

...in the morning blood...

written
(under duress)
by elijah bynum

BLACK

The fluttering churn of an old film projector starting up.

EXT. CATTLE RANCH - DAY (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

Ancient flickering sepia footage burns through the black screen. The HUM of the film reel provides our only noise.

A MAN cuts a hole in the wire fence and slips through.

LATER

The man guides two COWS up a wooden plank onto his truck bed.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
In 1886 Samuel Francis Monroe was
convicted of rustling cows and
selling their milk.

The LITTLE GIRL, our narrator, has a voice that is haunting and beautiful in a way that seems too perfect for this world.

EXT. COUNTRY STORE - DAY (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

A winding LINE OF PEOPLE wait to buy bottles of milk.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
A serious offense at the time.

NEWSPAPER

An old newspaper zooms into frame.

Headline reads: MILK BANDIT CAUGHT

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
He was sentenced to death by
hanging.

INT. GALLOWS - DAY

A crowd of townspeople have gathered. A noose is tossed over Monroe's neck. He closes his eyes.

The EXECUTIONER yanks the lever. Nothing happens.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
However, on the day of his hanging
the trap door malfunctioned.

The executioner resets and tries again. Nothing.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Three times.

Monroe opens his eyes and looks around, stupefied.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
It had never happened before and
would never happen again.

INT. UNDER THE GALLOWS - A WEEK PRIOR (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

THEODORE T. WOOLSWORTH screws bolts into the trap door hinge.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Turns out just a week prior the
bolts had been replaced by a
Theodore T. Woolsworth. A skilled
technician who had never messed up
before and would never mess up
again.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

Woolsworth is unabashedly guzzling a fifth of WHISKEY. Liquor
runs freely down his face and neck.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
But this time was different.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

Woolsworth stands before a headstone, weeping.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
After twenty-seven years of
sobriety he was driven to drink
after the sudden death of his
beloved wife.

INSERT: OLD BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPH

WOOLSWORTH'S WIFE, a painfully average looking woman, sits on
a chair, staring at us with an expressionless gaze.

EXT. COUNTRY STORE - SEVERAL WEEKS AGO (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

She heads away from Monroe's general store clutching a newly
purchased bottle of milk.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

Mrs. Woolsworth lays in bed. A Doctor feels for a pulse. He turns to Mr. Woolsworth and mournfully shakes his head, no.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
They didn't know it at the time,
but the cause of her death came
after ingesting a contaminated
batch of Monroe's milk. And,
without knowing it, Mr. Woolsworth
saved the life of his wife's
killer.

EXT. COURTROOM - DAY (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

We push in on the face of a JUDGE. His mouth moves but we can't hear the words.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Amid the confusion of the botched
hanging attempts the county judge
reduced Monroe's sentence to life
imprisonment.

The judge bangs his gavel. Monroe faints.

EXT. JAILHOUSE - DAY (36 YEARS LATER) (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

Monroe exits the prison gates.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
After thirty-six years he was
pardoned for excellent behavior.
Something that had never happened
before in the state of Oklahoma.

EXT. STREET - DAY (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

Monroe crosses the street. A gigantic TRUCK plows over him.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
The day of his release he was hit
and killed by a truck.

OVERHEAD

We dolly down on his flattened dead body.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
It was a milk truck.

EXT. COUNTRY HOME - DAY (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

Monroe sits on a rocking chair. A NEWBORN BABY in his lap.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
But before he went to prison Monroe
had a son.

EXT. COUNTRY HOME - EARLY 1900'S (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

A man who looks similar to Monroe sits on a rocking chair. A newborn baby in his lap.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
And that son had a son.

EXT. COUNTRY HOME- 1920'S (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

A man who looks similar to Monroe sits on a rocking chair. A newborn baby in his lap.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
And that son had a son.

EXT. COUNTRY HOME- 1940'S (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

A man who looks similar to Monroe sits on a rocking chair. A newborn baby in his lap.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
And that son had a son.

EXT. COUNTRY HOME- 1960'S (SEPIA FOOTAGE)

A man who looks similar to Monroe sits on a rocking chair. A newborn baby in his lap.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
And that son had a son. And his
name was Wilson Monroe.

16MM HOME VIDEO FOOTAGE

WILSON MONROE waves at us, smiling.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
This is Wilson Monroe.

Wilson gives the camera a dorky wave.

OUTER SPACE

A spectacular EXPLOSION erupts from the suspended silence. A luminous wave of matter hurdles silently across the cosmos.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
This is where his story begins.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Wilson, mid 30's now. Stares out into the night. A detached, zen-like tranquility in his eyes. A grin on his face.

We slowly rotate around and notice the back half of his head is missing.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
And this is where his story ends.

HOME VIDEO FOOTAGE (MID 90'S)

Footage of an ecstatic SHARON MONROE accepting the MRS. IOWA 1996 trophy. She fans herself and fights back tears of joy.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
This is Sharon Monroe.

She blows a kiss at the camera.

OUTER SPACE

A spectacular EXPLOSION erupts from the suspended silence. A luminous wave of matter hurdles silently across the cosmos.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
This is where her story begins.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

CLOSE ON her beautiful brown eyes. We float upwards. More of her body comes into frame, we realize her neck is broken. Her legs, too. She lays on her back in a puddle of blood. Dead.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
And this is where her story ends.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

We drift lazily across the room towards a YOUNG WOMAN.

She SNORTS a monster line of coke off the table. The camera RUSHES in rapidly on her bloodshot eyes.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
 There's also the girl with the
 broken dreams.

INT. DARK ALLEY WAY - EVENING

We stare at a brick wall. A MATCH IS STRUCK. The light throws
 a MAN'S 15 FOOT SHADOW against the wall.

A man wearing a trench coat and a fedora slanted to the left.

He lights the cigarette in his mouth.

He blows out the flame and our world goes dark.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
 And the man with the broken heart.

EXT. HOUSE IN THE HILLS - AFTERNOON

Low to the ground, we push in on a BLACK MAN'S HAND. His
 PINKY FINGER is missing. He rubs the head of a DOG wearing a
 gold collar as they both gaze out at L.A. below.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
 The fool with nothing left.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL YARD - NIGHT

A silhouette of two figures. A man on his knees, pleading for
 his life. And a HITMAN, standing behind him.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
 And the bastard who took it all
 away.

The hitman shoots his victim in the back of his head. BANG--

CUT TO BLACK

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
 And this is their story.

The eerie and mellifluous opening cords of David Bowie's
Space Oddity simmer across our eardrums.

BOWIE
Ground control to Major Tom...

TITLE CARD: (in children's handwriting):

Chapter One: "Pussycat"

From the dark a very faint and distant image begins to appear like a star in a far off galaxy.

We float through space, soundless, weightless, more of these stars begin to fade in. An entire universe of them.

But something ain't right, these stars are moving, wiggling.

That's because they aren't stars and we aren't in outer space.

We're in a FALLOPIAN TUBE and what we're looking at are SPERM.

More fade into focus, an ocean of them, swimming like the fate of mankind depends on it (which it does).

We latch onto one of the stubborn bastards as he surpasses the less ambitious and navigates the great unknown.

Suddenly there are fewer and fewer..

Our hero has trusted himself into rarefied air.

Fewer even.

Alone now, dancing with Bowie's haunting voice.

BOWIE (CONT'D)
...commencing countdown engines on..

A magnificent WHITE GLOW permeates the horizon.

Utopia. The Promised Land. Kingdom Come.

From here, the EGG, which hangs suspended in a boundless dark, appears strikingly similar to the planet Earth.

BOWIE (CONT'D)
*...check ignition and may God's
love be with you...*

As the song CRESCENDOS the sperm breaks into the egg.

EXPLODE TO WHITE

BOWIE (CONT'D)
*This is ground control to Major
Tom.*

The WHITE dissipates enough to see we are in a STEAMY BATHROOM.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

A hot shower going full blast. Through the blanket of steam we push towards the pebbled glass door. A SILHOUETTE of a man begins to take shape in the shower.

A middle-age man. And from the looks of it he's masturbating. Pathetically.

SHARON MONROE enters the bathroom wearing a bathrobe. Tired, grouchy and eight months PREGNANT.

Her beauty queen good looks are under attack by the creep of middle age and her Midwestern charm has taken a back seat to a raging undercurrent of anxiety.

She lifts up her robe, sits on the toilet and begins to pee.

The man in the shower makes no attempt to stop. She pees, he masturbates. This goes on for a moment before:

SHARON
Do you mind?

The man continues.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Wilson.

He continues.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Wilson!

His pumping slows then stops entirely.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Do. You. Mind.

For a moment he is still. Then, he goes back to rinsing his hair. After a long silence he adds, sheepishly:

WILSON
It's been eight months...

SHARON
And that's my problem how?

He has no response. She flushes, stands and leaves.

Several seconds later Wilson goes back to masturbating.

PRELAP: Otis Redding's I've Been Loving You Too Long.

INT. THE BLUE VELVET - NIGHT

A dark old-timey supper club. It drips with nostalgia. A relic from a bygone era. The kind they don't make anymore.

On stage is the YOUNG WOMAN we saw snort cocaine.

She's done up like a 50's pin up girl but the tatoos snaking up her skin serve as reminders from another life.

She is indisputably gorgeous. The type of beauty that can break your heart just by walking into the room. But behind those blow-torch blue eyes hides a terrible sadness.

A SCAR cuts through her bottom lip, interrupting an otherwise flawless face.

Her silky voice croons Otis Redding's ballad. She hits a high note. The crowd cries admiration. In these walls she's God.

SUPERIMPOSE: (in children's handwriting) JANUARY JULY

FLASHBACK. INT. JANUARY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Otis Redding's velvety blues song continues, giving the following images an ironic sense of poetry in motion.

Fiending, January dumps out her purse--rifles through drawers--checks under mattress. Nothing. Then she remembers something.

From her BRA she pulls a 20 DOLLAR BILL. Her eyes light up.

JANUARY

Hello.

She unrolls it, plants a big RED KISS on Andrew Jackson.

CLOSE ON - Flame erupts from a Zippo lighter and heats a SPOON.

BACK IN THE BLUE VELVET

January singing. Her eyes float passively through the crowd of onlookers--something--someone--breaks her rhythm.

CLOSE ON - A syringe sucking up the liquid.

CLOSE ON - An arm is tied off. A vein bulges.

We see what she sees: Sitting in the back of the club, swallowed by the shadows, the silhouette of A LARGE BLACK MAN.

He's back lit by glowing red candles giving him a devilish aura. SMOKE plumes from his nostrils. He stares at her.

CLOSE ON - Toes flex then go slack.

CLOSE ON - Those blue eyes rolling heavenward.

A glimmer of concern on her face. She continues to sing--her eyes moving away from the mysterious man in the shadows...

INT. JANUARY'S APARTMENT - SHOWER - NIGHT

January sits on the floor, knees to chest. Water rushing over her head. Mascara runs off her face, twisting down the drain.

BATHROOM - LATER

With her finger she draws a smiley face in the fogged mirror. It smiles at her. She smiles back, gently. Guarded.

Then, condensation collects in one of the eyeballs and a droplet runs down the smiley face like a tear.

Her smile flattens then disappears altogether.

In the bedroom a T.V. is on. The LOCAL NEWS. The weatherman is giving the 5 day forecast.

We PUSH IN on the screen.

WEATHERMAN

...with this low pressure system
moving through expect temperatures
to dip just in time for the long
weekend...

We keep pushing in...closer...

INT. KQRW STATION - NIGHT

We watch the Weatherman live now. Green screen behind him. We recognize this man, it's because we've met him before.

This is WILSON MONROE.

WILSON

...and guess what else folks,
that's right, maybe even some
scattered showers. No need to throw
the cows in the barn but it could
get a little damp for some places
in the San Fernando Valley...

INT. KQW OFFICE - NIGHT

Within this poorly lit office of this underfunded news station there are two men.

One sits behind the desk, this is LARRY RHODES.

And one stands next to him, arms folded. Arms always folded. This is GARY SCOONMEYER. They speak in hushed tones.

There's a gentle knock at the door, Wilson pokes in his head, disrupting the conversation.

LARRY
Oh, hey there, Wilson. Hell of a show tonight.

It becomes plainly obvious that Wilson was just being spoken about.

WILSON
You wanted to, um...

LARRY
Yes, yes, grab a seat.

Wilson's eyes move over to Gary Scoonmeyer. Confused.

WILSON
Scoonmeyer?

SCOONMEYER
That's right.

WILSON
From legal?

SCOONMEYER
Yeah, that's right.

WILSON
(to Larry)
What's he doing here?

LARRY
(shouts)
Mona!

Mona, the secretary, pops her flabby head into the room.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Thirsty?

WILSON
No thanks.

LARRY
Nonsense. Mona grab Wilson a
Yoo-hoo, would you? Oh and grab me
a uh..a uh...nevermind.

Mona leaves. Wilson sits in a the chair across from Larry's
desk. Larry stares at him with mournful eyes. At length:

LARRY (CONT'D)
How are you Wilson?

WILSON
I'm, you know--what does this have
to do with Scoonmeyer?

LARRY
How's that car coming along? The
one you were fixing up.

WILSON
It's, um--say, is this about the
uh, the incident---

LARRY
--no, no--

WILSON
--in the cafeteria--

LARRY
(waving him off)
No no no--this is--what incident in
the cafeteria?

Silence. Wilson opens his mouth to answer.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Ah, nevermind. Look, Wilson, you're
familiar with Fletcher Donaghue
from KTLA, yeah?

INSERT: HEADSHOT of FLETCHER DONAGHUE. He's overly tanned and
entirely untrustworthy.

WILSON
Yeah, sure. Great hair.

LARRY
(agreeing)
Great hair. So anyway...
(indicates Scoonmeyer)
...Gary and I--and it wasn't easy--
but we convinced him to come over
here to KQRW.

WILSON
Who?

LARRY
Gary and I. And it wasn't easy.

WILSON
No, who did you, uh..

LARRY
Fletcher Donaghue.

Gary Scoonmeyer interjects for the first time.

SCOONMEYER
We're trying to be dynamic, Wilson.

WILSON
Why Fletcher Donaghue?

SCOONMEYER
I just told you why.

WILSON
Oh, okay...so...is he taking the 10 o'clock?

LARRY
Well, that's what we wanted to chat with you about. KQRW is moving in a new direction, and, frankly, we can't take everyone with us.

WILSON
A new direction?

SCOONMEYER
We're trying to be dynamic, Wilson.

