

LATE FOR DINNER

by

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SHOOTING SCRIPT
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LATE FOR DINNER

1 INT. HUSBAND KITCHEN - NIGHT

1

Half light from a low sitting moon drags little more than edges and outlines on the screen as a man shuffles past to poke in a cabinet, remove a glass, faintly jerk the ice box open for milk. Sitting down at a table, he flips on the oddest cowboy lamp. This is WILLIE HUSBAND...unshaven and disheveled hair, t-shirt and baggy pants. But most still count him handsome.

Wearing a faint milk mustache, Willie shifts his chair back on two legs, stretching to lift a shoebox and photo album from an old pine cabinet. As he pulls out a small load of photographs, Willie notices a single cigarette and a box of matches. Quickly, furtively, he glances back down the hall. Everything's clear and quiet.

2 INT. HUSBAND BEDROOM - NIGHT

2

JOY HUSBAND, Willie's wife, lays still, forcing her eyes closed only to open them again. Unable to sleep, she sits up quickly in bed, allowing us a better look at her young, soft face.

3 INT. HUSBAND BATHROOM - NIGHT

3

A striking man in his mid-twenties hesitantly stuffs a large pill in his mouth, raises a glass with a tiny bit of water in it, stares at the glass, finally lowering it before spitting the pill back in his hand. He sets it on the counter and employs a hefty Stanley tape measure to check the length of his now-sticky medication. This is FRANK LOVEGREN. He walks over to the toilet and unsnaps his pajamas.

4 INT. HUSBAND KITCHEN - NIGHT

4

Cigarette haze skirts the room as Ray Charles' 1962 hit tune "I Can't Stop Loving You" scatters weakly through an old RADIO beside the pine cabinet. Willie concentrates deeply, taking a profound drag on his cigarette, sifting through a puzzle of photographs: a pretty BABY wrapped in pink, Willie holds his daughter carefully with Joy's eyes on his smile... Willie and Frank, fly rods held cross-fire like dueling swords (FISHING BUDDIES, APRIL 1959)...shirtless and sweating, Willie restoring an old, crumbling adobe house with Frank busy at his side measuring 2x4's (OUR HOUSE, JUNE 1958)...Frank in the throes of cutting endless green with a rusted hand mower (FRANK AT WORK, AUGUST 1957)...Willie at work, dressed in white, getting out of his milkman's truck (DELIVERING THE GOODS, OCTOBER 1960).

4 As Willie stares at Frank in those photographs, rearranging them to make events flow in time, the song haunts with the words "For I'll just live my life with dreams of yesterday." 4

A faint noise in the background raises Willie quickly from his chair as he erratically swats the smokey air. He douses his cigarette in the milk and wraps what's left in a tissue from his pocket.

5 INT. HUSBAND HALL - NIGHT 5

Willie stands in front of a door. He lifts his hand to knock, then cheats the sound and scrapes the air. He leans his head in toward the door, his ear itching the wood.

WILLIE

Frank?

A little girl sleepily wanders up behind and gently sinks her knee into Willie's calf. It's meant to buckle his legs, but she's a bit small for effect.

JESSICA

Daddy...

Willie turns to face his daughter, JESSICA. For a second, he looks apprehensive, nearly trapped.

JESSICA

I have to go.

Willie's face eases as he sweeps the three-old up.

WILLIE

Pretty soon here Uncle Frank will be done with the wee-wee portion of the room.

The bathroom door opens and Frank peers out, disheartened... but when he looks your way, it's always square in the eye.

FRANK

Nothing. Sorry, Willie.

WILLIE

Trying's what made this country, Frank. You just turn right around there and get ahold of yourself. You gotta know Johnny Mathis would fill that jar as well as sing, if the doctor said so.

FRANK

Maybe if I could have a little more water...?

WILLIE

Well, Frank, maybe if I could twist myself into a pretzel, I'd be an attraction at carnivals. You know you had your quart's worth today, an' tomorrow morning I'll just let you explain to Dr. Pinkus where that eleven p.m. piss is. God knows what kinda trouble it'll be for us all.

FRANK

I'll try again. Just make up a story for me if I don't fill the cup. Okay?

Franks grins a secret smile and closes himself back into the bathroom. Willie leans forward and lip pecks his daughter on the cheek. He starts to walk from the hall.

WILLIE

What to do with you...? I'll just set you up over the kitchen sink. Don't tell mommy.

We lose sight of them as they leave the hall.

JESSICA (O.S.)

I have to go real potty. Right now!!

WILLIE (O.S.)

Oh, Frank!!

The screen PLUNGES INTO BLACK.

6 INT. HUSBAND BEDROOM - NIGHT

6

Silence. A door opens, allowing only a faint spray of light sloppily into the room. Willie tiptoes in through the half-light up to the shadowed image of Joy standing by the bed, staring out through a window. Behind her, he gently presses his knees against the back of hers, soft-toppling her toward him. She smiles as his arms wrap around her breasts and his nose snuggles the side of her cheek.

JOY

You said you'd quit. I can smell the smoke on you.

Joy slips from her husband's hands and pulls back the sheets on their worn old painted bed as Willie shuts the hall door.

WILLIE

Oh, that's just my privates reheating.

Sliding under cover, Joy flips Willie's side down...an invitation to dance? Willie drops his pants in the moonlight and pulls off his t-shirt, but as he gets in beside her he just can't stifle an update on Frank:

6

WILLIE

He woulda forgot that honkin' big pill, you know, the one he claims never leaves his throat, if his coughin' hadn'ta reminded me to remind him.

JOY

When you were working and so tired at night, he somehow always remembered...or I used to remind him.

WILLIE

When I was working, he wasn't so...he seemed to remember better.

JOY

Willie, I grew up with Frank. You're not the only one that loves him.

Not very romantic, this sudden turn of conversation. Willie rolls onto his side and stares for a moment at his wife. He slides the back of his hand down her arm.

JOY

We need to talk. About Frank.

WILLIE

Talk is for daylight.

JOY

You do know the truth, and I've never heard you talk about it. Daylight or no light.

There's some rustling of sheets as we HEAR the click of a radio dial, followed by soft, romantic music.

WILLIE

I felt a little bug in the bed.

JOY

I'm not in the mood, Willie, so you can just turn off that music and...

WILLIE

I thought I felt that hairy legged little creeper, just slowly makin' its horrifying way up an' up my unsuspectin' leg...

JOY
 Willie...don't...
 (suddenly)
 Ah...!! Oh!

6

Joy starts to laugh as they wrestle around in the dark. The laughter subsides as they kiss, deeply. A CRY! Jessica. Willie turns on the light...

JOY
 I can go. She just can't sleep
 with us every night, Willie.

WILLIE
 Seems to be we can't even sleep
 with us.

He pulls on his pants and scurries from the room, closing the door, leaving Joy staring blankly at his image, then turning to run her hand across the warm sheets where he lay.

7 INT. LITTLE JESSICA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

7

Willie enters...

WILLIE
 Well, who's yanking at your toe,
 sweetie?

JESSICA
 There's a man out there. I saw him
 in the window.

Willie rushes to the glass...

...SEES only a misty image of a MAN climbing into a car,
 tail lights filtering into the black night.

JESSICA
 I heard pounding.

Willie slides in bed next to his daughter, turning on a lamp as she lowers her head onto his shoulder.

WILLIE
 He's gone like a bad dream. I
 won't ever let him come back.
 Ever.

JESSICA
 He scared me, daddy.

WILLIE
 Whenever you get scared, I want you
 to think about me. Because I get
 scared too. I get so scared
 (MORE)

7
 WILLIE (cont'd)
 sometimes I just wanna climb in bed
 and pull those covers up over my
 face...and never come out again!

7

Willie's in hiding, and Jessica starts to giggle, searching for her father's face.

JESSICA
 Daddy! You're never scared!

He pops up quickly! Jessica jumps back. Slowly, Willie lowers his lips to his daughter's for a goodnight peck. Jess grabs hold and hugs him tightly.

JESSICA
 Maybe I could sleep with you and
 mommy?

WILLIE
 You just snuggle down and close
 your little peepers. I won't leave
 you.

8 EXT. HUSBAND HOUSE - NIGHT

8

Just beyond Jessica's window, affixed to the old wooden gate in the front yard, is a NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE...bristling and twisting at the harshness of the night wind.

9 INT. HUSBAND HALLWAY - LATER

9

Joy wanders sleepily down the hall tying a soft Pendleton robe around her waist as the faint echo of Ray Charles' voice seeps over the house: "...those happy hours, that we once knew, those happy hours still make me blue..."

10 INT. LITTLE JESSICA'S ROOM - SONG CONTINUES - NIGHT

10

Joy leans against the doorjamb, her face hiding her emotions: "...they say that time, heals a broken heart, but time has stood still since we been apart..." Jessica is fast asleep under the covers, Willie sprawled half-on, half-off the bed, arms splayed, also asleep. An unavoidable smile leaks across Joy's lips as she stares at silly Willie and the perfect face of her daughter.

11 INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT

11

The light's on, and Frank's sitting atop his bed, reading "Life Magazine," listening to a tiny transistor radio. There's a knock.

FRANK
Who is it, please?

11

Joy opens the door.

JOY
How 'bout some hot chocolate?

Frank's all smile as he gets up, and Joy wraps her arm around his waist, and together they walk out of the room.

FRANK
You know Willie and the doctors
don't let me drink milk...

JOY
Well, I'm your sister, and
sometimes it's all right.

12 EXT. DOWNTOWN SANTA FE, N.M. - DAY

12

Smartly attired in a soft-collar shirt and an old tie, Frank's standing outside Woolworth's, measuring things with his tape. The width of a section of sidewalk. The height of a letter in a window advertisement. The distance between himself and a post...

...as Willie emerges from the store with a surprise for Jess and a small Rexall bag in hand. Shaved, dressed in a sport coat with a Western string tie, he's a man with a mission this morning.

WILLIE
Let's go, we're late.

Willie crossing the street, Frank already several steps ahead...

FRANK
I'll carry my own pills, okay? I
won't lose 'em, I promise.

WILLIE
Yeah, right, sure.

They've reached a beat-up '54 Ford station wagon, Willie climbing behind the wheel...

13 INT. HUSBAND WAGON - DAY

13

...Frank getting in back, checking through the candy Willie's bought...

FRANK
I wish I had a dog.

WILLIE

No you don't.

13

FRANK

Oh, yes I do. Forty-one inches long.

Frank's tape cresting the front seat, calculating his precise distance from the dash as Willie works the troublesome ignition.

WILLIE

No you don't. Joy's not here, I don't see why you don't sit up front with me.

FRANK

I really do, Willie. I wish...

WILLIE

(exploding)

If you wish for anything, wish for two new kidneys! Okay?! Because yours are for nothin', Frank! Would you do that?! Do it for me? And stop wasting your time wishing for something I would just as soon run over. Okay?! Huh?!

Frank retracts his tape, hurt by the words. So Willie crumbles.

WILLIE

You want a dog, I'll buy you a dog.

FRANK

Who needs a dog?

WILLIE

You just say the word, Frank.

Frank looks over. His face lightens, and the engine fires up.

14 EXT. FREEMAN JOB SITE - DAY

14

Willie's Ford motors toward us down a narrow lane...but before a moment passes, a HUGE BULLDOZER wipes the foreground and ploughs away the last adobe bungalow on what was once a nice neighborhood street...

...as a five-year old boy named DONALD is being whacked out the door of a gigantic construction trailer by the open hand of his father, BART FREEMAN, dressed in an outlandish modern suit.

FREEMAN

14

How many times?! You're not to play with my buildings! They're not toys! They're mine. And stop staring at me. You just sit out by that rubbish and wait til your mother comes.

Willie's Ford bumps into view again along the dusty, rutted land as Donald comes down a plank sidewalk with a marble in his hand, tears in his eyes...

WILLIE

Mr. Freeman! Willard Husband. Thanks for seeing me on such short notice.

Freeman simply stares as Willie gets out so confidently.

WILLIE

(just to remind him)
Your bank sent me over so I could straighten everything out with you personally...

FREEMAN

I've got calls to make. Come in here and wait near Phyllis.

THE TRAILER DOOR SLAMS behind Freeman. Willie scales the plank porch, past an oasis of shrubbery around the strange mobile office, and edges inside as Frank sticks his head out the Ford window.

FRANK

What's that you got there?

Donald raises his open hand...

FRANK

A giant cat's eye!

15 INT. CONSTRUCTION TRAILER - DAY

15

Willie sits in a small ante-room on a very low, futuristic black chair, his rear sliding toward the edge of the slippery seat. Tucked behind a similar desk, PHYLLIS smokes a cigarette and types to beat the band. Nothing better to do for the moment, Willie picks up a newspaper strewn on the table beside him: "3,000 TROOPS PUT DOWN MISSISSIPPI RIOTING AS NEGRO ATTENDS CLASSES; JFK STANDS FIRM."

Now a beefy, crew-cut man in vaguely pink shorts and a work shirt comes into the trailer. DWANE. He gives Willie a serious looking over then leans his head into Freeman's office where his boss is on the phone:

15

FREEMAN

15

They want cash for the land. Hey, ssh, ssh, listen: if I needed to know, I'd've asked. I wanna see ten grand in this office this afternoon.

Freeman sets the phone down. A quiet monster.

DWANE

You want me in here, Mr. Freeman?

16 INT. TRAILER OFFICE - DAY

16

In response, Freeman takes a seat behind his huge, atomic-age conference table, starts flipping through blueprints and contractors' bids while behind him a reel-to-reel tape machine plays a selection of easy-listening favorites.

FREEMAN

No. Get out and trim my hedges. Phyllis? Send what's-his-name in please.

Dwane makes himself scarce. Phyllis looks at Willie, flicks her head. His turn. Willie gets up, breaches Freeman's inner sanctum...inching forward, past the "toys" little Donald almost had fun with: elaborate scale models of what seems to be a vast, high-rise city. Without looking up...

FREEMAN

So what's the big problem, Husband? I get a phone call, here you are.

WILLIE

Well...long story short? Your bank's got the mortgage on my house. And my job let go of me a couple months ago so I fell a little behind, then your Mr. Stanley offered to buy my house away from me, but instead I borrowed from relations to make up those back payments. So I guess you can imagine my surprise when I got this pack-your-bag notice on my gate last night.

(offering it up)

Even though it looks like I'm the only one left on the block without one of your purchasing signs on me.

FREEMAN

Please get to the point.

6

WILLIE

16

Oh...sure. Well, I was handed a receipt for the months I missed, after making them up and all, a carbon copy, but your bank didn't seem to have the original this morning so for some reason they directed me here, and I brought my carbon with me. I came here to clear things up.

Freeman holds out his hand, then rests his elbow on his desk while Willie produces the receipt from a zippered section of his wallet, hands it over.

FREEMAN

When I came here, seven years ago, fresh from New York, fresh outta college, you know what I did?

Freeman opens the top drawer of his desk and produces two cigars. He hands one to Willie as he bites and spits out the end of his own.

FREEMAN

I looked around and I saw people living in dirt houses. Little people in little dirt houses.

WILLIE

Whole earth's made of dirt.

FREEMAN

And I thought, with this backdrop, this is the New Frontier! What if I swept all that dirt away and built a real city?

Freeman flicks a big chromium lighter and extends the roaring flame to Willie, who awkwardly puffs the room into smoke as...

FREEMAN

A modern city. I'm a thinker. I'm a doer. And I'll tell you this, and this is the truth...

Freeman ignites his own cigar before turning the blowtorch on Willie's receipt...the paper in an ashtray, in flames in a flash, Willie trying hopelessly to save it!

FREEMAN

...I really can't have an unemployed milkman spoiling my vision. You got to try to understand me, son. I'm going to erect

(MORE)

5

FREEMAN (cont'd)
 this highrise tower, with my name
 on it, on that dirt your house is
 taking up.

16

Huge cigar still poking from his mouth, Willie stops trying to fight the blaze as he focuses on Freeman tamping his little "home lot" down with a scale model high rise.

FREEMAN
 I got you fired, Willard, and it's
 gonna be goddamn impossible for you
 to find another job. In this town
 anyway. Trust me on that. My
 offer still stands. Nine thousand
 dollars. Cash.

Willie removes the cigar from his mouth as he takes a single, hostile step toward Freeman.

WILLIE
 I'll say it again, it's not for
 sale. It never will be.

FREEMAN
 Fine. Then I own it now anyway.

Freeman dangles the foreclosure notice.

FREEMAN
 You have thirty days to leave.

He goes back to his blueprints and bids, the center of his universe. Stunned, Willie backs up, sits on the sofa. As he speaks, he purposefully places the burning end of his cigar on a nearby chair:

WILLIE
 I rebuilt that house from scratch,
 Frank and Joy helpin', and I'll be
 walkin' the halls of that house
 when you're dead and buried.

A torrent of smoke rises from the burning chair.

FREEMAN
 Hey!! Stop that! That's three-ply
 vinyl! Phyllis!! Get Dwane! This
 lunatic's marring my furniture!!

Willie calmly edges off the sofa to his knees, lowering the cigar to the rug, attempting his next flame trick.

FREEMAN
 He's on my shag!! I got that in
 Vegas, you dumb...Dwaane!!?

/ EXT. HUSBAND FORD - DAY

17

A view from across the hood and up toward the Freeman trailer as the door kicks open, and Dwane throws Willie out onto the gravel. Willie collects himself, almost goes for Dwane, but then walks quickly across the jobsite, climbs in his car and drives off with Frank still sitting in back.

18 INT. HUSBAND FORD - DAY

18

Blocks from the Freeman enterprise, and Willie is driving and fuming...until he bursts.

WILLIE

I flicked ashes on his desktop,
then ground 'em in! I'm far from
through with him, I can tell you
that much 'cause if he thinks he
can make me sit down and fold my
tail between my legs like his
little boy...

As if on cue, Donald's head drifts up into view in the backseat, eating a Three Musketeers. Though we see him, it's clear that Willie hasn't. Frank shushes the child with his finger...

WILLIE

...well, then he just don't know
how stiff my tail can be in
unfriendly gusts of bad times!

Willie looks back at Frank for a second, then to the road again. Suddenly his eyes open full frame, and he slams on the brakes as he turns back to Frank...and Donald.

FRANK

Can I keep him, Willie? He can
have my bed, and I'll sleep on the
couch. He doesn't eat much, being
small and all. Three feet one
inch.

According to Frank's tape measure.

WILLIE

Oh, Lord, Frank! Why?
(just because)
Now I gotta take him back. I gotta
call and explain...

DONALD

Can he be Uncle Willie?

WILLIE

...Uncle?

-8

FRANK

18

(to Donald)

That's our house right there.

Willie stares at his funny little house, fifty yards up the canyon.

19 INT. HUSBAND BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

19

WILLIE

We don't need his money, not like that...

JOY

No, and you said it: we don't need legs either, except damn if they don't make dancing a whole lot easier.

WILLIE

I'll get another job so fast his...

JOY

We don't need anymore trouble in our lives. Not one bit more, Willie. Don't make that call...

He's sitting on the bed, his hand on a phone that's been snaked in here from the hall. He glances at Frank and Donald playing Chinese Checkers out in the living room, Jess sitting on one of Frank's legs...

WILLIE

How many other people in town is he shovin' around with his money, Joy? Dressed in those clown suits, with his welcome smile, thinkin' he owns the air we breathe, Joy, thinkin' we're all afraid to...

