like to pray for you, son, if that would be alright with you.

Jim, Bernie, and Roy stand in the back, watching. Jim leans into Roy and whispers:

JIM

Ain't this just the darndest. What'd you do to him when I left last night?

The pastor motions to the crowd. They circle around Bailey, reaching their arms out, hands all over the boy.

BAILEY

Can I say something?

PASTOR

Of course.

BAILEY

I just gotta say that...well, I done some stupid things in my life, stuff I ain't real proud of...and...I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Roy.

The churchgoers look to Roy. He BLUSHES from the attention. The pastor motions for Roy to join. Jim nudges him forward.

Roy's PUSHED TO HIS KNEES. Hands reach out and land on his head and shoulders. The pastor starts to pray as Roy and Bailey stare at each other...

START MONTAGE - Song: "Sinner, You Better Get Ready"

A) INT. TRUCK - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT - Roy listens to the radio.

B) INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY - Roy watches in disbelief as Bailey talks to the crew, Bible in hand.

C) EXT. CHURCH - DAY - Bailey stands outside, greeting people, shaking hands.

D) EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY - Roy works in the yard. In the BG, Bailey sits on a fence, reading the Bible. Roy stops working, looks at Bailey with curiosity.

E) INT. CHURCH - DAY - Bailey claps along with the choir. Roy stands next to Jim and Bernie, trying not to smile.

F) INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY - Roy hears Pointer on the radio.

G) INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - Pointer makes a TV appearance, holding up a glass of water, praying over it.

H) EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY - Roy rubs dirt between his fingers.

I) INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY BACK ROOM - DAY - Bailey points out things on a page in the Bible to Sara. Roy sits across from them, eating a sandwich, looking on with pride.

J) EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY - Roy digs. A few leaves from a nearby tree fall into the hole.

K) INT. CHURCH - DAY - Bailey walks down the aisle with an offering basket. Bernie holds up a hand, saying 'wait'. The pastor motions and Bernie nods. Bailey smiles, getting it.

L) EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT - Roy listens to the radio.

M) INT. CHURCH - DAY - Roy makes eye contact with Mrs. Caldwell, she smiles at him. He nods back at her.

N) EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY - The trees are even more bare. Roy looks up at the sky, holds out his hand and waits.

O) EXT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING - Small group ladies and Bernadette bring a large stack of casseroles over. They hug Roy, then Bailey.

P) INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - Pointer on TV again, this time in front of a larger crowd, doing the glass of water spiel.

Q) INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT - Small group has returned to Roy's house. Bailey talks lively, joined by Sara, and Roy laughs along as the boy tells a story.

R) EXT. CHURCH - DAY - Sara is baptized by the pastor. All wet, she hugs Bailey and Roy as the churchgoers applaud.

S) EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT - Roy listens to the radio, water in hand. He holds up the cup, looking at it...

END MONTAGE

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Roy digs in the trench. On the porch, Bailey reads out loud to Sara from the Bible. She closes her eyes and smiles.

Tommy glides up on his bike and hops off. He waves at Bailey and Sara on the porch, who smile back. Roy stops digging.

ROY

All packed up, I reckon?

TOMMY

Yep. Momma said I could say bye before we leave. Don't let my daddy know...Ain't gonna be the same. Won't have none of my friends there.

ROY

You'll be fine.

TOMMY

Hope so. What about you?

ROY

Don't you worry about me.

Roy makes a face at the boy like old times. Tommy smiles.

TOMMY

I still pray for you, ya know. And Ms. Emily, too, even though she run off like she done.

ROY

Sure she appreciates that.

BEAT.

TOMMY

Well, gotta go. Wanted to make sure  
I gave you this, though.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the BASEBALL CARD.  
Roy looks it over and smiles.

ROY

Forgot about this.

TOMMY

Didn't feel right taking it.  
Take care, Mr. Roy.

Tommy glides away on his bike. Roy admires the card.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Roy stares down the PHONE on the wall. He picks it up, dials.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hello?

ROY

Em, it's me.

EMILY (O.S.)

Roy, I don't --

ROY

Please don't hang up. Please.

Emily sighs on the other end.

EMILY (O.S.)

What do you want?

ROY

I just wanna talk to you is all.  
Ain't heard your voice in forever.

EMILY (O.S.)

Reckon why.

ROY

I wanna see you...I wanna be close  
to you...Can you meet me somewhere?

EMILY (O.S.)