WILSON
So..am I keeping the 10 o'clock?

LARRY
Well, Wilson, that's the thing...Fletcher Donaghue would be taking over the 10 o'clock.

WILSON
So, what--

LARRY
Let me stop you there, I think I know what you're going to ask and the answer is: Fletcher Donaghue will be taking over the noon spot as well.

WILSON
I was going to ask what this has to do with Scoonmeyer...

LARRY
Look, Wilson, we--

WILSON
--The noon spot, too?

Wilson lets go a gentle sigh. His eyes search the floor.

WILSON (CONT'D)
(rationalizing)
...so back to mornings...
Okay...well morning's aren't
terrible...

When his eyes come back up he notes uneasy stares coming from both Larry and Gary.

WILSON (CONT'D)
I am taking the mornings, right?

LARRY
Where's that Yoo-hoo?
(shouts)
Mona!

WILSON
Larry--am I taking the mornings?

LARRY
Look, Wilson, KQRW is moving in a
new direction.

WILSON
Yeah, you said that. And what's
that mean for me?

Larry and Gary exchanges glances.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Is this about my hairline--I can do
somethi--I get a, uh--a transp--

LARRY
No no no, this is--
(shouts)
Mona! Damn it.

WILSON
Heck Larry, Sharon's eight months
pregnant. What am I going to...
(sighs; depleted)
What am I going to do?

Larry shrugs helplessly. Then adds...

LARRY
KQRW is moving in a new direction.

Wilson is actually about to raise his voice when--

The door opens. Mona waddles in carrying the Yoo-hoo. They all fall quiet, careful not to carry on in her presence.

Mona hands Wilson the Yoo-hoo, clears her throat, and waddles back out.

The tension lingers as the three men trade glances. A long silence passes. Then:

SCOONMEYER
We're trying to be dynamic, Wilson.

EXT. KQW - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Wilson shuffles through the parking lot carrying a box of his possessions.

He arrives at his 2003 FORD FOCUS and finds that the driver side WINDOW has been smashed. Pulverized glass spread across the seat. He let's go a defeated sigh.

Several feet away sits AN OLD DRUNK HOMELESS MAN.

HOMELESS MAN
Some guy smashed your window, man.

Wilson shakes his head.

WILSON
Jesus Christ.

HOMELESS MAN
Some guy smashed your window, man.

WILSON
I can see that--and you just...you just sat there and let him do that?

The homeless man stares back blankly. Then, after a long pause:

HOMELESS MAN
Some guy smashed your window, man.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - NIGHT

Wilson ambles into the dark house carrying a box of his possessions. He places the box down on the kitchen counter.

It's then that he sees the Post It note:

"Did you get my message? Clearly not. XO Sharon."

He opens the refrigerator. Pulls out a carton of milk.
Notices a post-it note stuck to the carton:

"Please finish or toss. Don't put back w/ so little. XO Sharon"

He sighs. Notices the answering machine is BLINKING. Plays the message as he drinks the milk.

SHARON'S VOICE
I just called your office and they
said something about you not
working there anymore. What in the
name of Christ is that about? Call
me. It's Sharon.

Click. Message over. Wilson looks at the milk.

Not strong enough.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Wilson slides several boxes out of the way and finds an old
CASE OF BEER he's kept hidden. He blows off the dust.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

A pair of naked male legs, wearing only tennis shoes, stick
out from underneath a 1973 PONTIAC FIREBIRD.

Sharon stands in the doorway in her pajamas, tired, confused
and thoroughly irritated.

SHARON
(pure disbelief)
Fletcher Donaghue? The guy with the
hair?

Wilson speaks from under the car.

WILSON
Can you believe the level of
disrespec--

SHARON
...what does that even mean,
"trying to be dynamic"?

WILSON
They're moving in a new direction.

SHARON
Fletcher Donaghue?

WILSON
...without a warning or a --

SHARON
Would you cool it with that gosh
darn car for a second.

A pause. Then Wilson wheels out from under the car. He wears nothing but tight white BRIEFS and a pair of goggles.

He's clearly drunk.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Are you drunk?

A beat.

WILSON
No.

Her eyes narrow. A brief stare down ensues. She decides to take him at his word.

SHARON
Is there some kind of severance
package?

WILSON
Yeah, um...no there won't be any of
that.

SHARON
What do you mean?

WILSON
There won't be any, uh, severance
or--

SHARON
How is that possible? When a
company lays you off they have to
pay you severance. That's how it
works.

WILSON
Yes, you are correct.

SHARON
That's how it works, Wilson.

WILSON
Right. You are correct.

SHARON
Well?

WILSON

Well...

She throws her hands in the air, looking for an explanation.

SHARON

Well?!

WILSON

Well...

FLASHBACK - INT. KQRW OFFICE - NIGHT

Right where we left off. Gary Scoonmeyer has just told Wilson they are "trying to be dynamic" for the third time.

A quiet moment. Then Wilson stands, calmly, and without saying a word, straight arms all the shit off Larry's desk.

Framed pictures. A mug of coffee. A computer. It all crashes to the floor.

LARRY

Christ, Wilson!

WILSON

Fuck you, Larry, I quit!
(points at Scoonmeyer)
And FUCK YOU SCOONMEYER!!

He hurls the Yoo-hoo against the wall. It EXPLODES. He storms out of the room while the chocolate milk drips down the wall.

BACK IN GARAGE

SHARON

(incensed)
You did what?

WILSON

You've got to understand--

SHARON

For the love of Pete! You. Did.
What?

WILSON

That guy Scoonmeyer--

SHARON

What about the baby?

This leaves him at a loss of words.

SHARON (CONT'D)

What about the baby, Wilson??

Again, he has no response. At this point she's fully disgusted.

SHARON (CONT'D)
You moron.

INT. JANUARY'S 1957 FORD THUNDERBIRD - NIGHT

At a red light. The Delfonics on her stereo. A Virginia Slim in her lips. She raises a Zippo to the cigarette--pauses--

Her eyes trained on her side mirror. Then her rearview. An OMINOUS CAR behind her. Doesn't like how it looks. She closes the Zippo without lighting her smoke. Swallows. Hard.

The light turns green. She waits a beat then turns right. The car follows. Moving slowly--dark streets--she takes a left.

The car follows. She cuts off the radio. If it weren't for the hum of the engine we'd hear her galloping heart.

She blindly gropes for a bottle of pepper spray under her seat. Fingers slip, barley gets hold.

Suddenly--she SLAMS on her breaks, stopping her car in the middle of the street. She gets out and marches back towards the tailing vehicle, pepper spray raised.

Blinded by the headlights, can't see inside. There is a brief stare down and then the other car calmly pulls around her and drives off. Was she being followed? It's unclear.

January watches the car's tail lights recede into the night, then she bends over and VOMITS in the street.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

A run down motel near LAX. Through the exterior window we see January pay the attendant for a room.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

CLOSE ON - Flame erupts from a Zippo Lighter. Liquid simmers.

CLOSE ON - An arm is tied off. A vein bulges.

CLOSE ON - Those blue eyes rolling heavenward.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Wilson stands before the mirror examining his hairline.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Wilson is on the phone.

WILSON
Hi, yeah, how's it going. I was
sent over to you for pre-approval
on a hair transplant.

VOICE
They're called hair restoration
surgeries.

WILSON
Hair restoration. Okay. I was
hoping--

VOICE
And they're elective. And we don't
cover electives.

WILSON
Well, you see, my situation is
unique, I'm a public fig--

VOICE
They're elective. And we don't
cover electives.

WILSON
Heck, miss--we're not talking about
a nose job here.

VOICE
Please don't raise your voice, sir.

WILSON
I'm sorry.

VOICE
You're speaking in a very fresh
tone.

WILSON
You're right. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.
But ma'am--

VOICE
We won't be able to continue until
you change your tone.

WILSON
I--okay....ma'am I'm a public
figure, you see. This transplant is
a neecessit--

VOICE
Restoration.

WILSON
What?

VOICE
They're called hair restoration
surgeries.

WILSON
Damnit ma'am--this...

A sudden wave of dizziness hits him. He tries to fight through.

WILSON (CONT'D)
...this is...uh...this...

VOICE
Please fix your tone, sir.

Wilson wobbles, eyes roll upward. He starts to fall, grabs at the phone cord for balance, ripping it from the wall.

He collapses on the kitchen floor.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Wilson sits on the examination table in his socks and underwear.

He stares blankly at a poster on the wall:

A SOARING BALD EAGLE. "Underneath it reads: *Until you spread your wings you have no idea how far you'll fly*". He sighs.

A quick knock and then a DOCTOR enters.

DOCTOR
Hiya there, Wilson. How you
feeling?

WILSON
A little... better. Is everything--

DOCTOR
Exciting news at the station I
hear.

Wilson is not quite sure what he means.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Fletcher Donaghue.

Wilson smiles politely.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
The guy has a great head of hair.

The Doctor clicks his pen closed and looks up from his notes.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
So can you remember what you were
doing when you fainted?

WILSON
Well, yeah, as I told you earlier I
was exercising.

DOCTOR
Uh-huh.

WILSON
Really building up a sweat and with
the heat and the sun...

DOCTOR
Uh-huh.

WILSON
I figure it was, you know...

DOCTOR
Uh-huh uh-huh, those are all very
reasonable assumptions.

Wilson waits for more. The doctor looks as if he needs a
prompt.

WILSON
Okay...

DOCTOR
I have your test results here.

Again Wilson waits for more and again the doctor needs a
prompt.

WILSON
Okay...

DOCTOR
Look, Wilson, I have
some....*difficult* news.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Wilson sits on a park bench, absently gazing off. Then he
curls into a ball, hugs his knees, and weeps like a man who
has been holding it in his entire life.

DUSK NOW

Wilson has fallen asleep on the bench. A COP kicks the bench with his boot toe. Wilson jerks awake. Looks up, bleary eyed.

COP

Move.

INT. WILSON'S CAR - MOVING - DUSK

The silky smooth 50's BALLAD pouring through the radio is in sharp contrast to the tears running down Wilson's face.

They blur his vision. He makes no attempt to wipe them away.

Fuck it. Sometimes it feels good to feel sorry for yourself. Sometimes there's nothing like---

A FIGURE ahead. He **SLAMS** on the breaks.

The car screams to a halt--but not before KNOCKING the figure off its feet.

We'll recognize her as January. Maybe it's the blue eyes, maybe it's the blonde hair, maybe it's the way the headlights glow on her face, but to Wilson she looks like an angel.

He stares at her, spellbound. She glares back into the blinding light. Time slows a half step. The music swells.

It's the single most beautiful moment of Wilson Monroe's life. If he could, he would live in it forever.

Time resumes. January climbs to her feet, gathers the shit that fell out her purse and struts away, but not before adding:

JANUARY

Watch your step, Daddy-O.

Wilson's eyes remain clung as she heads into her motel.

Then, he notices lying on the pavement, her ZIPPO LIGHTER.

He gets out the car--the seatbelt catches his throat--he unbuckles it, freeing himself, then picks up the lighter.

Emblazoned on the stainless steel is the word: PUSSYCAT.

A HORN BLARES. Some guy has pulled up behind Wilson's car.

He ignores this. Watches January close the motel door behind her. Then he drops the lighter in his jacket pocket.

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Wilson sits in an arm chair. Watching the seconds of a wall clock tick by. Tick. Tick. Tick.

The front door rattles, Sharon enters. She starts speaking before she sees Wilson.

SHARON
Did you get the chicken broth?

WILSON
Hun.

SHARON
Did you get the--where are you?

WILSON
Hun.

She turns and sees him in the living room. Enters.

SHARON
Did you get the chicken broth?

He stares at her blankly.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Wilson.
(sighs heavy)
I asked you how many times? I left notes.

WILSON
I need to talk--

SHARON
The McNamara's are going to be here in...
(checks watch)
My goodness. I have to go get the broth. Chop the carrots would you? Actually, don't.

WILSON
Hun, I need to talk to you.

She SNAPS.

SHARON
About what?!

Wilson flinches. Gathers his courage, proceeds.

WILSON
Well...it's hard news. I, uh, I was at the doctor's and, um--

Sharon's face contorts, she clutches her stomach and SPLAT, her WATER BREAKS, soaking her legs.

PRELAP:

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (O.S.)
 ...ladies and gents...a warm
 welcome for the queen of the Blue
 Velvet. The dazzling January July.

A roaring APPLAUSE.

INT. BLUE VELVET - NIGHT

January on stage again. But any warmth we may have felt the first time has all but vanished.

She sings a haunting rendition of California Dreamin'.

JANUARY
*All the leaves are brown and the
 sky is gray...*

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - SAME

January's voice carries over.

Sharon and a MARRIED COUPLE (the McNamaras) are gathered around. They coo the NEWBORN BABY. They smile annoying smiles and Sharon, so proud of herself, blabbers words we can't hear.

In the other room Wilson watches T.V. Alone. Eyes glazed over. Nobody seems to realize. Nobody seems to give a damn.

An idea comes over him. He rises, slowly, and walks unnoticed past the trio...

GARAGE

The garage door is closed. He climbs into the '73 FIREBIRD. Rolls the windows down. Starts the engine.

BLUE VELVET

JANUARY
*I'd be safe and warm if I was in
 L.A.
 California dreamin' on such a
 winter's day...*

GARAGE

CLOSE ON - The muffler as black exhaust billows out. The air begins to thicken with smoke.

Wilson closes his eyes. Waiting to die.

A single tear rolls down his face.

BLUE VELVET

JANUARY (CONT'D)

*Stopped in to a church I passed
along the way. Well I got down on
my knees and I pretend to pray.*

A single tear rolls down her face.

GARAGE

The car engine sputters then dies. Wilson's eyes open. He looks at the fuel gage. It's on EMPTY. He sighs.

JANUARY'S MOTEL

She rolls out her dope bag. Heroin. Syringe. Spoon. Tie-off. No Zippo. Her shoulder's sink.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Wilson, standing next to his Ford Focus (driver window still blown out). He fills up a red gas canister.

JANUARY (V.O.)

*California dreamin' on such a
winter's day.*

Staring blankly out into traffic. His hand absently slides into his jacket. Fingers touch something.

He pulls out January's ZIPPO LIGHTER. Pussycat.

He studies it, turning it over in his palm. Lost in thought. Gas starts overflowing from the canister. His trance breaks.

JANUARY'S MOTEL

CLOSE ON her feet as she paints her toes BRIGHT RED.

