

P O W D E R

by

Victor Salva

Producer:
Dan Grodник

"Where is the foundling's father hidden?
Our souls are like those orphans whose unwedded mothers
die in bearing them: the secret of our paternity lies in
their grave, and we must there to learn it."

HERMAN MELVILLE

1 EXT. NIGHT SKY. (TITLE SEQUENCE)

We are in the stormy gray clouds of an impending thunderstorm. They are billowing and angry looking as THUNDER RUMBLES noisily in the distance. When the title POWDER appears, the rumbling becomes angrier and there is a flash -not a bolt- of lightning that edges the billowy swells with a white fire. We boom down now as rain starts to fall. It drops in sheets onto the pavement at the Emergency Entrance to a small city hospital. In a moment, an ambulance is careening into the lot, lights flashing and siren whooping in the rainy night. As it pulls up to the entrance the HOSPITAL RESPONSE TEAM is already rushing out to join it as the PARAMEDICS scramble to the doors at the back of the vehicle.

PARAMEDIC ONE

She stopped responding. Vitals are dropping off to nothing.

PARAMEDIC TWO

This lady's very pregnant too.

RESPONSE TEAM MEMBER

What they said-

PARAMEDIC ONE

(nods)

Chalk one up for Ripley's Believe it or Not.

The roller bed is coming off the ambulance with a PALE, comatose looking woman of thirty. This is ANNA CARTER and moving with her is her very shaken husband GREG. Now a GROUP OF DOCTORS arrive, among them LAWRENCE DEGGAN, hurrying up to the bed as it rolls for the doors. He nods to Greg and is then full attention on the woman. The procession moves quickly inside but a RUMBLE OF THUNDER stops a remaining response team member and his eyes lift skyward. Another RUMBLE OF THUNDER as he stares and then hurries in.

2 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. NIGHT. SOME HOURS LATER.

Greg Carter sits, a lone figure in the empty hospital hall staring blankly at the floor. The only audible sound is the hum of the fluorescent lights over his head. He takes out a pack of cigarettes and thinks about lighting one when he sees Dr. Deggan step out into the hall with two other physicians MORTON and BERGER.

They are all grim looking and Greg stands. Deggan's eyes are so sad we know instantly his news is not good.

DEGGAN
(with a tired sigh)
Anna didn't make it Greg.

Greg stands stoic with this information.

DEGGAN
Tried everything. The trauma was
just too much.

Greg is silent, looking numbly at their grim faces.

DEGGAN
(continuing)
The chances of what happened Greg,
are so infinitesimal-

MORTON
We're very sorry.

BERGER
Very sorry Mr. Carter.

Greg lifts his eyes to them now, whispering.

GREG
The baby?

Now the doctors stand staring. It is obviously a subject they wish hadn't been broached. Greg looks to them, pleadingly.

DEGGAN
The baby's alive Greg. Anna held on
just long enough.

But there is obviously something they are not telling him.

BERGER

The baby we're concerned, may have some abnormalities.

MORTON

Outwardly we can already tell the child has no pigmentation.

DEGGAN

It's got nothing to do with the accident. Albinism is strictly genetic.

GREG

What's that, pale skin right?

DEGGAN

(nods)

And pale eyes that are usually more light sensitive.

GREG

You said abnormalities.

DEGGAN

Greg you have to remember that an unborn child experiences everything the mother experiences. In this case a massive electrical shock.

BERGER

We're concerned about trauma to the brain especially.

Greg stares for a moment.

GREG

You're saying it's retarded?

MORTON

Retardation, epilepsy, there are any number of things that can result from brain damage in the infant stage.

GREG
I wanna see him.

Deggan regards him.

GREG
I wanna see him now.

DEGGAN
You're under a lot of duress Greg.

GREG
(an urgent whisper)
You TAKE me to him. You SHOW me.

3 INT. HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT. NIGHT.

Greg enters the room with Deggan. Morton and Berger are still in attendance. The ATTENDING NURSE turns and is about to speak when she realizes Greg is present.

DEGGAN
Alicia, this is Greg Carter...

She nods to him but her look is awkward. Greg has already spotted the incubator in the room's center.

DEGGAN
(continuing)
Is he testing?

ATTENDING NURSE
We just started.

DEGGAN
Would you all step out for a moment?

The room empties save Deggan who watches from the door as Greg steps to the incubator and peers in. The INFANT is small and a sickly, chalky white. The eyes are clamped shut and it's tiny hands are curled in tight fists while the small stomach rises and falls.

It has been wired to a machine where graph paper rotates under a needle that makes marks recording the baby's brain waves. Greg studies the infant with an awe that has no voice and no face.

DEGGAN

We'll do everything we can for him
Greg, you know that.

GREG

What're you doing to him?

DEGGAN

Measuring his brain waves.

To Greg's horror the infant's eyes open. They are a startling pink, almost rodent-like. As the newborn opens its mouth and begins to cry, Greg stares paling. The baby's wailing seems to voice Greg's own growing fear.

GREG

This is not my son.

DEGGAN

You don't have to do this now.

Deggan looks on helpless as the machine receiving the infant's brain waves catches his eye. As the baby continues to scream the needle riding the graph paper begins to jolt.

GREG

Not my son.

The needle on the paper is moving now, up and down in harsh and rapid strokes, picking up speed with the intensity of the baby's screams -as if it understood it's father's condemnation. Deggan is completely befuddled -the needle is riding the graph paper in strokes so rapid the paper is actually beginning to blacken. As he looks for a malfunction, Greg stares at his child's open mouth, tears streaming from those small, pink eyes. Deggan looks out the doors and beckons his associates back in.

DEGGAN

Greg?

In a moment Greg looks over at Deggan.

DEGGAN

(continuing)

Come on. Let's get some air.

Berger and Morton watch the machine as the doctor steps to Greg and ushers him gently toward the door. Deggan nods to his associates and to the machine on his way out.

DEGGAN

Get something in here that works.

ATTENDING NURSE

(to Berger)

I just ran this machine.

BERGER

There's some kind of misread going on.

MORTON

Or there'd have to be one hell of an earthquake going on inside that little head.

The baby screams on as the doctors and nurse regard each other grimly. The needle continues to leap across the graph paper at an even increased velocity now. Outside THUNDER RUMBLES again as we move in and our frame fills with the blackening paper...

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

4 EXT. REED FARM. DAY.

At an isolated farmhouse, surrounded in all directions by expansive fields, sit several County cars and two sheriff's vehicles. A Coroner's car pulls away down the long dirt road to the highway and passes a small sedan just arriving. The driver is JESSIE CALDER.

As she pulls up to the other vehicles and studies the simple farmhouse, we see that she is a handsome woman of thirty. She moves officially out of the car and toward the DEPUTIES on the porch. As she moves up the steps one of them turns. This is SHERIFF DOUG BARNUM. He is a weathered, sad faced man somewhere past fifty. His voice is deep and full of gravel.

BARNUM

Ms. Calder?

JESSIE

Call me Jessie. Sheriff Barnum?

BARNUM

We got the damndest thing in here.

JESSIE

They said a boy?

BARNUM

I'm guessing that's what it is.

With this odd announcement the sheriff is opening the front door and nodding for her to enter.

5 INT.. REED FARMHOUSE. DAY. IMFO.

Jessie enters with the sheriff following. The house has a lonely, fragile feeling and the room he moves her through is faded and threadbare, though neatly kept. On the living room carpet is a large wet stain and some broken fragments of a coffee cup. The sheriff nods to it.

BARNUM

The old man here died last night. Neighbors found him this morning. We figure the boy's his grandson.

JESSIE

Where is he?

The sheriff has taken her into the kitchen. Beyond the old, yellowing linoleum, in the corner by the back door is a closed hatch in the floor. The sheriff nods to it.

BARNUM

Won't come up from the cellar.

Jessie looks at him strangely.

BARNUM

(continuing)

Didn't report his grandfather dead either.

(assuring her)

It's already been determined he died of natural causes.

JESSIE

What am I doing here?

The sheriff stares at her for a moment, then gives up any pretense.

BARNUM

Neighbors say he might be retarded. One said deformed. Physically handicapped, something. We thought maybe you could get him out of there without us going down and dragging him. He's scared enough and we'd probably have to use restraints.

JESSIE

Have you talked to him?

BARNUM

A little. Says he lives in the cellar. Says the light hurts his eyes. Neighbors guess him at about sixteen.

JESSIE

Guess? Does anybody KNOW anything about him?

BARNUM

Not that we can find out. We're pretty sure now the old folks KEPT him down there like some family secret.

Jessie looks horrified.

BARNUM

(continuing)

Can't even find local school records on him. Must've been home tutored.

JESSIE

What the Hell are you saying?

BARNUM

Just talk with him, okay?

He crouches at the hatch and knocks on it loudly.

BARNUM

(continuing)

Boy?

No answer. The sheriff knocks again and then reaches down and pulls the hatch open. A long wooden stairwell descends into darkness.

BARNUM

(continuing)

I brought someone who's gonna have a talk with you.

Jessie waits for an answer, giving Barnum a strange look.

JESSIE

My name is Jessie. I'm with family services.

Silence only.

JESSIE
(continuing)
I need to come down and talk to you.

When there is no answer Jessie takes a look at the sheriff and starts down.

JESSIE
(continuing)
At least tell me your name. We only want to talk. We only want to see if you're all right.

The sheriff doesn't like her going down first and tries to dissuade her in pantomime to let him lead, but she declines.

JESSIE
Look if you're scared you don't need to be.

A string hangs down from a light bulb midway down the stairs and Jessie pulls it. No light.

JESSIE
Not with me.

6 INT. REED FARMHOUSE CELLAR. DAY. IMFO.

Jessie reaches the bottom of the steps, wary of how dark it is. The light spills down from behind her and she can see the cellar floor is hardwood.

JESSIE
Think you could turn a light on?

The basement has in fact been converted into living quarters. Though in one corner sits the water heater and on one post the fuse box is situated. The windows are high, almost to the ceiling and dusty drapes are drawn over them. Jessie stands in the light from the stairwell peering into the black as the sheriff joins her.

JESSIE

Hello?

BARNUM

Just want to see you're all right,
boy.

POWDER

I'm all right.

The voice has come from the darkest corner and the sheriff lifts his flashlight and sends its' beam there. What it flickers on is a tall boy of seventeen in a flannel shirt and jeans, arms up to protect his face from the light.

BARNUM

You sure you're all right boy?

The boy sucks in a breath. The light is hurting him and the sheriff lowers the beam instantly. It stays on the boy's feet, strikingly white on the hardwood floor. Jessie is watching curiously.

JESSIE

What's your name?

POWDER

Powder.

The sheriff steps up to Jessie now as they regard him.

JESSIE

They call you Powder?

POWDER

Because of my skin. The color.

JESSIE

How old are you?

POWDER

(an urgency to his
whisper)

He was getting coffee and he fell.
He just fell over and died. I tried
to help him. I tried.

BARNUM

We know that son, I told you. You're
not in any trouble.

Jessie takes a tentative step toward him.

JESSIE

You don't need to be afraid.

Now there is movement back there in the dark. The sheriff
raises the beam slightly. Jessie steps forward with an
outstretched hand.

JESSIE

(continuing)

It's all right. I just want to see
you.

POWDER

Why?

JESSIE

Give me your hand.

She waits for a moment.

POWDER

I don't look like other people.

JESSIE

Everything is all right, come on.

And then an inhumanly pale hand comes from the dark, the
fingers are long and they find Jessie's tentatively. She is
gently pulling him into the soft glow of the light from the
stairs, watching as his face eases into view.

It is the most uniquely striking face she has ever seen. POWDER is tall and handsome in his youthful maleness -and completely alabaster. There is no hair in evidence anywhere, not even eye brows or lashes. His head is smooth and round and the eyes are a pale pink at the center and quite arresting as they flash rabid fear. She studies him in awe as the sheriff goes slightly slack-jawed. It is a moment before anyone speaks.

BARNUM

What's your real name, son?

POWDER

Jeremy Reed.

BARNUM

You been down here since last night,
Jeremy?

Powder doesn't answer. Jessie cannot take her eyes from him.

JESSIE

You must be starving.

Powder is still silent as Jessie stares into him.

JESSIE

Could you get us some food?

Barnum is not listening.

JESSIE

(continuing)

Sheriff?

He looks to her now, though she doesn't take her eyes off the boy.

JESSIE

Anything.

When he doesn't start up the stairs she turns to him.