How you gonna get there? I got the  
truck.

A FEW MINUTES LATER -

Roy slicks his hair down in the sink.

ROY  
Gonna be alright here by yourself?

Bailey holds up the BIBLE.

BAILEY  
Ain't gotta worry about me.

ROY  
Alright, well, I'll be back --

BAILEY  
Roy?

ROY  
Yeah?

BAILEY  
Can I pray for you before you go?

Roy looks at his watch, then nods.

INT. CRUISER - NIGHT [DRIVING]

Jim and Roy drive down the road in the cruiser.

JIM  
Should put a taxi sign on the top  
of this thing, eh?

Roy doesn't bite. They drive on.

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - NIGHT

A few patrons are scattered amongst the yellow dining room. Roy scans the room and finds Emily sitting in a booth by herself, her back turned. Jim points to an empty bar stool.

JIM  
I'll be over here.

Roy nods and crosses to Emily. She doesn't look up. He sits and a WAITRESS brings him a glass of water.

WAITRESS  
Anything to drink, sugar?

ROY  
 Coffee.  
 (to Emily)  
 Want anything?

Emily shakes her head. The waitress exits. BEAT as they both sit awkwardly, unsure.

EMILY  
 Got a beard now, I see...Makes you look older.

ROY  
 Reckon I should shave it, then.

EMILY  
 Hmm.

The waitress returns with the coffee.

WAITRESS  
 Cream and sugar?

ROY  
 Black's fine.

The waitress exits. Roy takes a sip and winces. He pushes the coffee away.

ROY  
 You look good.

Emily's eyes flutter around the room, then land on Roy.

EMILY  
 What are we doing here, Roy?

ROY  
 What?

EMILY  
 What do you want?

ROY  
 I wanted to see you.

EMILY  
 (getting up)  
 Well, you seen me. Good enough?

ROY  
 (reaching for her hand)  
 No. I...I miss you, Em...I'm sorry.

She stares at him, fire raging in her eyes.

EMILY

And that's that? You're *sorry*, and we're good?

ROY

Em, I...I love you. I need you.

EMILY

And what do you want me to do about it? My heart don't want nothing more to do with you...

ROY

You gotta give me a chance.

EMILY

You've had em. Plenty of em.

ROY

I'll get our stuff back.

She rolls her eyes.

ROY

As much as I can. Might take me a while, ya know, with the money way it is and all, but I promise you, I'll get it back --

EMILY

I don't want it.

ROY

What?

EMILY

Keep it. Keep all of it. I'm done.

Emily moves to leave.

ROY

Em, wait.

He reaches out and grabs her arm. She stops.

ROY

I'm sorry, alright? I messed up.

EMILY

Yeah, you did.

She takes a step away, then turns back, staring at him.

EMILY

Tell me it ain't true.

ROY

What?

EMILY

All that stuff you used to believe in and talk about. Tell me it ain't true.

ROY

Em...

EMILY

Want me to give you another shot? Start with that.

She waits. He stares down at the coffee mug.

ROY

I don't know.

EMILY

That's not what I said.

ROY

I mean...I sure hope it is, but I don't know. How could I know?

EMILY

You know...because whoever it is you've been talking to don't want nothing to do with you, am I right? All those times you called out to him, spoke so highly of him, *stood up for him when he ripped my baby from me*, you were just standing around pissing in the wind. Say it!

ROY

Em, come on.

EMILY

I want to hear you say it, Roy.

He stares at her, but doesn't speak. She can't believe it.

EMILY

You really think there's somebody up there, watching over you?

ROY  
(slowly)  
Yeah.

EMILY  
Where's he been the last couple  
months? The last year? Hell, the  
last *ten*? Answer me that.

ROY  
I don't know...Waiting.

She laughs out of disbelief.

EMILY  
You mean to tell me that after all  
we've been through -- my daddy, the  
drought, your baby girl being still  
born -- you're telling me that  
somebody up there just ain't *paying*  
*attention*, is that it? And somehow  
that's better than nobody being up  
there at all?

ROY  
I...I can't explain it. I feel  
like...like he's been testing me.

She gets up in a hurry.

ROY  
Em, wait!

EMILY  
I don't want your damn test, Roy! I  
don't care whether you like being  
shit on or not, just leave me the  
hell out of it!

Emily exits and Roy's left sitting by himself.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT [DRIVING]

Jim and Roy drive back in silence, Roy leaning his head  
against the window. Franklin Pointer's COMMERCIAL comes on  
the radio. Roy hurriedly shuts it off.