OUTSIDE JANUARY'S MOTEL

Wilson's car rolls up. He looks up at her window. Lights on.

MOTEL

Her feet come into frame. Nails freshly painted. They are balancing on a chair. The chair rocks left then right then left and TOPPLES OVER. The feet remain dangling in frame....

OUTSIDE MOTEL

Wilson hesitantly climbs the exterior stair case. Reaches her door. Raises a fist to knock. Pauses. Reconsiders. Starts to walk away. Pauses. Reconsiders. Turns back and knocks.

No answer. He turns to leave and catches a glimpse through the window blinds of January hanging from her neck.

Wilson gasps--letting out a feminine gasp. In a panic he bangs on her window, mumbling like a confused ape.

INSIDE

The fall wasn't hard enough to break her neck so instead January just chokes. The sound at her window brings her eyes over.

JANUARY
(choking)
G'..Oh...a..way...

Wilson's banging grows more furious. He takes two gather steps and throws his entire body into the window--

Smashes into her room with a clumsy roll--knocking into an old record player. The needle skips on the vinyl and California Dreamin' goes into a crazed and demented warp.

Glass has cut Wilson's hands, he bleeds over the rug. Staggeres to his feet, approaches her--she kicks him away.

He takes a flurry of gut shots, bear hugs her body and lifts her up, releasing the tension from her neck.

She punches him in the face. Hard. Stunning him. Miraculously he maintains his grip. She swings again. This one breaks his nose. He falls flat on his ass. She starts choking again.

He gathers himself. Dizzy. Eyes stung with pain. Tries to stand. Wobbles and falls. Blood runs from his nose.

January turning purple. Death near. Having second thoughts.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
..elp...elp me.

Panicking now, she contorts her body, kicking her feet, grasping at her throat. Wilson tries to untie her.

WILSON
I can't--I can't get the--the--

JANUARY
--Elp!

WILSON
I can't--the--thing is--

JANUARY
--Elp!

A horrible gurgling scream escapes January's mouth. Wilson screams. She screams! Wilson screams! She screams--

INT. RETRO DINER - NIGHT

Mostly empty at this time of night except for the drunken Elvis impersonator and drunken Darth Vader impersonator sharing a wedge of cherry pie.

Wilson and January sit in a corner booth. Wilson's hands are bandaged. His swollen nose the size of golf ball.

January has changed her clothes. Something more comfortable. However, the PURPLE BRUISE around her throat is plain as day.

Sleepwalk by Johnny and Santo emanates from the jukebox.

January is polishing off what once was a banana split. Wilson watches her in oddly impassive silence.

She finishes eating. Looks up, wiping her mouth, studying Wilson as if noticing him for the first time.

She slides the bowl away. Takes out a cigarette, lights up.

JANUARY
Ever had a strawberry so good it
made you wanna dance?

Wilson stares back.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
Why do you smell like gasoline?

WILSON
It's a long story.

JANUARY
So tell me your tale, nightingale.

WILSON
I'd rather not.

JANUARY
Ohhh a secret. I like secrets.
Let's trade.

WILSON
Trade what?

JANUARY
Secrets. I tell you one and you
tell me one. But it has to be
juicy. Something I'll go home and
smile when I think about.

A pause. Wilson ponders.

WILSON
I'm losing my hair.

JANUARY
I said a secret.

Wilson smiles ever so gently, taking the slight like a sport.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
Look at that. I bet that's the
first time you've smiled in months.

He quickly snubs the smile out.

WILSON
I didn't smile.

JANUARY
Did too. Cross my heart. You're not
a big eater, your lack of appetite
told me that. You haven't smiled in
at least four months, your eyes
told me that. And now you are about
to tell me a true, honest to God,
juicy as jam secret.

Wilson considers. It might feel good to tell someone. Fuck
it. He speaks as if it's hard to believe his own words.

WILSON
I'm dying. I'll be dead in eight
weeks.

JANUARY
And?

WILSON
And my wife--who doesn't know I'm
dying--just had a baby I never I
wanted to have.

JANUARY
And..?

WILSON
And...tonight I tried to...

JANUARY
Thought so.

WILSON
How can you tell?

January smiles a sly, coquettish grin.

JANUARY
I can tell.

The WAITRESS roller blades over to them, checking in.
Sees January's lit cigarette.

WAITRESS
Miss, you're not allowed to..um..
(sees her neck bruise)
...can I get y'all anything else?

JANUARY
I'd like a Coca-Cola. Chilled
please. In a bottle. With a straw.

The waitress jots this down, looks at Wilson who declines.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
I can tell because you look like a
tortured man. There are ten
prevalent forms of torture and
yours is the absolute worst.

WILSON
I'm not sure I know what you mean.

JANUARY
First there are burns.

INSERT: Image of sizzling flesh.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
Then you have penetrating injuries.

INSERT: A nail slamming into a tied down hand.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
Asphyxiation.

INSERT: A plastic bag over someone's head.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
Starvation.

INSERT: A horrifically skinny naked person.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
Traumatic removal of tissue and
appendages.

INSERT: A Finger being hacked off.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
Beatings. Electric shocks. And
sexual assault.

INSERT: A baseball bat. A cattle prod. An enormous dildo.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
Hanging by the neck or limbs. Which
I know all about. And finally,
number one most brutal form of
torture--mock executions. Or any
situation which the victim fears
that their death is imminent. The
trauma of knowing you are about to
cease from existence surpasses any
and all physical pain. So, stands
to reason, it must be the same
after being told you only have
eight weeks left to live.

Wilson stares back. Blinks. Has no words. The waitress
arrives and places down the bottle of ice cold coke.

January wraps her red lips around the straw and drinks.
Those sultry eyes never breaking away from Wilson.

Electricity in the air.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
Want to know my secret?

WILSON
Okay.

JANUARY
Awhile back, but not too long ago,
I used to write.

WILSON
Write what?

JANUARY
It was a poem. A short story. I
don't know what to call it.

WILSON
Just one?

JANUARY
I only wrote one.

WILSON
Why?

JANUARY
It's all I felt like writing.

WILSON
Okay. So let me hear it.

JANUARY
I can't.

WILSON
Why not?

JANUARY
That would be two secrets. The deal was one for one. I already told you I used to write. Which is one secret. If I told you another it would be breaking the rules and I don't break the rules.

WILSON
I told you everything. That's not fair.

JANUARY
Nothing ever is.

A stretch of silence. A new SONG comes on. A classic. January closes her eyes in bliss. Her lips move along with the lyrics.

Wilson watches in awe. A schoolboy at the girl of his dreams. She lifts open one eye, catches him staring.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
What were you just thinking about?

WILSON
Nothing.

JANUARY
That's impossible. We're always thinking something.

WILSON
It's...I don't want to offend you.

JANUARY
Then don't.

WILSON
Maybe I shouldn't ask.

JANUARY
So it was a question?

WILSON
What was?

JANUARY
What you were just thinking about.
You had a question.

WILSON
No--well, yeah but it's not my bis--

JANUARY
If you don't ask I'll assume it was
offensive and then I'll be
offended.

Wilson scratches his neck. Not getting out of this one.

WILSON
Okay. Why did--

January holds up a finger, he pauses. The song has reached the hook, she lips syncs along with it. The next verse starts.

JANUARY
Okay. Proceed.

A beat.

WILSON
Okay. Why did you try to, uh...

JANUARY
What?

WILSON
You know...

JANUARY
Pull the old dutch act?

WILSON
Sure. Yeah.

She takes a good long sip of Coke. Gathers her thoughts.

JANUARY
Have you ever heard the saying
"it's better to die at your own
hands than at the hands of
another"?

WILSON
No.

JANUARY
That's because I just made it up.
Do you know how this came to be?

She indicates the SCAR which cuts through her bottom lip.

WILSON
No, I--how would I--

JANUARY
I'm going to tell you a story about
two men.

Without taking her eyes off Wilson, she raises her hand sharply above her head and SNAPS her fingers.

The waitress skates over.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
(eyes still on Wilson)
I'd like a bowl of peanuts. Whole
not crushed. Please and thank you.

We PUSH in on her eyes....

INT. CITY STREET - NIGHT (ANIMATED)

The following sequence plays out in COMIC BOOK ANIMATION. In the vintage, pulpy, hard-boiled fashion of Frank Miller.

It's a dark, stormy night. A young man sits in a dark car hidden by dark shadows. His name is JACKIE SUGAR (18).

JANUARY (V.O.)
The year was 1966. Paul Newman was the sexiest man alive, The Supremes were in their heyday and although it was three decades before I was born something happened that would alter the course of my life.

Jackie exits, pulling his trench coat collar up, shrugging against the rain. He crosses the street towards a LITTLE HOUSE whose windows emit a warm yellow glow.

As he passes under the STREETLIGHTS they flicker and go out. He has the grin of the Devil and the eyes of something much darker.

JANUARY (V.O.)
By the time he was eighteen Jackie Sugar was already one of the most formidable assassins breathing God's air.

He removes a PISTOL from his coat. It gleams under the light. He knocks on the door of the little house.

JANUARY (V.O.)
Why he was there that night is not at all important.
(MORE)

JANUARY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It's what he set into motion that
 changed everything.

A MIDDLE-AGED BLACK MAN opens the door. His face melts in horror. Jackie shoots the man--BLOWING his head clean off.

Jackie enters the house. We stay outside. A series of WHITE FLASHES erupt through the windows. Jackie exits sometime later, bloody footprints, smoke snaking out from his pistol.

He dumps gasoline around the house. Lights a cigarette, flicks the match--it kartwheels through the air-- and KABOOM! The house goes up in flames.

With that, Jackie Sugar vanishes into the storm.

EXT. HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT (ANIMATED)

Rain beats down on the burning house. Lightening SNAPS overhead. Hellish red flames lick up into the black sky.

JANUARY (V.O.)
 And it's not *who* Jackie Sugar
 killed that night.

Crawling away from the fire is a 10 YEAR OLD BLACK BOY.
The PINKY FINGER from his right hand missing.

JANUARY (V.O.)
 It's who he *didn't* kill.

Push in on the boy's face. DISSOLVE to him 10 YEARS LATER.

We realize he's in--

INT. HOUSE - DAY (ANIMATED)

We follow behind his feet now. Low to the ground. His pinkyless hand dangles in our view.

He walks through the living room. Passing not one but...two DEAD CHILDREN and a WOMAN squirming in a puddle of blood.

Without looking down he shoots her dead. Keeps walking.

We see what he's headed towards. Jackie Sugar (28 now) tied up in the corner. Helpless. The Black Man points the pistol at him. Jackie closes his eyes, accepting his fate....

Nothing happens. His eyes open. The Black Man lowers the pistol, grins savagely and walks out of the house.

JANUARY (V.O.)
 He figured the greatest pain came
 not from dying but from living.

Jackie SCREAMS at the heavens. An earth rattling roar.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY (ANIMATED)

A wedding. Jackie (40 now) lifts the veil from his BRIDE's face and kisses her.

SUPERIMPOSE: 12 YEARS LATER

Across the street a MAN sits in a car, reading a newspaper. He folds the paper down and we see his face. The Black Man.

He watches as a "Just Married" car pulls away.

JANUARY (V.O.)
But he wasn't finished. Not by a
damn sight.

EXT. PARK - DAY (ANIMATED)

Jackie, his NEW WIFE and their 7 YEAR OLD CHILD feed a family of ducks. Jackie even smiles.

Across the way The Black Man watches.

JANUARY (V.O.)
He waited for the wounds to heal.
For the dust to settle. For the
pieces to come back together.
(beat)
Then he took it all away.

EXT. JACKIE SUGAR'S HOUSE - NIGHT (ANIMATED)

The Black Man walks away from a house consumed by a raging fire. He opens his car trunk and pulls out Jackie. He's bloody, beaten. Makes him watch the house burn.

Jackie HOWLS through his gag. The Black Man leans down, and whispers into Jackie's ear--

JANUARY (V.O.)
Remember.

The letters R-E-M-E-M-B-E-R float into Jackie's ear. Then the Black Man KICKS him in the head and all goes dark.

EXT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT (ANIMATED)

The Black Man (A.K.A ROOSEVELT DUVAY) drives through the desert. Face pale under the blue moon. He flicks his cigar out the window and the whole desert goes up in flames.

JANUARY (V.O.)
 Roosevelt Duvay had finally sought
 his justice. But little did he know
 this time it was he who committed
 the fatal flaw.

EXT. JACKIE SUGAR'S HOUSE - THAT SAME NIGHT (ANIMATED)

A 7 YEAR OLD GIRL, wearing pajamas, watches her house burn
 from the backyard. An orange glow on her sullen cheeks.

A GASH has been cut through her bottom lip.

EXT. OFFICE - DAY (ANIMATED)

A HENCHMEN whispers into Roosevelt's ear. His eyes lower.
 Then he erupts into a volcanic rage, kicking over his desk.

JANUARY (V.O.)
 He received word of the survivor
 and has been looking for her ever
 since...

End animated sequence.

FLASHBACK - INT. BLUE VELVET - NIGHT

Where we first met January. She sings on stage. Her attention
 falling on the mysterious BLACK MAN hidden in the shadows...

JANUARY (V.O.)
 And last Saturday night he found
 her.

BACK IN THE DINER

The waitress arrives with the peanuts. January takes a
 handful and pours them in her bottle of Coke. They sizzle.

WILSON
 Can you call the police?

JANUARY
 That's cute.

WILSON
 What about your father?

January takes a gulp of Coke. Crunches a peanut.

JANUARY
 He was taken off the payroll.

FLASHBACK. JACKIE SUGAR (ANIMATED)

Jackie shoots himself in the head.

BACK IN DINER

JANUARY (CONT'D)
Or so they say.

A genuine wave of empathy washes over Wilson.

WILSON
I'm sorry.

January gives a gentle shrug as if to say "that's life".

WILSON (CONT'D)
So then this Roosevelt guy got what
he wanted. You're in the clear.

JANUARY
Roosevelt Duvay is a man of
principle. You could even say he
has a code of ethics. He's going to
find me, he's going to kill me, and
he's going to finish what he
started. Because that's just the
type of motherfucker that he is.

She crunches another peanut. An idea comes over Wilson, he
leans forward onto his forearms, lowers his voice.

WILSON
There's a way out of this you know.

JANUARY
Quit while you're ahead. How many
men can say they saved a gal's life
then bought her a banana split?

WILSON
You say the only way this ends is
if you're dead, right?