JESSIE
We'll be all right.

BARNUM
Be right back.

His eyes still on Powder, Barnum turns and climbs the steps.

JESSIE
Why didn't you call someone? Why
didn't you call the police when you
knew he was dead?

Powder stares at her, fearful. In a moment, a frightened
whisper comes from him.

POWDER
He said there would be a day. When
he would die, like grandma died. And
that people would come. And see me.
And take me away.

Jessie stares at him.

7 EXT. REED FARMHOUSE. DAY. IMFO.

The sheriff bolts onto the porch and snaps at the first
available deputy, CHARLEY DUNCAN. He is blond and attractive
though somewhere behind those blue eyes, is a coldness
bordering on cruelty.

BARNUM
Get in there. Just keep an ear,
don't go down.

The sheriff goes out to his car and lifts his radio phone.

BARNUM
(continuing)
Lucy this is Barnum.

LUCY (filtered)
Go ahead sheriff.

BARNUM
Still at the Reed place. We got
something out here nobody's gonna
believe.

8 INT. REED FARMHOUSE CELLAR. DAY. AN HOUR LATER.

A lamp is on in the cellar/bedroom now and Jessie stands studying the walls of books that line the room. Powder sits at his desk and eats a sandwich, wolfing it down like any hungry teen-age boy. They seem more relaxed in each other's company and have been talking for some time.

JESSIE
But you didn't live down here?

POWDER
(shakes his head
'no')
It's my room. Do most of the work
around the place. Every day till the
sun gets too high. Then even the
sunglasses don't help.

JESSIE
You know they make contact lenses now
that can protect your eyes all the
time.

POWDER
I read about them. Grandpa said they
cost too much.

JESSIE
Sheriff says you were home tutored.

POWDER
My grandmother.

JESSIE

So you haven't been to school since
when?

POWDER

I've never been to school.

Jessie stares at him trying to mask her shock.

POWDER

(continuing)

I've read about it. Seen it on T.V.

JESSIE

And you say you've read all these
books?

Powder nods again as he takes another bite. Jessie takes
down a copy of MOBY DICK by Herman Melville.

JESSIE

(continuing)

This book?

Powder nods as Jessie looks at him skeptically as he wipes
his hands with a napkin.

JESSIE

(continuing)

I know college kids who couldn't
struggle through this one.

POWDER

Pick a page.

Jessie is doubtful but opens the book and reads.

JESSIE

Two-hundred and seventeen.

POWDER

"Where lies the final harbor, whence
we unmoor no more? In what rapt
ether sails the world of which the
weariest will never weary?"

Jessie is going numb as he recites the passage perfectly.

POWDER

(continuing)

"Where is the foundling's father
hidden? Our souls are like those
orphans whose unwedded mothers die in
bearing them: the secret of our
paternity lies in their grave, and we
must there to learn it."

His eyes have dampened ever so slightly with this recital.
It is at this moment that she finds him completely and
utterly compelling.

JESSIE

You know the whole book?

POWDER

I know every book.

Jessie wants to disbelieve him, but she finds it difficult.

9 EXT. REED FARMHOUSE. DAY. AN HOUR LATER.

Barnum steps out onto the porch. Some neighbors and other
onlookers have joined the county and police personnel.
Barnum snaps at Deputy Duncan.

BARNUM

Clear everybody back.

Deputy Duncan turns to everyone in the small front yard.

DUNCAN

All right everybody back and I mean
back beyond the vehicles, let's go.

Barnum has turned his attention inside the house where out of the kitchen walks Jessie with a very sad looking Powder towing a beat up suitcase. He is dressed for travel in one of his grandfather's old suits which is a little small on him, a matching stetson in his free hand. He is clearly an unwilling party to this and stops cold when he sees the police and county vehicles through the screen door.

JESSIE

It's all right.

Powder stares with wild eyes. Barnum peers in at them from the front porch.

JESSIE

(continuing)

No one's going to hurt you. You have to trust me.

POWDER

I don't want to go.

Jessie looks at him. They have discussed this several times in the last hour.

JESSIE

I told you, there's nothing to be afraid of.

POWDER

(his attention still
out the screen door)

YOU'RE afraid.

(turns and looks at
her)

You're afraid for me.

Jessie is taken aback. He is right but she doesn't know how. His eyes are eerie as they look into her.

JESSIE

We're just going to walk to the car.
Just like we said.

He turns those eyes back toward the porch.

JESSIE
I'm gonna be right next to you.

Powder moves forward again. Barnum opens the screen door and holds it there. The boy turns and regards the living room one final time. His eyes are deeply sad. He digs in his pocket and takes out small, oval sunglasses. He slips them and the stetson on and moves onto the porch. DISTANT THUNDER RUMBLES. Powder halts and tenses, still on Jessie's arm. There is an even greater fear evident behind those glasses.

JESSIE
(continuing)
It's all right.

He won't move.

JESSIE
(continuing)
You telling me you never heard
thunder before?

Powder doesn't answer, his eyes skyward.

BARNUM
Come on, boy.

Powder moves forward. Outside all heads turn to this bizarre young man stepping into the cloudy daylight. They are silent as he moves down the steps with Jessie as his escort. A VOICE on a police radio crackles from inside one of the cars. OFFICER STU GIBSON, a large, healthy looking man of thirty-something, leans over to Deputy Duncan and whispers.

STU
Would you look at that thing?

Barnum and Jessie usher Powder toward her county sedan. As the boy steps past the police vehicles the VOICE ON THE RADIO is lost in static that seems to blare as Powder passes. Deputies Duncan and Gibson take curious note of this.

Barnum opens the passenger door to Jessie's sedan and THUNDER RUMBLES AGAIN. Everyone's look goes skyward. At the same time the radios in every car suddenly SQUEAL WITH STATIC as the gray clouds flash with unseen lightning. At the power line attached at the roof of the house, a small, white tendril of electricity materializes with a sharp CRACKLE and as Powder moves into the sedan, snakes down the line. It disintegrates just over the car as he closes the door. The witnesses to this are silent as the boy sits sullenly in the car, emotion masked by those dark glasses.

THUNDER RUMBLES AGAIN and the sheriff takes the boy's suitcase and sets it in back of Jessie's car. Every pair of eyes in that yard are on Powder as Jessie sits down behind the wheel and starts the engine. The boy's gaze is ahead at the house and when Jessie looks over, she can see his hand, white-knuckled as he grapples his knee in silent terror. She stares at it sadly, draws a breath and backs out, turning down the long drive and toward the highway, a patrol car following her. Barnum watches this as Deputy Duncan and Officer Gibson step up, the latter with a paper in his hand.

DUNCAN

You seen this? Preliminary from the coroner's?

BARNUM

What about it?

DUNCAN

(hands it to Barnum)

That old man had been tampered with.

BARNUM

Kid said he tried to revive him.

DUNCAN

Yeah, how?

(reads)

"Evidence of fibrillation." The body was juiced with electricity.

BARNUM

Report also says "natural causes".
You ever hear of paramedics?

STU

Neighbors weren't sure they saw 'em
use the paddles, Doug.

BARNUM

You saying the kid electrocuted the
old man?

(gives Duncan the
report back)

You think he's doctor Frankenstein?

DUNCAN

(pointing down the
drive)

I'm saying that is more than albino,
Doug! That is spooky!

BARNUM

Never thought we'd find a man too
white for you there, Duncan.

The sheriff moves toward his car as Stu and Duncan look on.

10 EXT. HAMILTON STATE FACILITY. LATE DAY.

The county car moves through the gates of this small State Facility. It has the charismatic architecture of an old prep school, with it's red brick face and cornices. At the yard aside the main building, several TEEN-AGE BOYS stop their intense game of flag football and watch while Jessie pulls up. Powder is looking out the window at them. One of the boys notices Powder and is staring so intently that the pass intended for him bounces off his head. As the others step up staring as well, Powder can see the leader is dark-haired and brooding, his considerable brows eave his piercing eyes and look out at him with an intensity. This is JOHN BOX. The other boys, also Powder's age, MITCH, BRENNEN and SKYE stare too, not entirely sure what they're looking at.

MITCH

What the Hell is that?

11 INT. JESSIE'S CAR. DAY. IMFO.

JESSIE

Look remember it's just for a while.
Just till we can find out more about
you.

Powder turns from them and looks to her. She wants to be a
source of strength for him.

JESSIE

(continuing)

We're gonna get you some contact
lenses made. They'll even let you
pick the color. You have a color you
like?

POWDER

I'm not ten years old.

JESSIE

I know that, I'm sorry. I don't do
this too well.

Powder looks back to the gaggle of teens regarding him
unkindly.

POWDER

You're feeling bad. You took me from
my home and you're taking me to a
place you know I'll be unhappy.

Jessie is stunned and embarrassed by his adept perception.
He looks to her now.

POWDER

(continuing)

You're wondering if you've done the
right thing.

Jessie tries to smile.

JESSIE
You read minds too?

POWDER
When can I go home?

Jessie has no response to this though she makes a feeble attempt.

JESSIE
I'll look into what's happening with
the farm, I promise.

Powder looks back at the game. Jessie's look is one of deep concern. She knows she has uprooted this boy and dumped him into a world completely alien to him.

12 INT. DANIEL GRIFFIN'S OFFICE. LATE DAY.

The facility administrator is DANIEL GRIFFIN, a harried looking man just past thirty. He is openly gawking as Powder sits before him with Jessie.

GRIFFIN
Most of our boys right now are away
at the summer program we have over in
Butte Falls. Only a few had to stay
back so you'll find your time with us
very quiet. Take off that hat,
you're indoors.

Powder takes off his stetson, his smooth white head creating even more a spectacle for Griffin who does a poor job of pretending he doesn't notice.

GRIFFIN
(continuing)
Hamilton is a very special State
facility, Jeremy. We interact
completely with the community of
Lincoln and pride ourselves in being
a welcome component.
(more)

GRIFFIN (cont'd)

As a result, when you step outside these gates, you are representing Hamilton to the people of Lincoln City. We expect responsible and courteous behavior at all times. You understand that?

Powder nods. Griffin stands, extending a hand, which Powder rises and looks at almost warily before shaking.

GRIFFIN

(continuing)

Jeremy. Mrs. Kubler's outside, she'll take you upstairs and show you where you'll be staying.

At this moment a small electronic whine is heard, almost inaudible, as their hands part.

JESSIE

(to Powder)

Be right out.

Powder looks to her and then steps outside, closing the door. Griffin's look is so contrary she tries to speak before he does.

JESSIE

(continuing)

Look Daniel you're gonna need to keep him isolated for a while.

GRIFFIN

Exactly Jessie, this isn't a prison! We interact! The whole point is that we mainstream!

JESSIE

(her voice lowers)

We don't know what those people did to him! Just his social deprivation makes me wonder what else he's gone through. I don't know how he can be as adjusted as he is.

GRIFFIN

I see what's going on Jess'. This morning he was living in a storm cellar for Christ's sake and goddamned child welfare never even heard of him! They wanna hide him up here hoping nobody'll find out about him 'cause when someone does, heads are gonna roll and they know it!

JESSIE

Those diagnostics Daniel, are crucial. He shows signs of being highly intelligent.

GRIFFIN

I'll do the tests. You just let your people know this isn't gonna work. If he wants to go school I'm gonna let him, we don't have house arrest.

This is when Griffin realizes his watch has stopped working. It's digital screen is flashing 12:00. He studies it curiously.

13 INT. HAMILTON CAFETERIA. NIGHT. HOURS LATER.

Daniel Griffin was right when he said most of the boys were gone for the summer. There is probably no more than fifteen, all of them in their late teens, in the hall eating. Powder sits at a table in the corner away from them all. John Box and his group are some tables away, watching the alabaster boy with wary eyes. It is to Powder's surprise that John stands with his tray and moves toward him, the rest of his gang following suit. The other groups of boys in the hall watch intently as they situate themselves on either side of Powder, dropping their trays noisily. John is closest to him and slowly eats a dinner roll as he studies the strange, pallid face.

JOHN

(nonchalance masking
menace)

Why you look like that?

Powder continues to eat.

JOHN
(continuing)
They kick you out of cancer camp?
How come you got no hair?

POWDER
It's a medical condition.

Giggles from the others.

JOHN
We're all sitting over there
wondering what the hell you are, you
know? You look like some kinda'
vampire from outer space or something.

Powder turns his gaze at John for the first time. Those
eerie pink eyes seeking him out.

JOHN
Don't look at me man, I don't like
your eyes.