Roy spots something on the side of the road and points.

ROY  
Pull over.

JIM  
 (spotting it)  
 Come on, you don't want to --

ROY  
 Pull over!

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Roy takes a few steps towards the liquor store, then turns back and leans through the passenger window. Jim holds out a TWENTY DOLLAR BILL. Roy nods "thank you".

A FEW MINUTES LATER -

Roy walks out with a BROWN PAPER BAG.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Roy unscrews the lid and starts to sip from the bottle.

LATER -

Jim looks at Roy, who's asleep in the passenger seat.

INT./EXT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Jim parks the cruiser and nudges Roy awake. Roy takes in his surroundings and exits.

JIM  
 This ain't the way to handle this.

Roy waves him off.

JIM  
 Roy! Come on.

Roy STUMBLES off, bottle in hand. Jim watches Roy, then reluctantly reverses out of the driveway...

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Roy WOBBLER through the house, dripping booze as he goes.

ROY  
 Bailey!

No response. He checks the kitchen.

ROY

Bailey?

He sees the phone on the wall and slaps it off its hook. DIAL TONE echoes throughout the kitchen...He notes Bailey's LIGHTER on the kitchen table, pockets it.

He moves upstairs, tripping as he goes. On the top floor, he stops in front of his bedroom, swings the door open. EMPTY.

He crosses to the window, looks out at his property, then lifts the bottle to his mouth. EMPTY. He TOSSES it out the window and listens for the CRASH as it breaks below.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Roy walks out onto the front porch, takes a seat on the steps and lets his eyes wander. His gaze stops at the BARN...

INT. BARN - LATER

Roy walks inside, the barn pitch black, but he doesn't have to feel around for anything. He grabs the LADDER.

EXT. BARN - CONT.

Roy positions the LADDER against the barn wall. He checks it to make sure it's sturdy, then CLIMBS.

BARN ROOF - CONT.

Roy's head appears over the roof's edge. The quiet is deafening; not even the crickets are out. Roy walks to the pitch of the roof, splits the difference between his legs.

ROY'S POV: The night sky, filled with stars. His gaze shifts down, looking around his empty fields.

He shuffles down, closer to the edge. His shoes reach the lip of the roof and he STOPS. We hear the sound of his exaggerated breathing, but nothing else.

Roy lifts his head up. Waits, then SCREAMS --

ROY

Why couldn't you have just answered me?!

He shuts his eyes, then takes a deep breath, like he's going to jump into deep water and will need the air to survive.

His eyes open and SEES --

THE HOLE. It stares back, taunting him. A GRAVE, as if he had been digging it for himself all along.

His feet inch away from the edge...

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Roy circles the bare living room, notes the UPRIGHT PIANO in the corner...The last remnants of his wife.

He looks at it with disgust, then with curiosity.

In a rush of energy, he positions himself behind the piano and starts to PUSH, struggling at first, but then getting into a good forward motion. He forces the piano --

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONT.

-- through the door onto the porch. He catches his breath, abandons the piano and heads for the barn...

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Roy feels around in the dark, landing on something.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Down in the hole, Roy digs furiously, maniacally.

THE HOLE - LATER

Roy stops and takes a visual measurement. He removes his shirt, tosses it aside, then keeps digging.

THE HOLE - AN HOUR LATER

The hole sits almost three times as big as it was before. Roy looks around at his work, then climbs out, satisfied.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - A MINUTE LATER

Roy lays his weight into the piano, pushing until it TUMBLES down the steps, NOTES CLINGING OUT as it crashes.

He lifts it back on its wheels, pushes with all his might.

Finally, the piano on the lip of the hole, Roy backs up, takes a deep breath, gives one final PUSH --

And the piano CRASHES down, notes echoing in the hole below. Breathless, Roy looks for his shovel, starts tossing dirt.

YARD - LATER

Roy sits on top of the burial mound, catching his breath. He sees his EMPTY HOUSE, sitting silent in front of him.

He reaches into his pocket, grabs the business card.

With his other hand, he grabs Bailey's lighter from his pocket and SETS FIRE TO THE BUSINESS CARD.

He grabs his shirt, lifts the card, and lets the fire travel.

He walks to the porch and TOSSES THE FLAMING SHIRT THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR. It catches something and the fire SPREADS.

He stumbles off the porch, down the driveway, and watches as the last of his possessions BURN.