JANUARY
Seems to be the case.

WILSON
So be dead.

January raises an eyebrow, intrigued.

ACROSS THE STREET

We watch them discuss through the diner window. Traffic
rushes past.

EXT. '73 PONTIAC FIREBIRD - SUNSET

Wilson and January drive down an abandoned stretch of highway. The candy red car rocketing towards the melting sun.

The top is down, her hair floats in the wind. She is beauty.

MONTAGE

-They kiss on a deserted beach. A wave crashes over them.

-They dance hand in hand under a full moon.

-Older now, gray hair and winkles, they lay staring up at the stars. Their heads touching.

-Elderly now. They spoon in bed, passing away together.

The gurgle of a FLUSHING TOILET breaks the dream--

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - SHOWER -NIGHT

Wilson is lost in a cloud of steam. Blood runs from his gashed hands, his swollen nose...and swirls down the drain.

He opens his eyes.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
That night Wilson Monroe dreamed of
another life. Perhaps on the edge
of some distant planet, spinning in
some far off galaxy, in a universe
light years away, this life could
exist.

Through the fogged shower door he sees Sharon jiggle up her underwear and saunter out of the bathroom.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
But here, in this world, it simply
never will.

COMPUTER SCREEN

A Smith & Wesson 9MM handgun. Pull back to reveal--

INT. MONROE HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Wilson in the dark. His face, lit by the screen's blue glow, stares intently at the gun. Something sinister in his eye.

Suddenly--Sharon enters--Wilson quickly shuts off the monitor, spins around, horribly guilty. Sharon freezes.

SHARON
Were you...?

WILSON
No.

SHARON
(lowers voice)
Masturbating?

WILSON
No.

She sighs, disgusted, a chill through her spine.

SHARON
Wilson....grow up.

She leaves. Wilson exhales. His eyes come back to the gun...

INT. WILSON'S CAR - MOVING - DUSK

Wilson and January drive. The distant lights of Los Angeles glow furiously, but here, on this long stretch of road, it is calm and dark. The eye of the storm.

January hugs her body, trying to find warmth.

JANUARY
It's freezing.

Wilson turns on the heat.

WILSON
They say it might snow tonight.

JANUARY
In Los Angeles? Fat chance.

WILSON
It has before. Three times. 1882.
1932. And 1949.

Off January's bemused grin:

WILSON (CONT'D)
I'm a meteo--I *used* to be a
meteorologist.
(under breath)
Fucking Fletcher Donaghue.

JANUARY
The guy with the hair?

WILSON
Yeah...

JANUARY
Well I happen to think you're much
more handsome.

A silence fills the car. Helen Forrest on the radio.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
Tell me how this will work again.
First we head out to the oil
fields, take the pictures....

INSERT: A rapid clip of PHOTOGRAPHS of January. Crumpled in a
crudely dug hole. She's bound. Gagged. Bloody. Dead.

JANUARY (CONT'D)
You go back to the station and
then...?

FLASHFORWARD.INT. KQRW OFFICE - NIGHT

Wilson talks to Larry Rhodes and Gary Scoonmeyer. By the
looks of it Wilson is making reparations.

He leaves the office and slips into a CONTROL ROOM.

WILSON (V.O.)
Then I get to work.

Wilson DELETES the script from the Teleprompter and begins to
type...

NEWSDESK - LATER

The NEWS ANCHOR reads from the Teleprompter.

NEWS ANCHOR
Los Angeles police received
disturbing pictures of the dead
body of an unidentified woman...

A head shot of January sits in the upper right-hand corner of
the screen.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)
Authorities urge anyone with
information on this woman to come
forward...

WILSON (V.O.)
Once KQRW runs the story others
will, too.

FLASHFORWARD.INT. A RANDOM LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We push in on a T.V. screen of A DIFFERENT NEWS CHANNEL running the same story. January's face on the screen.

WILSON (V.O.)
Your picture will be everywhere.

BACK IN THE CAR

WILSON
And before the sun comes up you'll
be dead to the world.

A halfway smile on her face. After all, this is what she has always wanted and after all it is so terribly sad.

WILSON (CONT'D)
You can't ever come back here.

JANUARY
Why are you doing this for me?

WILSON
I don't know.

And he really doesn't.

JANUARY
If Roosevelt finds out this is a
hoax I won't be the only one he
comes for.

WILSON
I'll be dead in eight weeks anyway.

JANUARY
But he'll make it hurt.

Wilson shrugs apathetically. She studies his face, a warmth in her eyes. Some sort of misplaced romance. Maybe in another life.

He reaches across her lap, his hand grazing her knee, and pops open the glove compartment. Inside, a HANDGUN.

WILSON
I bought it for you.

She takes the cold steel into her hands. Smiles gently. It's the sweetest thing anyone has every done for her.

She leans over and kisses Wilson on the cheek.

Her LIP MARKS GLOW neon.

ANGLE FROM ABOVE

We watch the car drive towards a distant OIL FIELD. Jack pumps bobbing lazily against an purple sky.

EXT. OIL FIELDS - DUSK

A cemetery of dusty oil rigs, creaking eerily like the cries of Jurassic birds in the desert wind.

Wilson's car idles, headlights flooding across the plain.

The silhouettes of January and Wilson dig a hole in the earth. Healthy piles of dirt at their side. Hard work.

Suddenly, TWO HEADLIGHTS pop over the horizon, heading towards them. The car bounces across the uneven terrain sending the glare of it's lights splashing to and fro.

The car stops directly before January and Wilson--frozen--shovels in hand--blinded by the headlights.

A TALL DARK STRANGER steps from the vehicle. Hard to make out his features. He wears a trench coat and a fedora canted to the left. In his jaws rests a snubbed out cigar.

He holds a pistol by his hip, pointed at Wilson.

STRANGER

Listen here scum. I'm P.I. Dick
Krumholz. Step away from the dame
before I make this pistol sing.

The stranger (Dick Krumholz) moves his eyes over to January.

KRUMHOLZ

Miss, are you oka--

Wilson has pulled out the hand gun and shot the stranger between the eyes. He falls. Dead.

Silence. Creaking oil jacks and cold wind.

The dead man's phone rings--startling Wilson who FIRES six more shots into his body. His phone still rings...

Shaken, Wilson fishes the phone out from the man's pocket. Wilson's lips part, his eyes go wide--utter bewilderment.

Now we see why: The phone display screen reads: SHARON MONROE.

It starts to snow...

FADE TO BLACK

The opening chords of The Shangri Las Remember melts over the dark like warm cream.

January sits suspended in the sea of black. She's illuminated by a SPOTLIGHT. Dressed in a white gown, her hair bound up in golden waves.

Lips fire red. She sings to us. Her voice like a ghost seeking salvation...

JANUARY
*Seems like the other day/ my baby
went away/ he went across the sea..*

We dolly in on her ever so slowly.

It starts to SNOW all around her. We push closer...

A bullet hole opens up in her stomach. SMOKE curls out then drifts away into the dark.

Crimson blood follows. Pouring out the dime-sized hole and soaking her white dress. She continues to sing. We get closer.

Smoke trickles out from her mouth. Her eyes turn black as coal.

INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

Jackie Sugar (55) opens his eyes. Sweat dots his forehead.

TITLE CARD: (in children's handwriting):

Chapter Two: "Old Friends"

LATER

Shirtless, Jackie gazes out the window of his bedroom. Below lays the sprawling glittering tundra of concrete that is Los Angeles. Sprinkled with forlorn souls and dreams deferred.

He's still reeling from the nightmare but even at this age he maintains his effortless untouchable cool. A once in a life time cool. The kind they write songs about.

SUPERIMPOSE: (in children's handwriting): Jackie Sugar

SUGAR (PRELAP)
...The other day I took a shit in a
crowded public bathroom and I left
the stall door open. Why? Because I
felt like it.

A CAT jumps up next to him. He rubs its head.

INT. SHOWER - MOMENTS LATER

Track with his hands as they push the shampoo out his hair.

SUGAR (PRELAP)
 They say "don't drink", fuck you.
 They say "don't smoke", fuck you.
 "Don't eat this, you'll get fat".
 Guess what? Fuck you.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MATCH CUT to his hands as they slick grease through his hair. He stands before the mirror, fully dressed now. White t-shirt. Leather jacket. A toothpick resting in his mouth.

SUGAR (PRELAP)
 You can't come inside of her,
 you're married, fuck you, I'll come
 on her tits. We do these things
 anyway. We lie, we cheat, we kill.
 Is it wrong? Maybe. What's wrong?
 What's *right*? It doesn't matter. We
 do these things anyway.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

He eats a banana while staring out the window, absently stroking the head of his cat who laps up her food.

SUGAR (PRELAP)
 We don't think about tomorrow, why,
 because tomorrow doesn't exist.

He checks his watch. Time to go. He finishes his Dr. Pepper.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

A neon sign of a pin up girl flickers above a brick bar.

SUGAR (PRELAP)
 Three minutes ago doesn't exist.
 Three minutes from now doesn't
 exist.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A dreary den where alcoholics mill about like dying flies. It's a slow night. 3 or 4 occupants, tops.

Sugar sits at the bar, a glass of milk before him. He's in the middle of talking to CHARLES "DUSTY" NEVINS, a weary soul.

Sugar continues his ramble...

SUGAR

A little girl is raped and killed, four years old, the monster who did it lives into his eighties. What is fair? Nothing. It's not supposed to be. Where is the order? There isn't any. Stop looking for it. It doesn't exist. All that exists is how I feel at this very moment. Not true, you say. Prove it to me, you say. Fuck you, I say. We have these moments, you live them and you can't have them back. Your first cigarette, the way your head spun. The first time you were punched in the teeth, the taste of blood in your mouth. Your first fuck, the way she looked at you--the way it made your cock hard and your heart pound. These are the moments.

(pause)

Have I had pain in my life? More than you will ever know. Does it haunt me? Every day, brother. Is the glass half empty, is the glass half full--these are the questions. Fuck the glass, either way there is the same amount. It doesn't matter what you think and yet it's all that matters.

He places a consolatory hand on Charlie's shoulder.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

So you lost some--what's your name?

CHARLIE

Charlie.

SUGAR

Charlie. So you lost some money. So you're feeling down. We're up and then we're down and we're up and then we're down. These feelings...these *feelings*...what are they? When was the last time you dipped your toes in the ocean? That's life. A butterfly flaps it's wings here there's a hurricane there--do we have *total* control? Do we have *zero* control? It's meaningless and it's full of meaning. It is whatever you think it is. What is real? Is the past real? Maybe.

(MORE)

SUGAR (CONT'D)

I can't see it, I can't touch it,
 does that make it not real? It
 could. You break your arm, that
 feels real. Woman breaks your
 heart, ouch. Right? Guy I knew,
 healthy as a clam, jogged everyday,
 ate organic. Thirty-nine years old.
 Heart attack. Boom. Gone. What am I
 saying, here? Am I afraid of death?
 I'm not ready to die I know that
 much. Does that mean there is
 something to live for? Something to
 do? Something to be? I'll tell you:
 if there is we didn't come into the
 world knowing what it is. We must
 shape it. We must define it. What
 is life? Does something come after?
 Maybe. Maybe not. I don't know. I'm
 here now. I won't be here forever.
 You won't be here forever. Be happy
 they say, life is short they say,
 be happy. What is happy? What does
 it look like? A new car? Maybe. A
 hot wife? Sure. A big cock? Why
 not. Does it mean anything? These
 are the questions. Happiness is
 your toes in the sand. Happiness is
 the smell of salt in the air. The
 sound of the foam as it laps around
 your ankles. The birds. The moon.
 That's happiness. That's life.
 Everything else is just everything
 else. You understand?

Charlie blinks a few times.

SUGAR (CONT'D)

No you don't understand. Do you
 have to be up early?

CHARLIE

..huh..?

SUGAR

In the morning. What time do you
 need to wake up?

CHARLIE

I don't have..uh..

SUGAR

You and me...
 (finishes the milk, slams
 it on the bar)
 ...we're going to the ocean.

CHARLIE

Now?

SUGAR

Yes now. There is nothing else but now, were you not listening? We're going to the ocean and you're going to see what it means to live again.

(to Bartender)

A bottle of your finest lager for my friend here. Be sure to wrap it in a brown paper bag and be sure to wrap it tight. We're headed to the edge of the universe.

EXT. BEACH PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Headlights swing through the dark, Sugar's 1970 CHEVY CHEVELLE pulls to a stop and parks. He exits, Charlie follows along begrudgingly.

We track with them as they walk across the beach. Nearly 50 yards of sand separate them from the water.

We're near LAX so every few seconds a plane roars overhead.

SUGAR

Do you lie, Charlie?

Charlie takes a depressed swig of beer.

CHARLIE

Shit, I dunno....yeah, sure.

SUGAR

I have no issue with them. Liars that is. There is nothing as sexy and dangerous as a good lie. But I saw a man on Hollywood Boulevard awhile back who was holding a sign that claimed he had seen God. I walked up to this man, leaned forward to ask him a question, then slapped him squarely in the nuts. If there *is* a Heavenly Father there is no way that rotten scoundrel had ever seen him. I know this because as a younger man I owned a Triumph 900--a furious little bike--and I'd wait for the fog storms, the ones that rolled in ugly and mad off the Pacific and I'd load up on blow, booze and whatever pills that were laying around and I'd ride the beast through the night in an attempt to smell God. And on those wicked nights I *would* smell something, but I'll tell you: whatever it was, it wasn't God.

They have now reached the incoming surf. They gaze out at the ocean which glitters under the white moonlight.

Charlie takes a long pull of his beer, draining the bottle. Chucks it into the ocean. He's only half paying attention.

CHARLIE
Yeah...what'd you smell?

For the first time all night Sugar is at a loss for words.

SUGAR
It's hard to explain, Charlie, it's
hard to explain.
(pause)
You'll know soon enough.

Sugar pulls out a pistol and shoots Charlie in the head.

Sugar inhales the salty air, deep, exhaling despondently. He looks down at Charlie and frowns. He genuinely liked the guy.

SUGAR (CONT'D)
You break my heart.

He lowers the pistol and fires another into Charlie's head.

EXT. BAR - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jackie dips under the back fender of Charlie's car and removes a TRACKING DEVICE.

EXT. PAY PHONE NIGHT - NIGHT

A plane from LAX screams overhead. Sugar is on the phone.

SUGAR
(into phone)
Charlie Nevins sleeps with the
seagulls.

The person he's talking to clearly missed the reference.