JOY

We don't have the money to fight a man like that, Willie. And Frank doesn't have the time. Let's just go some place else and...

WILLIE

Go? Where? This is where...

JOY

I don't know! Where it doesn't snow. Hawaii. California. Anywhere we can just stop fighting and start living again.

49

WILLIE

19

But what would I be sayin' if I did that?

Willie and Joy look at each other, real love and empty hate.

DONALD

Help! My lollipop's stuck.

Frank slaps his leg as he laughs at Donald, the little boy with a finger stuck straight in his mouth, pressed tight against his cheek, doing a human doodle, a popular fad of the age. Jess slaps Frank's leg, too, then leans back against his chest. Joy, standing still in the middle of the bedroom, turns to the playing children. She looks beautiful in a white cotton dress, nervously working her hair up into a pony-tail...

...flustering Willie as he dials a few numbers, then sets the receiver back down.

WILLIE

I can't. I finally belong somewhere.

He glances back to Frank and the kids. They're staring into the room. He stands up and gently closes the door on the phone wire.

WILLIE

You and Frank were born here, but this is my home now too. You're askin' us to give up...I can't. How can we, after all the effort?

JOY

Everyone has to give up something! Sometime! Sooner or later, we all give up on something.

WILLIE

Like you've given up on Frank. I won't, Joy.

Joy takes a step away from Willie, upset by the words. It's fairly obvious that Willie wishes he'd kept his mouth shut. He makes a feint move toward his wife, stopping far short.

JOY

That's an awful lie.

WILLIE

I'm sorry. There's always reason to just hope, isn't there? I mean, isn't there?

.9

JOY

19

You take six months of mortgage money and you take Frank to Texas after every doctor in Santa Fe and Albuquerque tells you...:

WILLIE

I really gotta make this call, Joy, I gotta get that boy back to his father.

Willie sits back down on the bed, picks the phone up once more and dials as Joy just starts to talk, trembling....

JOY

A part of me fell in love with you because of the way you protected him. When he brought you home...walking into my mother's house with your bloody nose and torn shirt...and Frank said he'd made his first friend. No one but family ever stood up for him.

(on the edge)

That was the time to fight.

Willie wants so much to lessen the tension, to ease the tears...

WILLIE

Who'da ever thought? Fresh outta high school. An innocent child, like you. And me, being what I am.

JOY

I looked at you...and I saw someone so good...with those whiskers and every answer I could ever ask a question for.

WILLIE

(slightly startled by someone picking up)

Ah...Phyllis, is it? Let me speak to Mr. Freeman. Willard Husband.

(looking up at Joy)

You told me you were gonna marry me before I even knew I loved you.

JOY

And you laughed so hard...I hope you still love me.

Joy wipes a tear from her eye. She opens the door and walks out of the room before Willie can say anything. Frank and Donald are back at the game. Willie adjusts the receiver to his mouth and clears his throat from the emotion welling inside.

.9

WILLIE

19

This is Willard Husband again.

He stands and edges the door closed with his foot.

WILLIE

I called to tell you...I...

He stops short as he stares for a moment at the closed door.

WILLIE

(softly)

I'll take the money for my house.
We've decided... we don't wanna
live here anymore. But I want it
today.

(uneasily and quickly)

Oh, yeah, that. Well, somehow that
little rascal a yours wedged
himself in the back seat of my
vehicle. I'd like to return him
right away so you can abuse him at
your leisure. What!? Mr. Freeman,
we did not...huh?! No! Wait...why
Fort Marcy? What time? Why can't
I just bring him to your...Mr.
Freeman? Hello...?

Willie sets down the receiver. Trapped, he checks the time,
then glances around at the rest of the room. He walks to
the door with the clunky telephone, opens it.

20 INT. HUSBAND HALL/KITCHEN - DAY

20

Joy's starting a casserole, trying to be busy. Willie puts
the phone back in a hallway niche, locking eyes with Frank,
out in the living room, for just an awkward moment before he
moves on into the kitchen and edges up behind Joy, a whisper
away, flexing his knees as if to buckle hers, to make a
joke, to make her smile. But the gesture's only a shadow of
the real thing because suddenly it's all become so frighten-
ing and serious.

WILLIE

I had an inkling he'd take Donald's
joy ride wrong.

JOY

He thinks you kidnapped his son.
On top of everything else.

WILLIE

What's that? Your macaroni?
Great, then we'll all sit down at
supper then, just the four of us
later, okay, hash this mess out,
okay?

) Joy sets the parmesan box on the counter. Willie tugs lightly on her pony-tail...then slowly turns her his way. 20

JOY
What's going to happen to us?

WILLIE
You know, just for testimony stand conversation, the boy's never said once he wants to go home. Not once.

Willie lowers his lips to hers. They kiss, but it seems inappropriate, scary.

DONALD
Mr. Bus Driver, may I come in?

Frank HOOTS as Donald scrunches his face together with both hands--another amazing, living doodle.

WILLIE
We just gotta figure out the right one to pick, Joy. We got a lotta choices.

She looks up at him, seeing his simple dreams in his face.

JOY
No we don't.

She turns away, back to the food. Willie wants to touch her, hold her, but finds himself slowly slipping away.

21 EXT. FORT MARCY - AFTERNOON 21

High on top of a flat hill, above the slight city of Santa Fe, Willie stands beside his car as a chromed-out, red and white Cadillac climbs the long, steep road leading to Fort Marcy. Anxiously, Willie turns in search of something.

WILLIE
You stay away from the edge of that hill! You hear me?! You shouldn't make me worry.

There's a sudden sound of MOUTH GUN FIRE, then:

FRANK (V.O.)
They got me! I'm dying!

Willie wipes some sweat above his lip as the gaudy Cadillac inches to a halt thirty feet in front of him. Bart Freeman steps out of the car and walks forward, stopping ten feet short of Willie.

:1

FREEMAN

Where's my son?

21

WILLIE

You know, your little boy's nothing to do with the money. I didn't even know he hopped in my wagon.

FREEMAN

Get me the kid.

WILLIE

He's with Frank. He wouldn't come without Frank. Oh, Frank!

From behind a distant rock, Frank and Donald rise, take each other's hands and start walking toward fidgeting Willie.

WILLIE

Hey, I don't like anything about this. I'd just as soon stay and find other feet in town willing to help kick your butt...only it's not just me. So, why don't you take your little boy, gimme my money, and we all go live our lives.

Freeman lifts a sealed envelope from his jacket and holds it out for Willie...who walks cautiously forward. The distance closes between them. Wind blows a swirl of dust.

FREEMAN

When I called the police to tell them this crazy man wanted fifteen thousand dollars before he gave me my son back, they seemed to think you crossed a line. I'm sure they're asking your wife right now where the hell you might be.

Willie is astounded and slightly frightened by Freeman's calm arrogance.

WILLIE

I'll just have your little boy tell the truth.

Freeman lifts an arm, snaps his fingers. The Cadillac back door bursts open, and Dwane, pink shorts/work-shirt and revolver, thrusts himself out onto his knees, aiming squarely at Willie. Smiling, Freeman now pulls a gun from behind his own back. Donald grabs Frank's leg in terror as Dwane alters his aim from Willie to Frank.

FREEMAN

My son will say what I tell him to say. That's the best part of family.

1

WILLIE

This isn't...what...I'm only asking
the money you offered me before!
Nine thousand...

21

FREEMAN

Hey! You blew your nine when you
burned my shag and my vinyl. You
won't believe how you're gonna pay
for that.

(motioning with his gun)

Move over to the car. Imagine that
headline tomorrow morning, huh,
Dwane? "Bart Freeman Captures
Deranged Kidnappers Of Tiny Son,
Foins Ransom At Gunpoint!" You
gave up any hope of a future by
messing with me, Husband.

WILLIE

No....no way....not like this...

In absolute frustration, Willie turns to leave it all
behind, but suddenly his body twists around, and his fingers
latch on to the barrel of that gun! Freeman falls back as
the weapon flips through the air, twisting, barrel over
handle. Frantically Willie stretches his fingers, then
locks them onto the dangerously spinning firearm! And so
Dwane alters his aim in a panic, from Frank back to Willie,
as Willie grasps the gun and his reach throws him off
balance, forcing him to his knees. Dwane FIRES! The shot
lands squarely in Willie's shoulder, tossing him to the
dirt!

FRANK

Willie???

Frank breaks free of Donald's paralyzed grip as Willie
raises his head in the cloud of dust to see Dwane, the crazy
gardener, SHOOT at Frank! He misses and readjusts for the
second bullet.

WILLIE

No!! Please!!

Willie is forced to aim and FIRE, blasting Dwane's work-
shirt bloody, dropping him from his knees to his face.
Freeman is inching toward Willie, but Frank strikes him in
the chest with both hands pressed together!

FRANK

Willie, you're bleeding, Willie!

WILLIE

I'm okay, Frank...I just been
brutally grazed is all. We gotta
get ourselves back to Joy and
Jess...

21 Frank's very scared, hurriedly carrying Willie to their car, the driver's door, setting him down behind the wheel. 21

WILLIE
Go see if I hurt that man to death,
okay?

FRANK
What about Donald...? And our
money?

WILLIE
The money's not ours, Frank, an' we
have to leave him...

Frank understands, rushes to check on what looks to be a dead gardener as Freeman sits up, holding his jaw.

DONALD
I don't wanna stay!

FRANK
Willie says we can't keep you. I
would if I could though. We're
friends.

WILLIE
Could you cut the goodbyes short
before I happen to bleed to death
here?

22 INT. HUSBAND FORD - AFTERNOON 22

Frank slides across the back seat and shuts the door then looks ahead at sweaty, dusty, wounded Willie.

WILLIE
I wish to high heaven you followed
through on your driver's education
classes, Frank. Boy, would that
come in handy right now.

FRANK
I could try, Willie, but it
wouldn't be legal.

23 EXT. FORT MARCY - AFTERNOON 23

Freeman glances at Dwane, then reaches down for his gun as Willie's Ford lurches forward.

FREEMAN
You killed my gardener!!

He aims, but Donald jumps him from a full run.

3 DONALD 23
I hate you! I hate you!

24 INT. HUSBAND FORD - AFTERNOON 24

Pain showing on his face, Willie turns the wheel as they make the corner to Canyon Drive, a winding lane of wonderful little adobes. Willie hits the brake. To his dismay the POLICE Freeman promised are indeed at his house. One officer talks casually to Joy at the front gate, his back to the street, as the other plays catch with Jessica in the drive.

FRANK
Willie, we're in trouble. They got
Joy and Jess.

WILLIE
No, no, it's just me they want...
they think I killed a gardener and
borrowed a young boy.

A BIG TRUCK coming up behind them, forcing Willie to drive again, right toward the house...

FRANK
So we'll just tell them the truth.
We'll tell them that. Stop,
Willie!

Jessica's face grows alarmed as she sees the approaching car with her dad and Uncle Frank inside. She overthrows the ball, sending one policeman shagging back deep in the yard as Frank edges his face close to the window and waves...but Jess shakes her head in warning, and Willie slowly passes, pushed onward by the truck to his rear. He makes one last stab at a glance at his wife...who never does see him...then he turns the corner and all that's familiar...vanishes.

25 INT. HUSBAND KITCHEN - LATE DAY 25

Jessica sets four glasses carefully on the table. Beside four place settings. Joy checks her casserole in the oven while a YOUNG POLICEMAN awkwardly stands in a corner. The HALL PHONE RINGS! The policeman stiffens to attention as he faces Joy. He stares at her for three more rings, but she remains totally occupied at the stove.

POLICEMAN
Mrs. Husband...you said you'd
answer it.

JOY
I changed my mind.

5 Frustrated, the policeman finally gives up on Joy and grabs the phone as he turns to face Jess...like an intruder. 25

POLICEMAN

Hello?

26 EXT. PHONE BOOTH/DIRT PARKING AREA - LATE DAY 26

Frank is at a pay phone, clicking his tape measure, puzzled for a moment by the stranger's voice, as Willie, far in the background, eases himself out of the station wagon and stumbles slightly before walking out of view.

FRANK

Who's this? ...

(pause)

For me to know and you to find out.

Frank quickly hangs up the phone and walks off the stoop of a small gift shack cluttered with dried chilis and wood carvings of animals and Christ. As he nears the car, parked in the dirt lot next to the Santuario De Chimayo, he panics: Willie is missing! Frank opens the door to the Ford then scans the landscape for a clue. The Santuario?

7 INT. SANTUARIO DE CHIMAYO - LATE DAY 27

Frank comes inside, into a little passage hung with crutches and canes and hand-made crosses. He moves forward, looks into the church proper where he sees...

...Willie slumped in a pew, before a colorful, primitive altar where an OLD MEXICAN WOMAN lights candles. Frank comes over to his friend, sits quietly in the peaceful space.

FRANK

Willie, a policeman answered our phone. But I didn't talk to him, really. Was that okay? Willie?

Willie stirs, finally, his head lifting as a wash of candlelight flutters his dazed, ashen face into near translucence.

WILLIE

Where are we?

FRANK

I don't know. In a funny church.

Close to delirium, Willie works to focus...

WILLIE

27

Well, we can't get help anywhere near to here. I'll have to drive us a ways to safety...then buy a two-wheeler for Jess. Training wheels and ribbons dangling from the grips. Make her feel like she's coming all this way for a special reason.

FRANK

Can we go to the ocean? That's where Joy always wanted us to live. You remember.

Willie stands, clutches the small bloody blanket over his shoulder as Frank helps him walk.

WILLIE

California...well, see how darn smart she is, Frank? We just follow those signs to the Promised Land and say we got caught in some crossfire at one of those new Negro rights movements. No one's gonna think twice about another bullet wounded body out there in sunny California...

28 EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

28

The pencil road strips a thin black line through the thicket of tall pine and mountain peaks. Willie's Ford wobbles down the winding road as we HEAR Dean Martin start to bumble in through some rolling, train-time drums: "Find a wheel, as it goes 'round, 'round, 'round, as it skims along, with a happy sound. As it grows, along the ground, ground, ground, 'till it leads you to the one you love..."

29 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

29

The moon looms absolute in a black sky as the Ford bullets through the folds of night, and DEAN MARTIN SINGS US INTO...

30 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

30

Willie's car blasting up over the horizon while the heat of the morning sun shakes the air in floating waves. And now the car gently edges over the yellow line, veering slowly toward the flat cliffed landscape beyond...

1 INT./EXT. HUSBAND FORD - MORNING

31

Sheetrock-white and feverish, Willie amazingly still clings tight to the steering wheel with both hands as he races the rising sun, Frank slowly waking up in the back seat, rubbing his eyes as he looks at Willie. The living-dead pallor of his friend ignites a new sense of fear in Frank.

FRANK

It's strange to drive on this side
of the road.

Willie jerks the car back into the proper lane as a "LEAVING ARIZONA" sign registers off to the side of the road. Frank turning his head to notice another big bold announcement: "CALIFORNIA WELCOMES YOU!" He leans over the front seat to check out Willie's wound then lightly runs his hand down the back of Willie's hair, to cheer him up.

FRANK

Willie?

WILLIE

What's that, Frank?

FRANK

Can I stop and take a piss in the
promised land?

Willie coughs...and the Ford starts to veer toward a steep embankment. Willie slaps on the brake and twists the wheel frantically, about to plunge them into a trough! Frank straightens stiff, watching the car slide to an uneasy stop a foot from the precipice edge. Willie cranes his neck for a view of the ground below, then gently rests his forehead on the steering wheel.

FRANK

(terrified)

That's okay, I can hold it.

Willie raises his head and wipes the sweat from his forehead as he glances at his shoulder.

WILLIE

I seem to be burnin' up right
inside my skin here, Frank. I
gotta talk to Joy about a doctor
...have we seen a phone?

FRANK

(still very frightened)

Maybe I can drive us to one...I can
try.

WILLIE

Wouldn't that be somethin'?

31 Slowly, so carefully, Frank climbs out of the car and 31
crosses around back, as Willie slides across the front seat,
and Frank positions himself behind the wheel.

WILLIE

Joy would be so proud of you. That
you would make this effort.

Frank looks up at the headliner, down at the floor, measures
the diameter of the steering wheel with his tape.

FRANK

Do we ever get to go back home?
No, probably not, huh?

Willie winces as a pain shoots through his body.

WILLIE

Okay, maybe things aren't going all
our way, but they easily could be
worse...I sure as hell don't know
how, except the right attitude is
looking for all the good coming
down that pike, Frank. Just
waitin' for us, tomorrow.

Frank's takes that in...then keys the ignition and stares at
the dashboard. Stares and stares. Willie reaches over and
pulls the gear shift into reverse.

WILLIE

Okay, now the pedal.

Frank presses the brake pedal as he closes his eyes.

WILLIE

Well, Frank, we're not moving here,
maybe it's the other one.

Without opening his eyes, Frank lets up on the brake and
floors the car backward, and they jumble up to the lip of
another savage gulley across the road.

WILLIE

The other one!! The other one!!

Frank lets up on the accelerator and grinds his foot onto
the brake, hiding his hands under his thighs. Wheels spin
in dirt, billowing a dust cloud high as Willie slowly eases
the shift into drive.

WILLIE

Beautiful. That was...superior
driving. Okay, now slowly, very
slowly, the other one.

31 Opening only one eye and with both hands under his thighs, Frank eases down the accelerator while Willie painfully steers the car out of danger...and back onto the open road. 31

32 EXT. POMONA STREET - NIGHT 32

A modest intersection with simple buildings and very few PEOPLE in sight. Willie's Ford stops right in its lane, out front of Ruth and Charlie's News and Candy, across the street from Evelyn's Bridal Faire.

33 INT. HUSBAND FORD - NIGHT 33

Frank slips the stick up into park, then turns around and climbs onto his knees to look at Willie splayed out on the back seat, his fevered head resting on the bundled small blanket. Gently, Frank lowers his hand to wipe Willie's face, but Willie bolts up at the touch.

WILLIE

Now where are we?!

FRANK

A town called Pomona.

Willie tries to make sense of where they've stopped, the time lost.

WILLIE

We need to be in Los Angeles, Frank. So I can have my open wounds looked at without anyone being the wiser.

FRANK

But you kept asking for Milk Duds.

WILLIE

Milk Duds! I'm infested with lead, and you stop for Milk Duds?

FRANK

Okay, we won't. Los Angeles is twenty miles it said on the sign.

Frank plops himself back behind the wheel.

WILLIE

Wait a minute...okay, now you got me thinkin' about 'em.

Willie takes a deep, tricky breath...drifts again...

WILLIE

You know what's one of the first things we gotta do in Los Angeles?

3 Frank stares back at his wounded friend...tries to comfort. 33

FRANK

Look for where Johnny Mathis lives.
He's my favorite.
(singing quietly)
Chances are...

WILLIE

Buy a flowered dress for Joy.
Pleated...what have I done?

FRANK

'Cause I wear a silly grin, the
moment you come into view. Chances
are you'll think that I'm in love
with you.

A slight smile works up on Willie as he closes his eyes and
curls his body into a fetal position.

WILLIE

Listen, Frank, I, I was half
thinkin' back here and, well, what
I was thinkin' was that Joy and
Jess are home all alone without a
place to live...no money, no
home...

FRANK

They need our help.

Frank pulls out his tape, to comfort himself.

WILLIE

You bet. Suppose maybe...if I had
to stay here to recuperate back to
perfection and all, Frank, how
would you get back home?