Smiling, he passes out.

INT./EXT. JIM'S CRUISER - NIGHT

The farmhouse all ABLAZE in the b.g., Jim's cruiser pulls up the driveway. Jim gets on the radio --

JIM

This is Officer Jim Parks. I need  
fire assistance immediately!

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONT.

Jim RUSHES from the cruiser, focused so much on the burning house that he doesn't notice Roy passed out in the yard.

JIM

Roy! Bailey!

He SPRINTS toward the fire, but the HEAT is too much.

Hands guarding his eyes, he checks the side of the house. Nothing. He runs to the barn, continues to call for Roy.

The roof of the house starts to CAVE IN. He squats, burying his face in his hands, convinced he's lost his best friend...

Then he spots Roy, lying limp in the dirt. He rushes over, checks Roy's pulse, then lifts him up off the ground.

JIM

Roy! Where's Bailey? Is he in the house?

Roy moans indecipherably. Jim loads him into the cruiser and drives off, leaving the HOUSE TO BURN.

Another piece of the ROOF CAVES IN, and we --

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - DAY

Roy's eyes open, groggy. We hear Jim on the phone in the BG. CAMERA pulls back and see Roy lying down on a couch.

Bernadette sits beside Roy, worried smile on her face. Roy sits up. She hands him coffee and ASPIRIN. He downs it.

She grabs a pile of clothes from the coffee table.

BERNADETTE

Thought you might want something clean to wear. Probably be a little big on ya...

She walks to the kitchen, touches Jim on the arm.

JIM

(on the phone)  
I appreciate it. Be there in ten.

Jim crosses to Roy, who's rubbing his temples.

JIM

Feel like going for a ride?

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Roy rides shotgun, holding his head in pain. The cruiser slows, red and blue LIGHTS FLASHING through the windshield.

Roy stares through the windshield, eyes wide...

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY - CONT.

SOUND DROPS OUT except for the occasional radio squawk. Roy steps out of the cruiser, almost in a trance...

PIECES OF BURNT PAPER flutter past his head. He reaches out, grabs one, look closer; a charred twenty-dollar bill.

REVERSE on a SMOLDERING CAR, upside-down in a ditch. A few officers are milling about, inspecting. The church pastor stands next to the car, head bowed.

Jim talks to an officer in silence, then crosses to Roy. Roy can't take his eyes off the car...

JIM

Pastor called this morning, said the church had been robbed. Every dollar they had in the safe, wiped out. Swore it wasn't a break-in. Said the combination was used to open it up, so the only person who could have done it had to have known that code...

Roy walks closer to the car. In the driver's seat are BAILEY'S CHARRED REMAINS...

JIM (O.S.)

Have to wait til the coroner can do a report, but with all the crank in there, I'd reckon he was high. Mike Pilson reported it stolen bout eight o'clock this morning, and he lives next door to the pastor, so the story fits. By the skid marks, it looks like he was going over a hundred.

Roy kneels down, notes something. He reaches out, pulls the burnt object closer. A BOOK, the cover almost completely destroyed, but Roy would recognize it anywhere: IT'S ROY'S BIBLE. A hand instinctively goes to his mouth.

In a rush, he leans over and PUKES in the grass. Jim offers Roy a hand, helps him up.

Jim wraps an arm around Roy's shoulder, tugging him.

JIM

Come on. Pastor's called a meeting  
for all the church members.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY

Roy stands in a daze outside the church. Jim nudges him,  
leading him through the parking lot, up the steps into --

INT. CHURCH - MORNING - CONT.

-- the sanctuary. It's a full crowd, and it's a somber  
affair. Jim sits down next to Bernie in their usual  
seats...she's in tears, arms wrapped around Sara.

Roy walks down the aisle, trying to avoid eye contact. He  
makes it to the front, slowly turns to face the crowd. He  
stands SHELL-SHOCKED, takes a deep breath...

ROY

Well...I wanted to say...

The church members stare at him silently.

ROY

This ain't easy for me.

Harriet stands up quickly and points.

HARRIET

He's got the spirit of deception  
deep inside him, Pastor. He's in  
tight with the devil. That's why he  
can't speak in the Lord's presence.

PASTOR

Harriet, please --

HARRIET

He knows the Lord won't let no lies  
come out.

Following the lead, Evelyn stands up.

EVELYN

I can see it in him, too, Pastor.  
He ain't no good.

JIM

Evelyn, would you sit down and let  
him talk?