SUGAR (CONT'D)
(into phone)
It means--have you never seen--
nevermind. It's done.

He hangs up.

EXT. MIDO SUSHI - NIGHT

A sad, dimly lit little sushi shop wedged between a check cashing store and a bail bondsman.

Through a dirty window we watch Jackie Sugar eat.

INT. MIDO SUSHI - NIGHT

He's the only customer. He sits in the corner chewing his California roll. A Japanese pop song filters through a radio.

Just another Tuesday night.

He looks down at the sole of his shoe. Traces of sand. He gently taps his heel to the booth, knocking the sand loose.

Then he uses his finger to dislodge a piece of rice from his molars while he passively watches an old T.V. in the corner.

The LOCAL NEWS. The weatherman is giving the 5 day forecast.

It's Wilson.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: A PAINTING OF SAINT ANTHONY HOLDING BABY JESUS

A SPLASH OF BLOOD has been dashed across it. Oddly, that blood lifts BACKWARDS off the painting. We're in--

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - 1966 - NIGHT

A 10 YEAR OLD BLACK BOY hides under a table. His eyes stare up at the painting. The patron Saint glares back, apathetic.

Laying on the ground before him is his DEAD FATHER. Eyes blank. Blood flows BACKWARDS into an open wound.

Then the body flies back up off the ground revealing the boy's DEAD MOTHER behind it.

To be clear, this scene is playing out IN REVERSE.

The mother's body now flies backwards up off the ground.

From the boy's vantage point we watch a series of feet and legs as a struggle plays out. A broken lamp comes back together and sucks upwards. The red carpet turns back white.

The family sits around the dinner table, about to eat. The father walk backwards from the door, sits down.

And everything GRINDS TO A HALT. From here the scene plays out normally.

The Father blesses the food before the meal.

FATHER

...surely your goodness and love
will follow us all the days of our
lives, and we will dwell in the
house of the Lord forever. Amen.

There's a knock at the door--everyone looks over.

FREEZE FRAME

The grinding guitar solo from Link Wray's The Shadow Knows
melts onto the track.

LINK WRAY

*Who knows what evil lurks in the
hearts of men?
(evil laugh)
The shadow knows.*

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)

He was five years old at the time,
but for what it's worth this is the
night Roosevelt Duvay was born.

INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT"

The distorted electric blues song plays over the sequence.

An OLD BLIND BLACK MAN sits in a booth in the empty club. He
wears large black sunglasses, his teeth gold capped.

Across from him sits 10 YEAR OLD Roosevelt.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)

Roosevelt went to the old blind
prophet to seek guidance.

We see Roosevelt talking, his eyes lost and angry.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)

And the old blind prophet said...

We see his mouth move but hear the narrator's voice.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)

What will be, will be. Your destiny
will seek you so long as it's your
destiny you seek.

A RAPID SUCCESSION OF SNAP SHOTS

Sugar's family--both of them--shot down by Roosevelt. A
gunshot rings out after each snapshot. Bang. Bang. Bang.

EXT. AMERICAN HIGHWAY - DUSK

Roosevelt's '74 COUPE DE VILLE cruises down a long forgotten highway filled with a CREW of murderous villains.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Once he slaughtered both of Jackie
Sugar's families he embarked on a
long and arduous quest to kill the
girl and fulfill his destiny.

MAP OF THE UNITED STATES

A dotted red line travels from Los Angeles to New Orleans.

INT. BROTHEL - NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT

An old VICTORIAN HOUSE. Several BEAUTIFUL WOMEN are situated around the livingroom, the staircase, etc.

Roosevelt and his crew stare back at them.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
He thought he had found her in New
Orleans in The House of the Rising
Sun.

The beautiful girls start to SING seductively.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
But the sirens had other plans.

OVERHEAD - we pan over a room of naked men sprawled out on the floor. They wake up, drugged, groggy, robbed blind.

MAP OF THE UNITED STATES

A dotted red line travels from New Orleans to Reno, Nevada.

INT. STRIP CLUB - RENO, NEVADA - NIGHT

Roosevelt and his crew scan a scummy strip joint.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
He thought he found her in a strip
joint in Reno, Nevada.

Across the way a group of menacing SKIN HEADS glare back. The leader of the pack is blind in one eye.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
This is where he met the cyclops.

We rapidly PUSH IN on the one-eyed man.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

From afar we see the SILHOUETTES of 4 CORPSES hanging from trees, swinging in the violent winds of a torrential STORM.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
He too had other plans.

Suddenly, in the immediate foreground, Roosevelt's pinkyless hand grabs soil, pulling himself up from a ravine.

He's covered in mud and feces. He wades through a shallow creek, stumbling, sucking for oxygen.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Roosevelt crawled to freedom
through 500 yards of shit smelling
foulness I can't even imagine. Or
maybe I just don't want to. The
length of five football fields.
Just shy of half a mile.

He rips off his shirt. He extends his arms towards the sky.

We CRANE UP into the Shawshank Redemption shot. A FLASH OF LIGHTNING arcs from horizon to horizon.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
And yet, his search for the girl
was not deterred.

MAP OF THE UNITED STATES

The dotted red line pinballs across the map. Coast to coast.

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

Roosevelt's car pulls up to a red light. He glances at the church to his side. Sneers at the gigantic cross.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
But years passed and the trail had
long gone cold.

He drives away.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
And then came the twenty-dollar
bill.

CLOSE ON AN ATM

A female finger punches in a pin code. CASH is ejected.
REVEAL Sharon Monroe putting the cash in her purse.

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - DAY

The door opens, Sharon enters carrying groceries. She stops short, remembering something.

SHARON

Shoot!

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)

Sharon Monroe had forgot to buy milk.

SHARON

I forgot to buy milk.

MOMENTS LATER

Sharon hands Wilson a 20 DOLLAR BILL. FREEZE FRAME on the bill. Resume. Wilson takes the money and leaves.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)

Her husband, Wilson Monroe, was tasked with getting the milk.

INT. GROCERY STORE - EVENING

At the check outline. A carton of MILK. is purchased. Wilson hands over the \$20 to the CASHIER.

INT. GROCERY STORE - BACK ROOM - EVENING

We hear the sound of fellatio. The CASHIER has his pants around his ankles. A TRANSVESTITE PROSTITUTE on her knees.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)

At 10:39 that evening Cyril Nazaryan used the bill to pay for a date with a transvestite prostitute named Cherry.

INT. CHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ding dong. The door bell rings. Cherry opens the door. It's a DELIVERY BOY. She takes the food and gives him the \$20.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)

Cherry used her hard earned cash to order a spicy tuna roll and shrimp tempura.

INT. MIDO SUSHI RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The delivery boy enters the restaurant, puts the \$20 in the register and slams it shut.

TIME CUT, the register pops open-- A WAITRESS fishes out the bill. We track with her as she walks over to a table and places it down along with some coins.

REVEAL Jackie Sugar putting the bill in his wallet.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
After his meal Jackie Sugar
received \$23.36 cents in change.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Sugar buys a pack of smokes. Slides the bill across the counter.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
He used the bill to purchase a pack
of Marlboro Reds and a Slim Jim.

LATER

A MASKED MAN enters the liquor store waving a SHOT GUN, barking orders. The clerk slowly opens the register--

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Forty-seven minutes later Hunter
Strawberry entered.

--in a flash the clerk pulls out a hand gun and fires at the robber--the robber fires back. Both men drop dead.

Cash from the register scatters about.

LATER

An EMT is at the scene. He tests for the clerk's pulse.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Harold Tan arrived on the scene to
find two dead bodies...

He sees the \$20 on the ground.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
...and the twenty dollar bill.

He glances around, nobody watching, he slips the bill into his pocket.

INT. BLUE VELVET - NIGHT

January sings on stage. Harold Tan, the EMT, dressed casually now, ogles her. He smiles lustfully and slips her the \$20. She winks and accepts, tucking it into her bra.

INT. JANUARY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Fiending, January dumps out her purse--rifles through drawers--checks under mattress. Nothing. Then she remembers something.

From her BRA she pulls a 20 DOLLAR BILL. Her eyes light up.

JANUARY

Hello.

She unrolls it, plants a big RED KISS on Andrew Jackson.

We notice this time what we didn't at first. Her red lip prints have a void of negative space where her scar is.

INT. LESTER WETHERBY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lester Wetherby is a low level drug dealer. He tosses January a bag of dope and she gives him the lip marked \$20.

INT. ROOSEVELT DUVAY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lester Wetherby sits before Roosevelt. Hands him a thick envelop. Roosevelt feels the weight in his hand.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)

Lester Wetherby paid his weekly dues.

LATER

Roosevelt counts the cash, comes across the lip marked bill.

CLOSE ON: The lip prints. The scar.

CLOSE ON: Roosevelt's eyes. Widening.

INSERT: slow motion glamour shot of January looking directly at us. Hair blowing in the wind, a movie star glow around her.

We push in on her lip scar. She blows smoke at us, obscuring the view.

BACK IN ROOSEVELT'S OFFICE

The SOUND of FIREWORKS go off.

INT. LESTER WETHERBY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door is kicked open, Roosevelt and his men bust in. We see him speak. His mouth matches our narrator's voice.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Where'd you get this?

Lester is terrified. His mouth matches our narrator's voice.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
A girl from the Blue Velvet. Voice
like an angel.

INT. BLUE VELVET - NIGHT

This is the scene where we first met January singing Otis Redding. But this time we watch from Roosevelt's POV.

We are in the back, hidden in the shadows. A halo of smoke around him. He watches January sing--her eyes meet ours...

INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

The old blind man sits in a booth in the empty club. Across from him sits Roosevelt, the same place he sat 40 years ago.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Upon finding the girl Roosevelt
suffered from the same nasty
existential plight that besets us
all. He asked the old blind prophet
what his purpose would be once the
girl was gone. Once his destiny had
been fulfilled. What was it all
for? What does it all mean?

We read Roosevelt's lips and this is indeed what he's saying. The old blind man laughs a deep hearty laugh. And then says:

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
What will be, will be. Your destiny
will seek you so long as it's your
destiny you seek.

End sequence.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Roosevelt Duvay sits up from underneath a tub of cloudy bath water. Both Sides Now by Judy Collins blasting from a stereo.

SUPERIMPOSE: (in children's handwriting) Roosevelt Duvay

He rises from the water, on his hands he wears yellow dish gloves.

-He shaves his face. Tweezes his eyebrows. Applies eyeliner. In the mirror he meets his own gaze. Stone cold bad.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Roosevelt Duvay was many things.
Four of which were abundantly
clear: He was big, black, queer as
a three dollar bill and badder than
a motherfucker.

Roosevelt blows a deadly kiss at the mirror.

INT. JACKIE SUGAR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jackie enters, whistling the Judy Collins song to himself.

SUGAR
(calling cat)
Hey pussycat. Daddy's home.

The cat doesn't show. He lays his pistol on a table and without hitting the lights dips into the bathroom to take a leak. Still whistling. He flushes, exits and--

Stops dead.

Roosevelt sits in a chair. One leg over the other. Sugar's cat purring in his lap, both of them comfortable as can be.

To his side, a muscular white man. His build and disposition are that of a stone cold killer but his tweezed eyebrows and white turtle neck throws a wrench in the whole matter.

We'll come to know him as NICKY.

Sugar's eyes flit over to the table where he left his gun.

ROOSEVELT
Hello old friend. Looking for this?

Roosevelt's voice is baritone, molasses smooth, and entirely sure of itself.

He holds up Sugar's pistol. Then points it directly at him.

SUGAR
Shoot me in the gut and let me
bleed out. I only get to die once,
might as well enjoy it.

ROOSEVELT
I like you better alive.

SUGAR
How long have you been following me
this time?

ROOSEVELT
Just the right amount, Jackie
Sugar, just the right amount.

For the first time Sugar looks over at Nicky.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
This here is Nicky. Nicky is my
little white bitch. Nicky does
everything I ask Nicky to do. I
need a back rub, Nicky does that. I
need my feet washed, Nicky does
that too. Awhile back there was
this individual who crossed me in a
way I care not to repeat.
(to Nicky)
Tell Jackie Sugar what you did.

Nicky smiles, bashful. Roosevelt finishes for him.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Nicky found the homie's pregnant
wife, cut the baby out her belly
and roasted it like a Christmas
ham. And he did so with panache.
But Nicky doesn't do *anything*
unless I tell Nicky to. So try to
relax.

Sugar's glare betrays not the slightest tinge of a reaction.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Tell me, what would you say it is
that I do?

SUGAR
You leave impressions.

ROOSEVELT
And how do I leave these
impressions?

SUGAR
With sound and fury.

A small grin spreads through Roosevelt's lips.

ROOSEVELT
Indeed. Indeed.

Roosevelt lowers the pistol, ejects the magazine, clears the chamber and tosses the gun back to Sugar.

He addresses Nicky without removing his eyes from Sugar.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Fix me and Jackie Sugar here each a
glass of brandy. Be generous with
the ice.
(to Sugar)
You got brandy?

SUGAR
No.

ROOSEVELT
You got Gran Marnier?

SUGAR
I don't got anything. I don't
drink. I got milk.

ROOSEVELT
Ain't that just sublime.
(eyes firmly on Sugar)
Nicky, baby, fix us each a glass of
milk.

NICKY
You want ice?

ROOSEVELT
Surprise me.

Nicky goes to the kitchen. Roosevelt tilts his head to the side and admires the swing of Nicky's ass.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
How's business?

SUGAR
I just retired.

ROOSEVELT
Is that so? And when was this?

SUGAR
The other night.

FLASHBACK. EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Sugar shoots Charlie Nevins in the head. Sighs, mournfully.

FLASHBACK. INT. MIDO SUSHI - NIGHT

Sugar chews a piece of sushi, a bland expression on his face.

SUGAR (V.O.)
The sushi didn't taste like it used to. I decided I was done right then and there.

BACK TO SUGAR'S APARTMENT

ROOSEVELT
What's the fun if the fish don't taste right.

SUGAR
What do you want with me, Roosevelt? I have nobody left.

ROOSEVELT
Oh but you do...yes you do...Your daughter is alive and well and what a warm wedge of pie she has become.

For the first time a flicker of emotion dashes across Sugar's face. Disbelief more than anything.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
That's right. I've been looking for her...
(counts in head)
..for a long time. And now I've found her and you already know what happens next.

A cold knot forms in Sugar's gut. He remains speechless.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
I was just as taken aback to hear the news as you. I thought I had done a thorough job.