Powder does not avert his gaze.

JOHN
(continuing)
You hear what I said?

Powder looks back down to his tray and takes a bite of food.
John does not like this show of calm.

JOHN
(continuing; to his
cronies)
What do new guys do when they get
here?

BRENNEN
They gotta do the due.

John takes the dinner roll off Powder's tray and bites into
it.

JOHN
New guy, first day, first meal...
(lifts Powders spoon)
...has to wear his spoon.

Powder looks to the spoon John holds. The others are suppressing smiles.

JOHN
(continuing)
You ever wear your spoon?

POWDER
No.

JOHN
You got two choices. You can either wear it on the end of your nose... show him Mitch.

Mitch takes his own spoon and rubs his thumb in it's shallow as everyone, even from other tables, watches.

JESSIE
See that?

Mitch now rubs the tip of his nose and in a moment puts the hollow of the spoon on the end of his nose and it dangles there, attached.

JESSIE
(continuing)
You can wear it like that or you can wear it the other way. Which is up your ass. You choose.

Silence in the hall now and Powder looks to everyone. It is a moment before he continues eating.

JOHN
You hear what I say?

Powder looks briefly to John and then reaches out, taking the spoon from him. All eyes are on him as he takes a pale thumb and begins to rub the hollow of it. He doesn't rub his nose but reaches out and holds the spoon in the center of the table.

JOHN
What're you doing?

Powder continues to rub the hollow with his thumb.

POWDER
Hold your spoons out.

Silence. In a moment, Brennen holds his out in a fist that he brings down hard on the table. Then others follow suit, meeting Powder's challenge. Everyone but John who does not like his own challenge being diverted. Powder stops rubbing the spoon and stands it on end, one finger keeping it upright at the very top. Powder looks about with those eerie eyes and then gently lifts that finger off his spoon. THWACCCKKK! It has happened so fast there is only time to flinch. Everyone's spoons have flown so quickly to the center of the table there is instantly a mass of utensils falling over loudly in a messy pile. Boys are spattered with food from silverware that in a nano-second, cut across plates to smack into the center of the table and Powder's spoon. No one will speak. They are all stunned and uncertain of what kind of trick they have witnessed. What kind of enormous magnet Powder had made his spoon with simple rubbing. Before John Box or anyone else can even get angry picking flecks of food off themselves, MRS. KUBLER, a large European looking woman of fifty is approaching and stares. No one will say a word about the food spattered spoons in a pile in the center of the table as she looks on unkindly. John Box's look to Powder is also less than kind.

14 EXT. SHERIFF BARNUM'S HOUSE. LATER THAT NIGHT.

Barnum's patrol car rolls down the gravel drive of his two-story country house. He sees a pick-up under the oak tree there and the sight of it stops him in his tracks. He stands looking to the house. In a moment the front door opens and the sheriff's son STEVEN BARNUM hurries out. He is a tall, handsome man of thirty-something, eyeing his father with unease and then stepping off the porch and moving to his truck. He and Barnum regard each other in the shadowy night before Steven finally nods a good-bye.

STEVEN

Poppa...

The sheriff does not acknowledge this but steps ahead now onto the porch. He watches stoically as Steven starts his pick-up and backs down the drive.

15 INT. UPPER HALLWAY BARNUM HOUSE. NIGHT. MINUTES LATER.

Through an open doorway we see EMMA BARNUM, the sheriff's wife. She is a pale, bed-ridden woman of forty something, though her illness has withered her to someone looking much older.

A woman clearly at death's door, she sleeps with a pained expression and a scarf wrapped around her pallid head. MAXINE, a stern looking woman of fifty something collects the linen she has just changed on Emma's bed. Sheriff Barnum is looking through the bedroom doorway at both of them.

MAXINE

You see Steven?

Barnum ignores this question and moves to Emma's bedside.

MAXINE

Stayed for three hours. Brought something too.

Barnum is about to bend to kiss his wife but stops to see Maxine holding out a small silver box from the prescription laden dresser. He moves forward and takes it, eyeing it briefly and then setting it down without opening it.

MAXINE

(continuing)

He did her more good than those pain killers. She was hurtin' all day 'till he got here.

Barnum sits bedside and puts a gentle finger on his wife's lips. She grimaces slightly, in the stupor of pain-filled sleep. Maxine takes the linen out of the room and down the hall.

MAXINE

What happened over at the Reed place?

BARNUM

(staring sadly at his
wife)

How the Hell'd you hear about that?

MAXINE

Something about a retarded boy they
got up at the state home now?

Barnum studies Emma's sad face as she sleeps. He takes a melting ice cube out of a dish on the night stand and wets her dry lips with it. She swallows.

MAXINE

Last thing we need is mental
defectives up at that place along
with the hoodlums.

Barnum looks on sadly, repeating the process with another ice cube.

BARNUM

I don't know what he is, but retarded
he's not.

16 EXT. HAMILTON SCHOOL. NIGHT.

The brick face of the facility stretches into the night sky.

17 INT. HAMILTON UPPER HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Daniel Griffin moves down the hall, looking through each window in each room, doing the midnight head count. It is Powder's door he does a double take at. Through the small window, Powder sleeps on his side tangled in the bedclothes and grappling his blankets in tight fists. He is in the stupor of some agonized dream. Pushing those fists into the bed again and again.

What horrifies Griffin -and he is convinced the shadows are playing tricks on his eyes- is that each time the albino boy pushes his fists into the bed THEY GIVE OFF A BRIEF ORANGE FLASH AS IF LIGHT WERE EMANATING FROM THEM! He throws open the door with such intensity Powder lurches from his sleep. Wide-eyed and freckled with perspiration he stares out. A truly eerie visage in the dark room. Griffin stares, not sure at all now what he was seeing.

18 INT. HAMILTON MEDICAL ROOM. DAY.

The doctor attending Powder is DUANE ROTH, an older man of color, his hair just starting to gray. Powder is sitting on an examination table in long johns. Sans shirt his physique, though well-defined from farm work, is as white as the rest of him. Daniel Griffin is watching as the doctor takes a final glimpse at the chart in his hand.

ROTH

You can get dressed. You're in damned fine shape Jeremy. All the trappings of a healthy young man.

(to Griffin also)

Optometrist says contact lenses be here some time the end of the week.

(to Powder)

Said you asked for green.

Powder doesn't answer as he dresses. Griffin forces nonchalance with a nod to the doctor.

GRIFFIN

Do me a favor doc, will you? Take a look at Jeremy's hands.

Powder's eyes lift now. Doc Roth gives Griffin a strange look but obliges, taking the alabaster hands in his own while Powder watches nervously.

The contrast of the doctor's dark skin against Powder's whiteness is dramatic. Doc Roth turns them palms up. Finding nothing, he looks to Griffin. Daniel is at a loss. He nods, smiling to dismiss the whole idea.

GRIFFIN
(continuing)
Thanks for coming out, doc.

ROTH
You betcha'. Good day gentlemen.

Roth steps out as Griffin looks on. He draws a breath before speaking.

GRIFFIN
You got here just in time for the
SummerFest. That's a big town picnic
and Fair next week.

Powder has no reaction to this as he buttons his shirt.

GRIFFIN
(continuing)
I don't know how comfortable you'd be
Jeremy, but summer school classes
also start Monday at Lincoln High.
If you want to attend any I'm gonna
let you.

Powder looks to him now.

GRIFFIN
(continuing)
As long as you're here I think you
should have the same privileges
anyone does at Hamilton. Jessie says
you're very smart, you might like it.

Powder is pondering this as he dresses.

GRIFFIN
(continuing)
There are other people in the world
besides these screw-ups that missed
their chance at summer camp. Maybe
you should meet some. It's your
choice.

POWDER

Would my contacts be here before
Monday?

Griffin just stares at Powder.

19 EXT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL. DAY. (SOME DAYS LATER)

The small van from Hamilton rambles up to Lincoln High school and Powder looks at it through his window. He lowers his sunglasses and we see the effect his green contact lenses make on him- mixing with his pink irises they create a rather striking blue -almost turquoise. He gets up and moves out into the flurry of onlooking summer school students.

20 INT. SCIENCE CLASS. DAY. AN HOUR LATER.

Powder may be the strangest looking student in this classroom but the teacher DONALD RIPLEY pays it no mind. He is an interesting looking man of thirty with an easy, off-hand teaching style and he smiles often. Powder is aware of the attention on him in the classroom and looks over to see a girl across the room staring.

RIPLEY

When we speed up the course of
molecules we get..? Energy!

(writes ENERGY on
blackboard)

And since we are all basically just
a mass of molecules, what does our
brain send out to all the other parts
of the body? Lindsey?

He has called on the girl staring at Powder. This is LINDSEY KELLOWAY, a simple beauty about her. She looks ahead now, confused.

LINDSEY

Impulses...

RIPLEY

Electric impulses. Jeremy, turn your
head and look at Lindsey.

Powder is startled to be part of the class and looks up from his text book. He turns his head tentatively to her. He is ill-at-ease, nervous as a school boy as it were, his eyes meeting hers shyly. He looks away.

RIPLEY

(continuing)

You have just relayed electricity.
Your brain sent out an electric
impulse down your neck to the muscles
there and what turned your head?

(a sweet smile at
Lindsey)

Besides the obvious?

(back to Powder)

What did your muscles use to turn
your head?

Powder, pencil in hand, without taking his eyes off Ripley, circles the word 'ENERGY' on the page his text book is open to. The title of the chapter: "ENERGY: THE STUFF OF OUR LIVES".

RIPLEY

(continuing)

Energy! Always relaying, always
transforming.

Ripley moves to a Jacob's Ladder set up on the counter before the class.

RIPLEY

(continuing)

This is a science fair toy called a
Jacob's Ladder, built to show us how
electricity travels.

Ripley throws a switch and the Ladder sends a continuous arc of electricity climbing between it's two tines. Ripley walks over and turns off the classroom lights so the blue bolts climbing the 'V' of the model are more dramatic.

RIPLEY

(continuing)

Who can tell me why electricity
travels?

A handsome boy, ARTURO speaks up.

ARTURO
Boredom?

Laughter from the class.

RIPLEY
Potential. This side is positive,
while the other has a strong negative
pole. That's all the potential
electricity needs to travel.

In the darkness of the rear of the classroom, Powder's jaw is tightening and there are small veins in his forehead starting to visibly pulse as a shiver runs through him. Lindsey notices this and peers at him.

RIPLEY
(continuing)
Now what would happen to the Jacob's
Ladder if there were an even greater
positive charge in this room?

STUDENT ONE
It would arc again.

Powder is perspiring, white knuckled he grapples his desk top as his veins pulse vigorously and his ball point pen starts to spin like the needle on a compass. Ripley is writing ELECTRODES on the blackboard and doesn't notice but more students do.

RIPLEY
(nodding)
Jumping from this point to where ever
more positive electrodes were massing.

Lindsey leans to Powder.

LINDSEY
You okay?

RIPLEY

Remember energy doesn't cease to exist, it just transforms. Relays. Flows in a cycle that never ends.

ARTURO

Then why do we have to pay the electric company for it over and over again?

The portion of the class unaware of Powder laughs, just as Ripley steps ahead, beyond the Jacob's Ladder.

RIPLEY

That's something business science could better explain-

KOOOSSHHH!!! A WICKED BLUE BOLT OF ELECTRICITY GRAZES RIPLEY'S COAT SLEEVE, LEAPING FROM THE JACOB'S LADDER AND RIPPING DOWN THE CENTER OF THE CLASSROOM. THE BOLT IS SKIMMING DESKTOPS, SPITTING PAPERS AND PENS INTO THE AIR AND CAUSING PANIC AS IT TRAVELS FIERCELY TO IT'S TARGET: POWDER. IT STRIKES HIM DIRECTLY IN THE CHEST AND HE JOLTS! HIS HEAD WHIPS BACK AND HIS CHEST HEAVES AS STUDENTS FALL OVER THEMSELVES TO GET AWAY FROM HIM. Ripley stares in disbelief, diving for the switch on the model and turning it off. But the Ladder continues to arc from time to time to Powder -the bolt connecting the albino boy to the model grows thicker and stronger and crackles viciously starting to actually lift Powder out of his seat and off the ground.

INSIDE POWDER'S MIND HE SEES A GLOWING WHITE INFANT, STILL FLOATING IN THE WOMB, THEN JOLTED BY A POWERFUL WHITE FLARE.