Evelyn turns to look at Jim, then back at Roy.

EVELYN

Talk, then. I ain't stopping you.  
Go on.

HARRIET

Speak up, devil! Tell us why you  
brought that evildoer into this  
church. You were conspiring with  
him, weren't you?

ROY

No, I --

HARRIET

Give away all your stuff, then try  
and rob us because of your mistake!  
(turns to face the crowd)

Had us deceived the whole time. He  
brought that boy into this  
congregation, made us believe that  
he was a good Christian, but the  
whole time he and that scoundrel  
were planning to steal from us,  
from the good people in this town.  
Ain't that right?

ROY

No.

HARRIET

Stealing from the house of the  
Lord!

A few members shake their head in shame.

ROY

I had nothing to do with that.

EVELYN

That demon's got a good hold on  
him, Pastor.

HARRIET

He sure does.

ROY

I don't have a demon. There ain't  
no such thing.

EVELYN

(gasps)

See what I mean, pastor?

Blasphemy!

(to Harriet)

Woman's got a right to leave her husband, I reckon, if he loses all sense like he done.

HARRIET

I'll say.

EVELYN

This whole town is cursed because of you. You've brought the wrath of God down upon us!

Someone else agrees with her and yells "Amen."

EVELEN

You've brought your evil ways onto everyone here. Well, we don't want it. I declare it in the name of God that you should get out of town! Let this place return to the Lord!

A few more members start agreeing. Jim steps forward.

JIM

Now hold on just a second. Roy didn't have nothing to do with what Bailey did.

HARRIET

Don't stick up for him, Sheriff. He can defend himself. The truth alone will set you free.

ROY

I'm telling you the truth!

EVELYN

'But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation'! Mark 3:29.

JIM

Evelyn, stop it!

ROY

I didn't...

Bernie stands up.

BERNADETTE

It wasn't his fault.

The crowd turns to look at her. She takes a step toward the front, toward the angry old women.

EVELYN

Another soul he's poisoned.

BERNADETTE

Evelyn, I've heard you tear Roy down long enough. He didn't have nothing to do with what happened last night.

ROY

Bernie...

BERNADETTE

No, they deserve to hear it... Y'all should be ashamed. Yes, Roy's made some mistakes. I can't admit to knowing the reason behind them, but who are we to judge?...Bailey acted on his own accord last night. Roy couldn't have had nothing to do with it cause he was asleep.

HELEN

How do you know that?

BERNADETTE

Cause he was at our place.

EVELYN

Why was he sleeping there?

Bernie looks at Roy. He shrugs, giving up the ghost...

BERNADETTE

Well, in all honesty...he had passed out --

EVELYN

I knew I smelled sin on him when he walked in!

All eyes drift back to Roy. He knows this is a losing battle.

ROY

This was a mistake.

BERNADETTE

Roy!

He STUMBLES as he walks down the aisle.

HARRIET

My Lord, he's drunk right now! Look at him.

EVELYN

Drunk in the house of the Lord.

ROY

I ain't drunk.

He walks towards the door. People lean away as he passes. Harriet calls after him:

HARRIET

Good riddance, devil!

Roy stands at the door, his back to the congregation. He thinks about it, then turns around to face them.

ROY

I used to be one of you! All my life, I bled and sweat on that farm, just like my parents before me. My roots run as deep as any of yours...You've eaten my crops. You've been in my home. You were there when I got baptized. And now, when I ain't got nothing left, when I ain't got nothing but the blisters on my hands to prove I ever done nothing worth a damn, now you cast me out? You think I didn't have faith?

He reaches and grabs a Bible away from a churchgoer.

ROY

There ain't a verse in here I ain't read twenty times. Over and over again I went to the Lord in prayer, begging for help, pleading, but He didn't answer me...He left me up on that roof to rot. Now...y'all want to do the same thing to me, so be it.

He opens the door. Jim reaches for him, but Roy continues --

EXT. CHURCH - CONT.

Outside. He's at the road before Jim and Bernadette exit the church, yelling --

JIM

Roy! Come on. Where you going?

Roy turns, throws up his hands.

ROY

I can't stay here...I ain't got nothing left.

The two men stare at each other, Jim realizing this may be the last time he sees his friend, but he can't bring himself to words. Bernie runs forward and hugs Roy, in tears.

Roy nods with quiet understanding, then turns and walks off down the rural highway, alone...