Roosevelt casually admires his freshly manicured nails.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Just because the truth isn't what we want it to be doesn't make it any less true.

SUGAR
If she's alive, like you say she is, why haven't you killed her yet?

ROOSEVELT
I intend to. And I intend to do so in a fashion as far away from civilized as I can dream up.
(looks up from his nails)
I just thought you might like to know.

SUGAR
Or I kill you first.

Roosevelt tilts back his head and laughs at the absurdity of that. Nicky returns with the glasses of milk (with ice).

ROOSEVELT
How about this, I'll give you three days. If you can somehow find your daughter--and I'll be God damned if you can--but if you do I'll allow you to...dispose of her in a more humane manner. It's the best I can offer. And you should do it for the girl. Her life has been hard enough, let her death be easy.

Roosevelt takes a long gulp of milk. His face contorts and he SPITS it all across the room.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
...the fuck?

SUGAR
Possum milk.
(beat)
For my cat.

Roosevelt shakes the spit up milk from his hands, then wipes his mouth on Nicky's shirt.

He stands, slowly, and moves close to Sugar. Dangerously close. A white hot stare down ensues. Neither man blinks. A thousand years in that stare. An indomitable hatred. A tacit respect.

ROOSEVELT
Three days. That's all you got before me and Nicky and a couple hard boiled niggas hook her up to a pair of jumper cables and a car battery and make you and your cat watch.

The stare down lingers several seconds longer before Roosevelt nods at Nicky and they head for the door.

He opens the door, pauses, shakes his head in disbelief.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Possum milk.

Then both he and Nicky leave.

INT. JACKIE SUGAR'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

He breaks the seal on a bottle of Jack Daniels. Inhales the fumes. Considers. Then tilts liquid down his throat.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
That night Jackie Sugar had his
first drink in 23 years.

--Later, he holds a faded PHOTOGRAPH of 7 year old January. Her innocent smile breaks his heart. He drains the bottle.

--Savagely drunk now, he staggers through the house, gin bottle clutched in one hand, waving a pistol with the other.

--He sits on the shower floor. Fully clothed.

EXT. JACKIE SUGAR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

From afar we see Sugar stumble drunkenly from his apartment, approach his car, fumbling for his keys.

REVEAL: Nicky, sitting in a dark car, watching. Phone to ear.

NICKY
Looks like the sad bastard is
making another trip to the liquor
store.
(listens)
Don't worry, I'm on him tighter
than good leather.
(listens)
Alright, boss.

Click. He hangs up.

EXT. ROOSEVELT DUVAY'S HOUSE - DAWN

Sunrise. An establishing shot of the McMansion in Ladera Heights. A choir of crickets summon the rising sun.

INT. ROOSEVELT DUVAY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN

Roosevelt sleeps peacefully in his white silk sheets. We move in slowly on him. He stirs awake.

Is that...blood on the sheets? Why yes, yes it is. Confused, groggy, Roosevelt looks at his hand. It's slick with blood.

He peels back the rest of the bed covers. His entire body is soaked. At his feet rests Nicky's beautiful HEAD.

But unlike that poor bastard in The Godfather Roosevelt doesn't scream. He does the opposite. A rumble starts deep in his belly, it turns to a chuckle then a villainous laugh.

INT. JACKIE SUGAR'S CHEVY CHEVELLE - MOVING - NIGHT

The car barrels through the night. Top down, wind in his hair, bloodlust in his heart and resolve in his eyes.

He looks in the mirror--a fleck of blood under his eye--he leaves it be. Turns up the radio and punches the gas.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

An old sunbleached pump station in the middle of the desert. Sugar is on the PAY PHONE outside.

SUGAR
Looks like Kwanzaa came early this year.

INTERCUT: with Roosevelt in the bath tub, on the phone.

ROOSEVELT
Well played, Jackie Sugar, well played.

SUGAR
You're next, old friend.

ROOSEVELT
Let's dance.

INT. THE PINK SALOON - NIGHT

Hunched over a desk, a single light hanging overhead, Jackie builds what appears to be a BOMB. He carefully touches two raw copper wires together. They SPARK. He grins. Just right.

EXT. THE PINK SALOON - DAY

A brutally hot sun beats down on this shot to shit motel on the outer fringes of Palm Springs.

INT. THE PINK SALOON - DAY

A knock at the door.

Sugar wakes abruptly from a dead sleep, immediately claws at his head.

He has sweat through his clothes, through his sheets. It's unclear which is worse, the heat or the hangover.

SUGAR
No necesito servico.

Another knock. This one causes him to tense. He reaches into the night stand. A Bible and a pistol. He takes the pistol.

Gun in hand, he cracks the door far enough for the chain to catch. Harsh light floods in, blinding us.

When our eyes come around we see-

SUGAR (CONT'D)
Who the hell are you?

SHARON
I'm not sure I should say.

SUGAR
Did we have relations?

SHARON
What?

SUGAR
Nevermind. What time is it?

SHARON
Two.

SUGAR
In the afternoon?

A beat.

SHARON
Yes. May I come in?

SUGAR
Not until you tell me who you are
and how you found me.

SHARON
You know how I found you.

Sugar thinks. Realizes.

SUGAR
Bastard...

SHARON
Now may I come in? My thighs are
beginning to sweat.

He sizes Sharon up, she seems harmless enough. He unlatches the chain and lets her in. She takes a gander around.

Three dozen empty beer cans, several empty liquor bottles. Overflowing ashtrays. The aftermath of a legendary bender.

Sugar nurses his hangover with a bottle of warm beer. Sees now that Sharon is pregnant. Gestures to the bed.

SUGAR

Want to sit?

SHARON

Absolutely not. I was told to speak plainly with you so that's what I'm going to do.

(as if recited 100 times)

My husband, his name is Wilson Monroe, I want you to kill him and the wench he's sleeping with.

Sugar nods at her pregnant stomach.

SUGAR

Already? The guy hasn't had the chance to fuck that kid's life up yet.

She self-consciously cross her arms over her stomach.

SHARON

I brought pictures of my husband. I don't know what the girl looks like.

SUGAR

You've been led you astray, lady. I'm out of that business. There are plenty of other rotten bastards who will do it for half the price.

SHARON

(re: the bomb)

You don't look like you're out.

Sugar looks despondently around the room.

SUGAR

Yeah I do.

SHARON

I'll pay you ten thousand dollars.

SUGAR

You don't get it.

SHARON
Twenty thousand.

SUGAR
Lady, it ain't about the money.

SHARON
Thirty thousand.

He hurls the beer bottle at the wall. It explodes. Silence.
He faces away, ashamed of his display of emotion.

After a long pause:

SUGAR
I got bigger fish to fry anyways.

When Sharon speaks next her tone has gone from one that is
demanding to one with tremendous concern.

SHARON
I think he's going to hurt my baby.

Sugar's ears perk up just enough for Sharon to press on.

SHARON (CONT'D)
He has said things that make me
worry.
(beat)
He can be violent.

Sugar takes this all in, then turns to face Sharon.

SUGAR
You said you brought pictures?

A PHOTOGRAPH OF WILSON

His foolish smile blissfully ignorant to the fate that
awaits. REVEAL Sugar looking at the picture. It rests on the
passenger seat of his car. He's parked in a--

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE PARKING LOT - DAY

He watches Wilson exit his car and enter the store. In
Sugar's hands we see a TRACKING DEVICE. Same kind he planted
on poor Charlie Nevins car.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Sugar casually steps from his car and approaches Wilson's
vehicle. He reaches under the bumper and slaps on the device.

EXT. ROOSEVELT'S - DUSK

Roosevelt's soul food joint nestled deep in South Los Angeles. His '74 Cadillac pulls into the lot. He enters the restaurant.

REVEAL, Sugar, across the street, watching.

MOMENTS LATER

Sugar has the hood of Roosevelt's Cadillac open. He attaches the CAR BOMB to the engine block. Gently closes the hood.

A SLIP OF PAPER stuck on the windshield grabs Sugar's attention.

It's a FLYER for a local church. He stares at it a beat. The irony giving him pause. Then he walks away.

MOMENTS LATER

Sugar's car peels away. Reveal a MAN ON A PAY PHONE.

Phone to ear.

MAN # 1
You'll never guess who I just saw.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

ANOTHER MAN is on the phone.

MAN # 2
I'll be damned.

INT. STRIP CLUB - DAY

ANOTHER MAN is on the phone.

MAN # 3
Sure it was him?

INT. AUTO REPAIR GARAGE - DAY

ANOTHER MAN is on the phone.

MAN # 4
Sonuvabitch.

INT. SPA - DAY

ANOTHER MAN getting a massage, phone to ear.

MAN # 5
Jackie Sugar.

INT. BAR - DAY

ANOTHER MAN on the phone.

MAN # 6
Jackie Sugar.

INT. ROOSEVELT'S - BACK OFFICE - DUSK

Roosevelt watches the local news. FLETCHER DONAGHUE.

FLETCHER
..that's right folks they're saying
it might even...are you ready..?
are you ready for this folks..?
hold onto your hats--they're saying
it might even....that's right,snow.

The phone RINGS. Roosevelt picks up. Listens. Hangs up.

A twisted little grin crawls across his face.

ROOSEVELT
Jackie Sugar.

--He straps on a BULLET PROOF VEST

--Loads slugs into the belly of a shotgun. Pumps the gauge.

EXT. ROOSEVELT'S - MOMENTS LATER

He exits the building, shotgun in hand. A SLIP OF PAPER stuck on his car windshield. He opens it up, reads.

It's the flyer for the local church.

On the cover, a picture of SAINT ANTHONY HOLDING INFANT JESUS. Push in on Roosevelt's eyes. They grow dark.

FLASHBACK. INT. ROOSEVELT'S HOUSE - 1966

10 year old Roosevelt stares up at the PAINTING as his family is massacred. BLOOD splatters across the holy picture.

BACK AT SCENE

He crumples up the flyer and tosses it to the ground.

ROOSEVELT
Cocksuckers.

Climbs in the car and fires up the engine--

The engine chokes and dies. He tries again. Same result. He tries one more time and the engine roars to life.

A SONG blasts from the stereo. The muffler spits an angry plume of exhaust.

He speeds away. We hang on the crumpled flyer....

FADE TO BLACK

INT. 1981 BUICK LESABRE - KQRW PARKING LOT - EVENING

A man wearing a trench coat and fedora canted to the left. Between his jaws rests a snubbed out cigar.

He watches an unassuming Wilson exit KQRW. He strikes a match, lighting up the cigar.

This is DICK KRUMHOLZ.

DICK KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
I had been following the poor devil
for three months without a whiff of
anything rotten.

TITLE CARD: (in children's handwriting)

Chapter Three: "The Joker and the Thief"

INT. DICK KRUMHOLZ'S BUICK - ANOTHER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Torrential rain pelts his roof. Lightning flashes in the sky.

DICK KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
It all began on a dark and stormy
night. I've been in this business a
long time and I've met a lot of
dames. Mean dames. Girls who had
been chewed up and spit out and
were out for blood. Dames like this
paid the bills. But *she* was by far
the meanest I'd had--

His narration breaks and his voice grows far away, as if he has removed his mouth from the microphone. He speaks off...

DICK KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
 What's that? You sure? Hell, I
 believe you're right.

He returns back to speaking to us.

DICK KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
 Apparently it wasn't dark and
 stormy at all.

INT. DICK KRUMHOLZ'S BUICK - PARKING LOT - DAY

Warm and sunny. Dick waits in the car.

DICK KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
 Bright and sunny in fact. With a
 slight breeze. But when it comes to
 matters of love and despair weather
 is rarely important.

Sharon gets in the back seat. She wears a wide-brimmed sun
 hat and over-sized sunglasses. Some sort of elegant disguise.

We'll notice at this point in the story she is NOT PREGNANT.

Krumholz eyes are cast out the window, not looking at her.

KRUMHOLZ
 Private Dick, Dick Krumholz.

SHARON
 I'm sorry?

KRUMHOLZ
 Private Dick, Dick Krumholz.

SHARON
 Dick...crumb holes? What are you sa-

KRUMHOLZ
 Krumholz.

SHARON
 Crumbles?

KRUMHOLZ
 Dick Krumholz, Private Dick.

SHARON
 You're a Private Dick named Dick
 Krumholz.

KRUMHOLZ
 That's right.

SHARON
Why didn't you just say so.

He twists around to look at Sharon for the first time. His eyes widen. For Dick Krumholz it's love at first sight.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
She was a ravenous beauty. The kind they start wars over. I had a bad ticker and one sight of her made the damn thing seize up.

INSIDE KRUMHOLZ'S CHEST

We see his HEART stop beating for a moment.

BACK IN CAR

SHARON
Please don't look at me.

Krumholz turns his eyes back out the window. Sharon's lips move but we can't hear the words...

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
She had this rotten feeling her husband was sleeping around. She had no proof and ever fewer details but it was all I needed.

LATER

Sharon places a picture of Wilson on the dashboard and exits the car. Krumholz watches her go. Yearning in his eyes.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
Tried as I might I stood little chance in ignoring my desires. How could I? She was a broken angel. Beautiful and raw and damaged and I was just an old lonely drunk with a bad heart.

SUPERIMPOSE: (in children's handwriting) Dick Krumholz

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

Sharon stands before the mirror. A frown tugging at her mouth. She examines her crows feet. She presses the bags under her eyes as if trying to trap her eroding beauty.

Before her sits a wide array of pills. Everything from vitamin E to fertility drugs. 15 to 20 pills in all.

Sharon gloomily swallows them one by one. The dreadful routine.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A WOMAN'S STOMACH. Pale. A tad flabby. Two latex gloved hands poke various areas of the flesh.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Uh-huh. Uh-huh....Uh-huh...

REVEAL: Sharon Monroe laying on the examination table. The same DOCTOR that saw Wilson now examines Sharon.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Uh huh....hmm....hmmmmmm...

SHARON
Is everything--

DOCTOR
--hold on just...another...second
there as I...uh-huh..hmmmm...

The doctor finishes and quickly snaps his gloves off.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Yep, everything is A - Okay.

SHARON
Really?

DOCTOR
Uh-huh.

SHARON
I don't understand. We stick to the
schedule. We hit the fertility
window hard. Sometimes I get him to
go twice in a night. I know at my
age we're fighting an uphill--

DOCTOR
And you said you're ovulating
regularly, right?

SHARON
Could set my watch to it.