FRANK

I'd wait for you, Willie...

WILLIE

(some anger)
If you had to leave me.

FRANK

(frustrated)
I would...I could take the bus...

WILLIE

How would you find the bus?

FRANK

At the bus stop.

33

WILLIE
Or in a phone book.

33

FRANK
Under buses! I learn the street, I
ask people where the street is, I
buy a ticket, I climb up into the
bus and then...
(scrunching his face)
"Mr. Bus Driver, can I come in?!"
And then I'm home.

Willie slides his hand up and weakly pulls at Frank's elbow.

WILLIE
Don't. Your face could freeze like
that.
(a cough, scary)
Tell Joy I'm sorry...that I really
still do love her.

Willie's voice is raspy. He raises his head with what
little strength he has left.

WILLIE
I want my Milk Duds.

FRANK
Okay. Be right back. Stay put.

Frank climbs out, carefully closes the door, takes off. A
moment...Willie glances down at his wound again, then
slowly, in agony, slides to the edge of the back seat and
opens the door.

34 EXT. POMONA STREET - NIGHT

34

As Frank runs toward the variety store, a young man named
LELAND SHAKES exits, reading a magazine and clutching two
paper sacks. He's wearing no-nonsense coveralls and without
paying attention to anything other than his "Popular
Science," he bumps headlong into worried, hurried Frank.

LELAND
You own the entire sidewalk?!
Can't manage to make room for me?

FRANK
I need a bus and Milk Duds! A bus
and Milk Duds...

LELAND
Idiot.

But Frank's gone, hustling off, and Leland Shakes continues
down the sidewalk to a doctors' office, its twin doors let-

tered "Dr. Daniel Chilblains/Dr. Christopher Underwood Cry- 34
onic Research and Electromedicine."

35 INT. DOCTORS' LOBBY - NIGHT 35

Leland enters a reception area common to a pair of offices,
heads for the door marked "Dr. Underwood." He pokes his
nose in just to turn off the light, to save electricity.

LELAND

A penny saved, a penny earned.

Point made, Leland goes for the other door, across the
lobby: "Dr. Chilblains."

36 INT. DAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT 36

Papers and books cascade over the jumbled little room. A
disheveled man, DANIEL CHILBLAINS, leans back in his chair,
puffing on a Camel, talking on the telephone as Leland
barges in...

DAN

...no, Christopher, listen, just
listen. It's so obvious.
Vitrification. If we vitrify
instead of freezing 'em, then
there's no tissue fracture from
thermal stress, not even any
crystallization...

LELAND

Here's your Pepto Bismol.
(one of the bags)
You gave me ten, and the Pepto
Bismol was one thirty-five so that
leaves...
(making change)
...eight sixty-five...

DAN

Leland, just a second, I'm
listening to...

LELAND

...but also I got a root beer and
the new Popular Science which I
think the office should pay for.

DAN

What...? I'm talking to Chris,
Leland, please...
(into the phone)
All I need to know, and I think I
just figured it out...exactly, yes,
(MORE)

.6

DAN (cont'd)

36

yes, exactly: how do we use just enough cryoprotectant to guarantee real live organ vitrification without toxicity? We use hydrostatic pressure. Then we introduce extracellular agents...

Now Leland's making an elaborate show of checking his watch. So Dan swivels away, trying to focus on the phone...and Leland, miffed, steps to the window, peers outside through the venetian blinds where he can...

...SEE Willie's Ford jerking slowly into motion...

DAN

But here's my brainstorm, Chris: small concentrations of propylene glycol. Yes, it will too. I know it will, Chris. And then we warm 'em and they pop back to life, good as new. Almost. Ponder it. I'll see you in a bit at the lab.

He hangs up the phone, thinks up at the ceiling.

LELAND

Not the root beer. That's mine. I paid for it myself. But I'm taking seventy-five cents out for the Popular Science because you guys can deduct it. So that leaves seven ninety-five. Here. You wanna count it?

DAN

(tuning in)

I trust you, Leland. Just drive over to the lab and start chilling down the big coils, okay?

LELAND

Oh, sure, easier said than done. That's an Indian head nickel there by the way.

(in Dan's change)

I wouldn't spend it if I was you.

(heading out, stopping)

Chris left his light on. Lucky I caught it.

He's gone. Thank God. Dan grabs his paper sack from Ruth and Charlie's, goes for his Pepto Bismol. Not a prayer: Leland's root beer's inside.

DAN

For God's sake, Leland...

6 Dan stands up and goes out after his peculiar assistant... 36

37 EXT. POMONA STREET - NIGHT 37

Dan hits the sidewalk, but Leland's fast, his pickup already whipping out, passing in front of the variety store where Frank's emerging, sneaking a Milk Dud, walking back to the Ford. But the Ford's not there. Frank stops in his tracks, then sees something!

Across the street, skewed across three parking spaces, the front bumper touching a light pole, is their station wagon. The engine is on, the door is open, and Willie's flat out on the pavement. Frank runs over, picks him up. Dan's watched all this...so now he's walking toward them...

FRANK

Willie?! Find a bus, find a bus...
a phone book...

Frank's turning in circles. This is serious. Dan takes a quick look at the gunshot wound.

DAN

Bring him with me, com'on...

For a moment Frank just stares at the kind stranger who's shutting off Willie's ignition, closing their car door...but then he follows the man, carrying Willie across the street toward the doctors' office.

38 INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - NIGHT 38

DAN

Easy, easy, lay him down...

Frank obeying, placing Willie very carefully on a nice padded table, then staggering back himself, dizzy.

39 EXT. POMONA STREET - NIGHT 39

The Husband station wagon. Sitting on the lonely street, resting at its odd angle against the light pole...as a MAN walks by with his DOG on a leash. Something's not right, and he knows it.

40 INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - NIGHT 40

FRANK

And we were playing games, Donald,
me and Jess, we played Chinese
Checkers and Donald taught me how
to do human doodles...

(MORE)

40

FRANK (cont'd)

40

(like this...)

...but Willie said we had to take him back. Except he wouldn't go without me. So then we went up to a hill, and Willie wanted his money.

Frank's sitting warily on a chair, fidgeting his tape measure. Beyond a frosted-glass partition there's an examining table where Dan's bandaging up an unconscious Willie...

FRANK

And then there was this gardener with a gun. And both of them had real guns. And then they shot Willie. And then Willie had to shoot the man, because he was going to kill me.

DAN

Frank...did you kidnap the boy?

FRANK

I didn't mean to. I liked him.

Done with Willie now, Dan comes round to turn his attention full on Frank, probing thyroids and kidneys...

DAN

Take your shirt off, Frank.

FRANK

(starting to unbutton)

Okay, Dan.

DAN

Do you remember what the doctors called your sickness, Frank?

FRANK

Sure, Willie taught me...

(pointing to Dan)

You're e...

(then at himself)

...me a.

DAN

Uremia. Nephritis.

FRANK

Hey! And that too. That's good, Dan. I need pills for it. They get stuck in my throat. But no one believes me. An' I'm not supposed to have milk or too much water.

0

DAN

Do you ever vomit?

40

FRANK

I have to, sometimes.

Dan stares at him, seems to make some big decision.

DAN

You can put your shirt back on. Do you get dizzy?

Only half unbuttoned so far, Frank starts the task in reverse...Dan scurrying about distractedly.

FRANK

More and more. The doctor at home told me I'll be dying soon because when my mom had me, I was all turned around, and then my cord got tangled.

(sneaking a look at Willie)

I didn't get much air, and they guess maybe it did certain things to my kidneys. Can I pull up Willie's eyelids and see if he's really sleeping?

DAN

Oh, he's sleeping for sure. He just lost some blood and had a little infection going there, but I think we caught it okay.

Dan slides a chair next to Frank and sits down. He reaches up and touches the top button on Frank's shirt.

DAN

You're one off on your buttons.

FRANK

I do that sometimes.

Frank starts to correct the problem, and Dan looks back toward Willie...beyond the frosted glass...

DAN

Frank...if you could sleep one good night, just one absolute night without a dream, and when you woke up the next morning, everything would be different...

(hard to put this)

Not a thing would be the same, except you'd still have your best friend. Just you and Willie.

10

FRANK
What about Joy and...?

40

DAN
You could go anywhere, Frank, no one would be after you. It would be like you'd never done anything wrong.

FRANK
We didn't mean to.

DAN
And in the morning, that morning, you could walk into a hospital and maybe they could give you a new kidney, just like that, give you one, like a miracle, one that wasn't sick, one that wouldn't kill you. Wouldn't you want to go to sleep that night? Just for the night?

FRANK
I need my rest anyway, Dan, so I don't see why not. Who makes kidneys that they could give me a new one?

Dan glances back at Willie.

DAN
The future, Frank. Time.

There's the sudden shock of CAR DOORS SLAMMING OUTSIDE... THE CRACKLE OF A TWO-WAY RADIO. Dan stands quickly as he sets his hand on Frank's shoulder.

DAN
You stay here and check Willie's eyeballs. I'll be right back. Don't make a sound.

41 INT. DOCTORS' LOBBY - NIGHT

41

Dan appears, closes the door to his office for privacy... hurries to the venetian blinds and cracks himself a small view outside...

42 EXT. POMONA STREET - DAN'S P.O.V. - NIGHT

42

TWO POLICEMEN. Their car parked near the Husband station wagon as they probe around inside it and quiz the dog walker about this mysterious blood-stained vehicle from New Mexico.

3 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

43

Dan comes back in on Frank and unconscious Willie, darts over to his desk to collect his jacket off the back of a chair...

DAN

We can't stay here, Frank.

44 EXT. BACK ALLEY LOT - NIGHT

44

Only moments later...and a door opens, and Dan comes out, helping Frank with a conked-out Willie...toward a '59 Dodge Royal parked properly in its space.

DAN

Just a short ride...

FRANK

Where we can sleep?

(beat)

Willie's eyeballs are like this...

Frank rolls his eyes up into his brain.

DAN

Some place safe.

45 INT. WAREHOUSE CHAMBER - NIGHT

45

The small space looks to be an eccentric operating theater with tiled walls and concrete floors. At one end is Willie, prostrate and semi-conscious on a deep-dish gurney that's presently being packed with ice cubes by Leland Shakes. A white sheet covers Willie's body, two clear tubes joining his nose to a myriad of frosty machines, a third tube injecting a bluish-green substance into the vein of his left arm.

Frank, a similar I.V. line in his own arm, lays on a second gurney, yawning and telling a story to Dan, who paces the slab floor nervously in a thick wool coat, adjusting pressure gauges on strange machinery. Words jump and split, breath floats...

FRANK

...and when Willie had his job, if I wasn't workin' mowing lawns or cleaning up snow for people, sometimes I could get in a white pants and shirt, and he'd let me run to the doors. Can we turn on the heater? I'm freezin'.

Willie makes a noise, and Frank tries to stare at him for a

5 moment...but he really can't because his eyes keep closing, opening, closing.... 45

FRANK

I had to be very careful to put the milk bottles in the...box...Willie said...that he wouldn't trust just the man on the street to do what... I...did...

(softly, slowly)

...will he ever...wake up...?

Dan takes Frank's hand as Frank's eyes close again.

DAN

He will, Frank. I know he will.

SQUEALING TIRES echo through the room, startling Leland!

46 EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT 46

A good clear view of the building...an older man with a long waft of white hair, gaunt ashen face and bony body is climbing as fast as he can out of a simple car. CHRIS UNDERWOOD...using a key to let himself into...

47 INT. WAREHOUSE CHAMBER - NIGHT 47

CHRIS

This is wrong. Dan, this is crazy. It should be one of us. That was the plan. The whole idea.

Dan attends to the tube injecting bluish-green extracellular agents into Willie's bloodstream, easing Leland aside as Frank's lids close for good.

LELAND

Dan says they'll hang for no real reason, Chris. But most people think they murdered someone.

Leland bluntly judgemental here, fussily disapproving as he darts up a short flight of stairs and leaves this small room by a doorway at the top.

CHRIS

Dan? What if they did? Dan?

Dan stops what he's doing to face his friend, his accuser.

DAN

If you can't tell an honest man when he's standing right in front of you...then what's the point?

(MORE)

DAN (cont'd)

47

(resolved)

Frank here is walking death. We're giving him a chance. That's all. Both of them. The slightest chance to let time atone.

A silence disturbed only by gurgling liquid, by hydrostatic pressure building up in creaky equipment...as from the space beyond, heavy double doors crack open...Leland the cause, standing in an eerie laboratory, backed by a sky-lit ceiling and ominous metal containers.

CHRIS

They're alive...that's the point, isn't it?

LELAND

You got it, doc. Live bodies. The only way to know for sure.

Dan and Chris...looking at each other over Willie, coming and going in a tray of ice, sort of hearing, sort of seeing....

DAN

It was all pointless, until this moment.

Dan walks over to an electrical panel on the wall, flips a switch, and rows of lights in the laboratory beyond blaze to life, exposing SIX STEEL CRYONIC CASKETS, each big enough to contain a grown person.

CHRIS

God forgive us.

48 INT. WAREHOUSE LABORATORY - NIGHT

48

As Leland unscrews a casket lid and LIQUID NITROGEN VAPORS swirl, a huge THUNDERING BLAST OF LIGHTNING flashes from the future, dropping Willie and Frank into profound darkness...

49 EXT. DARKNESS...

49

...and then...THROUGH THE VOID AND THE SILENCE LIGHTS BEGIN TO DANCE, DRIFT LEFT AND RIGHT, OUT-OF-FOCUS IN A STORMY DREAMWORLD as...

RADIO VOICE

The plight of the night heads,
being strung along through 'till
morning because of a job or fear.
It don't matter to me. Listen, but
(MORE)

RADIO VOICE (cont'd)
 don't touch. Okay? Three-four-
 teen. Plowing toward a hot, red
 Wednesday.

49

THE LIGHTS reaching us...HEADLIGHTS...TRUCK LIGHTS!

50 INT. LARGE FLATBED - NIGHT

50

One hand on the steering wheel, another shaking an empty can of beer. MORE THUNDER as the rain falls, and the beer can is tossed out the window and we find a most surreal focus on the scraggly face of the driver, an unkind soul named HARLAN. He has a mobile phone pressed to his ear as he maneuvers for another beer...

RADIO VOICE
 The rain will end and the projected
 high on this day of the dogs, 99
 degrees. Hell has risen to the
 surface of the earth. And that
 makes me its spokesman...if you
 believe in fairies, talk at me.
 Talk at me.

Harlan pops the beer can open as he lunges for the radio and turns the volume down, guzzling a gulp...

HARLAN
 It's Harlan again. I only got
 three things to say tonight.
 Number one is I'm sick and tired of
 Koreans. My idea is to give 'em
 Miami an' let 'em fight it out with
 them Haitians. Number two is I
 think the U.S. of A is being
 sweet-banged to slaughter by
 commies dressed in sheeps' clothes.
 And number three, I think fourteen
 is a good enough age for consent.

RADIO VOICE
 Harlan, I hope a fourteen-year-old
 Korean communist consents you wide
 open in Miami. Hello, talk at me,
 you're on the air.

HARLAN
 Hey, you little fuckhead...

Harlan caught in a downshift, lurching for his phone to redial, too much anger, not enough hands so...

51 EXT. BRIDGE-TOP - NIGHT 51

... his truck instantly snaps into a crazy slide of rage, hits a guard rail, knocking a GIGANTIC CABLE SPOOL out of a jumbled, unsafe load! The SPOOL plunges over the railing and keeps going...

52 EXT. INDUSTRIAL AREA - NIGHT 52

...hurtling clear of the bridge, the SPOOL rocketing in the rain until...

53 INT. WAREHOUSE LABORATORY - NIGHT 53

...it smashes through a familiar skylight in this old warehouse, breaking a bulky WATER PIPE open as it vanishes past us, setting off SHOCKING FLASHES OF ELECTRICITY AND CRUNCHING GOD-KNOWS-WHAT SORT OF IMPORTANT STUFF BELOW...AS THE SCREEN GOES DARK.

54 EXT. INDUSTRIAL STREET - MORNING 54

FADING UP on a brand-new day. Dan Chilblains' old Dodge Royal tools from the rain-damp street, stopping beside the office entrance to the SAME WAREHOUSE Chris Underwood parked in front of twenty-nine years ago. Leland Shakes, in modern coveralls, steps out of the immaculate car. Much older but still with that same dissatisfied face, he takes time to spit polish a smudge on the fender before unlocking the warehouse door. A puddle of water dissipates onto the parking lot, leaving Leland mystified as he peeks inside.

55 INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - MORNING 55

Once it was the "operating room"...but now...Leland fords through the shallow sheet of water to a cordless desk telephone, pressing a number while he stares up at the perfectly intact office ceiling.

LELAND

Yeah, what is this, Kolodny Brothers Plumbing? Say your name when you answer your phone. This is Leland Shakes, maintenance supervisor down at Chilblains Cryonic Life Extention. I'm down in the office, I got water coming in from probably that gate valve on the circulator that you didn't fix last week.

5 INT. WAREHOUSE LABORATORY - MORNING

56

The RUNAWAY SPOOL sits prominent beneath the broken skylight, amid crushed pipes and chunks of crap. A weakened structural beam GROANS. The cold, murky room is wrecked, a few feet deep in water, cryonic caskets and their lids toppled and popped. The frigid gas that once was contained now swirls above the strewn, floating SLEEPING BAGS..."DANIEL CHILBLAINS" stencilled eerily upon one of them. And as the gas billows up through the shattered windows and out into the bright morning, we see those powerful LIVE ELECTRICAL WIRES that precariously dangle from the groaning steel beam...

57 INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - MORNING

57

Leland's still on the cordless, starting to lose his fragile temper...

LELAND

Okay, oh sure, sure, tell him I don't have all day to sit around waiting, just tell him that if he remembers what a pipe wrench looks like, he should try an' picture one shoved up...

A MAJOR GROAN OF STEEL! Leland falls silent, looks around, detects a seep of water gurgling through those double doors to the lab, spilling down into his office area. Aha!

LELAND

Just a second, dear lady, I think I just got a handle on this mother.

Cordless phone in hand, Leland stalks to the doors, jerks them open, and a torrent of water roars forth, washing him head first into a desk where he's pronounced out...as Dan Chilblains' BAGGED BODY waterfalls into the office.

58 INT. WAREHOUSE LABORATORY - LATE MORNING

58

Water leaving quickly, things shifting...ELECTRICAL WIRES DROPPING!

Gracefully they fall to the floor below where TWO MORE SLEEPING BAGS command our attention, names stencilled on these as well: WILLARD HUSBAND, FRANK LOVEGREN...floating serenely on the coiling water as those LIVE WIRES HIT! All the other dead bodies are stiff and calm in the wired water...

...but not Frank and Willie. Their shrouded forms flop around like fresh fish on a dry dock, rude electricity smacking them back and forth for a moment...until all is silent. And the smoke settles. And Willie's charred bag

sits up. It falls back down, sits up, falls down and sits up as a hand worms out, unzips a zipper...so a head can appear, hair charged with static. 58

WILLIE
It was the Milk Duds.

He looks at the sleeping bag next to him. The thing is trying to sit as well..."FRANK LOVEGREN" writ large across its chest. Willie reaches over, his joints CREAKING as he unzips his friend then swoons!

WILLIE
Something's not right...

FRANK
(that wonderful face)
I'm near naked!