Powder again jolts in the grip of the bolt. Ripley abandons the switch and frantically dives for the cord as Powder floats out of his seat, head back, eyes rolling over white as he hovers. Ripley stops short of touching the electrical cord- it is melting and the outlet smoking as power courses through it. Powder jolts again.

INSIDE POWDER'S MIND THE INFANT IS AGAIN JOLTED IN THE WOMB BY AN ANGRY WHITE FLARE! HE CAN HEAR GREG CARTER'S ECHOING, HORRIBLE SCREAM.

GREG

ANNA!!!

Ripley leaps up, the thick, angry bolt of blue is still levitating Powder while smaller strands of electrical tendrils begin to cocoon him. The students are screaming, scrambling toward the exits and watching in horror. Only Lindsey and Arturo take a tentative step forward.

RIPLEY

DON'T TOUCH HIM!!

Ripley dashes to a corner and grabs a broom. He considers at first charging Powder with it but stops and looks to the Jacob's Ladder. In the next moment he swings the broom and topples the model. It clatters to the floor -it's arcs interrupted and vanishing into air as Powder falls the few feet back to earth, hitting the top of his desk and crumbling to the floor. The room is silent and dark. The few students remaining at the walls watch as Ripley approaches Powder's lifeless form.

RIPLEY

Jeremy?

The boy is lying on his side, breathing heavily, his eyes staring out blankly. Ripley reaches out and gently touches his shoulder -not realizing that the fringe of his hair begins to stand on end as he does. He looks for a moment as though something travels from Powder's body to his.

LINDSEY

Mr. Ripley?

Ripley turns to them -his hair even frizzier at it's fringes.

HIGH AREAL VIEW: In his collapsed state, Powder is in the fetal position. A strange looking fetus curled up on the classroom floor as Ripley hunches over him.

21 EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL. DAY. LATER.

The ambulance wails loudly as it takes the side street into the emergency parking lot.

22 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. DAY. AN HOUR LATER.

Sheriff Barnum moves down the hall as Deputy Stu Gibson enters through a far door and moves to catch up with him.

STU

Sheriff!

The sheriff keeps walking as Stu arrives, keeping pace.

STU

(continuing)

The local news, those Channel 5 people are outside. So's Jimmy Allred from the paper.

BARNUM

Tell 'em to go home.

STU

Come on Doug, they're not gonna go anywhere till someone talks to 'em.

BARNUM

Then get out there. Tell 'em there's no fatalities and no sex scandal, that'll get rid of 'em fast.

STU

Goddamn I sound like a moron 'I have to say more than five words to those people and you know it!

Barnum gives the officer a look that is beyond reproach. As Stu resignedly heads back down the hall, the sheriff can hear the charged voice of Donald Ripley ahead.

RIPLEY

For Christ sake Duane I'm just asking to see him!

Barnum comes up on Ripley talking to Doc Roth at the nurses counter.

When Ripley sees the sheriff he immediately tries to elicit his support.

RIPLEY

(continuing)

Doug tell this crazy old doc it's okay for me to see that kid.

BARNUM

Maybe you can fill me in Donald. No one's been able to really tell me what the Hell happened.

RIPLEY

If I hadn't seen it myself I'd say it was impossible! Doug it was a model for Christ's sake -picked him right out of his seat!

BARNUM

What did?

RIPLEY

I don't know what you wanna call it!

BARNUM

(to doc Roth)

What he come in with, doc?

ROTH

Not a scratch. Heart rate's a little irregular but nothing to indicate the kind of electrical shock Donald's talking about. He's not speaking but I think that may be his choice.

BARNUM

Take me to him.

RIPLEY

Both of us.

BARNUM

Just hold on Donald. Just calm down
and let me talk to him.

RIPLEY

Doug something has happened here!

The hall is quiet with this exclamation.

RIPLEY

(continuing)

I'm telling you, with everything we
know, about science, about the make-
up of the human body -what happened
in that classroom is impossible!

Doc Roth and Barnum stare at him for an awkward moment. The
physician's voice lowers.

ROTH

Think you better let me take a look
at you Donald-

It is in the next second a NURSE comes rushing up to them.

NURSE

Doc Roth.

Her quietness is urgent and she leads the doc and Barnum
quickly down the hall and up to an empty hospital room.
There are ORDERLIES looking everywhere in it.

NURSE

(continuing)

Nobody saw him leave his room, but
his clothes are gone too.

ROTH

Find him.

BARNUM
Couldn't of gotten far.
(takes out his walkie-
talkie)
Lucy come in.

Barnum moves back down the hall.

RIPLEY
What the hell's going on?

LUCY (filtered)
Go ahead sheriff.

BARNUM
(into his radio)
Reed kid just walked outta here, get
everyone looking.

Barnum stops now, Ripley's reaction is so startling.

RIPLEY
Doug there is no way someone could go
through what that kid just did and
then get up and walk away an hour
later...

BARNUM
(moving on)
Just calm down Donald!

RIPLEY
His limbs should've exploded! At the
very least his shoes should've
melted -that's what happens to people
who are struck by lightning!

BARNUM
(rushing off)
Donald you are really out there right
now, why don't you have the doc take
that look at you?

Ripley seems nonplussed.

23 EXT. LINCOLN RESIDENTIAL STREET. DAY.

Powder moves down a residential street, dressed in jeans, a 't' shirt, his sunglasses and his now trademark stetson, he is a strange mix of adolescence and science fiction as he pretends not to see the strange looks and dead stares of the people who catch a glimpse of him.

Out one window, Lindsey turns and gapes, surprised to see who is passing her front porch. She moves quickly to the front door and opens it.

LINDSEY

Hey!

Powder stops and turns as Lindsey steps out. She looks up and down the street, surprised Powder is out alone.

LINDSEY

(continuing)

Guess you're okay?

Powder only stares.

LINDSEY

(continuing)

How're you feeling?

Powder nods, smiling weakly as she moves down the steps.

LINDSEY

(continuing)

That was quite a light show. People be talking about that for years to come.

POWDER

(finds it hard
meeting her eyes)

Kind of embarrassing. Didn't mean to scare anyone.

Lindsey stares, studying him for the first time up close.

LINDSEY

I'm sorry for staring but I don't think I've ever seen anyone quite like you.

POWDER

That's okay.

Powder now notices that some people have come out on their porches.

POWDER

(continuing)

I've never seen so many people.

LINDSEY

(turns to him)

You grow up on Mars? This is about the tiniest town in the whole country.

(smiles good
naturedly)

They really call you Powder?

Powder nods, smiles back.

POWDER

Back home.

LINDSEY

Maybe it's true what people're saying then.

POWDER

What?

LINDSEY

That you're from a religious cult.
That shaves your head and only
worships the moon.

Powder grins at this with her. She is stepping closer.

LINDSEY

(continuing)

I had a bet with a friend that you got blue-gray eyes. She says they're blue-green.

Powder shyly raises his sunglasses.

LINDSEY

(continuing)

Looks like she's right.

Powder smiles and sticks a finger in his eye, taking out one contact lens. He looks to her with one turquoise and one pink.

POWDER

You're both wrong. Didn't ask for this color. The pink mixed with the green.

Lindsey stares into his eyes, taken aback. She is not smiling.

POWDER

(continuing)

I'm sorry, you didn't want to see that.

Lindsey is now feeling as self conscious as he is.

LINDSEY

No really, it just took me by surprise.

POWDER

No really, I'm sorry.

He is putting the contact back in. When he looks to her again he smiles weakly.

LINDSEY

I think it's okay to be ..whatever.
Different. Sometimes I wish I was
more different.

Powder looks into her eyes. Now she gets embarrassed.

LINDSEY

(continuing)

Where you headed?

POWDER

(sad now about his
answer)

Highway.

She nods ahead.

LINDSEY

Four blocks down. Cut over to
Sycamore and it'll take you out to
the city limits. You sure you're
okay?

Powder nods, smitten.

LINDSEY

(continuing)

You better hurry. They catch
Hamilton boys running away? I hear
they get solitary confinement.

He nods and moves away. When he looks back she raises a hand
in good-bye. Powder waves shyly after her and she calls to
him with a big smile.

LINDSEY

(continuing)

Stay away from electrical outlets!

24 EXT. LINCOLN HIGHWAY. DAY.

Powder moves down the highway at a steady pace as traffic passes him. One car slows down considerably but it is only to gawk at him from a distance and then speed off again. It is a moment before the sheriff's patrol car arrives and drives next to him. Barnum rolls down the passenger window though Powder does not look over or slow his pace.

BARNUM

I didn't know any better I'd say you
were headed for the highway.

No answer from Powder.

BARNUM

(continuing)

Son you're gonna have to go back to
the hospital.

POWDER

I'm all right.

BARNUM

I can see that.

POWDER

I'm going home.

BARNUM

You better stop right there.

From the other direction Powder can see deputy Charley Duncan in his patrol car stopped mid lane and blocking it as he studies Powder grimly. The boy stops and looks to Barnum.

BARNUM

(continuing)

Get in the car.

POWDER

'Not going back to the hospital.

BARNUM

We'll call the doc. If he says okay,
I'll take you back to Hamilton.

POWDER

Hamilton's not my home.

BARNUM

There's nobody back where you came
from son, you know that.

Powder stares a moment longer at the squad car ahead then to
Barnum. He steps forward, opening the door and getting in.
The sheriff lifts his radio mic.

BARNUM

(continuing)

Lucy this is one. We got him. I'm
headed back to the office with him.

A VOICE ON THE POLICE RADIO BLARES WITH STATIC.

LUCY

You're breaking up sheriff, but I
copy.

Duncan drives to them now, staring coldly at Powder.

BARNUM

Go on.

Deputy Duncan throws his car in gear, whooping the siren
briefly as he speeds away. The sheriff hangs a U-turn and
heads back to town as well.

BARNUM

(continuing)

You got something about hospitals in
general?

POWDER

Don't like 'em. My worst day was in
a hospital.

BARNUM

What day was that?

POWDER

Day I was born.

Now Barnum looks to him.

25 INT. HAMILTON CAFETERIA. MORNING. NEXT DAY.

The near barren cafeteria is filled with the early morning mutterings of it's small clusters of boys over breakfast. Powder sits at a table by himself in the corner and no one, John Box's group included, are remotely near him. Only an occasional glimpse or aside is offered in his direction and it is a moment before the boys notice the presence of Daniel Griffin. He stands in the entrance of the cafeteria looking at Powder. The cafeteria quiets and Griffin moves toward him. Powder looks up in time to see his strange, blank look as he stops at the head of his table.

GRIFFIN

Jeremy. Take a walk with me.

26 INT. HAMILTON HALLWAY. DAY. MINUTES LATER.

Griffin is staring somewhat strangely at Powder as they walk silently toward a door marked conference room.

GRIFFIN

People who live in this town keep an extra eye out for us. That means they're already a little nervous, you understand what I'm saying?

He stops Powder at the door, his voice quiet but firm.

GRIFFIN

(continuing)

You ever take off again, heading for the highway like yesterday? That's gonna be a problem. I don't like putting people in cages, Jeremy.

(more)

GRIFFIN (cont'd)
In fact it's what I like least of
all. You take off again, I'd have no
choice.

Powder stares at him.

 GRIFFIN
 (continuing)
We clear on that?

Powder nods.

 GRIFFIN
 (continuing)
Good. Now take a deep breath.

Powder looks to Griffin curiously who opens the conference
room door to reveal several people at the long table inside.

27 INT. HAMILTON CONFERENCE ROOM. DAY. IMFO.

Powder steps in, first recognizing Jessie Calder who he
hasn't seen since she left him here some days ago. Next to
her sits Donald Ripley. On the opposite side of the table,
an official looking gentleman in a gray suit AARON STIPLER,
regards Powder with careful scrutiny. Next to him are
several well dressed men and women of an official capacity,
silent as they regard Powder as well.

 JESSIE
Jeremy, this is Dr. Aaron Stipler
with the State Board of Education.

Stipler stands now, extending a hand.

 STIPLER
Jeremy...

Powder does not extend his hand and is instantly ill-at-ease.
Aaron Stipler throws a look to Griffin.

GRIFFIN

These men and women are here because the results of your diagnostics came back. And not without a few surprises.

STIPLER

Please Jeremy, sit down.

Powder situates himself in a chair a distance from the others, his eyes on Jessie, who presses out an uncomfortable smile.

The tests and several papers are laid out before Stipler who lowers his glasses and peruses them.

STIPLER

(continuing)

Have you ever been tested for I.Q. before?