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Behind a pawn shop counter, a DIRTY CLERK looks over something. Roy stands, waiting. The clerk smiles.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Outside, Roy counts through a large STACK OF TWENTIES.

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Roy stuffs all but two twenties into an ENVELOPE addressed to the church he just left. He seals it, drops it in a MAILBOX.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

At a RURAL CROSSROADS, Roy sits on a bench, waiting. A bus arrives, dust cloud behind it. The DRIVER exits.

BUS DRIVER

Any bags?

Roy shakes his head, then climbs aboard.

INT. BUS - DAY - CONT.

Roy finds a seat in the back. Across the aisle, a young boy sleeps on his mother's shoulder.

EXT. BUS STOP - ATLANTA - DAY

Roy exits the bus, looks up at the tall buildings around him. He asks folks passing by for directions, but no one stops. Finally, a WOMAN looks at the address and points...

EXT. MEGACHURCH - DAY

Roy stares up at a LARGE BUILDING looming in the BG. He falls in with a CROWD of people, all walking toward the entrance.

The front doors open, and two greeters smile as the crowd starts to mingle inside --

INT. MEGACHURCH - DAY - CONT.

-- into a large lobby with twenty-foot ceilings. We hear music pumping through the CEILING SPEAKERS...

Roy's eyes focus on SMALL TELEVISIONS mounted above the auditorium doors...

ON THE MONITORS is Pointer's smiling face. Underneath his picture, the title of the sermon: "Reaping What We Sow".

Roy moves to the auditorium doors. He walks through --

AUDITORIUM - CONT.

-- into a MASSIVE AUDITORIUM, roughly a thousand seats, stacked stadium-like at an angle.

On the STAGE down front, a band plays music as people sing and clap along, LIGHTS dancing around. In front of the stage are THREE CAMERAS on rolling tripods.

Roy stands amazed. A greeter motions to him to take a seat beside a YOUNG COUPLE (20s, the woman holding an infant). They smile at him and continue singing with the band.

The band finishes and the lead singer takes a step forward.

SINGER

Well good morning.

The crowd answers in a resounding, almost DEAFENING unison.

CROWD

Good morning!

SINGER

Sure is great to have all y'all  
here with us this morning. We're  
glad that you took time to come and  
worship with us. We promise we  
won't keep you too long.

A few laughs at this, including the young couple. Roy looks around the auditorium, taking it all in.

SINGER

Would you pray with me?

The crowd bow their heads together in a motion that resembles the wave at a baseball game. Roy follows, but keeps his eyes open, focused.

SINGER

Amen! Why don't you say hello to  
those sitting next to you before  
our ushers collect the offerings?

The band exits. The crowd start to shake hands and offer greetings. A curtain closes on stage and the lights go dim.

Volunteers walk down the aisles with offering buckets. As one is passed to Roy, he notes a LARGE AMOUNT OF CASH in it...

The lights come up onstage and Pointer appears behind the podium. He fiddles with some papers, then looks out at the crowd and smiles.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Good morning.

CROWD

Good morning!

FRANKLIN POINTER

So glad to be among friends.  
Welcome to Sunnybrook Ministries to  
all you here --

He points at the CAMERA directly in front of him --

FRANKLIN POINTER

-- and to all you at home joining us this morning. Welcome, welcome, welcome!

The SCREENS on the side of the stage show Pointer's face CU.

FRANKLIN POINTER

I want to start off this morning a little differently. You hear me talk every week, and we'll get to that in a minute, don't you worry!

A few chuckles.

FRANKLIN POINTER

But this morning, I thought we'd start by listening to one of our own. Now, I came to know this young woman a few months ago, when she first started attending service. She was struggling with some big questions that many of us have in our lives, and she's here this morning to tell you all about it.

Pointer motions offstage and a WOMAN (40s) appears from the wings. She nervously waves to the crowd.

TESTIMONY WOMAN

Hi. I'm...I'm Maggie...

Pointer puts his arm around her.

FRANKLIN POINTER

You're doing great. Isn't she? Go ahead. Just let the Lord speak through you.

TESTIMONY WOMAN

Well, to just jump right in...I wasn't raised in a family that believed in Jesus...

Roy looks around and notes DOORS on either side of the stage.

He gets up, walks in a crouch down the side wall toward the STAGE DOOR. A few people glance at him, but don't say anything. The woman onstage continues with her testimony...

Roy approaches the stage door, and a MAN dressed in all black and wearing a headset grabs his arm.

HEADSET  
 (whispering)  
 Sir, where are you going?