WILLIE
Frank, where are we?!

FRANK
(confused)
A doctor named Dan promised me a brand new kidney if we'd sleep a special sleep...

WILLIE
Some sort of pervert buggerer, with our luck. I knew there was reasons to stay clear of big cities. We been drugged and inveigled into ungodly acts!

Willie looks around, drops his head to see the bandages that cover his shoulder!

WILLIE
How'd I get fixed?! Who put this patch on me, Frank?

FRANK
Dan. The doctor. You fell out of the car. And Dan took the bullet outta you and then brought us here so the police wouldn't find us...

WILLIE
God oh God...what have we done to deserve this?

Awkwardly, Willie stands, stepping out of his cryonic slumber bag...wearing only boxer shorts.

FRANK
We killed a gardener.

8

WILLIE

58

I know what we done! You don't have to remind me! Here I am, in my underwear on a wet cement floor, dazed by drugs, and what do I hear from you but how I killed a gardener!!?

Silence. Frank's upset by Willie's yelling...and this quickly registers...so Willie pats Frank's foot.

WILLIE

Okay. All right. Just never talk to strangers, okay? That's the lesson to be learned and relearned here, okay? Frank?

FRANK

Okay. But your eyeballs were rolled up. I got to check. And now they're not. Now you're okay.

Frank stands up, CREAKING too, but far more surefooted than Willie who's shivering, trying to control his frayed emotions as Frank walks to a row of lockers, investigating.

WILLIE

Yeah...I'm...I do feel okay. How 'bout you?

FRANK

I'm okay, except today's Wednesday. I do Mrs. Olin's lawn today so we better get home, or she gets mad. How come we got our names on these lockers?

Willie hobbles over, finds his locker, pulls out a selection of clothes that aren't his...unusual shirts, only one that's actually acceptable. And more: a newspaper clipping from the Pomona paper about a kidnapping, a wounded gardener, and a blood-stained Ford wagon abandoned at the curb.

WILLIE

Gardener...Frank! The gardener! This says he's in the hospital! Maybe I didn't kill him completely dead.

FRANK

Wouldn't that be good news?

WILLIE

We gotta get back home right now so's we can tell our own version of this whole ugly story before events get completely outta hand. We

(MORE)

8

WILLIE (cont'd)
gotta call Joy, tell her we're
okay...

58

FRANK
Hey! These aren't mine?! But look
how pretty it is!

He pulls a wonderful striped shirt out to show Willie while Willie notices a crumpled tissue in his own locker. He unfolds it and finds inside that half-smoked cigarette he'd snuck while Frank was trying to piss, three nights back. He puts it in his mouth, but the thing just crumbles. They're both dressing now, and there's something else in Willie's locker: a thoughtful pack of Carltons and his wallet with a note protruding...

WILLIE
You see any matches?
(reading)
"In case I'm not there personally
to greet you, enclosed please find
one hundred dollars. It may not
get you far, but I hope you had a
pleasant sleep, and I pray I didn't
deprive you of anything forever. I
followed my heart...for Frank."

FRANK
Willie, look! It's okay.

Willie turns to see Frank pulling from his locker that precious tape measure. Whew.

59 INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - MORNING

59

Leland in a corner, unconscious, obscured by an upturned chair as Willie enters. Walking after twenty-nine years of inactivity isn't all that graceful.

WILLIE
There's gotta be a telephone...

He starts searching desktops as Frank appears...Willie drawn to Leland's discarded, BEEPING cordless whatever-it-is, picking it up, trying to fathom its purpose.

FRANK
Hey, this is the name of the man
that fixed you up!

Frank's at the zipper on Dan Chilblains' bag, peeking in:

FRANK
Pee yoo...he didn't smell so bad
yesterday...

9 Frank backing up in shock.

59

WILLIE

I tell you, something terrible happened here last night, Frank, and we better move quick or sure as hell someone'll start pointin' fingers our way.

FRANK

Here's some matches, Willie. You can light up.

60 EXT. WAREHOUSE LABORATORY - DAY

60

The bridge is thick with morning traffic, clearly heard but barely seen. Willie and Frank emerge, Willie finally getting those long, strange Carltons opened up as they walk over to the Dodge Royal and peer in.

WILLIE

This car has some keys in it.

FRANK

It's Dan's car!

WILLIE

(lighting up)

We'll borrow it until he stirs.

FRANK

Can I have a puff?

WILLIE

Don't tell Joy.

Willie opens the door, looking around all the while. He slides in and shuts the door. Frank stands still, smoking, until he HEARS the engine, then he makes a quick dash for the passenger side as Willie slips the immaculate car into drive and steers it out of the warehouse lot onto a quiet street.

61 INT. DODGE ROYAL - DAY

61

Willie settles in and starts glancing around at the dashboard as Frank so suavely inhales, exhales.

WILLIE

You know, I think things are finally gonna go our way here. I just got a feeling this is our time now. Gimme that smoke, Frank.

Willie flips on the RADIO. It's tuned to a LATIN STATION. Frank turns the dial: a MEGADETH SONG. Horribly nasty.

Discordant. Vile lyrics.

61

WILLIE

Must be the wrong speed, huh?

Frank twists the knob until he finds an old, slow ELVIS TUNE, and Willie takes a deep, frustrating drag on his modern Carlton.

WILLIE

The wild one! Long may that young boy live.

62 EXT. CONCRETE BRIDGE - DAY

62

As the shiny Dodge Royal squirms away into the great unknown, we BOOM UP higher and higher until the shimmering silhouette of A DISTANT CITY fills the horizon.

63 INT. DODGE ROYAL - DAY

63

Travelling along with ELVIS, a few miles east of L.A., both Willie and Frank beginning to look around at the BUILDINGS, the FEW PEOPLE, all the "FORECLOSURE" and "FASTER FOOD" signs, all the AUTOMOBILES.

WILLIE

Funny I don't remember this song. I thought I knew 'em all. Seems to be now I'm meltin'. How you doin'? You still doin' okay?

FRANK

No. I'm starved. Willie, look at so many strange people. And the cars...

WILLIE

I was noticing that, too. They must not even bother to advertise 'em back home. Must not go for fins here or something.

Frank's wiping sweat from his forehead, and Willie's rolling his window down a few twists as Elvis belts out the last of his notes and a DJ breaks in quickly:

RADIO VOICE

From Elvis to Elvis. King to King. From "Blood and Chocolates"... Costello continues for this hour of non-stop rock with "Tokyo Storm Warning"!

A simple pounding of a drum, an even jerking rhythm BEGINS, Willie and Frank keeping track of the massive, threatening buildings looming larger as the MUSIC GETS ANGRIER...

63

WILLIE

What we need is the slightest hint of a course of action here.

FRANK

Right. A plan: Time to Eat.

WILLIE

We gotta find you a doggone drug-store. And me a telephone for Joy. There's gotta be a Rexall around here that'll slip you a few of those throat-closers 'til we high-tail it back to your own supply.

FRANK

I bet they got a telephone.

Coming right up, an old coffee shop, worn chrome acting as eaves, a failing sign announcing the name. To Willie, hot and weak, the place does comfort and beckon.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

64

STRANGE MUSIC plays over invisible speakers in the two-steps shy-of-squalid diner, the place practically empty as a cook named OMAR and a waitress called BETTY struggle to figure out a new-fangeled kitchen tool.

Enter Frank and Willie. They've never looked worse, blood-red faces, crazy hair, snazzy shirts massively spotted with sweat, Willie's pants hugging low on his waist, drawing stares.

WILLIE

Two fries, two chocolate shakes, two double burgers and a bathroom, please.

FRANK

We need to wash up. We were almost naked.

Betty indicates a short hall, eyeing the peculiar pair.

BETTY

No fag shit back there, guys. I mean it.

Willie stops to take a look at the mouth on this woman, then continues back to the bathroom with Frank.

1

FRANK

64

Just number one for me, ma'am.

LATER...

...and Omar, a Walkman headset clamped over a baseball cap that boasts "RECYCLE," is setting two plates of fries and burgers on his service counter while Betty rags a table wet from a used water glass. A fry drops to the floor. She kicks it under the booth, yells and gestures over the Walkman:

BETTY

Hey, Omar, go take a look, see what they're still doin' in the john.

65 INT. RESTROOM - DAY

65

Frank's at the sink grooming away, drying his hands...and noticing that the air conditioning vent blowing COLD AIR toward his head makes him feel a lot better. So he smiles into it, starts to climb up onto the bathroom counter as Omar edges the door open...sees Frank up there pressing his head against the air conditioning vent...

WILLIE'S VOICE

Lord! Frank! I'm pissing green here too! What'd that man give us?

Willie's standing feet visible to Omar, in a toilet stall, Willie opening the stall door with his shirt off, bandages covering his shoulder...

WILLIE

Makes me fearful about doin' a big job.

Suddenly face-to-face with Omar, the man flustered...

OMAR

(in Arabic)

Your food's ready, com'on, com'on.

66 INT. DINER - DAY

66

BETTY

Smoking or non?

FRANK

Excuse me?

BETTY

Smoking? Do you smoke or not?

FRANK

Oh, no, we're giving it up.

Frank obeying as Betty points the way to their table, but Willie stops in front of a pay phone and stares at it for a second--no dial, only buttons. He digs down into his pocket, lifts the receiver, inserts a nickel and presses zero. The nickel drops into the coin return. But then:

66

WILLIE

Operator? Great. I'd like to make a call to Santa Fe, New Mexico, please. The number is JL5-2366. Huh? What do you mean dial direct? I don't even have a dial. Look, lady, please, just make this one thing easy in my life! Okay? Okay? Hello!?

Willie slams the phone down, lifts it back off and starts punching buttons. He remembers he forgot the nickel, slips it in and carefully pecks Joy's number with his finger. Two FACTORY GIRLS have entered the diner by now, laughing and talking as they check the place out, one of them wearing a t-shirt that asks in block letters, "AIN'T I CUTE?" They sit in a booth once removed from Frank, lost in his burger and fries.

WILLIE

Oh, Lord! You want my first born too!? Just a second here.

Willie checks the money in his hand, then slips in five quarters, wiping sweat from his face as he turns to Frank who's stuffing a wad of fries in his mouth and showing the two very flirty girls across the way his amazing tape measure...Frank's metal rule retracting like a switchblade from a sixteen-inch length.

WILLIE

What do you mean disconnected?

FRANK

Can I talk to Jess?

WILLIE

Miss, we've shared this line with Mr. Gomez since...hey! You're repeating yourself! She's repeating herself, Frank.

FRANK

Tell her don't do that.

The girls giggle at Frank, and he laughs a little laugh himself while Willie vs. The Phone escalates...

WILLIE

Look, just listen to me for a second! Try to connect me with
(MORE)

6

WILLIE (cont'd)
 this number then...hey!!
 (taking a hit)
 She's blowing' a whistle in my ear!

66

FRANK
 (right out loud)
 You betcha.

Frank's remark intended as an answer to that t-shirt query. Taken as such by the girls who look at each other in a suggestive way...as Willie slams the phone up and grabs his change.

WILLIE
 Bitch! She was like a machine,
 Frank! Unhospitable to boot.
 Sorry for the harsh word.

FRANK
 Well, ladies should be ladies.

Willie nods at the two girls and joins Frank in the booth.

WILLIE
 I think they got some kind of
 exemption clause at the phone
 company, huh?

FRANK
 Just eat your burger, Willie.
 They're real good.

To Willie's sudden horror, THREE MEN walk into the diner... one quite obviously a cop, another in rough clothing, his face cut slightly, the third in a jacket stencilled "SHERIFF'S DEPT." across the back. To our eyes, narcotics cops fresh from an ugly raid.

THIRD MAN
 Is that your Dodge out there?

The guy's coming right toward them, Willie looking around for someone else who might be able to answer--but he's it as the other two men take seats at the counter.

WILLIE
 Pardon?

THIRD MAN
 (friendly)
 I got a fifty-nine too. Green.
 Completely restored. Primo.

WILLIE
 Restored?

But now the third man's glancing at Frank...at his tape measure edging across the table top toward Willie...to gauge its width?

66

WILLIE

That's enough, Frank.

FRANK

Thirty-two inches. I guessed that.

THIRD MAN

Hey, we got some service here?!
What if I was the mayor an' not
just handsome?!

Snapped with a sudden mercurial mood shift toward the staff.
Then back at Willie so nicely again:

THIRD MAN

I've had six solid offers. I'm
talkin' major money too. No
bullshit.

(acknowledging the
ladies)

Hey, Sandy, ask real pretty and
I'll let you touch my gun today.

Both girls cringe at the thought. SANDY (of the t-shirt)
turns and gives Frank her biggest smile yet.

FRANK

You want a french fry, Sandy?

BETTY

What'll it be, boys? Shock me.

THIRD MAN

Anything with enough sugar to put
our trigger fingers on edge.

Said as he joins his partners at the counter, and Frank
stands up, hands each of the girls one of his fries before
he steps up onto the booth seat, burger in hand, to press
his head against an air vent, catching the third man's
attention once more.

THIRD MAN

Can I help him or what?

Kind of savagely put. Willie beelines it around to Frank.

WILLIE

(muffled, tense)

An anxious group here, Frank.
Let's leave now, let's not piss
these people off.

66

FRANK

But it feels so good!

WILLIE

(without moving his lips)

Attention's coming our way here,
Frank.

Frank climbs down. Willie grabs a pile of fries, takes Frank's hand and hauls him toward the door.

BETTY

Hey! You pay for all of it whether
you eat it or not, cutey pies!

Willie freezes in his tracks. He turns and smiles at the cops, let's go of Frank's hand and pulls out his wallet.

BETTY

Twelve-fifty.

WILLIE

Twelve-fifty?! For burgers!?

FRANK

(sounding like Willie)

That's highway robbery!

Willie looks back at the Sheriff's Dept. jacket, smiles again.

WILLIE

Yet, reasonable.
(opening his wallet)
So...reasonable.
(forking out cash)
Keep the extra. Please.

FRANK

Willie, could we ask one of these
people where I can buy my drugs?

WILLIE

(quickly)

A drugstore. My friend's sick.

FRANK

My kidneys are for nothing.

POLICEMAN

Look, if he's hurtin', take him to
county.

WILLIE

County...?

66

66

THIRD MAN

66

Hospital! Second light, hang a left, head east, you cannot miss it.

SANDY

Hurry up, and maybe you'll beat the crowd. Everyone gets shot or stabbed around here after dinner.

WILLIE

Oh, okay. Very good. Lucky us.

67 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

67

A madhouse. Frantic and crowded. ADDICTS and BLOODY BODIES side by side as a black doctor named DAVID ARRINGTON crosses the room quickly, reading a chart on the fly. He's the supervising physician in E.R., working hard in the understaffed room, reaching a NURSE...

DAVID

Have Timmons do the work up. And where the hell are Jackson and O'Brian? If they're in the morgue again, merging, they're gone.

Covered in bloodied protective suits, TWO EMERGENCY SURGEONS cross quickly beyond an amazed Frank as a MAN huddled on the floor suddenly lunges forward and wraps his arms around Willie's leg. With no success, Willie tries gently to shake free, yank free...

WILLIE

(as nonchalant as possible)

I've got a man on my leg, Frank.

Willie bangs his assailant on the head with a fist, but even this doesn't seem to faze him. TWO MALE NURSES in rubber gloves grab the man and drag him SCREAMING across the room, right past David, drawing Willie's glance to the young physician.

WILLIE

Excuse us, but we need pills. Is there a doctor we could speak to?

David looks at them, sweaty, pale-white and wide-eyed.

DAVID

I'm Doctor Arrington. What kind of pills?

FRANK

Hi. I'm Frank.

67 Frank extends his hand, and David takes it, disarmed.

67

DAVID

Dave.

Willie scans the wild room, finally focusing on David, suddenly too on guard to spill all his beans.

WILLIE

To be honest with you, we're not medical people ourselves, so I couldn't rightly tell you. Frank here...well, you met Frank. I'm Willie...you're a Negro, you know?

DAVID

Right. Now how can I help you?

WILLIE

Well...Frank has somewhat of a kidney ailment, and he takes a big white pill along with a couple hundred units of codeine a day.

FRANK

I have a prescription and all, but I'm afraid it's back home...

WILLIE

(fast)
...in Alaska.

DAVID

How much codeine a day?

FRANK

It says right on the bottle. By the way, Dave, is it possible to get a whole new kidney? That someone could give me one?

WILLIE

Frank, don't bother the doctor with silly questions...

(low to David)

Look...he's in some pain, and we both seem to be sweating a bit here though it used to be we could take the heat as well as any man.

DAVID

Sure, Frank, it's possible to get a new kidney. They were doing a transplant a month when I interned in Minneapolis. Anything's possible, but don't hold your breath unless you got connections.

67

WILLIE

Where you'd wear the internal organ
of another? In Minnesota?

67

DAVID

(yelling)

Miss Lilly!?

Willie jerks back and forth. A little tense. The nurse David talked to earlier, LILLY, walks toward them through the medical fray.

FRANK

Well, I can hold my breath for
sixty-five seconds, Dave, so how do
I get connections?

DAVID

What? Oh, you need to be referred
by a urologist, after a lotta
tests. Then there's the world's
longest waiting list. Unless you
got a relative...

(to Lilly)

Take this gentleman back and get a
blood and urine sample. I have no
idea what I'm dealing with.

LILLY

And I do?

She hauls Frank off, tugging on him with her rubber-gloved hands as David takes Willie toward the admitting counter...

DAVID

You need to fill out seven thousand
forms here.

Except no one's around so David waylays a passing NURSE...

DAVID

Agnes, where the hell is Eddie?

AGNES

Who knows? Your lunch is down
there.

Okay. He fishes a couple papers himself from behind the counter along with a McDonald's sack.

DAVID

How 'bout if I get you started?

David tackles the forms while he eats his Big Mac.

67

WILLIE

Is it hot in here? Both Frank and I tend to puddle up in heat. Did I mention that?

(still starved)

Looks to be quite a hamburger.

DAVID

Cold and dry.

Perhaps, but Willie's mouth opens a bit every time David takes a bite.

WILLIE

Maybe if you have a couple extra minutes, just to take a peek, I seem to have accidently shot myself. Your people were in no way involved.

DAVID

My people?

68 INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

68

Lilly walks to the bathroom--the door is open, but Frank isn't there. She walks down the hall as we HEAR a THUMP from the other side of a closed door. Lilly opens it abruptly. Frank. Urine sample in hand, his head stuck inside a tiny refrigerator.

LILLY

Why is your head in with our food?

Startled, Frank tries to stand, but some of the refrigerator's contents come out with his head, and he spills a small portion of urine on his shoe...

69 INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

69

DAVID

Frank's middle and last name?

WILLIE

Lovegren it is.

(beat)

You know, I read a few days back it took 3,000 National Guards just to see a Negro boy safe into school. I mean, Lordy, what'd they have to do to get you to be a doctor?

69

DAVID

They had to give me a chance. But, hey, there's still those days when I could use a few thousand guns protecting me from your people... Frank's birthdate?

69

WILLIE

That would be September 5, 1937. Don't get excited, I didn't mean anything bad by that. I just really haven't known a Negro before...I like you.

David writes down the September 5 part then stops and looks back up at Willie who's watching the oddest electronic TOY cross the counter, under his nose, return to the LITTLE KID who belongs to it.

DAVID

Frank looks good for what, fifty-three? You meant nineteen sixty-seven he was born.