DOCTOR
And you've cut back on the
caffeine?

SHARON
Completely. I don't touch the darn
stuff. I know at my age we're
fighting an uphill--

DOCTOR
Uh-huh. Yeah I have no idea.

SHARON
I don't understand. I check my
cervical mucus regularly--

DOCTOR
Oh, great. And..?

SHARON
It's wonderful.

DOCTOR
Uh-huh.

SHARON
I forbid him from wearing briefs.
There's no more soy in the house.
He bought himself a bicycle last
spring, guess what I did with that?

DOCTOR
Uh-huh. Well, sometimes things
happen, or don't happen, and
there's really no way to, uh--
there's no explanation.

SHARON
There's this car he's been working
on for months. It takes up the
entire garage--the bane of my
existence--don't get me started--
but do you think maybe the fumes or
chemicals...?

DOCTOR
Uh-huh, uh-huh, chemicals
certainly, might uh, there are many
factors--

SHARON
Could it be stress? Because he
plays with that darned thing when
he's stressed.

DOCTOR
Yeah. Uh-huh. Could be. I have no
idea.

Then, seemingly out of nowhere:

SHARON
I think my husband may be sleeping
with another woman. I don't know
what to do.

The Doctor's face pulls tight. He's beyond uncomfortable. He
takes a moment. Decides to avoid the question.

DOCTOR
Just, uh, keep your chin up and
keep on at it I guess. And cut back
on the caffeine.

He offers a lopsided smile.

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sharon reads a fertility book in bed. Oddly enough she still wears a full face of make-up. She pumps up her breasts so as to make the tops peek up from her shirt.

Wilson flushes the toilet, pads across the room, and without acknowledging Sharon's presence, climbs under the covers and turns out the light.

After a moment, Sharon begins to massage his thigh. He shifts and rolls over. She wiggles behind him. Kisses his neck.

WILSON
Hun...

She keeps kissing, nibbling his ear.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Hun, please. I have gas.

She turns over. Water in her eyes. The bitter sting of rejection.

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

Sharon downs her pills again. One by one. Each one harder to swallow than the one before.

EXT. OLD MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Krumholz leans against the wall, smoking. Wilson walks past him and enters the theater. Krumholz flicks his cigarette, follows.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
I was on him day and night.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Mostly empty. Wilson sits towards the front. An old movie plays. A moment of humor plays on screen. People laugh, Wilson stares at the screen, glumly.

REVEAL Krumholz in the back row, fedora pulled low, watching.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
I had never seen a squarer square
in all my years.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER PARKING LOT - DAY

Wilson heads towards his car, gets in, sees something,
pauses, gets back out, digs into his pockets and feeds the
meter.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
One time, one time I saw him come
back to his car to find he
accidentally forgot to pay for two
hours of parking. He feed the meter
before leaving.

Wilson's car drives away. Krumholz's eyes narrow, something
isn't right...

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
Guys like that don't cheat on their
wives. They just don't. Everyone
has dirt. Everyone. Not this guy.
This guy was a saint.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: A PAINTING OF SAINT ANTHONY HOLDING BABY JESUS

SHARON (O.S.)
...I forbid him from wearing
briefs. There's no more soy in the
house. He bought himself a bicycle
last spring, guess what I did with
that?

INT. MINISTER'S OFFICE - DAY

We now see that the painting hangs in a minister's office.

Sharon sits in front of an ancient MINISTER. He's pushing 85
and it's unclear if he can even hear what Sharon is saying.

He stares on blankly through his cataracts.

SHARON
At times, and shame on me for even
saying it, but at times I think he
doesn't even want a baby. At times
I think--well...

She pauses to chew on that last thought. Then continues:

SHARON (CONT'D)

And the doctor--I told you about him last time--he still doesn't have any explanation.

(getting emotional)

And I ask the Lord to grant me a beautiful healthy child that I can care for and cherish and love and I ask him time and time again but...there's nothing. There's nothing. Maybe he can't hear me or worse...

(lowers her voice)

...maybe he doesn't want me to have a child. And I'm not losing faith--I would never lose faith--but I ask and I ask and I...I'm a good person. I'm a good person.

Now with half her soul poured out she awaits a response.

The old minister blinks his tired eyes a few times. Finally, after an excruciating silence, he opens his mouth as if to respond but it becomes evident he was only stifling a yawn.

She looks up at the painting, the infant cradled in the arms of St. Anthony. That smug look on his face. Taunting her.

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sharon sits alone on the couch. A faint and sad smile on her face. That's because she's watching...

An OLD VIDEO of herself. The night she won MRS. IOWA 1996. She gazes at her young self, radiant and filled with joy.

On screen: she accepts the award. Covers her mouth, breaks into tears of joy. The video pauses. Silence.

We see Sharon's face in the reflection of the T.V. Older. Jaded. The radiance gone. The joy, too. Her chin quivers.

SHARON

Don't you dare...

She starts to cry. Harder now.

She SLAPS herself across the face.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Don't. Stop! Stop it, Sharon!

Her crying intensifies. She slaps herself again. Harder.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Stop it!

She bolts up from the couch and yanks her MRS. IOWA SASH from the mantel above the T.V. Furiously tries to tear it apart. The polyester doesn't budge. She twists and pulls at it, boiling with rage--hysteric.

She SCREAMS then bites into it--ripping it with her teeth--fabric tears--she shreds it into pieces--

BATHROOM

She charges in and dumps the torn pieces into the toilet. They float there silently, looking up at her.

Her anger gives way to sadness...then regret...then shame...

She stops crying. Her breathing slows. Calm. She bends down and slowly plucks the soggy pieces out of the toilet water.

SHARON (CONT'D)
(whisper)
I'm sorry...

She sinks onto the bathroom floor and quietly weeps.

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Wilson chews his oatmeal, reads the newspaper. Sharon peels potatoes. They do so in silence. Ignoring the other. Routine.

The only sound comes from the husking of the potatoes.

Sharon's peeling slows, then stops. The breach in sound brings Wilson's eyes up. Then, without fanfare, she vomits.

When finished, she looks at Wilson with a curious grin.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The doctor is poking Sharon's stomach.

DOCTOR
Uh-huh...Uh-huh...Uh-huh...

EXT. HALLYWAY - SAME

Outside the closed door. We hear Sharon SCREAM with joy.

INT. DICK KRUMHOLZ'S - APARTMENT - NIGHT (ANIMATED)

This scene is also set in classic COMIC BOOK ANIMATION.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
 When I got the news it felt as if
 my heart exploded.

A BLACK SILHOUETTE of Krumholz. In his chest, a big red beating heart. The heart EXPLODES. He collapses to his knees.

End animation.

SUPERIMPOSE: (in children's handwriting) 9 MONTHS LATER.

EXT. KQW - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Krumholz ambles up to Wilson's Ford Focus. He tries the handle. Locked. He conspicuously glances around the parking lot. All clear. From his pocket he shimmies out a tire wrench and SMASHES THE WINDOW. Pulls open the door, climbs in.

Flips down the visor, checks under the seat. Center console, glove compartment, etc. He finds nothing.

 KRUMHOLZ
 Damn.

He exits the car and sees the DRUNK HOMELESS MAN staring at him. He stares back a few moments then walks away.

EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY

Krumholz sits on a bench, staring out at the ocean. Sharon approaches, wearing her disguise, new born BABY in her arms.

She sits on the bench behind Krumholz. They sit back to back, trying to be inconspicuous.

 KRUMHOLZ
 I broke into his car like you
 asked.

 SHARON
 And?

 KRUMHOLZ
 And I tore it apart.

 SHARON
 And?

 KRUMHOLZ
 And I found nothing. He's clean.

 SHARON
 Impossible--I know he's up to
 something. He has to be.

Instinctively, he twists around to look at her.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Please don't do that.

He catches himself, turns back around.

KRUMHOLZ
I've been on his heels for over a year. He's routine as the 5:29 train. I know his next move before he does and not a lick of it smells foul.

SHARON
Why do you talk like that?

KRUMHOLZ
Like what?

SHARON
Nevermind.

KRUMHOLZ
Listen, doll, I don't like this scoundrel any more than you, but one thing I won't do is paint a square man crooked.

SHARON
Talk like that.

Again, instinctively, Krumholz twists around, perplexed.

KRUMHOLZ
Like what?

SHARON
Nevermind. And please don't look at me.

He turns back, sadly gazing out at the ocean.

KRUMHOLZ
(reciting)
So what is real in what is seen?
That which we see, that which think
we see, or something in between?

SHARON
What?

KRUMHOLZ
You have to be careful with these things.

(MORE)

KRUMHOLZ (CONT'D)
If you're hoping to find something
you might start seeing what you
want to see instead of what's in
front of you. And I don't have to
tell you how that ends.

SHARON
He's up to something. I know it.

KRUMHOLZ
Say I did catch your husband with
his pants down. I snapped pictures,
the whole nine. You going to leave
him?

Sharon hadn't thought that far. The idea saddens her.

SHARON
I don't know.

KRUMHOLZ
You need a man who's going to take
care of you. A real man.

She scoffs.

SHARON
All the real men are either dead or
married.

KRUMHOLZ
Perhaps. Or perhaps you're looking
in the wrong place. Perhaps he's
right under your nose. Or...right
over your shoulder.

SHARON
(not paying attention)
It could be a woman from
work...Have you ever seen him leave
the office with anyone? And I mean
anyone.

KRUMHOLZ
When was the last time you were
kissed? I don't mean any old smooch
I mean the kind of kiss that sends
off the fireworks. A kiss like the
world is about to end.

Still oblivious to his come on:

SHARON
A woman from work, why hadn't I
thought of that? I want you to
follow him double time now.
(MORE)

SHARON (CONT'D)
If you can't do that then... maybe
we need to rethink our arrangement.

With that she gets up and leaves. Krumholz sighs.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

From across the street, we watch Wilson, through the diner window, broken nose and all, discussing his plan with January.

REVEAL Krumholz watching them. He raises a camera to his eye.

SNAP. SNAP. SNAP.

KRUMHOLZ
Disco.

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Wilson holds a bag of frozen peas over his broken nose. Sharon dresses his bloody hands with a fresh bandage.

The NEWBORN BABY cries.

SHARON
So you were at the station to
apologize?

WILSON
That's not what happened.

SHARON
I thought you said you went back to
KQRW to apologize about--

WILSON
Yes, yes, that's why I left the
house--I mean--they didn't toss me
from the car, I jumped.

SHARON
The muggers?

WILSON
Yeah. Way out in the desert
somewhere. Had to walk through the
night to find a police station.

SHARON
How did you get the car back?

WILSON
Police found it this morning.
Joyriders. Kids.

Sharon frowns, genuinely concerned. She hushes the baby.

SHARON
My Goodness, Wilson...

WILSON
I know. The world we live in...

SHARON
Why didn't you go to a hospital?

WILSON
I just wanted to get home. I knew
you'd be worried.

A moment of warmth?

SHARON
Are you okay?

WILSON
Yeah, I just need a shower.

SHARON
Wilson?

WILSON
Yeah, hun?

She looks him square in the eye, into his heart, the way they used to look at each other when they were young and in love and had their whole lives ahead of them.

SHARON
If there's anything you want to
talk about I'm here for you.

Wilson tenderly touches her cheek.

WILSON
I know.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A SHOWER turns on. Sharon looks at Wilson's bloody shirt.

Looks at his jacket, that too is blood stained. She squirts some Tide on the stain and starts to scrub.

Something heavy and metal drops out and rattles to the floor. She picks it up. It's A ZIPPO LIGHTER. PUSSYCAT.

We push in rapidly on her eyes. They go black.

INT. DICK KRUMHOLZ'S CAR - PARKING LOT - DAY

Dick holds the Zippo lighter in his open palm. Looks up at Sharon who's awaiting his response. Her eyes red from tears.

KRUMHOLZ

I don't know how I could've missed it. I was on him like a button.

Krumholz ponders his next move, decides to proceed. From his coat he pulls PHOTOGRAPHS of Wilson and January at the diner.

SHARON

What's this?

Hard to see January's face but you can see her youthful, radiant hair. Wilson's boyish gaze is damning.

Krumholz uses the rearview mirror to gauge Sharon's reaction. A long silence passes, Sharon looks up from the photographs.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Remember when you asked me what I'd do if I caught him and I said I didn't know.

KRUMHOLZ

Yeah.

SHARON

Well now I know. And I want it to hurt.

A heavy beat. Krumholz shifts uncomfortably in his seat.

KRUMHOLZ

What are we talking about here?

SHARON

What do you mean?

KRUMHOLZ

What are we talking about here? You and me--what are we talking about?

SHARON

Are you...are you being serious?

KRUMHOLZ

I'm serious. Hell yeah, I'm being serious. Are you?

SHARON

What are you talking about?

KRUMHOLZ

That's what I'm asking, what are we talking about? Are you talking about what I think you're talking about or are you talking about something else? Because if you're not talking about what I think you're talking about..

SHARON

I think I'm talking about... what you think I'm talking about.

KRUMHOLZ

Okay. So what are we talking about?

A long pause. Sharon proceeds with caution.

SHARON

My husband. Dead. And the wench, too.

KRUMHOLZ

Okay, now we're talking.

SHARON

Can it be done?

KRUMHOLZ

For you, anything.

SHARON

So...when is this going to be...

KRUMHOLZ

You'll be a widow by the end of the week. Tops.

SHARON

And the wench, too.

KRUMHOLZ

Right, her too. You just have to talk to my guy.

SHARON

Your guy?

KRUMHOLZ

Yeah, my guy.

SHARON

What do you mean your guy?

KRUMHOLZ

I have a guy who--

Instinctively, he twists around to look at her, perplexed.

KRUMHOLZ (CONT'D)
You thought I was going to--

SHARON
Please don't look at me.

He catches himself , turns back around. Looks out at the lot.

KRUMHOLZ
You thought I was going to...

SHARON
Well how many people know about...

KRUMHOLZ
Just me.

SHARON
And your guy.

KRUMHOLZ
Yeah just me and him.

Sharon sighs. Looks out into the lot, woebegone. What has her life become and when did it all go south?

SHARON
What's his name?

KRUMHOLZ
Sugar. Jackie Sugar.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Krumholz trails Wilson, spying. Wilson pushes a cart filled with supplies.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
Even though the bastard would be dead in less than a week I kept eyes on him. I didn't trust him. He had a kid he didn't want and he didn't love the broad who gave it to him. Guys like that are shifty. Guys like that pay the bills.