Powder shakes his head a solemn 'no'.

STIPLER

(continuing)

And never been to school?

Powder shakes his head 'no'.

STIPLER

(continuing)

Anywhere? Never?

Griffin fills the awkward silence.

GRIFFIN

What all these grim faces are trying to tell you Jeremy is that you appear to be in the genius range.

Silence in the room as the boy turns his strange blue eyes on Griffin and then to Jessie.

JESSIE

A genius' genius. Your I.Q. scored right off the charts. There isn't even a classification for you, you scored so high.

Stipler raises a hand to silence her. Her enthusiasm is dampened.

JESSIE

(continuing)

Mr. Stipler is here because he needs to ask you some questions.

STIPLER

Your grandmother Jeremy, when she tutored you, did she ever comment that you had an intelligence higher than normal?

POWDER

(a shrug)

She told me I was a fast learner.

STIPLER

Ms. Caldwell says you've committed all of 'Moby Dick' to memory. Is that true?

POWDER

Yes.

STIPLER

And other books?

POWDER

Yes.

STIPLER

(a beat)

To memory.

Silence in the room now.

POWDER

You don't believe me.

STIPLER

I'm not saying that Jeremy, tell me something, would you be willing to take these tests again? Along with some others?

Silence now. Stipler and Powder's eyes lock..

POWDER

You think I'm lying.

STIPLER

That's not what I'm saying.

POWDER

You're not saying it. You're thinking it.

Silence again.

STIPLER

Jeremy I'm here because if you are not in fact a hoax, you may have one of the most advanced intellects in human history. Do you understand what I'm saying?

POWDER

If you thought I was that advanced would you ask me if I understood?

JESSIE

Jeremy, these people are very important. They're very powerful. They could make things much easier for you. They could do things for you.

Powder looks to them, his voice quiet as he stands.

POWDER

Could they send me home? Could they
send me back?

Her look is so somber he knows she has bad news.

JESSIE

I'm sorry, no they couldn't. The
farm is in probate, do you know what
that is?

POWDER

"One: Of or pertaining to probate or
a court of probate, i.e.; the
official proving of a will as
authentic or genuine. Two: An
official certified copy of a will so
proved."

The grim faces on each side of the table are silent with
this.

JESSIE

Even in probate, it looks like the
bank owns most of the farm. And
they'll probably get it.

Powder's icy glare stifles her and the overhead lights blink.
Ripley notices this especially.

POWDER

There's something else. Something
you're not telling me.

Silence again.

POWDER

(continuing)

My grandparents?

JESSIE

(her voice quiet with
fear)

How did you know that?

The lights are blinking again and several people look to the ceiling with Ripley.

POWDER

You didn't want to tell me but you're afraid now that I'll find out some other way. That the people that raised me are not my grandparents. That they aren't even related to me. That you don't who they were or how I came to them.

Jessie is in shock. Her thoughts are being read word by word and she is paling.

POWDER

(continuing)

But even so, you'd like me to know that they obviously loved me very much. They loved me but that they are not my flesh and blood... I've known that forever.

Jessie sits, staring with mounting unease.

JESSIE

(a choked whisper)

You have?

Powder nods and then turns to Stipler with those eerie eyes.

POWDER

THEY couldn't keep secrets from me either.

The room grows cold with this chilly revelation and the lights buzz now and flicker.

POWDER

(continuing)

You're not here to ask me questions. You're here to find out how I cheated. That's the only way you can make sense of it. It's what you need to believe.

Ripley looks down at a pen on the table, it is beginning to move, slightly, like the needle of a compass as the lights dim.

POWDER

(continuing)

But I don't need you to believe in me
Mr. Stipler.

Stipler's hand goes to his neck where he feels a shiver.

POWDER

(continuing)

And I'm not interested in taking
anymore tests. I'm not interested in
you or anything.

(to Jessie)

I'm interested in going home.

GRIFFIN

What the Hell is going on!?

POWDER

What you already know.

(he turns now, the
room dark)

I'm not like other people.

Powder steps out the door. The lights flicker back on and everyone remains in a stunned silence.

28 INT. HAMILTON HALLWAY. DAY. IMFO.

Powder enters the hall and storms angrily out the doors.

29 INT. HAMILTON CONFERENCE ROOM. MORNING. MINUTES LATER.

The room has erupted into chaos with everyone standing and arguing over Aaron Stipler.

RIPLEY

Look I'm the one who's seen Jeremy attract a naked arc of electricity from across a room!

GRIFFIN

Let's not get carried away here Donald-

RIPLEY

And for the same reason lightning strikes a human being! I can tell you right now, if Jeremy walked out into a lightning storm his potential for being struck would easily be at one hundred percent! These grandparents, whoever they were, did you know they kept him in a subterranean basement?

STIPLER

Oh come on...

RIPLEY

I think they knew! I think they knew what Jeremy was and that they put him in the only place he'd be protected.

Stipler and the others stare blankly at this hypothesis.

RIPLEY

(continuing)

Listen to me, we don't know WHAT we could be talking about here! He's like nothing anyone's ever seen before!

JESSIE

(struggling with this)

What are you saying, he's some kind of walking electrical storm?

RIPLEY

This isn't just about energy! You saw what he did!

STIPLER

No one knows what he did!

RIPLEY

It was goddamned mental telepathy!

GRIFFIN

Woa Donald...

RIPLEY

You think it's science fiction!? This is pure Einstien! Einstien theorized that we would one day use much more than the puny ten percent of the brain we do now. His theory was that as we evolved the more brain we would use and the more brain we would use, the more the powers of the mind would open up! Total recall, mental telepathy, telekinesis!

Griffin and the others stare incredulously.

RIPLEY

(continuing)

We just saw each one!

STIPLER

Who the Hell is this man!?

GRIFFIN

(an angry eye to
Ripley)

What we should be talking about here is, what is in Jeremy's best interest? Friday's paper's gonna run a story on what happened at the school yesterday. That's the worst kind of P.R. in a town this small. Especially for a kid like Jeremy.

Jessie turns and out the window sees the lonely sight of Powder walking sadly across the yard. In the distance, John Box and the other boys stop their game of flag football to watch him pass.

GRIFFIN

(continuing)

Dr. Stipler, we've found him unfamiliar with not just an incredible amount of every day objects, but ideas. Simple ideas he's just never been exposed to. He may have all this intellect potential but in many areas he's as unknowing as a small child and that's very dangerous.

STIPLER

Keep him out of view while the story runs. What's in his interest is to keep the media off him as long as possible.

GRIFFIN

His interest or ours?

Stipler is cool with this. So too his colleagues.

STIPLER

What was dangerous Dr. Griffin, was too expose him too quickly to a world he knew nothing about. As you did when you sent him to a public school less than a week after he arrived.

Silence in the room as Griffin smoulders.

STIPLER

(continuing)

What you'll do now, is keep him out of view.

30 EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY. DAY.

It is overcast as a pick-up truck climbs the acme of a stretch of mountain highway flanked by the dark green forests of the surrounding woodlands. The truck's bed is filled with tents, bedding and other camping paraphernalia and leads a large van with HAMILTON SCHOOL on it's side up into the deeper woods. Driving the truck is officer Stu Gibson.

He is suited up for the great outdoors in his boots, jeans and flannel shirt and Mitch and John Box ride in the cab with him as the radio plays.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Clear skies all through the basin for you hunters out there this weekend. Cooler temperatures Saturday and warming Sunday. So good hunting and stay safe...

Stu gives a knowing look to the boys. Sheriff Doug Barnum drives the van and Deputy Duncan sits behind him. They too are in jeans and flannels. The van is filled with the other boys from Hamilton and Barnum keeps looking in the rearview mirror to catch glimpses of Powder, sitting alone, staring out and up at the passing woods. When Powder does look over, he finds himself the object of grim looking deputy Duncan's uncharitable gaze.

31 EXT. MOUNTAIN CAMPSITE. NIGHT. HOURS LATER.

In this camp clearing, beneath the towering pines that stretch into the night sky, several tents have been pitched and the boys and deputies eat dinner around a large campfire. Next to officer Stu, Mitch, Skye, Brennen and John Box eat together. But Stu's attention is on Powder, alone at the edge of camp, staring into the woods. In his flannel shirt and jeans the albino boy looks like a lumberjack from outer space. Stu does not regard him kindly and John is happy to voice his own dislike.

JOHN

What the Hell is that thing doing up here anyway?

Barnum moves across camp and next to the albino boy but Powder doesn't turn to look at him. He keeps his eyes on the high treetops.

BARNUM

Dan Griffin said you didn't want to come up here.

POWDER

I don't want to be anywhere that's not home.

FAINT THUNDER RUMBLES IN THE DISTANCE. Powder turns his head in that direction.

BARNUM

We don't usually bring the boys up here 'till August. They want you out of town this weekend on account of the newspaper story.

Powder looks to Barnum and the man is confused by the fear he sees.

BARNUM

(continuing)

Storm's over in Poho County. We be lucky to see a drop.

MORE THUNDER IN THE DISTANCE. Powder turns his head gently in it's direction, his voice soft.

POWDER

When a thunderstorm comes up, I can feel it inside. When lightning comes down I can feel it, wanting to come to me.

Barnum turns and looks to him.

POWDER

(continuing)

The white fire. Grandma said it was God. She said the white fire was God.

Silence as Barnum regards him strangely.

POWDER

(continuing; swallows)

Do you believe in God, sheriff? That it was God who took my mother?

A SUDDEN FLASH OF THE GLOWING INFANT JOLTING IN THE WOMB AND THE MAN WE KNOW AS POWDER'S FATHER GREG, SCREAMING IN HORROR AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS.

GREG
ANNAAAAAA!!!!

AND THEN POWDER'S MOTHER ANNA, STANDING, HER FACE STRETCHED IN HORROR AS A WALL OF CLEAR WATER FLIES UP BEFORE HER!

BARNUM
Hey-

Barnum has grabbed him by the arm jolting Powder out of this memory.

BARNUM
(continuing)
Took your mother?

The albino boy stares at the sheriff blankly in the quiet of the campfire.

BARNUM
(continuing)
Someone told you that?

Powder shakes his head a silent 'no'.

POWDER
(a whisper)
I remember it.

Barnum is ill-at-ease. THUNDER RUMBLES AGAIN.

32 EXT. MOUNTAIN CLEARING. MORNING. FOLLOWING DAY.

Powder moves through a dense wood, surrounded by THE CALLS OF WHOOPING BIRDS and other MORE DISTANT FOREST SOUNDS. Strangely, the boy acts like a natural element in this habitat. He stops at a RUSTLING SOUND and looks down. The slender red tail of a NEWT scurries under some leaves.

Powder studies the earth for a moment and then kneels. He puts a hand out, splaying his fingers and setting them deep in the blanket of leaves and twigs at his feet. It seems queer at first, watching curiously until there is a rustle in some leaves to his left. Then all about where he crouches there is the ripple of movement. Powder watches with a curious simper.

NEWTs, small, brown-red lizards with tiny, unblinking black eyes begin to appear everywhere, crawling out of their cover of leaves all around Powder and scurrying toward his fingers still set deep in the earth. There are as many as a dozen of the small reptiles in view now -as if called out of hiding by some unheard transmission emanating from the boy's hand. He watches with a subtle satisfaction as several newts explore his fingers and he smiles as one climbs trustingly onto his index finger. Powder lifts and studies him when a sharp sound turns him abruptly. Something unseen sends all newts scurrying back under the cover of leaves. He sets the one on his finger down just as John Box peers out from a tree some ways behind him. Powder doesn't turn to him. He remains crouched, instinctively sensing who it is.

POWDER

Hello John.

JOHN

Mitch...

Mitch steps out from another tree. Powder stands and turns. There is a dark look about John this morning. His eyes are charged with an energy Powder doesn't understand.

MITCH

What the Hell YOU doing out this far?

POWDER

What're you?

Before Mitch can answer, John steps all the way out from behind his tree -revealing a hunting rifle at his right side. Powder's eyes drop to it.

JOHN

You're s'posed to be at the lake.

Powder's reaction is cool. Even as John steps toward him.

JOHN
(continuing)
Afraid you might get a little color
on that marshmallow ass o' yours?

MITCH
Stay away from him man.

John heeds this warning by slowing. Mitch senses trouble.

MITCH
(continuing; to
Powder)
Why don't you get outta' here?