Willie looks at the doctor, totally confused.

WILLIE

What?

(going for proof)

I got a copy right here of his birth certificate in my wallet, if they left it in. Hospitals always want a look-see.

A nurse, RUTH, rushes over, starts to reach for the forms.

RUTH

I'm sorry, Dr. Arrington. I can do this...

DAVID

That's okay, Ruth. Try to find some Lasix and codeine.

WILLIE

Here, see? 1937. Black and white.

Frank's birth certificate. But as Willie's pulled it out, a business card with the words "DANIEL CHILBLAINS, CRYONIC RESEARCH AND ELECTROMEDICINE" has come with it, catching David's eye.

DAVID

Where'd you get this? Oh no...come on.

69

WILLIE

He's twenty-five. I told you, there...1937 from 1962 leaves twenty-five which is just exactly what I claimed.

69

DAVID

What are you telling me, Mr Husband? That you think that this...that what? You and your friend have been on ice for the last, what...twenty-nine years?

He's holding the card out, perched between thumb and forefinger.

WILLIE

Huh? No...this isn't mine. "Daniel Chilblains...?"

DAVID

See, I was born in 1964 so it couldn't very well still be 1962, now could it? Look.

David reaches over the counter for a calendar and sets it down in front of Willie as the futuristic toy returns.

DAVID

(kindly)

Cryonics is a joke, Mr. Husband. You can't freeze people like hamburger. No matter what Michael Jackson and Liz Taylor tell you, okay? And I don't have time for jokes around here. So if you really feel one and one don't make two, then I think you should stick around, and I'll find someone you can talk to.

Willie picks up the calendar and can only stare at the date, unable to take his eyes off the year: 1991. He flips numbly through its pages...David watching poor Willie for a moment, then gently patting his hand as he gets up.

DAVID

Take it easy, okay? We'll help you. I'll be back in a second.

Willie's face just staring at the date -- all along he's been aware that something was wrong, but not this wrong. People move in the background, unfocused, their voices muddled.

WILLIE

(half remembering)
God forgive us...?

69 Slowly, he takes Frank's birth certificate, folds it, carefully slips it back into his wallet, tidying up. He stares at the cryonics business card and reads it over and over again. Across the crowded room Lilly's holding a vial in her hand, nervously showing it to David Arrington. 69

LILLY
His urine's sort of green...and so
is his blood.

David looks back at Willie, and Willie turns immediately away as Ruth walks up with a bottle.

RUTH
I could only find some Darvon.
I've called up for Lasix. Is this
for you or Dr. Arrington?

WILLIE
(numbly)
...live bodies? Joy...

RUTH
Well, Dr. Arrington'll tell you
what dose she should take.

Ruth sets the bottle on the counter, then walks over toward Dr. Arrington herself! Willie snatches the bottle and slips it in his pocket as he makes his getaway from the counter...as Frank reappears...

FRANK
Hey, Willie! I had my head in a
Frigidaire, and I'm starting to
feel right again!

Willie turns, grabs Frank, pulls him toward the entrance doors...

FRANK
Willie, wait, Willie, we forgot
about my new kidney, I need to...

WILLIE
It's in Minneapolis, Frank.

Willie moves forward, pulling Frank with him, out through the emergency doors.

70 INT. DODGE ROYAL - DAY

70

Willie's got it pretty near floored, whipping down the street, flipping the RADIO from STATION to STATION, trying to find someone who'll confirm the year as Frank takes two pills out of his new bottle...

70

FRANK

I need something to drink with these, Willie.

Willie turns to Frank, looks at the pills.

WILLIE

I don't know what it means!

FRANK

It means these pills get stuck in my throat! Please go slower. You know how accidents can happen.

WILLIE

Joy...my little Jess is older than me. It's not real. Twenty-nine years in an icebox...?

FRANK

(uneasy)
You want some pills too?
(checking the gauge)
You don't have enough gas to make it home. Okay, then I get to steer if we run out.

WILLIE

Home...? Where's Joy? What do we say? What do we do?!

FRANK

We say, hi! We're back! Did you miss us? How's that gardener we shot? We're very thirsty.

Erratically, Willie veers the car across traffic into the parking lot of a garish GAS MART, up to the complex pumps.

71 INT. GAS MART - DAY

71

Willie climbs out of the Dodge, and we hear him through the malfunctioning, opening-and-closing doors of this war-torn inner-city convenience emporium:

WILLIE

Stay here, okay? I'll get you a soda. Just stay here, Frank. Can you do that, huh?

A youngish girl named FARAH mans her register, squarely inside a fortified-and-refortified plexiglass command post punctured by a single pass-thru with a steel-mesh slider, her gaze tracking a long-haired MUTANT streaking down her short aisles on his road-warrior roller blades. Willie bursts in between the guillotining doors. He heads straight for the magazine rack near the dairy case where this AVERAGE

71 GUY in a white dress shirt and loosened tie is searching through yogurts. For Willie, one publication after another confirms the time, confirms his absolute loss as he checks only the dates, magazines fluttering to the floor all around him...

71

LOUDSPEAKER

Hey, hey! Lookin' for something in particular, pal?

Willie slowly raises his blank stare to Farah. Was it she addressing him from within the scarred plexiglass?

WILLIE

My life.

FARAH

(amplified)

An' you think you're gonna find it in Teen Beat?

WILLIE

I just want my life back!!

The man at the dairy case, lost in his own problems, unfolds a cordless phone as Willie crosses to Farah's cage and leans in close to the steel-mesh pass-thru to ask very seriously:

WILLIE

Do you enjoy living?

But Farah's back at the rolling punk now, freeing herself to emerge boldly right on the selling floor as she presses a button and BROADCASTS again through that little microphone hooked on her skull...ECHO AND FEEDBACK:

FARAH

I'm not telling you again, squeeze head! Get outa those blades and walk over here like a two-legged piss an' I'll screw your head so far down your throat you'll have to unzip to smile!

Willie slaps his hands flat against Farah's bullet-proof plastic! She turns back, refocuses her attention his way, stares into his crazy eyes...

WILLIE

I mean now! Right now. Do you like your life!? In this world?

FARAH

(off the mike, calmly)

Yeah, I like my life. Thinking about changing that, you sweaty little asshole?

71 A momentary stand off then...

71

FARAH

I'm gonna go back in my box and get my gun and shoot you. You just all been too much trouble today.

Farah withdraws. The mutant takes a few more sweeps through the aisles in defiance as Willie hears the man peering at the dairy case put through his call:

MAN

I'm here now, okay? And they don't have Yoplait, okay? Dannon, that's all they have, Dannon. But it's low-fat, and I got it in my hand so do we want it or not?

Willie stares for a second at this agitated person on another one of those damn phones without cords. What life is this?

MAN

It's fine! It's perfect. It expires next month, okay? July ten, nineteen ninety-one.

That does it. In helpless frustration and fear, Willie just sweeps his hand across the counter, wiping it clean! Candy and gum scatter on the floor! The squeeze head stops skating. The man stops talking.

WILLIE

I want my life back!!

Way over the top. So Farah leans away and whips up a gun! She juts it out the pass-thru and right into Willie's face. This is no joke.

FARAH

You ain't gonna have this one, you do that again. What the hell is your problem?!

A very big question. All motion has stopped. Time stands still. Willie can see the kid...the man...a grotesque counter-top slush dispenser softly churning a foot from his face...and last time he looked down the barrel of a gun...

FRANK

What's a Slush Ball, Willie?

Willie turns, blankly. Frank's come in.

FRANK

They look good.

71 And Frank's no fool. The air's dripping with danger, and he knows it...and all Willie's doing is just looking at road maps in a rack...so Frank starts arranging the scattered candy back on the counter, a half-ass effort, but at least he's trying... 71

FARAH

Look, pay for what you want an' get your pal the fuck outta here, okay?

The "F" word! Frank couldn't be more horrified, terrified...

FRANK

Yes, ma'am, we'd just like some service at the pumps, please, that's all. And two large Slush Balls.

FARAH

Service at the pumps? Sure thing, Mister Brains. An' I'd like to sit on Richard Gere's face. Pump it yourself.

WILLIE

(choosing a map)
Who's Richard Gere?

FRANK

(on the spot)
I think that's the son in "Make Room for Daddy."

72 INT. DODGE ROYAL - DAY

72

Staring blankly ahead, clutching a Slush Ball cup, Willie's driving, blind to the intense, wild traffic whizzing by, his refried brain cooling out, his weirdness paralyzing poor Frank...who takes a tentative gulp of his own icy mush then nervously glops a few fingerfuls onto his neck and head.

WILLIE

Frank, can you help me a second here, Frank? I got no one else in the world I can talk to now but you.

Willie's voice so calm, almost disembodied...a Willie Frank's never seen.

FRANK

I prefer not to look at that map, Willie, it makes me nervous.

72

WILLIE

Forget about the map. It doesn't mean anything really.

FRANK

Then why'd you...it cost us two dollars, Willie.

WILLIE

Frank, you remember back some days ago when I was gonna leave you?

FRANK

Leave me?

WILLIE

Yeah, I was gonna go off and... rest. For Life. Die. I was gonna go die. I had a hole in my body that God didn't put there, an' I didn't want you to see me like that.

Willie slides the side of his icy cup against his sweaty brow.

FRANK

Like what? You fell outta the car, Tuesday, is that when? And I picked you up, and Dan fixed you.

WILLIE

Oh yeah, he fixed me, all right, he fixed us fine.

FRANK

He gave me a special pill to swallow, and then he said not to worry because I could get a new kidney the next day when we woke up...

Right outside Frank's window a PICKUP roars by, seven feet off the ground, suspended on tires the size of Jupiter!

WILLIE

The next day? A new kidney?

Willie looks at Frank, for the first time in a long time.

FRANK

It was just one night. I thought that'd be a plan you'd like.

WILLIE

Well, it wasn't one night, and he lied, damn his eyes!

72

72 Willie swerves off the road, onto the shoulder, hits the
brakes. Silence.

72

FRANK
(quietly)
You don't know that. Dan was nice.

WILLIE
He froze us solid, Frank! An' now
we're melting!

Willie thrusts the door open, gets...

73 EXT. BUSY ROADWAY - DAY

73

...out of the car, wondering why, how, where? A grotesque
fragment from some demented DINOSAUR FLOAT peers back at
him, discarded in a field...as Frank's door opens...his head
edging up, looking at Willie over the roof.

FRANK
We're sweating because it's hot.

WILLIE
We're melting, Frank. That's why
we sweat so much. It's why you
stuck your head in that refrigera-
tor an' why we're leakin' colors
because we're thawin' out like a
couple'a ice cubes! It's why you
got that Slush-Ball thing all over
your head...

FRANK
No, I don't! What do you know
about kidneys anyway? You're not a
doctor. You're just a milkman!
(in on himself)
You're a milkman.

Rattled by Frank's great agitation, Willie comes around to
try to make his case less painfully, but Frank's having none
of it, circling the car...Willie after him...

WILLIE
Frank, listen to me. Now listen to
me. You're right. I'm sorry,
okay? I don't have a clue, not
about kidneys, not in this day an'
age...but if there's a store where
they sell 'em, you gotta know we'll
be the first in line. You gotta
know that.

Frank stops, hoists himself up onto the fender, a kid on a
footbridge. Willie comes close.

73

WILLIE
Okay? I...this is...are you still
listening to me, Frank?

73

FRANK
All ears.

WILLIE
Good. Good. See, what...well,
your doctor friend...Don...

FRANK
Dan.

WILLIE
Dan. He helped to speed up time,
Frank. Or somehow he slid us
through it without even so much as
a wrinkle.

There. He said it. Flat out.

FRANK
Wrinkles are for when you get old.

WILLIE
We're old...or maybe we're not old,
but I think everyone else is. I
mean we been dealing with people
today and yesterday that wasn't
even born the day before.

Frank's posture tenses...he closes his eyes tight.

WILLIE
All I'm trying to say is, things
being what they are and all, that
Donald's father probably kicked us
out of our house by now. So we
probably don't live anywhere
anymore, right? We probably don't
have a home, and maybe Joy an' Jess
aren't even...

FRANK
What are you talking about? I
don't like you saying dumb things.

WILLIE
I'm talking about Joy being as old
as your mom! An' Jess being older
than the both of us, Frank. And I
don't know where they are anymore.
So I don't know what to do! Or
where the hell to go next! Can
you understand that?

73

FRANK

Don't swear at me.

73

Frank blasts off, hands jammed down deep into his pockets, cars and trucks slightly obscuring Willie's voice as he half-jogs to catch up.

WILLIE

Frank...? Honest to God, I'm not tryin' to make you learn somethin' you won't ever need, like I did with those state capitals. I just don't want you to be scared...

FRANK

I'm scared.

Frank won't look back. He just keeps walking...toward a Mexican named GEORGE sitting in a chair, watching a portable T.V. with a spacey antenna, selling fresh shrimp on ice out of his little red pickup.

WILLIE

Well, don't be.

FRANK

You made me!

WILLIE

I had to make you, so you wouldn't be!

FRANK

I wouldn't be if you didn't make me!

Oh, God. Willie breaks it off, forced to deal with George, who's staring intently at both of them.

WILLIE

It's a hot one.

George nods back before glancing over at Frank who sinks his arms elbow-deep in shrimp and ice, Willie distracted for an instant by the amazing cordless T.V. broadcasting I LOVE LUCY.

WILLIE

My God...doesn't she look good for a woman her age?

GEORGE

Your friend's sticking my ice down his pants.

FRANK

Am not.

3 But two chunks slide from Frank's pant leg onto the dirt.

73

WILLIE

We tend to over heat a bit.

(whipped)

All we're tryna do is just go home.

Frank looks at Willie, standing there so lost. There's an awful, empty moment...before Frank comes over, talks quietly into Willie's ear:

FRANK

Then where on earth do you suppose
Joy and Jess live now?

Exhausted, Willie thinks, or tries to. Tries to grasp the non-sequitor. Just what exactly is his friend asking?

WILLIE

How the hell do I know, Frank? I
been with you the whole time. I
don't know any more than you do.

So true.

FRANK

Well, when you need to know where
something is, you look it up in the
phone book. And that's where the
address is. That's how you find
where buses are.

Willie stares at Frank. Frank stares at Willie...then sets the agenda with all the grace of a wonderful magician:

FRANK

We had too many things to be gone
in three days since you and me are
the only ones strong enough to move
our big furniture. Unless maybe
someone helped them. Joy and Jess
are girls.

Willie's turn.

WILLIE

Barney. Barney from the grocery
store. He took off work early and
he helped with the heavy stuff.

And a conspiracy is born. The last ugly ten minutes never quite having happened. Frank puts his tape into Willie's hand.

FRANK

That was real nice of him.

3

WILLIE

73

Yeah, it was. Awful nice.

And now Frank nips the tip of the metal rule that Willie's just holding, draws it out as he walks back toward their car...Willie following serenely on Frank's funny leash.

WILLIE

You wanna drive, Frank? I'm sorta pooped.

FRANK

Lincoln, Nebraska. Scranton, Pennsylvania. Boise, Idaho.

WILLIE

Yeah, you were listening.

FRANK

Just 'cause I close my eyes, doesn't mean I don't hear.

At the car. Across the hood. Linked by that metal umbilical. Frank near the driver's door, Willie at the passenger's side. Friends again?

FRANK

I'm not pooped at all.

74 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

74

The sun is full, DRIPPING HEAT in squirming waves across the highway. A desolate, piercing, endless land, stuck randomly with gangly growth...and the Dodge Royal bursts into this seductive deathscape, heading east through a HAUNTING MELODY.

75 INT. DODGE ROYAL - NIGHT

75

Frank drives into the darkness, Willie next to him, Frank's eyes studying the strange world outside where...

76 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

76

...red rock slabs of mountain cut the starkness of the sandy flatlands beneath a starry sky as the Dodge glides down the road, past a most amazing array of SATELLITE DISHES, bone-white under the moon...

77 INT. DODGE ROYAL - DAY

77

Frank still at the helm...Willie's dreaming brain coming and going as Frank flips the radio--static, tuning...sad country rock, tuning...landing on a song by JOHNNY AND JOE...

,7 Willie's eyes opening!

77

FRANK

It's okay. I love to drive! There just could be ten million things I never tried I'd like to do.

WILLIE

I don't doubt that.

FRANK

Remember when I was afraid the sun would fall and hit me in the head? Until my mom said that God held it up with a string. God wouldn't drop the sun on our heads.

WILLIE

Well, he's got an awful lotta balls in his hands these days not to let one splat to earth now an' again.

Willie thinks about that, finds himself playing nervously with Frank's tape measure. So instead he fine tunes the RADIO...JOHNNY AND JOE sounding so sweet...

WILLIE

Joy loved this song. We had the forty-five. She'd take all those records and pile 'em high...and we'd dance. Late at night. Holdin' her in my arms...agreeing on everything...

(softly, to himself)

Just like makin' love, dancing.

Frank sneaks a peek at his best buddy...as a sign by the side of the road shouts, "Welcome to New Mexico, The Land of Enchantment." They both heard it.

FRANK

See? God's still holding our balls, Willie.

You have to laugh...or you'd cry...Willie wrapping his hand behind Frank's neck, rattling his head.

WILLIE

And there are some who only love you for your body.

An easy, relaxed smile from Frank. He looks about as refreshed as he has in...years. Willie too, come to think of it.

FRANK

You like my sister's body, huh? Because she has...hooters.

17 Outside the car a pressing sun backlights the bouldered sand as Willie drops his hand from Frank's neck and thinks back three days ago, or twenty-nine years ago, to Joy's breasts. 77

WILLIE
That she did.

78 EXT. DODGE ROYAL - MAGIC HOUR 78

With Willie back behind the wheel again, the car crests a last horizon, affording Santa Fe in full view, much larger than remembered or expected...

79 INT. DODGE ROYAL - MAGIC HOUR 79

...but Frank's asleep, and Willie leaves things that way as he looks out on the flocks of chic buildings and a McDonald's stand where open land and large fenced ranches once stood...but still a great relief from what Freeman promised.

80 EXT. SANTA FE PLAZA - NIGHT 80

Willie takes the Dodge around a corner and stops it beside a phone booth. Straight down the street, there's that ageless, familiar Woolworth's, still there.

81 INT. DODGE ROYAL - NIGHT 81

Willie and Frank. So quiet. Too quiet. Frank wakes up.

FRANK
Where are we? Are we...?

WILLIE
Home. Stay calm, just stay calm, an' we'll figure this one out. Let me get my bearings here.

82 EXT. SANTA FE PLAZA - NIGHT 82

Near the phone booth a MALE RUNNER waits behind a WOMAN using a sidewalk ATM. Willie gets out of the car and walks over to the booth and tries to sneak off with the telephone book, only to be jerked back by the steel-ringed plastic binder! He yanks at it a couple of times, then gives up and starts to look through the thing for Joy and Jess's names when suddenly:

FRANK
That box gave the lady money!!

82 The woman glances at Frank...then quickly walks away. Fur- 82
tively, Willie begins ripping a few pages from the book as
Frank now gets out and comes over to stare in amazement at
the ATM screen which the runner is using, trying to obscure
the screen with his barely-clad body as Willie, confused and
fascinated by the ELECTRONIC BEEPS and the cash spewing from
the slight metal slot, grabs Frank's hand and pulls him back
to the car.

WILLIE
I found where Joy lives.