Wilson examines several items on the shelf.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
When I saw him toss the duct tape in the cart I thought maybe he had a leaky pipe. When I saw the rope I figured maybe a tire swing for the kid...

Wilson takes down a SHOVEL and puts it in the cart.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
 ...But when I saw the shovel I
 thought--

He says out loud, under his breath:

KRUMHOLZ
 My God. He's going to plug the old
 dame.

INT. DICK KRUMHOLZ'S CAR - DUSK

He sits outside January's motel. Blowing in his hands.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
 It was a cold night. The winds
 kicking off the San Gabriels made
 it colder. They smelled of smoke
 and steel. The winds that is.

Wilson and January exit her motel and hurry his car.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
 But they also smelled like
 something else. They smelled like
 murder. Bloody murder.

Wilson's car lights come on. Krumholz starts his engine and
 then clutches his CHEST in pain.

KRUMHOLZ (V.O.)
 There it was again. Father time
 telling me to hang up the shoes.
 Not now. Not yet. I still had
 things to do.

He pulls out a snub nose PISTOL and places it on his lap.
 Then drives out behind Wilson's car

A single SNOWFLAKE drifts down and we....

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE CARD: (in children's handwriting)

Chapter 4: "The Night of All Nights"

Over the black we hear the ECHO OF A GUNSHOT.

EXT. OIL FIELDS - NIGHT

Wilson and January stand lit by the car headlights. Krumholz
 lay dead before them. They exchange stunned glances.

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Sharon sits in the dark, listening to the wall clock tick.
She's a nervous wreck.

On the mantel a picture of her and Wilson. Younger. In love.

She looks down at her baby in her arms.

Tears flood her eyes, her chin quivers and she starts to cry.
Then she loses control and sobs like an abandoned child.

KITCHEN

Panicking, she feverishly dials a number on the WALL PHONE.

SHARON

Pick up. Pick up. Pick up.

EXT. OIL FIELDS - SAME

Krumholz's phone rings--startling Wilson who FIRES six more
shots into his body. His phone still rings...

Shaken, Wilson fishes the phone out from the man's pocket.
Wilson's lips part, his eyes go wide--utter bewilderment.

The phone display screen reads: SHARON MONROE.

It starts to snow...

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Sharon get's the VOICE MAIL.

SHARON

(frantic)

It's me. I need you to, um...I need
you to tell your friend not to...

(starts losing it)

Oh Goodness. Oh my Goodness...

She cries. The baby screams.

EXT. OIL FIELDS - NIGHT

Wilson and January bury Krumholz in the hole they dug.

Wilson's skin is caked in sweat and dirt, illuminated by the
headlights, breath misting in the cold air.

EXT. WILSON'S CAR - OIL FIELDS - NIGHT

We are behind the car, low to the ground. Just under the rear bumper we can see a small TRACKING DEVICE. It blinks.

January enters the car. Wilson slams the trunk shut and gets in the car and accelerates away, kicking up dust.

INT. JACKIE SUGAR'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

In the passenger seat sits a GPS display screen. It blinks.

INT. ROOSEVELT DUVAY'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

He cruises the dark streets, shotgun resting to his side. Smoke starts to curl out from the vents.

The speedometer display lights FLICKER.

Huh? He pounds the dashboard. There, that's better.

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sharon releases her grip from the phone, she buries her head in her hands and slides down the wall, shaking.

She weeps. In the other room her baby does, too.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
But Dick Krumholz had done one
final deed before meeting his
demise...

FLASHBACK. INT. DICK KRUMHOLZ'S CAR - MOVING - EVENING

He tails Wilson's car. The OIL FIELDS are on the horizon. Krumholz has a cell phone to his ear.

KRUMHOLZ
Looks like he's headed to the oil
fields. I'll keep you posted.

INT. MONROE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Still on the ground, head in hands, weeping.

Then, she has an epiphany. She bolts up, runs to the door, pauses, realizing she forgot something--turns back

Scoops up the baby and leaves.

EXT. MONROE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

She stumbles out, baby in arms and skids to a stop at the sight of the falling snow. She looks up at the sky in wonder.

INT. ROOSEVELT DUVAY'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Several flurries of SNOW fall on his windshield.

His brow furrows.

INT. JACKIE SUGAR'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Sugar slows the car then pulls to the shoulder. He steps out, looks up into the sky, entranced.

He walks into an abutting field, snow falls all around him. Distance lights twinkle gold. The wind whispers.

He holds out his palm, a snowflake melts in his hand.

Then, not too far away, a BUSH ERUPTS INTO FLAME.

Sugar watches it burn. The orange fire dancing in the falling snow. An otherworldly moment of haunting beauty.

EXT. SHARON'S CAR - OIL FIELD'S NIGHT

Sharon's car winds through oil derricks.

INT. SHARON'S CAR - SAME

She peers into the night. Ahead, in the distance, she spots a CAR, headlights staring out into the dark.

MOMENTS LATER

Sharon's car pulls up next to Krumholz's car. The driver door is flung open and the headlights are still on.

Sharon steps from her car. On the ground she sees snowflakes drifting into a POOL OF BLOOD. She gasps.

Her eyes track with a messy trail of blood...

Several feet over is a patch of disrupted Earth. Clearly a burial sight. Sharon drops to her knees.

SHARON

No no no....

She crawls to a pile of dirt that she assumes is her dead husband.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Wilson!

She breaks down completely.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Wilson!

LONG SHOT

Her screams are muted by the howling wind.

LATER

We are CLOSE ON Sharon's face. Too close to tell where exactly she is.

She is done crying. Drained. Raw. There is snow in her eyelashes and wind in her hair. She gazes off....

SHARON (CONT'D)
As a little girl I would lay in bed at night and listen to the voices in the living room. Then I drifted off and it was just the smell of my father's pipe. I'd wake in the middle of the night and the voices would be gone and it was quiet. So quiet. And the room felt small and I couldn't breathe. And here I am...and it's still quiet.

She looks down. We see who she's been talking to: Her baby, wrapped in her arms.

Pull back, we see where she is now:

Standing on the LEDGE OF A BRIDGE. The hard ground 60 feet below. She says, to her first, last and only child:

SHARON (CONT'D)
Sorry.

She drifts over the edge--taking the baby with her.

INT. JACKIE SUGAR'S CAR - NIGHT

Sitting on the side of the road. Lost in thought, still shaken. He eyes the PISTOL on the passenger seat. Contemplating.

Wrestling the demons. The demons win.

He fires up the engine.

INT. WILSON'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

They have been driving in silence for sometime now. Both of them stunned and numb. Finally, January speaks:

JANUARY
Someone is going to find his car.

WILSON
It doesn't matter.

January looks to Wilson, wanting more.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Nothing matters.

Wilson's thoughts are in a deeper place. Remorseful, he speaks as if just now solving a riddle from long ago:

WILSON (CONT'D)
All she ever wanted me to do was
love her.

A long pause.

JANUARY
Run away with me.

Wilson smiles ever so gently. A brush of enlightenment.

WILSON
I've been running my whole life. I
want to die with my wife and kid.

More silence. January casts her gaze out the window.

JANUARY
She's a lucky gal.

WILSON
I'm a lucky guy.

INT. JACKIE SUGAR'S CAR - MOVING - SAME

He's several car lengths behind them. Snow falls silently.

INT. WILSON'S CAR - MOVING - SAME

JANUARY
How did it feel to kill him?

WILSON

I had to. I didn't know what he was going to do.

JANUARY

And how did it feel?

He shrugs.

WILSON

It didn't feel like anything.

A small smile turns the corners of January's lips. Somehow this answers everything.

JANUARY

Remember that poem I said I wrote?

WILSON

Yes.

JANUARY

I've decided I want to tell you now.

WILSON

Okay.

JANUARY

It didn't take long for them to grow tired of one another. It was hot. You could tell this because the dog sat in the corner in the one spot in the house that held a shadow and he wouldn't even get up to chase the cat. That's how hot it was. They had driven through the night to get there and now here they are and it's too hot to move. Too hot to breathe. Too hot to think. The only thing one could do was be mad at everyone around them. So this is what they did. And the cat watched them. And the dog watched the cat. When the rain broke from the sky the man fell to his knees, stricken with gratitude, as if God himself had kissed his face. Her eyes rolled, she hated his dramatic flair and very much thought colorful emotions belonged to women.

(MORE)

JANUARY (CONT'D)

She yearned for the strong and quiet type, her father was such and although he drank and smoked and slept around and hit her mother she liked him because he did so without saying much and without allowing his disposition to waver too far in either direction. Something about it gave her comfort. At least you knew what you would get. Nonetheless, she ended up with him-- the man on his knees shaking his fists towards the raining sky. She could have done worse...She could have done worse...

Wilson stops at a red light. A long stretch of silence passes. Blue Velvet by Jerry Vale pours out from the radio.

WILSON

I'm glad I met you.

JANUARY

I'm glad you met me, too.

Their gaze holds.

A CAR pulls up alongside them. The window SHATTERS--Wilson's head blows onto January's coat.

Time grinds to a halt and the following sequence plays in graceful slow motion.

The lush, nostalgic love song CRESCENDOS giving an ironic and eerie beauty to the unhinged violence unfolding before us.

Wilson's foot has slid off the break, the car drifts lazily ahead.

January tries to scream but her lungs betray her. She opens her door and staggers out into a field.

Sugar steps from his vehicle--following behind.

Her ankles buckle in the soggy dirt, she topples to her knees and her stockings split and this is when she begins to scream.

Wilson's blood drips off of her body and onto the fresh snow.

The song grows LOUDER.

Sugar stalks calmly behind, watching her futile attempt to crawl away. He raises his pistol and FIRES--

EXTREME SLOW MOTION--the gun recoils, Sugar's flesh ripples--a white hot flash erupts from the barrel--a bullet spirals out

--and plunges into January's back.

She drops flat on her face. He raises the pistol again, the kill shot, she rolls over, looks her killer in the eye...

Those eyes widen in disbelief.

JANUARY (CONT'D)

Dad?

Stone cold HORROR on Jackie's face.

Her eyes roll upward and she goes dark. The song ends...

FADE TO BLACK

We hear the sounds of a man sucking wind, panicking, carrying something heavy, footsteps plodding through dirt.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Sugar carries January's limp body in his arms. His legs tremble. A horrendous sweat on his face. Agony in his eyes.

SUGAR

Stay with me. Stay with me.

At his car, he lays her in the backseat. Fires up the engine and slams on the gas. Tires fishtail on the slick road.

INT. ROOSEVELT DUVAY'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Roosevelt driving. Eyes scanning. His display flickers, more smoke coming from the vents. He bangs the dash harder.

INT. JACKIE SUGAR'S CAR - MOVING REALLY FUCKING FAST - NIGHT

Racing through the BLINDING storm. His engine roars.

In the back seat, January slips in and out of consciousness. The white leather interior splashed red with blood.

The overhead light is on. The car is bright. There is nothing graceful about it. Nothing romantic. This is pure horror.

Sugar steers the car with one hand, his other holding her hand. They pass under a bridge.

SOMETHING in the road ahead. He SLAMS the brakes--sending the car skidding across wet asphalt.

ROADSIDE

Still. Quiet. After a moment:

Sugar slowly steps out from his car, covered in January's blood. He approaches the object blocking his path....

It's a woman. A dead woman. Sharon. Lying face up, a pool of blood, snow collecting on her serene face.

Sugar stares at her. He recognizes her...

A NOISE breaks his trance. Something he didn't see at first. In her arms she holds a BABY. It whimpers.

Sugar blinks, distrusting tired eyes. Again the child whimpers.

He lifts up the child into his arms. He looks into it's eyes. It looks back.

Headlights from an approaching car flood over them. Sugar looks up, blinded. The car stops. A FIGURE steps out.

Roosevelt Duvay, shotgun at the ready. He walks towards them but one look at the scene and he softens.

It's a familiar scene, one that has haunted him his entire life.

A man holding an infant child. Here it is. In the flesh.

In the snow.

20 feet back Roosevelt's car EXPLODES. He flinches. A fire ball soars up into the sky.

He slowly peels his eyes away from Sugar and looks back at his burning car. Then slowly turns his eyes back at Sugar.

Gazing into each others eyes, Roosevelt and Sugar share the kind of moment a thousand lifetimes could not provide.

Roosevelt lets the shotgun drop to his side.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
As they stood in the morning blood,
it was with a single breath that
all of the evil left their bodies.

And then, with a single breath, it's as if all the evil leaves their bodies.

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE CARD (in children's handwriting):

Chapter Five: "Happily Ever After"

OUTER SPACE

A spectacular EXPLOSION erupts from the suspended silence. A luminous wave of matter hurdles silently across the cosmos.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
This is where it all began.

INT. WILSON'S CAR - NIGHT

The way we first met him. He stares out into the night.

A detached, zen-like tranquility in his eyes. A grin on his face. We slowly rotate around and notice the back half of his head is missing...

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Our first image of Sharon.

CLOSE ON her beautiful brown eyes. We slowly spiral upwards. More of her body comes into frame, we realize her neck is broken. She lays on her back in a puddle of blood.

EXT. OIL FIELDS - NIGHT

Falling snow basks in the headbeams of Krumholz's car...and on the pile of dirt under which he is buried.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
And for some, this is where it
would end.

FLASHBACK. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Roosevelt holds his shot gun at Sugar. Snow falls around him, his skin painted orange by the burning car behind him.

Tears fall from his eyes.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Roosevelt Duvay was never seen
again. People have theories. None
of which are worth discussing.
Nobody knows. It's nice not
knowing, I think.

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

Moving left to right...

...Reveal Jackie Sugar sitting in the sand, watching an orange sunset over the water....reveal January to his side, her head resting on his shoulder...a BULLET SCAR on her back.

...reveal A LITTLE GIRL (9) sitting next to them...

The little girl, stands up and starts to walk, we follow her.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
What lays ahead remains to be seen.

She turns and looks directly at us, a sparkle in her eye.

LITTLE GIRL
But it will all make sense in the
end.

FLASHBACK. INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Wilson, 15 years younger, walks with his tray of food. Suddenly he collides with someone. His tray falls.

A GLASS OF MILK shatters on the floor.

He bends down to pick up his tray, the person he bumped into bends to help. It's a beautiful young woman. Sharon.

LITTLE GIRL (V.O.)
Don't worry, the end will come
sooner than you think.

Their gaze meets. Love at first sight.

CUT TO BLACK

A groovy old love song takes us out....