Roy looks around, casually, playing dumb.

ROY  
 Bathroom?

HEADSET  
 Back through the lobby.

He points and Roy nods his head 'thank you', then retreats.

The crowd erupts into applause. Roy looks back up to the stage and the testimony woman is in tears, giving Pointer a hug. Roy looks out among the crowd: all smiles.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
 Amen! Isn't she a wonderful child  
 of God? Let's pray together.

The congregation bow their heads. Roy looks to the headset man, who's also bowing his head. This is his chance...

He creeps to the stage door, slides in behind it --

BACKSTAGE - CONT.

It's dark, and Roy almost trips on the stairs leading up to stage-level. A MONITOR plays what's happening on stage.

Roy avoids a backstage ASSISTANT and falls in behind the stage curtain, hiding himself from view.

He peers around the curtain, eyeing the stage and the crowd. His eyes move to the SPOTLIGHTS shining down, blinding...

Pointer finishes praying.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
 Amen! Now, friends, if you'll take  
 out your Bibles...if you forgot  
 your Bible this morning, don't  
 worry, we won't tell. You can read  
 along with me on the screen.

Pointer starts reading a verse. Roy eyes the CAMERAS down front, each moving and staying with Pointer as he preaches.

Almost unconsciously, Roy walks out --

ONSTAGE - CONT.

Under the lights. He's in no-man's land, DRIFTING towards the podium...A few people notice him and give questioning looks. More eyes drift away from Pointer and towards Roy...

Pointer notes the movement, turns to see Roy, walking dumbfounded out on the stage.

TWO MEN in all black rush Roy and grab him by the arms. Pointer reaches out a hand to stop them.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
No, no, that's alright.

The men release Roy. Pointer beckons with a tiny hand.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
Come, friend.

Roy looks at the crowd, then slowly walks toward the podium.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
It takes a great deal of courage to walk out here in front of this congregation, so I'm certain your purpose is pure, am I right?

Roy's awestruck...but he keeps walking closer.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
Has the Lord called you here today?

Roy nods.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
And what did He say to you?

Roy breathes, starts to say something --

FRANKLIN POINTER  
Come closer to the microphone.  
(looks offstage)  
Brother Mike, can we get him a microphone?

A LARGE MAN in black walks onstage, holds out a cordless mic. Roy takes the mic, looks down at it.

Roy steps closer, just a few feet away from Pointer now...SWEAT DRIPPING off his brow. He notes Pointer standing on a STEP-STOOL behind the podium.

FRANKLIN POINTER

That's better. Now, let's try this again. Why don't we start with your name?

Roy puts the mic to his mouth, gulps.

ROY

My name's --

LOUD FEEDBACK. He lowers the mic and tries again.

ROY

My name is Roy.

FRANKLIN POINTER

And what brought you in front of us today, Roy?

ROY

I...I...

FRANKLIN POINTER

It's alright. Just take a breath and tell us what the Lord put on your heart to say.

ROY

I wanted to offer up my testimony.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Amen!

(to the crowd)

Am I right?

The crowd applauds. Roy takes a huge gulp of air.

FRANKLIN POINTER

No better place to bear witness than in the house of the Lord, am I right? Go ahead, friend.

Roy sees the CAMERAS focused on him now. He looks back to Pointer...This is the closest he's ever been to the preacher. He lifts the mic to his lips --

ROY

Well, truth is, I...I don't wanna offer my testimony. I wanna ask you a question.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Just a question? Well, alright, ask away, friend.

ROY

See, I...I have a farm. *Had*. Passed down from my father and his father before him. Didn't make a lot of money, but it kept my daddy afloat his whole life. I wasn't ever as good as him at keeping it up, but I tried my best.

Roy's face appears on the SCREENS on the side of the stage. Pointer watches intently as Roy speaks.

ROY

But I lost it...I lost the farm, I lost my wife, I lost...just about everything a man could lose and still be alive...like a lot of folks round here, I hit hard times, and I made some bad decisions...

Roy stares at the crowd. The cameras. The young couple he sat next to. Hundreds of eyes staring back at him...

The spotlights are making him sweat. He turns and sees his face on the SIDE SCREENS, looking lost, confused...

He looks back to Pointer, who smiles.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Go on, friend.

ROY

I guess I just...I've been trusting in the Lord my whole life, ever since I was a boy and my momma'd read me verses before bed. I try to do good, try not to wrong anybody, but I still lost everything...so I wanna know...why me?