At the same time, John swings his gun up and aims off into the trees, before slowly and deliberately lowering his aim directly at Powder. Mitch is alarmed. Powder remains unaffected.

MITCH
(continuing)
Johnny...

JOHN
(his finger tightens
on the trigger)
How 'bout it? ..Huh? One less freak
in the freak show?

A subtle fear begins to creep into Powder's visage.

MITCH
What the fuck you doing?

JOHN
(Powder still in his
sites)
I should do you right now. Right now
man!

MITCH
It could go off!

JOHN
(to Mitch but holding
his aim on Powder)
Hey why don't you get your ass back
to camp all right? Take a skinny-dip
with all the other faggots!

John squints down the sights. Powder's temples are visibly pulsing now.

JOHN
(continuing)
How about it, you gonna show us
another one of your tricks?

Above in the trees, a flock of birds rustles their wings and dart into the sky. This distracts them all but only for only a moment.

JOHN
(continuing)
Huh?

Powder's temples continue to pulse. John sees him swallow and takes this as a small victory when KA-BLAMMM!! A gun goes off but it is not John's. It is from across the clearing and Mitch dashes to the forest fringe to see. John unwillingly relinquishes his aim on Powder and does the same. At the far end of the basin, Stu is running with his rifle toward the taller grass, with Brennen and Skye behind him. Mitch and John dart toward them as they group at something fallen in the tall grass. Powder steps forward hearing Stu's voice.

STU
A good hunter don't hunt for the
kill. A good hunter hunts for the
hunt. That's a perfect hit right
there. Perfect shot. You see that?
That's a clean kill. Right to the
heart. See that?

Powder nears now and Stu looks up coolly but continues talking.

STU

(continuing)

Suffering is minimal when you know what you're doing. The end is quick.

(to Powder)

What the Hell you doing out here?

Powder steps up and sees the large dying deer in the grass. It is still twitching, it's dark eye glassing over and a bullet wound in it's upper flank. Powder looks down at it numbly.

STU

(continuing)

You just back outta here, boy.

But Powder cannot take his eyes from the deer.

STU

(continuing)

Listen to me now, you didn't see any of this, you hear?

Powder lifts those eerie eyes at the deputy who is instantly unnerved.

STU

(continuing)

Get those eyes off me, boy.

Powder drops to his knees at the still shaking deer.

STU

(continuing)

Stay away from that thing, it ain't dead yet stupid!

Powder turns his eyes up to Stu for a moment and his look is truly chilling. The deputy is speechless for a moment.

BRENNEN

What the Hell is with you, man?

Powder reaches out and sets a hand on the deer's neck. It is still shaking. Stu bends to the boy now to lift him.

STU

Get this moron outta' here before he gets bit-

In the same instant Powder reaches out with his free hand and clutches Stu's forearm tightly. For a moment Stu thinks the boy is truly insane and then in the next instant the deputy's eyes go wide and he draws in a quick breath. The boys watch stunned as with one hand Powder touches the deer and with other he clutches Stu who is folding to his knees, his mouth open in mute exclamation. The deer shakes again and so does Stu -his eyes welling up and his face frozen in shock. It is as if something is passing into him, through Powder from the deer... Powder's eyes are welling now too and the boys can see the veins at his temples visibly pulsing. He has become a bridge for whatever is passing from the deer to the deputy.

JOHN

Let go of him.

Powder looks up to see he is once again at the end of John's rifle.

JOHN

(continuing)

Now. Let go of him.

Powder's wet eyes stare stonily into John's as the albino boy continues his firm grasp of Stu's arm. The deer shakes again, feebly and the deputy does the same, his face frecked with perspiration. John raises the sites of his rifle.

JOHN

(continuing)

Do it!

MITCH

Put that goddamned gun down!

JOHN

DO IT!

Mitch pushes John and the rifle fires -it misses everyone but startles Powder and Stu drops from his grasp onto the ground. Brennen and Skye run and tend to him while the others look on in shock. John's rifle smolders as Powder hunches breathless over the deer. It is finally still, it's dead eye staring out. Stu is still in shock. He is a pale white and his eyes are still wide as he lays on the ground, the boys massing around him and leaving Powder alone at the deer. The albino boy senses all the eyes on him and turns slowly. His wet, turquoise irises look especially eerie as they fill with fear.

33 INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT ROOM. LATE DAY. IMFO.

This is a cage, not a room. Barren except for a toilet, a bed, a chair and a clock on the wall. Powder, still in his camping shirt and jeans, sits in the chair staring blankly beyond Sheriff Barnum who leans against a wall, giving both Jessie and Griffin a grim look.

BARNUM

You understand the predicament I'm in here, son?

Powder does not acknowledge anyone. He stares ahead, not meeting anyone's eyes.

BARNUM

(continuing; crouches to him)

I need to know and need to know from YOU, exactly what happened. Those boys said you gave him some kind of attack. They said it was like a seizure.

Powder doesn't even blink.

BARNUM

(continuing)

That right?

POWDER

No.

Griffin and Barnum exchange silent glances as Jessie steps forward.

JESSIE

Then what did happen Powder? Why
won't you tell anyone?

POWDER

I let him see.

His voice is so whispered that it quiets the room instantly.
Barnum, Jessie and Griffin exchange glances.

POWDER

(continuing)

I opened him up and I let him see.
He couldn't see what he was doing.
So I helped him.

Barnum looks to Jessie and Griffin again, then rises, his hat
in his hand and moves to the door.

BARNUM

I wanna talk with those boys again.
(to Powder)
You think of anything else you wanna
tell me son, you know how to find me.

The lawman steps out, Griffin and Jessie left staring at the
boy.

GRIFFIN

I don't want to keep you in here
Jeremy...

POWDER

...because you don't like putting
people in cages. In fact that's what
you like least of all.

Griffin doesn't like having his own words used against him. He stares at Powder blankly.

JESSIE
Powder listen to me-

POWDER
I want to go home. Do you understand that? I want to go home!

JESSIE
Whatever happened up on that hill, whatever you saw....

POWDER
(his voice sharp and cutting)
I saw that I don't LIKE any of you!
That you're ignorant! That you know nothing and feel nothing!

Jessie hears the clock on the wall behind Powder. She looks to it. The hands are moving, rapidly, each in opposite directions, CHIMING each time they speed past another hour.

GRIFFIN
(trying to maintain composure)
Let us help you, Jeremy. We want to help you!

The cuff links on Griffin's coat sleeves are straining their cloth- lifting upward. Griffin watches in awe, seeing too his digital wristwatch now running numbers with a frenzy.

POWDER
You PRETEND Dr. Griffin!

PLINK! One cuff link flies straight up, sticking into the softness of the panelled ceiling. The CLOCK CHIMES faster.

POWDER
(continuing)
You pretend what IS-

PLINK! Now the other cuff link flies straight up into the ceiling.

POWDER
(continuing)
...and you pretend what-

Griffin's tie clip flies from him and hits the window, cracking the small pane...

POWDER
(continuing)
...you ARE!

The room swells with energy. The lights blast white hot before sparking as Jessie and Griffin are each pushed against walls. In this same instant the room goes completely dark. The clock has stopped and there is silence as they regard each other. Their frightened breathing the only sound in the dark.

Powder's eyes have an eerie blue glint as they well with tears. His voice is still angry but there is a pleading in it.

POWDER
(continuing)
How long do you really think I'll let
you keep me here?

KA-TASSSHHH!!! The small cracked window blows out -glass flying into the hall as the door blasts open. Powder rises silently and steps out the door, leaving two shell-shocked and numb looking onlookers.

34 EXT. BARNUM HOUSE. DUSK. LATER THAT DAY.

Barnum's patrol car barrels down the gravel drive up to a newer, late model sedan in the driveway. He eyes it nervously as he moves toward the front door. Maxine is already opening it.

BARNUM
What?

MAXINE

I called the doc when I couldn't get you, I got nervous.

35 INT. BEDROOM, BARNUM HOUSE. DUSK. MINUTES LATER.

Emma Barnum lies in that quiet, pained sleep that pinches her chalky features. Doc Roth is just packing up his small case when he sees the sheriff and Maxine looking in the doorway. He rises and takes Barnum further down the hall.

ROTH

Listen, this is like having your heart torn out every day, there's no explanation why she should be alive right now.

The sheriff just stares at the doc, these words cutting deep.

ROTH

(continuing)

The will to live is a strange thing. What I mean is, she can probably hear you, Doug. There are coma patients who wake up after years and remember everything that was said around them.

BARNUM

Gimme the short one, doc.

ROTH

She can't like seeing this strain on you, Doug. That may be why she's hanging on through the worst pain in her life. It's just gonna make it that much easier, we get her back to County.

BARNUM

She wants to be here Duane, she told me that when she still could. She's hanging on, I just don't know why.

ROTH

And you won't. Doug she's past communicating.

Barnum moves back down the hall and looks in on her.

ROTH

(continuing)

You can't get inside her head. And if you could she'd probably tell you: let me go.

Barnum's eyes are welling. Tears look funny on this large, grizzled looking man as down the hall the phone rings. With doc Roth looking on, Barnum stares at Emma's pained face in it's slumber.

36 EXT. HAMILTON STATE FACILITY. DUSK. SAME TIME.

Donald Ripley's car pulls up to the school and Jessie and Griffin hurry out to meet him.

He is anxious and intense looking as they usher him quickly toward the entrance.

RIPLEY

Where is he now?

GRIFFIN

Still in the cafeteria, he's been there since it happened.

RIPLEY

Let me talk to him alone.

JESSIE

Stipler can't know we did this.

RIPLEY

I'm not gonna tell him.

GRIFFIN

Donald I'm only doing this because I
don't know what else to do!

RIPLEY

Face it Daniel, you think I'm right.

37 INT. HAMILTON CAFETERIA. DUSK. MOMENTS LATER.

The archway to the cafeteria is dark as Ripley steps up to
it. There are no lights on save in the far kitchen area.
The tables are all in shadow. Ripley knocks on the archway.

RIPLEY

Knock-knock?

Silence. He can make out Powder at the corner table,
silhouetted from the light in the kitchen.

RIPLEY

(continuing)

You gonna let me sit down?

Ripley takes a few steps in and pauses several tables away.
He points to Powder almost playfully.

RIPLEY

(continuing)

You did something to me. I didn't
figure it out 'till enough people
looked at me like I was crazy or told
me to act my age.

No response from Powder.

RIPLEY

(continuing)

You zapped me. Or I zapped myself
when I touched you. I've been
running around on this high like I
was eighteen again. Had more ideas,
more focus and better sex than I've
had in ten years. Believe me?

Again silence.

RIPLEY
(continuing)
Why shouldn't you? You know if what
I say is bullshit don't you?

POWDER
Yes.

Ripley steps forward again.

RIPLEY
So you know when I say I'm just here
to talk, I mean it.

Silence from Powder.

RIPLEY
(continuing)
You read any Einstien?

POWDER
No.

RIPLEY
You'd like him. He said he believed
in life after death only because
energy can never cease to exist!
That it relays, it transforms, but it
doesn't stop! Ever! He said if we
ever got to the point where we use
all our brain, we'd be pure energy.
We wouldn't even need bodies!

He is at Powder's table and stays at the far end.

RIPLEY
(continuing)
What do you wanna bet because
something happened to you, something
that NEVER does or isn't supposed to,
that you're closer to that energy
level than any one BODY has ever been?

Powder edges into a sliver of moonlight that catches his eye.

POWDER
I'd say 'so what'?

Ripley is taken aback by this response.

RIPLEY
(energized sarcasm)
So what? Your life up to now has
been a farmhouse and twelve acres of
earth. The misery in the books you
read is real Jeremy! The tragedy is
real in all those stories, did you
think it wasn't?
(moving closer still)
That deer hunt, you think that's the
dark side of man? Killing for
pleasure? You haven't BEGUN to see
what we do to each other!

Ripley braves a seat next to him now.

RIPLEY
(continuing)
You're not just different Jeremy. I
think you have a mind we won't evolve
to for maybe thousands of years!
You're maybe the man of the future
right here and now, I don't know!
(is up again, leaning
toward him)
Christ we're still stumbling around
in some new Dark Age trying not to
kill each other, so I'm sure you'll
excuse the indignant reaction of a
high school science teacher,
stumbling on the phenomenon of the
Century when the phenomenon says "So
what?"!

Silence as these words echo into darkness. And then Powder
laughs. We have never heard him laugh before and Ripley
stands amazed. Out in the dark hallway, Griffin and Jessie
look to each other strangely as they hear this laughter.
Ripley sits next to him again.