83 EXT. WOODED LANE - NIGHT 83

The Dodge pulls to a stop behind a short string of cars
parked near an adobe wall. A house with its windows aglow
sits just beyond.

84 INT. DODGE ROYAL - NIGHT 84

Torn telephone pages resting on his leg, Frank's thrilled to
see something that at long last he recognizes.

FRANK
We shoulda thought they'd be
staying with Aunt Harriet!

WILLIE
(a big nervous lie)
Frank, we could be in dire straits
here. You know, the police still
might be spittin' mad...they just
might be in there right now, laying
to trip us up.

FRANK
(almost whispering)
The one on the telephone?

WILLIE
Huh? Yeah, could be.

FRANK
Is he older too?

WILLIE
Yes. I think.
(pause)
So. What it is we gotta do is I
gotta sneak up to the house and
take a gander in the windows, to
see what's what, while you stay
here near the auto here and be real
still, not makin' a sound.

4

FRANK
 (whispering)
 I'll keep watch for more cops.

84

WILLIE
 Good. Good...okay, that's a plan.

Willie stealthily opens one door...Frank the other...

FRANK
 (softly)
 Willie?

WILLIE
 What's that?

FRANK
 How come Joy is using my last name
 in the phone book?

For a second, Willie's stumped for an easy answer.

WILLIE
 Well...I think we forgot to ever
 tell the phone company she married
 me and altered herself.

Lousy answer, nice try, Willie. He steps out of the car.

FRANK
 Then how come...
 (gently)
 You don't have a clue, right?

WILLIE
 Not the slightest hint.

Frank gently folds the phone book pages.

FRANK
 Just askin'.

Willie closes the door and contemplates a backside approach
 to what once was just "Aunt Harriet's house."

85 INT. JOY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

85

A skinny man named BRIAN and a hefty woman called SUSAN,
 both in their fifties, carry dishes into the kitchen and
 over to the sink.

SUSAN
 Joy, did you ever get this crazy
 dishwasher fixed?

Joy's in the living room, heard clearly but barely glimpsed,
 her voice lower and smoother than we remember.

JOY
Don't do that! Susan, just leave
them in the sink, please...

85

JESSICA
Stay there, mom. I'll get her out.

Two women, mother and daughter, rendered only in fleeting
shapes in the room beyond.

JOY
No reason for you to hang around.
Albert's gonna pitch in.

JESSICA
But I want to help too.

JOY
Go home, Jess. I love you.

86 EXT. JOY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

86

Willie sneaks in a funny crouch around back to a bright
kitchen window. Slowly, he inches his head forward and...
wonder sweeps over his face, tinged with horror.

WILLIE
My God!

Susan jerks her head around, thinking she's heard a noise.
Willie flattens against the house.

WILLIE
(softly)
Joy...you got such lovely...chins.

He presses his hand over his heart to slow the beat as he
sneaks himself back to the window. Susan's returned to the
room. In her place, Jessica, looking eerily like Joy, pony-
tail and all, smiles then laughs at Brian as she sends him
packing and starts to rinse the dishes. Willie's mind is
reeling, doubling back on itself, mesmerized by that face
and that laugh...this perfect vision of Joy, through the
sheers, exactly as remembered. Barely a whisper:

WILLIE
Thank you, Lord.

Suddenly hands wrap around her neck and a WOMAN hugs her and
nudges her away from the sink, replaces her...a handsome wo-
man of about fifty. Her hair softly cut, her skin nearly
smooth. Not like Joy, but...Joy.

Willie's face tells us that he understands. Entranced by
this new, older vision of Joy, he raises his hand and taps
on the window. Joy turns, unsure of what she's heard...as
someone sneaks up from behind and wraps his arms around her

the cheek! It's a handsome man in
 aforementioned ALBERT. Willie stands
 to act or move. 86

HT 87

pants' pocket and pulls out his bot-
 s to be in some pain, sliding a few
 l at once.

FRANK
 et stuck...
 losing his eyes)
 juicy watermelon. I don't
 nd the seeds. Yuck!

n his hand, he swallows hard and makes
 yes and presses the cap back on the
 way again and glances around for
 ica he sees! She's walking out of her
 into a four-wheel drive. Amazed,
 r a moment...

FRANK

NIGHT 88

e watches Joy and Albert...his wife and
 er...as they rinse dishes, clean up.

FRANK'S VOICE
 ? Willie!?

Dodge being started in the distance!
 ce at that impossible kitchen...then

HT 89

out of the bushes as Frank lurches the
 up over a log, spinning tires, trying
 But then he sees Willie, and he slams
 llie climbs in and...

GHT 90

gr' t his seat as Frank anxiously
 h rrow winding lane at a death-rate

FRANK 90
 I saw Joy!! I saw her!! It wasn't
 how you said!! She was like she
 always was!!

WILLIE
 (as calmly as possible)
 Slow down...or we'll die.

FRANK
 But I saw her!! I can show you!!

91 EXT. WIDER ROAD - NIGHT 91

The Dodge whips into view, and a WOMAN leaps onto the sidewalk for her safety, as Frank, suddenly scared to death, lets way up on the accelerator...

92 INT. DODGE ROYAL - NIGHT 92

WILLIE
 You coulda done some real damage
 there, Frank!!

FRANK
 (dismayed)
 Joy was just ahead of me! She
 was...

WILLIE
 You coulda flipped some lady up
 onto our hood there, Frank!

Frank slowly stops the car, near a stretch of rural businesses. Willie flicks the engine off, then loses it as he grabs Frank and shakes him violently like a crazy man...

WILLIE
 Are you insane!? Have you lost
 your mind!? Never do that!!
 That's called speeding!! That's
 real speeding!! How stupid can you
 be!?!?

Willie suddenly drops his hands from Frank's shirt and opens the side door and climbs out. Frank's trembling...

93 EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF A RESTAURANT - NIGHT 93

A few PEOPLE who witnessed the speeding and overheard the yelling are staring at Willie. He looks left and right then harshly hits his head with both hands. He can see Frank inside the car, trying to hide his tears. Willie whirls around to face the big-eyed crowd. He wants to scream at them, tell them to mind their own business, but he turns

back and looks in on Frank, who's trying so hard to regain himself.

93

WILLIE
I don't know why I say dumb
things. Here. Okay? Here...

Frank's tape. Willie's had it for so long now...but Frank won't even touch it.

WILLIE
Jessica's name is right there,
Frank, on those phone pages right
there. If you want, we'll find
her. Okay?

Frank lunges over and grabs the pages! He crumples them up and throws them on the floorboard.

FRANK
Leave me alone!! I hate you!

WILLIE
No, you don't!

FRANK
Just leave me alone!!

Willie backs away from the car.

WILLIE
Okay...I'll leave you alone.

He walks to the porch of the restaurant where five of the staring people are standing, and he sits down on a chair, smack in the middle of the group. They immediately start to disperse. A car STARTS. After a second or two Willie realizes it's his car, the stolen/borrowed Dodge. He jumps to his feet...

WILLIE
Right now!! Yank that car in
reverse!!

Too late. The Dodge squeals off down the road.

WILLIE
Well, dammit to hell!!

94 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

94

Willie flying inside, nearly leaping at the HOSTESS!

WILLIE
A phone book!

INT. DODGE ROYAL - NIGHT

95

Frank's got the car pulled over to a curb, listening to a BEARDED MAN and his WOMAN, Victims of Turquoise, explain how to get to Jessica's street.

MAN

So the light after next, you make like this left...

WOMAN

Right.

MAN

No, this left. Then go until the road narrows, then you make like this right.

WOMAN

At the stop sign.

96 EXT. BACK STREET - NIGHT

96

Willie runs with a telephone book tucked up under his arm. He staggers to a narrow intersection of adobe walls, looking for landmarks, trying to decide which way next as a PACK OF GHOSTLY CYCLISTS glides by.

97 EXT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

97

The front porch light is turned off, and the house appears small and isolated. A slight night breeze whips the trees.

A dog barks. The BACK OF A SHOULDER, then the BACK OF A HEAD obscures our view of the house.

98 INT. JESSICA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

98

Hanging plants crowd an improvised greenhouse alcove as beyond, standing on one foot, her other folded up to the back of her thigh, is Jessica, a close image of her mother, in a simple nightgown, her hair loose, her arms spread, balancing her on the washed wood floor as she refers awkwardly to an open book on the table.

And now we see Frank, peering into the room through the forest of house plants and collectibles on window shelves. He seems puzzled as he stares at what must be Joy pressing her body through the odd gesticulations of T'ai Chi.

EXT. JESSICA'S PORCH - NIGHT

99

Frank bounds up and incessantly presses the DOORBELL...

FRANK

It's me, Joy!! What'ya doing in there!?

99

Jessica flips on the porch light and cracks the door a few inches, wrapping tight a familiar old Pendleton robe.

JESSICA

Joy's at her own house. What do you want? It's after midnight.

FRANK

Joy?

Jessica opens the door a few more inches as she adjusts her eyes to the bright light...and twists her hair up into a pony-tail...just like her mother used to.

JESSICA

I'm her daughter.

Frank backs away from the door, and Jessica can only stare at this vision. She opens her door wider...and Frank continues to edge away, until he runs out of steps and falls backward onto a spectacular plastic dollhouse, landing hard on his rear.

A WAYS DOWN THE BLOCK...completely out of breath and dripping sweat, Willie drops the telephone book as he walks over to the Dodge, then looks up the street to the FIGURE standing frozen in porch light. He sees the folded BODY at the base of the stairs.

WILLIE

Frank!!!?

Jessica glances down the ill-lit street to the APPROACHING MAN.

FRANK

(softly)
Willie, I'm sorry.

Jessica grabs her robe and tightens it around her chest as she takes a small, frightened step forward.

JESSICA

Who are you?

Finally, Frank looks up at his niece, the oddest assortment of bright little mystery furniture in his hands...tears in his eyes...

FRANK

I'm stupid, Jess...I'm just stupid.

Willie approaches...stopping a few feet behind Frank, and Jessica tries to focus on what must be, can only be another ghost.

99

JESSICA
This isn't funny...

Willie comes closer, inches his legs against Frank's shoulder blades, starts to brush Frank's hair back with his hands as he stares at Jessica.

WILLIE
I'm sorry, Frank. I shouldn't have yelled at you like I did.

The sound of her father's voice is a shock, and Jessica takes a slight step back as Willie kneels behind his friend and wraps his arms around Frank's chest, hugging him.

FRANK
How did the doctor stop us from growing up? Why did he do it?!

WILLIE
I think he put something special in our body systems, Frank, then he dunked us in our sleeping bags and slipped us in one of those metal boxes and froze us up like pop-cicles. Like, remember when we all went fishing, and we caught all those trout...?

Willie glances at Jessica and continues to hug and comfort Frank. If he can explain it to Frank, maybe Jess can understand too.

FRANK
And Joy wouldn't clean them and Jess threw up watching you do it.

WILLIE
On your shoes.

FRANK
I didn't mind. Half of fishing is who you're fishing with.

And now Willie produces Frank's tape measure again. And Jess can see it...unmistakably the tape measure that her Uncle Frank used to...Willie sets it in Frank's hand, and Jess doesn't move a muscle for fear her world will explode.

WILLIE
So then we froze the ones we couldn't use. And 'member when we ate 'em? A long, long time later?
(MORE)

WILLIE (cont'd)
And didn't they look just as
handsome as the day we caught 'em?

99

FRANK
But they didn't swim anymore.

WILLIE
Well, see, the doctor didn't scoop
our insides out like I did with
those poor fish. So we've been
thawed for use here, Frank, I mean,
we're still swimming...

Frank sits up an inch taller...his thoughts clearing.

FRANK
Can I touch Jessica?

She doesn't move or say a word as Willie tries to glean an
answer.

WILLIE
I don't think she'll mind. She
knows Uncle Frank would never hurt
her.

Willie helps Frank up to his feet...Jessica standing still
as Frank approaches, cautiously making his move back toward
the steps.

JESSICA
Please...no...

Frank stops a few feet away, scared off by her trembling.

FRANK
I used to take you for rides on my
back. But you're too big now.

Slowly Frank reaches his hand across the distance and takes
her hand and touches it against his face.

JESSICA
Uncle Frank...? How...?

FRANK
I wish you were young again.

Jessica closes the distance and wraps her arms around Frank
and looks at Willie, and Frank hugs her back. Willie slowly
comes up the walkway, then the stairs, trying not to fall
apart here...

WILLIE
We miss anything special?

99 Jessica's sobbing, loosening her hold of Frank as she stares into Willie's eyes. Suddenly: 99

FRANK
Hi. Who're you...?

Jessica turns to the front door...where a cute little SIX-YEAR-OLD GIRL and her FOUR-YEAR-OLD BROTHER (topped with a fairly radical hair-doo) edge their bodies out onto the porch.

JESSICA
Amy...and Frank...this is...

FRANK
That's my name, too. Frank.
Willie, I wish my hair was cut like that.

AMY
That's grandpa from the pictures!

Amy pointing right at Willie as little Frankie hides behind his sister.

FRANK
So who belongs to these kids?

Jessica. Too obvious for words. Willie and his full-grown daughter just staring at each other.

100 INT. FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 100

Frank. He's sitting on the bed, wide-eyed in Wonderland, with Frankie eating sinister candy and watching him like a hawk from a corner, Amy right at his side, showing Frank pictures from an album, many of the photographs the same ones Willie was looking at twenty-nine years ago, now carefully mounted.

AMY
See, that's my mom, when she was a little girl, and that's grandpa, and that's grandma, and that's Uncle Frank and his funny lawn mower.

FRANK
I'm Uncle Frank.

A mind-bending concept. Frank gets up, goes to the door, peeks out into the hall like a curious, worried cat. A FLASH AND A CLICK behind him! He turns around. Amy's taken his picture with a semi-professional child's camera.

AMY

Grandma's really old. How come you
and grandpa didn't get old like mom
and grandma?

100

FRANK

It was a trick.

AMY

Tell me how.

01 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

101

Jessica. Slowly edging around the perimeter of the living
room, her own living room, but it couldn't seem more alien,
her face mixed with terror and disbelief as she holds her
Pendleton robe tight and talks, and watches Willie explore,
make tentative little forays into his lost life...

JESSICA

I used to have these dreams...I
used to pray you'd come back...

WILLIE

Well, you got an answer, I guess.

their eyes lock.

JESSICA

An answer.

Willie turns away...

WILLIE

You know, both you and your mom are
printed up in the phone pages. An'
I just wanted to get a peek of what
her life was like, what she was
like...so I sort of was lookin'
through her windows tonight.

JESSICA

Tonight...

WILLIE

And I saw her, Jess, your mom...
and I saw someone kiss her. Right
in the kitchen.

JESSICA

Albert.

Willie turns to face her.

JESSICA

Albert. They're not in love, that's just, they just like each other...I mean nowadays people just ...do things differently. Albert's just...oh, God. He's not important. Mom was married.

WILLIE

To Albert?

JESSICA

No, not to Albert. Before Albert. After you.

Jess watches him, but Willie says nothing...his eyes asking all the questions, making Jess feel so exposed...

JESSICA

She's divorced.

Willie sits down, Jess still as a frightened deer.

WILLIE

Oh brother.

JESSICA

Years ago. I mean, well, it was official the day after Ronald Reagan got shot, so nine years ago, ten years ago.

(so what?)

She gave me all her things. Just gave them to me.

What are they talking about?

WILLIE

Ronald Reagan? Somebody shot the guy from "Cattle Queen of Montana" ...?"

His glance darting her way...eye contact...impossible to hold...

JESSICA

Yeah. He was President...

WILLIE

Of the movie people?

JESSICA

Worse. All people. Are you cold or anything? I mean...

WILLIE

I'm fine.

1 But Willie's dumbfounded, and it shows.

101

JESSICA

You kept coming back in both of our
dreams, and mom said you wrecked
her second marriage too...

Willie gets up, flees toward a large oak cabinet, shelved
with rows of records, CDs, tapes, and such very modern audio
equipment.

JESSICA

I mean because she could never find
anybody else that, well...
(faint)
Oh my God...

Willie starts toward her...

JESSICA

No, I'm okay. So she gave me all
her photo albums, all your tools
and those lucky coins you found,
everything that reminded her...all
your records...

(choking back tears)
She had to get rid of you.

WILLIE

Didn't she love me anymore?

JESSICA

Of course she did! That's why.

Willie tries to handle that one, tries to figure what he can
offer his daughter, his family...finds himself running a
finger across the ribbed edges of all his old albums.

JESSICA

We have to go see her...how can we
go see her...?

WILLIE

So is she happy now?

JESSICA

You don't know how long she waited.

Jessica's crying, trying so hard not to.

WILLIE

Then maybe one more night won't
matter, huh? Gimme time to catch
my breath here.

He's pulled an album from the shelf, just something to look
at, something to do while...

.1

WILLIE

101

After we put you to bed, sometimes
 on weekends we'd dance for hours.
 Turn the record on low...just in
 case you cried...
 (like right now)
 ...we could hear you. Put the
 lights down...

He's got the record out, and he's trying to put it on the
 most sophisticated turntable...

JESSICA

This isn't happening. People just
 can't be...not in real life.

WILLIE

Most times I'd shower first and
 dress up. It was a date.
 (all thumbs)
 I can't make this work. I've never
 even seen...

JESSICA

Here.

Jessica takes the album, and Willie watches her cue it up,
 sniffle through the task, start the loveliest VOICE singing
 softly...

ROSEMARY CLOONEY

He's a fool, and don't I know it?
 But a fool can have his charms...

Jess bounces the tone arm, all thumbs too, under her dad's
 close gaze...

JESSICA

Shit.

WILLIE

Except for your mother...I've never
 seen anyone more beautiful.

He's right there, big as life, and Jessica's looking into
 his eyes...making the miracle her own.

ROSEMARY CLOONEY

I'm wild again, beguiled again, a
 simpering, whimpering child again...
 bewitched, bothered, and bewildered
 am I...

JESSICA

Fathers have to think that.

101

WILLIE
(nearly surprised)
I'm your father.

101

His arms have folded themselves up across his chest, but now Jessica takes a step forward and holds a hand out...and un-
easily Willie takes it, keeps her at arm's length as they
begin to dance. Slowly Jess closes the distance, holding
tightly onto her father, Willie frightened by the closeness,
frightened by the scent of her hair, the warmth of her skin,
by how much she looks like Joy. But still, he can't give up
the dance...

ROSEMARY CLOONEY
Bewitched, bothered and bewildered
am I...

SOMEONE'S POV back down the hall, watching Willie and Jess
dance, and Willie senses the eyes upon them, looks up...

...at Frank and Amy, just standing there watching. And
Willie smiles, his hands leaving Jess's back for only a
moment, to shrug, and Frank smiles too, shrugs Willie right
back as the dance continues...and the SONG PERSISTS as the
ROOM FADES OUT...

102 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

102

...FADES IN MUCH LATER...with the couch now a makeshift bed
for Willie, who sits alone, rapt, with a photo album resting
on his legs, equally captured and unnerved by the images of
the family life he missed. Soft and slow, THE SAME RECORD
KEEPS ON PLAYING in the low-lit room as Willie's face trips
across emotions from awe to concern...

...and we glimpse some of the same photographs that turn his
soul: Jess waving with one-handed control of a two wheeler
...Amy with her camera, taking a picture of the person tak-
ing her picture...Joy dressed in white, kissing a strange
man behind a cut wedding cake.