Pointer smiles, nods.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Mmm. 'Why me?' A question I'm sure we've all asked of our Heavenly Father at some point in time, right?

The crowd agrees.

## FRANKLIN POINTER

And one without an easy answer, I'm afraid...I cannot speak for the Lord, but if I were to conjecture a response, it would be that everything happens according to His will. We may not always understand it, but we must accept it. The good news is that you have found yourself amongst a group of fellow believers who would love to see you through this pain in your life.

Pointer motions to the crowd to stand up. They oblige. Roy looks out at the group, all smiling.

## FRANKLIN POINTER

You see, Roy? You are part of a family. Created by God's design. All He asks is that you put your trust in Him...put your trust in us...and He'll do the rest.

Roy looks at his feet, shaking his head, frustrated.

## ROY

But...see, I listened to you before. That's how I lost everything. That's how I got to where I am...

Pointer reaches out, puts a hand on Roy's shoulder. The FIRST PHYSICAL CONTACT between the two.

## FRANKLIN POINTER

If listening to me brought you here today, to this very stage, then my friend, I believe the Lord has sent you to us. I believe you are one of thousands that I have met across this great region who have felt themselves called to this ministry...and on your shoulders, like all your fellow brothers and sisters out there, this ministry will spread. Can you feel it? We have been called to do great things together.

Roy's not buying it. He looks away, dejected.

Pointer scans the crowd, thinking. He motions to a MAN in the front row.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
 Could you bring those up here?

The man walks up onstage carrying the COLLECTION BASKETS.  
 Five baskets, filled to the brim with cash and checks.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
 Did you count this yet?

The man nods.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
 And?

COLLECTION MAN  
 Eleven thousand, two hundred.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
 Amen! Isn't our Father gracious?

The crowd erupts in explosive applause. Pointer looks back at Roy and points to the baskets.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
 My friend, in those baskets are tithes and offerings from the good people sitting out there before you, monetary contributions to this ministry to show their faith in the Lord, knowing he is always going to provide. And what are we as a church body if we don't take care of our own?

Roy looks at him with confusion.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
 I meant what I said when I believe that God called you here this morning. And because you listened when He called, Roy, the Lord has made himself known...through us. This is an offering to you.

Roy doesn't understand.

FRANKLIN POINTER  
 Take this money that's been made available by God above, and restore that which you have lost.  
 (to the crowd)  
 Does anyone object?

The crowd is silent. Then, slowly, a few people start to clap. Roy looks out at the crowd as the clapping grows.

FRANKLIN POINTER

Take it. May it renew you. And may  
it be the first of many blessings  
on you and this ministry.

Roy can't speak. He stares at the BASKETS OF MONEY, willing his hands to grab it, to run with it...But he can't move.

And then, Pointer starts to SING.

FRANKLIN POINTER

*Come thou fount of every blessing/  
Tune thy heart to sing thy grace*

The song that Roy was singing on his roof, ages ago. Roy can't hide the look of confusion on his face...

The crowd slowly joins Pointer in singing the hymn, taking over. Roy looks out at them, all singing, all smiling...and something changes in his face.

He looks at the money, then back up at Pointer, who's smiling a toothy grin, and Roy knows this isn't the answer...

Roy hands the mic to Pointer, then walks to the edge of the stage, the crowd still singing. He finds a camera down front and stares right into the lens. BEAT.

Roy starts walking down the front stage steps.

FRANKLIN POINTER

God be with you, friend!

Roy turns, gives the short preacher one more glance, then walks up the center aisle. People smile at him as he passes, saying, "God bless you" and "God be with you".

He pushes his way through the auditorium doors...

EXT. MEGACHURCH - DAY

Roy walks away, the large church behind him.

EXT - RURAL HIGHWAY - DAY

Roy walks down a highway, straddling the WHITE LINE along the edge of the road like he's done so many times before.

CARS WHIZZ by. He sticks out a thumb, but no one stops.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Roy stands in front of the RUINS OF HIS PROPERTY: charred boards, piles of grey ash, the fields as empty as ever. He looks around, taking it all in, then STOPS.

He moves a finger to his face, wipes off a DROP OF WATER...

He stares at it, confused, then he looks up.

The sky sits completely bare, not a cloud in it --

Another DROP OF WATER hits his face.

He wipes it off with his finger, studying it with curiosity. It slides down his palm...

Roy looks up once again. And we --

CUT TO BLACK.