He is alone in the modest surroundings and hurries to the window with the sound of an approaching vehicle. He pulls back the drape to reveal the sheriff's car joining his own in the drive. Duncan hurries to the front door and opens it as Barnum steps onto the front porch.

DUNCAN

Doug.

BARNUM

Where is he?

Duncan has no time for small talk, he takes his boss through the living room to an empty gun case. Barnum looks to it, then to Duncan who moves down the hall as Barnum follows. There is another, larger gun case and the sheriff sees it is also empty.

DUNCAN

Look at this.

He takes Barnum back into the living room and stops. Even the musket usually on display over the bay window is gone. It's wooden placard empty.

DUNCAN

(continuing)

You see that?! There ain't a gun in this house!

(turns the sheriff to him)

He took everyone goddamned one of 'em and threw 'em away.

BARNUM

Who told you that?

DUNCAN

He did. Dropped out of the Marksman tourney over in Butte too.

Barnum stares out the window as Stu, out of uniform, moves a wheelbarrow to the front yard and stops when he notices Barnum's patrol car next to Deputy Duncan's.

BARNUM

What're you digging at?

DUNCAN

Doug I was the one who drove him off that mountain looking like he was gonna die. Something happened up there and it happened with that kid!

BARNUM

Stu blacked out, Charley. That's all the doc said happened. You think something else went down, you tell me what.

Barnum regards him then steps onto the porch, Duncan following. Stu moves to his pick-up without looking at either of them. Silence for a moment.

STU

(somewhat defensive)

Leave me alone Doug, I just ain't hunting no more, that some kinda' crime?

Barnum only stares. From his pick-up bed, Stu hoists a bag of fertilizer over his shoulder.

STU

(continuing)

Got lots of other stuff to do.

DUNCAN

That's bullshit!

(steps angrily off the porch)

You gonna stop carrying one on the job? Jesus Christ you're a police officer! Goddamn you are an officer of the law! You can't pick up a gun and use it, that's a liability!

STU

And maybe I hate that shitty job you ever think of that?!

Stu tosses the fertilizer in the wheelbarrow.

BARNUM

I wanna know what the Hell's going on!

Barnum steps off the porch and approaches Stu who moves with the wheelbarrow into the side yard.

BARNUM

(continuing)

You took John and his gang hunting Saturday, I know that already. I asked you not to this year but you did.

He stops and sets the wheelbarrow down. He turns to the sheriff, his look a little blank.

STU

(begrudgingly nods)

And I bagged this big mama up at the basin. I'm telling you right now Doug-

(and to Duncan)

-and you too asshole, you ever tell anyone I said this, I'll move out of town.

(takes a deep breath)

That kid lays a hand on the deer, while it's still shaking and then he touches me, same time. I can't figure out why -'till my heart starts pounding and I'm shaking and feeling myself hurt and scared shitless, slipping away into the goddamned dark. Worse thing I ever felt.

Barnum and Duncan listen grimly as Stu's eyes well with the memory.

STU

(continuing)

It was like I could FEEL that animal dying. It was like I was the goddamned thing!

BARNUM
Come on Stu!

Stu reaches out and grabs Barnum's arm. Those sad and frightened eyes burning out at the sheriff.

STU
Doug I swear!

Barnum knows from Stu's look he is dead serious.

STU
(continuing)
I can't do it anymore. Can't look at something down the barrel of a gun without thinking about it. I TRIED it and I couldn't do it!
(a cutting whisper)
He done it to me Doug! He knew just what he was doin'!

Duncan stares paling.

DUNCAN
What the hell are you saying?

STU
That thing ain't normal!
(turns Barnum to look at him)
I'm telling you, he took whatever was in that goddamned deer and he put it right into me.

Barnum stares into Stu's pale face. The sheriff's thoughts have gone elsewhere though the deputies haven't noticed.

39 INT. POWDER'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Powder's eyes open instantly from a sound sleep. Out the window in his door, the hall is dark and shadowy. As he concentrates he can distinctly hear WHISPERING. Afraid, he sits up.

There is some shuffling in the hall and Powder watches as at this moment, light falls over him from the hall as the door is opened abruptly. The silhouettes of Sheriff Barnum and Daniel Griffin fill the doorway. The lawman takes a step forward into a shaft of moonlight. His face is grim and worried.

BARNUM

Sorry boy, doc Griffin says it might be okay if you come with me.

Powder just stares.

40 EXT. SHERIFF BARNUM'S HOUSE. LATE NIGHT. LATER.

The sheriff's car pulls into the drive with Powder in the passenger seat. Barnum turns off the engine but makes no effort to leave. His gaze is toward Emma's upstairs window. In a moment he looks to the boy with a grim expression.

BARNUM

I don't know what it is you do. I'm not even sure I believe you can do it. But if you can, I need your help.

41 INT. EMMA BARNUM'S ROOM. LATE NIGHT. MINUTES LATER.

Emma Barnum's face is still lost in painful sleep as Powder and the sheriff enter, each on one side of her bed, her eyes remain closed. Powder looks at her with a great, grim sadness, then back to the sheriff. Barnum nods ever so slightly his encouragement and the albino boy looks back to Emma and slowly sits bedside. Barnum turns to see Maxine at the doorway, she is in a night robe, clutching her rosary beads.

BARNUM

You go on, Maxie.

MAXINE

(her voice is
whispered and
frightened)

Don't you do this Doug Barnum. That boy should not be in this house!

BARNUM

Just go on back to bed.

MAXINE

You heard the stories I heard, you
would NOT want him in this house!
You don't know who's work he's doing-

She takes a step forward and Barnum is at the door in a step,
swinging it shut on her.

BARNUM

I said to get! Get on back to bed!

Barnum waits for a response but there is none. He turns to see Powder's pallid hand gently remove the kerchief tied round Emma's head. It reveals that she is as bald as he, her hair gone from kemo-therapy. She looks strangely akin to the albino boy this way and Powder is taken aback. He looks at her for the longest moment before touching her pale forehead with gentle fingertips. Emma moves slightly and then slowly, though her eyes remain closed, her features begin to relax. Barnum steps up, his eyes drop from the boy to his wife.

POWDER

She knows you're here.

Barnum nods grimly and sits bedside.

BARNUM

You can hear her?
(leans to her ear)
Talk to me woman. What can I do for
you, Emma sweetie?

POWDER

(studies her a moment
longer)
She can't go. Not until she knows
you're gonna get through this.

Barnum opens his mouth to speak.

POWDER
(continuing)
She says the both of you.

Now Barnum looks to the boy.

POWDER
(continuing)
You and Steven.

Barnum looks back to Emma, cooling a little.

BARNUM
Steven?
(trying to make sense
of this)
What the Hell am I supposed to do,
throw my arms around him?

Powder keeps a gentle hand on her.

POWDER
She wants you to remember the snow.
When Steven was little. And it was
snowing. You were all playing in it.
A snow ball fight and Emma lost her-

BARNUM
-ring. You lost your wedding ring in
the snow. You looked at your hand
and it was gone.

Emma swallows though her eyes remain closed.

BARNUM
(continuing)
We all looked for it. Me and Steven
dug through the snow all afternoon.
He went out each day after school for
a week, digging through the banks
thinking he'd find it.

POWDER

She cried. The way each of you
looked so hard for it. She cried
that you both loved her so much.

BARNUM

I remember Emma, I do.

Now her lips move ever so slightly and Powder amplifies her words in perfect synchronization.

POWDER

The silver box.
(his eyes lift to
Barnum's)
The silver box on the dresser.

Barnum looks confused for a moment and then looks to the dresser top where the small silver box that Steven had left after his visit, sits among prescription bottles. Barnum looks almost fearful of the trinket. He swallows nervously and his voice is barely a whisper.

BARNUM

What're you saying mama?

He stands and moves to the dresser. His voice hushes even more.

BARNUM

(continuing)

Oh no, mama... no.

Barnum opens it and a small, aged wedding band lies inside. He recognizes it instantly and lifts it. He stares at it with a numbness. Like the warmest and most precious part of his life suddenly was rushing back to him and he with no clue how to greet it.

POWDER

He found it at the old house. In a garden he was tilling. He said he knew right away what it was. And that it was time to come home.

Barnum turns to her. He remains standing, still holding the ring.

POWDER

(continuing)

She says she believes in miracles now. And you should too.

Emma Barnum's closed eyes are welling. Powder almost smiles at the thought he is receiving now.

POWDER

(continuing; his voice a choked whisper)

She thinks I'm an angel. Come to take her home.

Barnum sits bedside again, this thought so sad to him.

POWDER

(continuing)

And to bring you and Steven together again. Remind you how much you're still in each other's hearts.

BARNUM

Everything about each other we don't like Emma, you know that.

Emma's lips move again, Powder amplifying.

POWDER

He cares more about you than any man in the world.

Powder looks to Barnum now. The sheriff's eyes are welling.

POWDER

(continuing)

And she won't go. She won't leave this place, this room or this world, until you know that you still have a son.

Barnum stares into her sad, pale face. His eyes spill tears as he stares down at the ring. In a moment he is nodding. Powder looks to Barnum again. Powder's voice is a soft whisper.

POWDER

(continuing)

The ring. She'd like to feel the ring on her finger.

Barnum pales, suddenly panicked with the idea that her passing is at hand. He has the frightened look of a man who knows that his world is about to slip away. He leans in close and gently brings the ring to her finger. His tears blur his vision but in a moment he slides it on and then takes her hands, kissing her gently.

POWDER

(continuing)

Here...

He lays his free hand on the sheriff and keeps the other on Emma. In a gentler way than we have seen, he bridges the two.

POWDER

(continuing)

You can hear her.

As Barnum watches, her damp eyes open and look out at him. Barnum takes a deep breath. He can barely speak.

BARNUM

It's all right sweetheart...

Barnum nods almost imperceptibly as they regard each other for the last time in this life. In a moment he lowers his head onto her breast.

BARNUM

(continuing)

Good-bye Emma sweetie.

Powder, the bridge for all this, finds his eyes welling and his head tilting back.

He leaves the two in their final embrace and moves to the window, where a night breeze blows in as the boy sits on the sill. He stares up at the stars, a tiny silhouette at a softly glowing window in the windy night. As Barnum holds her, Emma's eyes slowly close forever.

42 EXT. BARNUM HOUSE. NIGHT. MINUTES LATER.

Maxine is out on the porch watching anxiously as headlights cut down the drive. Steven Barnum's pick-up arrives and she moves quickly down the steps to meet it. The sheriff's son steps out now, regarding her anxiously.

MAXINE

Hurry!

STEVEN

What the Hell're you talking about, Maxie?

MAXINE

They're still up there, right now!

Steven looks perplexed. Maxine yanks on Steven, pushing him toward the porch.

MAXINE

(continuing)

He's got him up there with your mama!

Acting mostly on Maxine's fear, Steven moves quickly ahead, stopping short just before the porch steps. His father's silhouette has filled the doorway. They regard each other in an eerie stillness.

STEVEN

Poppa?

Barnum steps out now. In the porch light his face is grim and sad and his eyes red. Maxine watches this and as Barnum moves down the steps, she hurries inside. Steven is frightened by Barnum's grim face and stands stunned as his father wraps his arms around him and holds him tightly.

It is the warmest, saddest embrace as father and son, they have ever known. Powder is still at the window sill in the bedroom window and looks down on this union as a night breeze blows.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

43 EXT. FAIRGROUNDS. DAY. SOME DAYS LATER.

The huge banner flapping between two large oak trees reads: LINCOLN CITY SUMMERFEST "Eats, treats and Incredible Feats!" The fairgrounds are busy with booths, concession stands and the people of Lincoln City celebrating their summer solstice. This is a homey, gala event that the whole town has turned out for. But as we move through the crowd, we notice strange looks from many as we meander through them. One BOY is walking with an ice cream cone and staring so oblivious he walks into a trash can. Other reactions are more malevolent. Maxine is one, standing in a huddle with some OLDER MEN AND WOMEN, scowling at us nervously over her shoulder. (We are Powder's POV!) We see him now, the albino boy makes his way through the crowd, a soda in one hand and a cotton candy in the other.

BARNUM

Hey now what's this I see?

Powder turns, drawn by a voice that is friendly and familiar. Barnum is at a picnic table with his GRANDAUGHTER OF TWO on his lap and a GRANDSON not much older, playing with his hand. The sheriff has a warm smile for Powder as Steven Barnum rises from the table and takes the girl off his father's lap.