Willie lifts his eyes from the photo, his hands in steepled
prayer as he stares vacantly at the room.

103 INT. JESSICA'S BEDROOM -- SONG CONTINUES -- NIGHT

103

She's in bed, staring up at the shadowed ceiling. A tree
rustles the moonlight into hands and vague faces grasping
for life and form from grey silhouette. Jessica gets up and
goes to a closet, pulls on its harsh light. A man's
clothing hangs inside, his partial wardrobe abandoned amid
so many empty hangers.

104 INT. FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

104

The little boy sleeps soundly near a big toy clock...3:15 flipping to 3:16 as Frank's hand comes into view, abducting the weird time piece and bringing it down to the floor where he's been trying to snooze in a fantastic sleeping bag.

105 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

105

Frank appears...stealing into the dark room in his underwear. He stares for a moment at Willie, dead to the world, curled up tight on the sheeted couch.

FRANK
(just a whisper)
Not me, I can't even sleep.

It isn't really intended to wake his friend...and it doesn't. So Frank sits on the floor beside the couch...and slides the open photo album onto his lap.

FRANK
Oh my.

That astounding wedding photo of Joy and some absolute, total stranger...

...as Willie turns in sudden fitful sleep! Frank holds his breath. Then when it's safe, flips to another page and sees...

...Jess in the late 70's, in the most immodest swimwear.

And now Jess in 1991! Coming right on into the dark living room, her arms draped with clothing that she begins to arrange on a chair...as Frank shrinks into the deepest shadow and hides to watch his niece so quietly collect the scattered photo albums, turn off the record player...pull the blanket higher up on sleeping Willie, tucking her father in, and we stay with Willie as the LIGHT CHANGES...DISSOLVING...

106 INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

106

...as the hours race by and DAWN eases bright into the room...and Willie's leg flops to the floor, jolting him awake! He blinks his eyes into adjustment, a momentary sense of confusion and fright consuming him as he struggles to his feet all alone in this unfamiliar living room. But it isn't a dream. Near the couch, on a chair, Willie sees a man's suit beside a clean shirt and socks.

107 INT. FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING 107

Frank shuts his eyes closed and pretends to dream as the door eases open and Willie glances in to view the two Franks. He can't help but smile, both so innocent and accepting -- so able to sleep.

108 INT. HALLWAY - MORNING 108

In his new borrowed pants and shirt and stocking feet, Willie eases Frankie's bedroom door shut and looks down the hallway toward those RUSTLING-ABOUT NOISES emanating from the open kitchen...

109 INT. FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING 109

Frank jostles his tiny nephew awake, the little boy in a fog as he looks into the wide-awake eyes of his uncle.

FRANK

Hi. We gotta figure out what we're gonna do today.

110 INT. HALLWAY - MORNING 110

Willie...approaching the kitchen. Someone's in there working away, an ALL-NEWS STATION tuned low...Willie looking around the door jamb in at...

111 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING 111

...this creature in a blue face mask and a Pendleton robe, trying to make fresh-squeezed orange juice and watch some toast toast. Jessica.

WILLIE

My God...

JESSICA

(whirling)

Jesus! Oh...you scared me...I was just...don't look.

She turns away to strip off that ghastly face peel, but Willie can't help himself, has to come around, get a clear view of the miraculous event...there, done. His daughter again.

JESSICA

I'm sorry...I...

111

WILLIE

111

No, it's your house. I was just...scaring people. I scare everybody, me included, I mean my nerves are climbing down an' setting up shop in my stomach.

Because Jessica's staring at him...seeing him in sunlight for the first time since she was three.

JESSICA

You look so handsome.

Willie regards himself in a chrome appliance. Doubtful. Sleep-tossed hair, stubbly whiskers.

WILLIE

Whose pants you got me wearing is what I was...

JESSICA

My husband's.

That stops everything for a moment. Then Jessica starts back at her breakfast chores.

WILLIE

Oh. He's a slight longer length than me. So. Well, where is he if his clothes...

JESSICA

Did you sleep well? Are you hungry? You must be starved after all those...

WILLIE

No. You?

JESSICA

Not a wink.

WILLIE

Me neither. I just looked through some photo albums.

JESSICA

We should get going before mom...I mean I'm just trying to get the kids and Frank some...

WILLIE

All night, pretty much. An' all I saw was my family living a life I'll never know. I saw my wife married, smiling a smile I never saw...I think this is wrong, Jess.

111 JESSICA 111
 She hasn't really smiled since
 the day you left.

Looking at each other.

WILLIE
 I saw her laughing.

112 INT. HALL/STAIRS - MORNING 112

Frank...crouched behind sleepy Frankie, whispering final instructions into the child's ear...then edging him off into the kitchen just before a sharp pain in his back makes Frank wince a bit.

113 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING 113

Little Frankie waddling in, right between Willie and Jess, plunking himself down at the table by rote as his mother sets food in front of him.

FRANKIE
 Hi, grandpa.

Willie's shocked to hear that word sent his way, still...

WILLIE
 Hi, Frankie.

Jessica ducking back into her coffee-making chores, but she heard that effortless "grandpa" too, and now Willie turns from the child, back to his daughter...finds her coming at him with food...directing him to the seat opposite Frankie.

JESSICA
 Here. Eat.

WILLIE
 What's she like, I mean nowadays,
 your mom? I mean Joy.

JESSICA
 Strong. Stronger than ever.
 Stronger than I'll ever be, that's
 for sure.

Frank's head appears in the doorway, for only little Frankie to see, urging the boy to act...speak up.

WILLIE
 Strong enough to handle me?

113

FRANK

113

Me an' Frank are gonna play games
this morning. I'm gonna teach him
Super Mario Brothers Four.

Willie looks at the child...Frankie at last remembering his
next line:

FRANKIE

So you don't have to worry about
us.

That said, he just gets up and walks back out of the
kitchen. Willie looks at the healthy breakfast spread
before him. No stomach for it...as Frank appears in the
kitchen doorway, boldly, so Willie can see him this time.
The two regarding each other for a moment...before Frank
underhands his crazy tape measure right across the kitchen,
and Willie reacts, just barely catches it.

FRANK

Good hands.

Jess watching them...Willie looking her way.

WILLIE

Well. Guess I'm ready as I'll ever
be.

114 EXT. SANTA FE - MORNING

114

A brilliant sun rests among a thicket of thin clouds. A
wind blows a WALKING WOMAN'S dress in a flutter, and she
grabs at it and holds it down as Jessica's car passes.

115 INT. FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE - MORNING

115

Jess is behind the wheel, Willie beside her, clicking
Frank's tape in and out, cracking the rule back and forth,
finally stopping himself and folding the damn thing away
under his hands on his lap...

WILLIE

Frank was asking me why would it be
that you're married but don't live
together?

Jessica looks at him. She's as nervous as he is.

JESSICA

Who said I was still married?

WILLIE

Amy told Frank, he told me, you got
kids and this nice suit, rumors get
started.

115 Jess looks cornered, puts her eyes back on the road.

115

JESSICA
Do we have to talk about this?

WILLIE
We have to talk about something.

True.

JESSICA
We were friends so long before we were lovers, we thought marriage made perfect sense...but his father was still alive, and he hated me...and I hated him.

WILLIE
So you don't love him anymore?

JESSICA
Well, just other things weren't right, okay? He had such a hard life...but I guess a lot of people did, do...I don't know.

WILLIE
You gotta know, Jess. Love isn't something that comes in halves. You either do or you don't.

He isn't asking about Jess and her husband, but about Joy. Jess softens and lets him hear what he wants to hear.

JESSICA
Then maybe I do...it's just been such a long time since I've thought about it.

116 EXT. JOY'S HOUSE - MORNING

116

End of the road. Jessica pulls up in front of that wonderful rambling adobe...the house that only last night...

117 INT. FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE - MORNING

117

JESSICA
I should've called her, told her something...

WILLIE
That's my job.

The two of them just sitting there. Staring at the house.

JESSICA

117

What if she left for work? We're usually both at the shop by now. No, that's a lie. And there's her car. So she's still in there. Oh dear.

Silence. Willie sets the big tape up on the dash.

WILLIE

You and Joy work for the same place?

JESSICA

We work for ourselves. We own a small shop. You remember our old house on Canyon Road?

The house of doom. Willie remembers. It's the only house he's ever known.

JESSICA

Guess you do. Stupid...

WILLIE

I remember I lost it.

... gets out...Jess scrambling after him...

EXT. JOY'S HOUSE - MORNING

118

Willie heading up toward the front gated wall...

JESSICA

(fast)

No you didn't. Mom kept it.

Willie stops.

WILLIE

What?

JESSICA

She kept it...for you.

Willie looks back up at...Aunt Harriet's house? Joy's house...? Things spinning...

WILLIE

Why? I mean how? I went up to that hill to sell it because she...

JESSICA

She sued Freeman. She borrowed money from every friend she had, and she got people together and forced him out into the open.

118

WILLIE

Mom did? But she didn't even
care if we...

118

JESSICA

Oh yes, she cared. She beat him,
for you. He backed down, and he
left town and built half of Houston
before somebody else murdered him.

WILLIE

(amazed)

We have our house. But then why...

He looks up at Aunt Harriet's old homestead.

JESSICA

Because mom couldn't live in it
anymore. So we opened...do you
want to hear this? Are you all
right?

WILLIE

Yes. Yes.

JESSICA

This antique shop...with all the
old stuff you guys had. And then
when mom got divorced, she bought
Aunt Harriet's place...here...when
Aunt Harriet...moved out of her
body.

WILLIE

Aunt Harriet's dead.

It's a simple statement of fact, a release. Jessica's
afraid to move, to startle him.

WILLIE

What do I say?

His nerve vanishing...his heart pounding so loud...

JESSICA

Do you think you should wait here?
Maybe you should just wait here.

Jessica's past him, heading for the porch.

WILLIE

Maybe I'll wait right beyond this
gate. Or to the side of the door
there.

Jess fumbles with her keys, then slides one into the entry
lock and opens the front door.

118

JESSICA

118

Give me a little time, daddy.

WILLIE

I got all the time in the world.

Willie presses himself against the house, but as Jessica starts to close the door behind her, he circles around and sticks his shoe between the door's edge and the jamb. Jess looks back out to see what's blocking the closing. In the background, we can barely HEAR Joy talking to someone.

JESSICA

I'll leave it open.

119 INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

119

Jessica walks through the big cathedral space, her heels echoing off the old brick floor.

120 INT. JOY'S HOME OFFICE - MORNING

120

Shafts of strong morning light from the old shuttered windows cut the room into a shadowed pattern. Joy, in full sunlight, sits behind a beautiful trestle table, fidgeting a video cassette as she talks on the phone to New York, frowning at the receiver when she spots her daughter come in. Jessica walks behind the table and begins to massage her mother's neck.

JOY

Harry, trust me, every piece of the Rookwood is wonderful. I have two Van Erp bowls, Harry, and I found a terrific Mexican trastero at an estate sale in Phoenix. Yes. Eighteenth century, painted pine, and I bought it real well for a change. Because it needs a little work.

The massage is helping, and Joy drops her head back and smiles weakly up at Jess. She pops the cassette into a VCR and locates a video remote on the wonderfully cluttered table top, amid gilded picture frames, ceramic vases, a mess of paper and books and a string of wooden candlesticks.

JOY

Harry, Harry, just let me Fed X this cassette, and you can see the stuff yourself, okay? In the privacy of your own whatever.

121 INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

121

Willie's entered the house, come through the foyer, a stranger in a strange land, anxiously listening to Joy as he wanders her new living room where Spanish Colonial antiques mix with Mexican and Indian artifacts. No clutter, nothing trendy, just supremely simple elegance...and on a table a few framed photos, one in particular a family snap of a pony-tailed MAN with Jess and the kids. Something about the guy seems to bother, but Willie hasn't time to pursue it because a WIDESCREEN TV in the den comes alive and an image appears: Joy!

JOY'S VOICE

I'm watching the tape right now,
with Jess. The things are special.
That's all I can promise you. If
people don't want them at a fair
price then, Harry, there is
something wrong with people.

ON THE TV SCREEN, visible from both the office and the living room, in full middle-age beauty, Joy can be seen standing in a small warehouse, showing the antiques to a HAND-HELD CAMCORDER, her commentary a mystery because the sound's off...her image freezing, reversing, fast-forwarding in response to all the nervous button-pushing going on in that office...

...as a ways behind Willie a bedroom door opens and a man appears. Albert. He's finagling his coat on, juggling a steaming cup of coffee as he spots Willie.

ALBERT

Hello...?

Willie spins around! Albert's a great looking guy, mature, confident, and now he just puts on a friendly grin and extends a hand Willie's way.

ALBERT

Albert Glaus.

This is the guy who kissed his wife...who just came out of her...bedroom? With his jacket off? And Willie finds himself shaking the older man's hand.

WILLIE

Will...no...Richard Gere.

Albert appears the slightest bit thrown by the name. It sounds vaguely familiar.

ALBERT

You're here for Joy? She didn't...

121 WILLIE 121
 What? Yes. No. I'm...well...here
 with Jess.

ALBERT
 (pleased)
 Jess is here? I'll just say a
 quick goodbye. She's like a
 daughter to me.

Willie is still and silent in the living room as Albert
 heads off through the den...

122 INT. JOY'S HOME OFFICE - MORNING 122

JOY
 Now that, I can live with that,
 Harry. I'll get the tape out to
 you today.

Jess, working on her mother's tense neck, jumps when Albert
 appears! Joy sees him now too and just swivels around and
 hammers at a calculator.

JESSICA
 Albert, what the hell are you...

ALBERT
 Sssh, sssh. I'm on my way out.

JOY
 Okay...okay, seventeen thousand
 eight-hundred fifty-three. I'd pay
 shipping if you...

Albert's winking at Joy, giving her a proud thumb's up.
 He steps over and kisses her on the cheek, Joy catching
 Jessica's stern glance.

123 INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING 123

Willie edges closer to the den doorway...trying to hear
 what's transpiring in the office beyond, afraid to find out.

JOY'S VOICE
 Right, and anything you decide you
 don't want, send back to me. Half,
 and I won't bill you the rest 'til
 the first.

Albert pops out, smack in his face.

ALBERT
 Oops. That's a great girl...
 (a wink)
 ...Jessica. Both of 'em.

And he's gone, slurping his coffee, out the front door to battle the new world. 123

124 INT. JOY'S HOME OFFICE - MORNING 124

JOY

I think you're going to be so surprised. I'll talk to you soon, and I'll Fax you the breakdown right now. Take, care, okay? Life goes on, Harry, keep smiling.

(hanging up)

Poor Harry. His brother died last month and willed half their shop to a bunch of Catholic nuns from New Jersey.

Jessica can't focus on that at all.

JOY

What's the matter, Jess? You're here so early...

JESSICA

I...didn't get a lot of sleep last night. Something very strange happened.

Shafts of light from the shutters sculpt Joy's face into lovely soft planes as she goes to her Fax, starts dialing Harry's machine.

JOY

What? Are you okay? You look...

JESSICA

I...I had a dream. I mean...I think I had a dream. Like we used to. Where daddy and Uncle Frank came back? They just showed up on my doorstep. Right there on my front porch. Live and in person. Last night.

JOY

I think you eat too late at night. That'll do it.

JESSICA

But wouldn't that be wonderful? If that really could really happen? Daddy and Uncle Frank.

Joy looks at her daughter.

14

JOY

Jess, Harry told me he dreams
about blowing the heads off those
New Jersey nuns. And he's a
Catholic.

124

Jessica takes an abrupt step back as Willie appears...an
ill-lit vision right in the doorway behind Joy! Shadows and
light mask and dissect him.

JOY

(back to work)

Dreams are mostly wonderful because
we get to wake up. Will you call
an electrician today and get that
worthless reostat...

JESSICA

Dreams are hope, aren't they? I
mean, didn't you ever hope?

So quick, so inappropriate.

JOY

What's the matter with you?

JESSICA

It wasn't a dream, mom. Not this
time.

JOY

Honey, what is this? Your father
and Uncle Frank are...

JESSICA

I touched them, hugged them. I
danced with daddy last night.

Joy's becoming understandably unnerved by this conver-
sation...and now Willie takes two silent steps into the
room...Jessica watching him, petrified...as the beeping Fax
starts transmitting.

JOY

Did they talk to you?

JESSICA

Oh, yeah, they did, mom.

JOY

Did they happen to tell you where
they've been for the last three
decades?

JESSICA

Dad, say something...touch her...

4 Joy turns...Willie's gone! An empty corner. So to humor
Jess:

124

JOY

I'm more than a little upset with
you guys! I had dinner waiting.
Where've you been for the last
twenty-nine years?!

WILLIE

Better late than never.

Joy gasps in fright as she hears Willie's voice behind her.
He moves quickly and places his hands gently on her shoulders,
and she sits, her legs gone weak...Jess in front of
her, a ghost behind.

WILLIE

We were sleepin' real slow, Joy.
Please...I need just to tell you
how hard we tried to get back here.
Please?

JESSICA

It's okay, mom.

WILLIE

(quickly)
And if you look at me, I can't tell
you that.

Joy is shaking, frightened as she stares up at Jessica.

JOY

Don't touch me...this isn't funny.
Jess, this isn't funny.

Willie removes his hands and steps back as Jessica kneels,
holds her mother's attention straight ahead.

JESSICA

Listen, mom, just listen.

WILLIE

Police answered your phone, then
your number was gone, handed to
strangers, an' I wanted to tell you
we were okay, that bad luck was
just pressin' down heavy above our
heads...

JOY

It's someone else...has to be...
someone else...

24

WILLIE

...that knows I kissed you on our second date? When you told everyone else it was our fourth, an' after Jess was born, how I snuck into bed with you with three other birthed mothers laid out flat an' looking, an' you cried...an' I couldn't tell if you were happy or sad.

124

JOY

(nearly a whisper)
Willie...?

Jessica takes her mother's hand in hers.

JESSICA

It wasn't his fault.

She lets go...and backs out of the room, giving her father a frightened smile that tries to encourage. Jessica's heels reverb on the living room brick, recede. Willie's still behind Joy...both of them keeping it that way...Joy afraid enough right now...of just his shadow on the wall before her.

WILLIE

I saw you last night. Here. I sneaked a look up through a curtain. And wasn't I surprised? You haven't changed. Not at all.

JOY

Where have you been?

WILLIE

In a town called Pomona.

JOY

Why come back now?

WILLIE

Where else would I go but back to you?

Joy can't take it any more. She just suddenly swings her chair around to face him! And Willie ducks into shadow.

JOY

After all this time...what do you want!?

WILLIE

I want my life back, Joy.

4

JOY

Your life? Your life? It's not here anymore. My God, it died... somewhere in the desert, when I was young. Where the hell have you been?!

124

She moves toward him, driving him further into the darkness, ashamed...

WILLIE

It's hard to tell you the truth, because it sounds so much like a lie.

JOY

Then tell me a lie that sounds like the truth! Tell me something! Or just leave me again!

Joy turns her back on Willie and walks around the desk to the far corner of the room.

WILLIE

Well, it's a whole strange long story that I don't really have a clue about, except they call it cryonics, I think, some kinda deep freeze miracle in Pomona, California, Joy, for no reason!

JOY

There's always a reason, goddamn you!

She grabs the shutters and tilts them up until the strong morning light shows the face of truth: Willie Husband, not a week older than when she saw him last.

WILLIE

Don't panic.

She's pressed against the wall...

JOY

Who are you?

WILLIE

Me.

(pause)

I been frozen, Joy. With Frank. For twenty-nine years. But now I'm not.

So simple. So impossible. She stares at him, then rushes to her desk and gathers up some papers, two candlesticks, her keys and her purse, a newspaper, a small lamp... crazy denial...

4

WILLIE

Joy? Lemme help you there, Joy...
 where you goin' all of a sudden
 like this? To that guy Albert?
 Please...he's almost sixty...

124

JOY
 (suddenly)
 I could be your mother!

WILLIE
 You could be my wife.

JOY
 I'm not!

She moves quickly out of the office...

125 INT. JOY'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING 125

...then runs through her living room, Willie only able to
 walk out after her...

WILLIE
 If you don't care about me...then
 go see Frank...

126 EXT. JOY'S HOUSE - MORNING 126

Jessica is sitting on the porch steps as her mother bursts
 from the house.

JESSICA
 Mom? Where're you...?

JOY
 (irrational)
 I'm late for work.

JESSICA
 Mom?! But it's dad and Uncle
 Frank! I mean it really is!

Joy flies down the steps and across the yard to her
 car...Jess going after her...

JESSICA
 I thought this might call for
 leaving the shop closed today!?
 Mom? Mom!

Willie comes out onto the porch, hurries down to the gate,
 sees Joy opening her car door, tossing everything in her
 arms across the front seat as Jess stands right near her,
 talking fast, explaining...and then Joy looks wildly up at
 Willie, wiping a tear from her uncomprehending face...

WILLIE
Don't leave...I came back...

126

Joy jumps into her car and whips it off down the lane.

WILLIE
Jess, I need your keys, car keys...

JESSICA
(desperate)
She just needs to be alone, to have
time to think...

WILLIE
She starts thinkin' about this, I'm
lost. Keys. Keys!

Jessica pulls the keys out of her skirt pocket...and Willie
starts for the four-wheel drive, stops...

WILLIE
Frank.

JESSICA
I can get home. I'll be with him.
Go. Go, for god sakes, go!

127 EXT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - MORNING

127

An old Volvo pulls into the driveway. Out of the car steps
a young man with a pony-tail. He's the guy Willie saw in
that photo with Jess, at Joy's. He walks up the porch
steps, noticing that broken doll house as he knocks on the
door, and the door flies open as Amy rushes up into his
arms.

AMY
Daddy!

He kisses her, then brushes her hair back behind her ear.

MAN
Don't you look pretty today.

AMY
Frank put the ribbon up in my hair.

MAN
(looking at the bow)
He tied it and everything?

AMY
Not Frank. Uncle Frank!

MAN
Who?

.27 Amy slips out of his arms and grabs one of his hands. 127

AMY
Come on, I'll show you. I can't
take his picture because it'll wake
him up.

128 INT. FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING 128

Amy creaks the door open, and there, to the astonishment of the man, is not only his son, sitting in bed with a chocolate moustache...but a large adult curled up on the floor, sleeping away.

AMY
He made us chocolate milk after mom
left, but his side keeps hurting
him, an' he takes these giant pills
because he's real tired.

The man inches forward...Frankie shooting him point blank with a string pistol!

FRANKIE
Hi, dad.

The man kisses Frankie on the cheek, disarms him, then kneels beside the bed. He slides his hand slowly toward the sleeping visitor but stops short of touching him.

MAN
Frank...?

It's not much more than a frightened whisper. And Frank is breathing so deeply that...

FRANKIE
Look what he can do.

...very carefully little Frankie lifts snoring Frank's eyelids with his fingers--completely white. Amazing.

MAN
Let's let him sleep.

129 INT. FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE - MORNING 129

As Willie nears his old neighborhood a telephone in the car starts to BEEP! He searches around, but before he can figure it out an answering machine interrupts with JESSICA'S VOICE!

JESSICA RECORDED
I'm not in the car right now, but
if you'll leave your name and
number...

9 Astonished, Willie slows to a crawl on the small street, staring at the homes of his neighbors, all of them still basically intact and unchanged, except that now every one of them is a business. He stops... 129

...because straight ahead is his old house, his home...the small adobe he struggled so hard to keep, the house that cost him twenty-nine years of his life. It's still standing, painted, in better shape than ever, with a hand-carved sign below the eaves: THE LOVEGREN SHOP.

SPEAKER PHONE

Jess, it's me Donald. I need to see you right now. I'm at the house.

130 INT. THE LOVEGREN SHOP - MORNING 130

TWO WOMEN browse through what used to be Willie and Joy's living room. A stirring array of wonderfully diverse artifacts and furniture grace the shelves, everything in a special place.

131 INT. SHOP OFFICE - MORNING 131

This was little Jessica's bedroom. And now Joy's sitting in a grand old chair that once was in their living room. She's holding an unframed photograph of Willie and Frank, FISHING BUDDIES, staring at it. A soft BELL sounds, and the front door of the shop opens. Joy freezes.

132 INT. MAIN ROOM OF THE SHOP - MORNING 132

Willie enters, instantly swamped by the memory of his old living room...how much has changed, how much is still the same...the two women glancing at him.

WOMAN

Nobody to help us...?

Slowly, Willie walks around the perimeter, taking everything in as the women share a secret...

WOMAN

She's six months pregnant, it's a boy, and they're actually going to name him "Jason."

Willie turns toward the hall. The wall to their old bedroom is gone, opened up as a selling space by a rustic arch.

3 INT. JESSICA'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

133

AMY

...and a wizard took them to a special place...and they got to drink wizard juice, then he took their clothes off and turned them into caterpillars sleeping in a cocoon, but then a bomb dropped that woke them up so their day was over and they came home so that...

DONALD

Slow down, honey, slow down.

The little girl's sitting on a sofa with her dad, Frankie on his lap as the door opens! And Jessica comes in, harried...

FRANKIE

Hi, mom.

JESSICA

Hi, sweetheart...

DONALD

Jess, what is this?

AMY

I'm telling daddy all about how grandpa and Uncle Frank got to come back and live with us!

Jess closes the door and takes a few steps toward her husband and his disbelieving gaze.

JESSICA

It's true. I swear to God, it is.

DONALD

They drank wizard juice?

JESSICA

No, they were frozen. In California.

DONALD

Oh, why didn't you just say so?

FRANKIE

They were not!

Frank. Standing in the hall. Listening to their every word. His brow tightened.

JESSICA

Donald, mom is losing it. It's not funny! She just ran out on dad,
(MORE)

JESSICA (cont'd) 133
 and he went after her, but I don't
 see how...I mean there's nothing I
 can do to keep them together!

In the background...the SOUND OF FRANK'S COUGHING. A little
 harsher than we've ever heard before. Jess walks to the
 empty hall, toward the bedroom...

JESSICA
 Is Frank okay? What's wrong?

INT. SHOP OFFICE - MORNING 134

From the hall, Willie finds her, stopping still as their
 eyes meet. Less afraid now, somehow ready, Joy doesn't move
 a muscle. So he backs up...

WILLIE
 Don't run away. Please.

JOY
 I never ran away.

INT. MAIN ROOM OF THE SHOP - MORNING 135

Willie walks back through the living room and opens the
 front door, too quickly, tensing the browsing women.

WILLIE
 We're closed. Sorry.

They don't know why, but they know they don't belong here,
 and they move out at Willie's urging. He locks the door,
 flips the "Open" sign to "Closed."

INT. SHOP OFFICE/HALL - MORNING 136

Joy gets up to face him as Willie comes back to her, down
 the hall, past their old bedroom, into the doorway of the
 room where they raised their small daughter...

JOY
 Frank's really home too?

WILLIE
 Over at Jess's, playing with the
 grandkids.

He can't believe he said it so easily. History and love and
 children...mixing this cruelly with time and distance and
 memory.

6

JOY

When the phone rang, or a knock on the door, every time my heart would race, and I'd think they didn't die somewhere in the desert, alone. And all I had was a blanket, from your car, that they gave me, but for years I hoped...every face, I wanted a miracle then...I looked for you, I looked for Frank. Every voice, laugh...

136

She comes close enough to touch him...

JOY

I was so helpless without you. I counted on you. I didn't have any money. Jess was so tiny. I needed you to get me through...
(a sudden resolve)
I'm not helpless anymore.

WILLIE

I am.

Joy stares for a moment at this man it took her so many years to forget. His innocence and his good nature were always so easy to see, but now he looks frightened...and she can barely breathe.

JOY

Oh, this is...this is...

WILLIE

...another shot at it maybe.

JOY

At what?

She's moved away again, tried to get out of the room, found herself staying...

JOY

What do we do now? This isn't fair, so much happened, I mean everywhere to everybody, I mean, Willie, a man walked on the moon!

He looks at her...from the dark ages.

JOY

A long time ago.

She lets her breath out, for the first time in years it seems.

WILLIE
I didn't know that.

136

JOY
So what's your plan? You always
had a plan...

WILLIE
I've run out. I don't know, Joy...
things happen, I don't know why or
how, an' all I can do is just keep
trying.

JOY
To do what?!

WILLIE
My best. Worm my way back into my
life. Your life. You know, maybe
you don't care to hear this, but to
me, there's only four days gone
since I saw you...since I kissed
you and slept next to you...

JOY
It was so simple then.

WILLIE
Lord knows it was hard enough.

JOY
My life with you is over, Willie.

She's gone from the room...out into the hall, through his
fingers...

WILLIE
Joy, four days of missing you...

JOY
(turning on him)
You're not talking to me! You're
talking to what I was a lifetime
ago! Look at me! This is real.

She means her age, everything about her. She turns away,
losing the courage to face him.

WILLIE
So am I. You think I haven't
thought a thousand times how you
looked? Driving eight hundred
miles through the desert to get
back to you!? Look at me, Joy.
I'm lookin at you now...and you're
better than I ever hoped for. I
mean, to be honest, I kept
(MORE)

5

WILLIE (cont'd)
 imagining havin' to spend the rest
 of my days with a face like your
 mother's.

136

Willie steps out after her, a few careful steps...

JOY
 The rest of your days...?

WILLIE
 And I decided, halfway to nowhere,
 that if I could only see you again,
 that I would tell you...

JOY
 No...

WILLIE
 ...I love you. As much as
 anything, I love you.

Willie closes the distance.

WILLIE
 I came back for you, Joy. Not
 your face. Not just for your skin.
 But for what you'd tell me. All
 your thoughts. And how you'd touch
 me. I came back for your smile,
 for that soft way you snore when
 your nose gets all clogged up.

He turns her cheek, and touch forces her to keep looking at
 him, to remember the excitement...

JOY
 I'm married...I mean, I've been
 married...I was married for ten
 years...

WILLIE
 And now you're not. Joy, I ran
 through every life you could'a
 lived coming back here, and you
 know the truth, an' I know it...I'm
 supposed to be the one that gets to
 make you happy. I'm the one that
 gets to wipe your tears...

JOY
 No. I won't cry.

WILLIE
 ...and hold you, and sleep with
 you, and wake up to you. That's
 me, Joy, because I tried the
 (MORE)

36

WILLIE (cont'd)
 hardest. I did my very best, which
 only God knows why was never good
 enough. I mean, for Christ sakes,
 I haven't even had a damn cigarette
 in twenty-nine years! Well...one.

136

He's so mixed up, so angry and desperate...but she can't.
 How can she?

JOY
 Please leave me alone. Please.

The PHONE starts BEEPING, the softest electronic chirping.
 Willie and Joy staring at each other until she ducks past
 him and lifts the receiver on the wall phone in their old
 bedroom, trying to take the out it's giving her, but Willie
 intercedes, removes it from her hand and sets it on the
 counter then very slowly backs her toward the wall, into a
 corner...

WILLIE
 All I ever wanted, I had, with you,
 and Jess, and Frank.

JOY
 No...

He leans in, their mouths only inches apart, and he raises
 his hand and wipes her tear then closes the distance and
 kisses her. And she kisses him...for just a moment...

JOY
 (a lie?)
 I don't know you.

WILLIE
 Think back.
 (staring so hard)
 Think back.

137 INT. JESSICA'S KITCHEN - MORNING

137

Jessica's on the phone, waiting, confused, Donald by her
 side...

JESSICA
 Mom? Hello...?
 (finally)
 Mom! Are you okay? Is dad there?
 Uncle Frank started coughing and
 coughing. It made me hurt just to
 listen...

Amy runs into the room.

7

AMY
They're still closed!

137

JESSICA
Mom, he won't open his eyes...and I asked him if he needed anything, what was wrong, and Donald wanted to call the hospital, but then Uncle Frank started yelling, "No!" And he frightened me. He closed his eyes and said he wanted daddy. Mom, I'm making waffles, I'm trying everything, wasn't it waffles that he loved so much? I thought he was going to die again.

138 INT. LOVEGREN SHOP - DAY

138

Willie looking at Joy on the telephone.

JOY
(drained)
Try some chocolate milk.

She looks at Willie.

139 INT. JESSICA'S KITCHEN - DAY

139

JESSICA
Chocolate milk. Okay. But please...

Jessica listens, nods, mumbles, "okay, okay," then sets the receiver back on its base. So carefully. She's frazzled and worried, and she looks up at Donald.

JESSICA
What's wrong with his eyes...?

DONALD
Com'ere.

Jess wraps her arms around Donald, and he kisses her hair.

140 INT. JOY'S CAR - MORNING

140

She's driving. Willie's sitting there looking straight ahead one second, right at his wife the next. She won't say a word. So he has to.

WILLIE

140

I'll give him one of my extras.
We'll go away, me and Frank'll just
get outta everyone's hair and go up
to Minnesota where they transplant
organs, an' I'll give him one of my
extras.

JOY

You can't give him a kidney.
That's not how it works. I have
to do it!

Joy's driving a bit wildly now, around a corner, wearing her
emotions on the gas pedal.

WILLIE

Is that how it works?

JOY

It doesn't work, not anymore,
nothing works...

WILLIE

That's not true. Frank met this
doctor in California that told
him...

(catching himself)

I'm sorry. I just keep goin'.

Joy looks over at him, her eyes almost empty, looks back at
the road. Silence.

WILLIE

So shoot me.

141 INT. JESSICA'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

141

Jess opens the door, Donald behind her as Willie comes in
fast, Joy a distance behind him, the two men acknowledging
each other awkwardly, Willie moving on past everyone...

142 INT. FRANKIE'S ROOM - MORNING

142

Frankie sitting smack on top of his prostrate uncle, Amy at
his side as Willie comes in...

AMY

You can open them now. Grandpa's
here!

FRANKIE

Hi, grandma.

Willie turns. Joy's behind him, walking on by him over to
the edge of the bed...drawn by some force she can't master.

2

FRANK
 (in the dark)
 Willie?

142

Willie steps up right next to Joy, agitated, bursting with conflict...

WILLIE
 It's okay. Open up, Frank.
 Com'on, we're gettin' otta here.

FRANK
 (nope)
 They wanted to take me to the
 hospital without you.

WILLIE
 (this is final)
 Open your eyes, Frank. Come on.
 Coughing's got nothing to do with
 bad kidneys.

Silence. A bluff called. Joy's glance going from Frank to Willie...

FRANK
 Ask nicely, like a gentleman.

JOY
 Frank? Open up.

His sister's voice. Joy lifts little Frankie off her brother's stomach...and Frank squints, then opens wide. Joy drops onto the bed, and Frank sits to catch her hug.

FRANK
 Wow, you really are old.

Tears well up in Joy's eyes, and she can't let him go, can't stop bear-hugging the poor guy...

FRANK
 Joy, you're squashing me.

JOY
 That's okay, that's okay, I don't
 mind.

Donald and Jess ease inside. Practically no space left for Willie here so he backs up.

FRANK
 Can I eat a chocolate waffle before
 I go to the hospital and die?

12

JOY

You're not going to die, Frank!
That's not what the hospital is
for. We'll go there so you can get
a kidney that works. All right?
Won't we?

142

She turns to Willie, but he's not around anymore.

FRANK

He can't hardly breathe without
you.

Joy turns back at her brother, his simple, wise, stubborn
face.

FRANK

Donald was going to take me to the
hospital to die.

JESSICA

No, no, no. Donald was not.

Out in the hall, from his bleacher seat, something finally
connects in Willie's mind.

WILLIE

Donald? Donald...?
(just the thought...)
Freeman?

Jessica appears in the bedroom door, looking out to her
father.

WILLIE

You married the child of woe?

JESSICA

Strange thing...love.

WILLIE

Too strange.

He turns and walks away...

143 INT. JESSICA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

143

Willie moving through his daughter's house, whacking at the
sofa back with his hand in frustration, pumping open the
front door with a stiff arm!

EXT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - DAY

144

Willie comes down the steps, pulled up short by that semi-
demolished dollhouse, the one Frank squashed. He walks
around it, past it, comes back at it, tries to shove it

4 together again, but all his usual dexterity's gone...as a VOICE filters out through an open bedroom window: 144

DONALD'S VOICE

How would you like to go see a big-city hospital, Frank? Where they could really help you?

Willie looks that way, toward Frankie's bedroom window. Silhouettes inside.

FRANK'S VOICE

Will it be that place in Minnesota?

DONALD'S VOICE

No, it's called U.C.L.A. It's a wonderful hospital in Los Angeles.

FRANK'S VOICE

Los Angeles!!?

Joy appears, in the doorway. Looking down at Willie...at his struggles with that mad hatter's dollhouse.

AMY'S VOICE

There go his eyes again!

Willie looks up at Joy.

WILLIE

It's busted. Frank sat on it. I can't fix it.

JOY

Hey, you can't always fix everything yourself.

He stops trying. He looks up. Silly Willie...on his butt, with that dollhouse, looking up at her like he's done a thousand times before.

JOY

Have I ever said it felt good...to see you again?

WILLIE

Not that I can recall.

A moment, a long precious, private moment, and then a smile starts taking charge of Joy's face, a real smile again, for the first time in twenty-nine years...as CLICK! Behind them. Amy. With her camera, catching them both, and the screen POPS TO BLACK...and we begin to share...

5 INT./EXT. - MONTAGE

145

...A FAMILY ALBUM...a privileged glimpse of the future, first just the immediate future, the next hour (courtesy of Amy Freeman) as everyone tries to eat a crazy meal in Jessica's kitchen... but then onward, all the ups and downs of a hundred tomorrows as POLAROIDs mix with HOME VIDEOS mix with 35MM SNAPSHOTS of children's drawings and real people...Willie and Frank topped with sombreros, standing near Amy and Frankie and a burro...Frank smiling weakly in a hospital bed...Joy also in a hospital bed...Donald and Jess happy and in love again...then at each other's throats again...Willie and Frank shirtless, Willie's old wound just a scar, Frank comparing it to his own new wound, newly bandaged...

...Willie and Joy arguing. Then laughing. Then frowning. Then grinning...Frank holding a demented TABLOID up for the camera to digest...its biggest headline? Amid a crowd of equally absurd headlines? "BEST FRIENDS FROZEN SOLID SINCE 1962...REUNITED WITH AMAZED LOVED ONES!" Who'd ever believe such a story?...as CREDITS ROLL and RAY CHARLES sings a new version of an old song, just like life...

RAY CHARLES

They say that time heals a broken
heart, but time has stood still
since we been apart...

THE END