STEVEN

Come on sweetie, give grandpa a rest.
(to the boy)
You too, Tough Stuff.

BARNUM

They're okay.

He removes them anyway, giving Powder a strange look. The little girl stares at him curiously and he smiles back. The small boy leaves his grandfather's hand and Powder can see the tot has been playing with Emma's ring, the simple band of gold now on Barnum's hand with his own ring.

PASTOR MACON

Doug?

Both Powder and Barnum turn. PASTOR MACON is a graying man of fifty, in his clerical dress even for this festive occasion.

The sheriff presses out an artificial smile for him. The pastor gives Powder a passing glance as he moves closer.

PASTOR MACON

(continuing)

I'm sorry I didn't get to say the mass for Emma, but I was away.

Barnum nods.

PASTOR MACON

(continuing)

I know it's a cliché, but it's very true. She's in a much better place, Doug. A much better place.

Barnum nods, watching Powder who turns his head with this, a strange look in those turquoise eyes.

44 EXT. FAIRGROUNDS. DAY. SOME MINUTES LATER.

Powder arrives at a table where Lindsey sits, watching him with a smile. He hands her the cotton candy and sips his soda. From across the way, Griffin and Ripley watch, sipping their own drinks.

RIPLEY

Seems to be advanced in more ways than one.

GRIFFIN

How you figure?

RIPLEY

(nodding to Powder and Lindsey)

He's doing better than I ever did at seventeen. And I had hair.

At the table, Lindsey picks off pieces of the pink candy.

LINDSEY
You must feel like a movie star, the
way everybody stares at you.

Powder vaguely shrugs, his attention on the others across the
yard. She can sense his unease.

LINDSEY
(continuing)
Does it bother you?

Powder continues to watch the others. They always look away
just as he meets their eyes.

POWDER
They're wondering if I killed her.

LINDSEY
(a shocked whisper)
They are not.

Powder chooses more faces, each turns away from him nervously.

POWDER
Would you believe me if I said I
could see inside them?

In the silence, Lindsey realizes he isn't joking.

LINDSEY
Depends what you mean. What are
people like inside?

Powder looks at first as if he will not answer, then his
voice becomes hushed.

POWDER
I don't know how to describe it
really. Inside most people there's
this feeling of being separate. You
know separated from everything.

Lindsey turns to him now, those turquoise eyes leveling at her.

LINDSEY

And?

POWDER

And They're not. They ARE a part of absolutely every ONE and every THING. They just can't see it.

She stares blankly at him.

POWDER

(continuing)

You think I'm kidding?

LINDSEY

(shrugs)

It's just so hard to believe.

POWDER

(raises an index
finger to her
forehead)

'Cause everyone has that same spot they can't see past. The spot where they were taught that they were disconnected from everything.

LINDSEY

Is that what they'd see if they could? That they're connected?

Powder's eyes meet hers again and his voice is softer.

POWDER

And how beautiful they really are.

She looks to him, unsure of the intent of this remark.

LINDSEY

How did you get so smart?

POWDER

(shrugs)

I'm not. I know hardly anything.

LINDSEY

But you just said you can know
anything about anyone. Just by
looking and listening.

POWDER

So can you. People only lie because
they're afraid.

(leans in closer)

Let's have a talk without any lies.
No exaggerations, no deceptions, no
sarcasms, nothing people use to
confuse the truth. We just say what
we really feel, every time we say
anything.

LINDSEY

I don't know any people that can do
that.

POWDER

We've already started.

(looks into her eyes)

I feel nervous talking to you. I'm
afraid you won't like me.

LINDSEY

I do like you.

POWDER

You don't think I'm ugly?

Lindsey is silent with this and cannot meet his eyes.

POWDER

(continuing)

You can think I'm ugly, Lindsey...
this is the truth.

LINDSEY

I don't know what I think when I look at you. Sometimes I think you're beautiful. I don't know how but you are. I think I know you Powder. That sounds so crazy. I look into your eyes and think sometimes I see all the people who've ever loved me.

Powder reaches out and gently sets a hand on her's. She watches this for a moment and then he whispers.

POWDER

You do know me.

(looks up to her)

I feel how afraid you are. Afraid you're not beautiful enough. Strong enough, good enough. All the things people worry they aren't.

Lindsey meets his eyes but only for a moment. She looks around, afraid they might be seen.

POWDER

(continuing)

I don't want you to be afraid. I won't hurt you. I'd never hurt you.

He is so close to her now, he can feel her breath. Their eyes meet and their foreheads touch in a soft, gentle breeze that blows. Powder is revelling in this and Lindsey, captivated, brushes her lips with his. When they part, Powder's eyes glisten. Tears from a place he never knew he had.

LINDSEY

What...?

Powder kisses her, enthusiastically, longingly -until he is suddenly wrenched away. When he looks about, Deputy Duncan has collared him.

DUNCAN

What the Hell you think you're doing boy?

MR. KELLOWAY

Lindsey!

Lindsey's father is some feet away, and his tone is cold. She turns to him. Mortified.

MR. KELLOWAY

(continuing)

What're you doing?

She has no words. It is as if she has come out of a trance and is still in a daze. Mr. Kelloway has a contemptuous glare for the stunned albino boy, who Duncan delivers roughly against the tree.

DUNCAN

Didn't they teach you nuthin' where you came from?

The ruckus has already garnered attention and Griffin and Ripley are hurrying over through the onlookers.

RIPLEY

Charley!

Charley glares at Ripley and then throws a comment to Griffin.

DUNCAN

Ain't you got rules about Hamilton boys fraternizing with the opposite sex there, doc?

GRIFFIN

Just let him go deputy.

MR. KELLOWAY

(to Griffin)

Keep your State trash away from my daughter.

He is escorting Lindsey quickly toward the parking lot.

GRIFFIN

Calm down, David!

MR. KELLOWAY

Keep that freak show on a leash or
I'll slap a goddamned lawsuit on you!
Far as I'm concerned she was
assaulted!

DUNCAN

You hear that, freak-show?

STU

You let him go.

Deputy Duncan looks over and sees Officer Stu Gibson standing
there, full of conviction.

DUNCAN

What the Hell you, doin'?

STU

I said get him off the goddamned tree!

Stu wrenches Duncan off Powder. The deputies scuffle. It
looks like Stu wants to throw a punch but doesn't.

DUNCAN

He messed you up, man! You're as
goddamned crazy as he is now!

Duncan spots Barnum approaching and moves briskly past the
others into the crowd, almost bumping Ripley, who is in
thought from this. Griffin doesn't like the tone of the
crowd and his tone reflects this.

GRIFFIN

Let's go Jeremy.

Silence from everyone. Powder just stares, still shaken.
Barnum steps up now.

BARNUM

You okay, son?

GRIFFIN

Taking him home, Doug..

Griffin and Ripley take custody of traumatized Powder, moving him through the crowd toward the parking lot. He is passing grim face after face. Finally there is Maxine's as icy as ever. The final one he sees is Lindsey's. She is in her father's car watching as Mr. Kelloway backs angrily away and onto the road.

45 INT. HAMILTON LOCKER ROOM. DAY. AN HOUR LATER.

Powder enters from the far door still in his suit. He is filled with melancholy and drawn by the racket of HOOTING boys in the shower, rowdy after a muddy game of football. He moves quietly down the rows of lockers toward the water and at a safe distance, regards Mitch, Brennen and Skye under the hot spray. It is a sad longing that fills Powder's eyes as his attention moves from body to body, their tanned, muscled skin and lathered hair. The strange, albino boy's eyes dampen with each sight until he is caught in a head lock from behind and John Box's voice is a cutting whisper in his ear.

JOHN

Why don't you take a picture, man?

John's remark echoes in the locker room and suddenly everyone is aware of what's going on. Mitch and the others stop and stare out as half-dressed John releases Powder and they face off. Showers are turned off quickly and the locker room becomes still. John's voice echoes again.

JOHN

(continuing)

This look like a genius to you?
Peeping Tom faggot maybe.

John's tone is dark and the gang can sense a major drama brewing. They grab towels and hurry toward the two.

JOHN

(continuing)

Huh freak-show? You wanna see what one looks like on a real man, huh? That what you wanna see!?

BRENNEN

Make him kiss it Johnny!

The others have have joined him now. Toweling and anxious. Powder turns to leave but John snatches the stetson off his head and this stops him.

JOHN

Bet you'd like that, huh? You want to know what it's like from a real man you just say so, freak-show. Maybe I'll show you.

Powder reaches out to take his hat back when John catches his arm and holds it tightly. Powder's eyes look deeply into John's.

JOHN

(continuing)

Meantime I'll keep the hat. You know what you gotta do to get it back.

Powder's eyes seem to be burning through him. It is at that moment that an entirely different voice comes from Powder's lips. An OLDER, DEEPER MALE VOICE.

POWDER

"You want it back then you just show me, Johnny-boy."

The voice stuns the boys while John, not relinquishing his grip, finds it even more unnerving.

JOHN

What'd you say?

The voice has come again.

POWDER

"You know what I said."

John tightens his grip on Powder who winces.

JOHN

What the Hell you trying to pull!?

The voice continues.

POWDER

"You know what you gotta do to get it back."

(his normal voice now)

Isn't that what he said to you?

First night he was drunk? You were ten years old and he took your hat? Your stepfather. He said the same thing.

(the older voice again)

"You know what you gotta do to get it back."

John is paling with this revelation. There is no way Powder could have this information.

POWDER

(continuing)

That's how it started. Late nights while your mother worked.

The boys stands stunned as John throws Powder off brutally.

POWDER

(continuing)

And then in the mornings when she was too drunk to wake up and he'd slide into bed with you before school?

JOHN

HEY FUCK YOU!!

He is rabid, lunging at Powder and slamming him against a locker -holding him there tightly- Powder's eyes wide with fear.

POWDER

You used to hide from him. Some nights you'd get home and sleep out in the car because you were too afraid to sleep in the house.

MITCH

What the Hell's he talkin' about Johnny?!

JOHN

I shoulda' done you when I could!

POWDER

You don't think I see it? You wear it. Every day in everything you do.

John whirls Powder around to another aisle of lockers and slams him against that.

JOHN

I outta' kill you right now, man! I outta' slit your throat and laugh doing it!

Then THUNDER RUMBLES and John stops abruptly. Both he and Powder's attention rise ceilingward. When they look down again John's eyes burn into Powder's eerie, frightened ones. John's whisper is full of dark pleasure.

JOHN

(continuing)

Well what do you know? Boogey-man's afraid of lightning.

46 EXT. HAMILTON SCHOOL GYM. LATE DAY. MOMENTS LATER.

The locker room doors fly open with a tremendous crash as Brennen and Skye drag Powder roughly into the windy darkness of the overcast afternoon.

The boys are all half-dressed as a less enthusiastic Mitch and John Box in only his jeans and the stetson, move with them. THUNDER RUMBLES again and Powder stops, held by each arm, his fearful gaze skyward at the storm clouds overhead.

JOHN

What's the matter freak-show?

The dragging continues as they maneuver him to two large trees at the side of the gymnasium. Between them is a large puddle.

MITCH

Come on Johnny, he's scared to death!

JOHN

He got a free-show, now we get one!

John rips at Powder's clothes while the other boys hold him. Buttons fly and the boy's albino skin is revealed as the suit is ripped away.

JOHN

(continuing)

Now that is white!

The angry clouds are etched in a white flash that rumbles as the wind picks up.

BRENNEN

Come on man, it's freezing out here!

John tugs at Powder's pants and yanks them down to his knees. He stands in his boxer shorts as an icy wind comes up.

JOHN

Look at this!

The albino boy is shivering, staring almost catatonic into the clouds. More THUNDER RUMBLES.

JOHN
(continuing)
You need some color. Don't he need
some color? Turn him around!

The boys struggle at the puddle's edge to turn Powder around,
as more THUNDER RUMBLES.

JOHN
(continuing)
Yeah man you definitely need some
color!

With a raised foot John pushes Powder forward -sending the
albino boy flying face first into the mud. Laughter as
THUNDER rumbles again.

MITCH
Come on man, you're gonna give him
fucking pneumonia!

JOHN
Go get him!

The boys look to John like he must be crazy.

JOHN
(continuing)
Do it!

The boys wade into the mud and retrieve him, his wet clothes
hanging off him and mud all over him.

JOHN
(continuing)
You got some color now, freak-show!

Powder is glaring at John through his mask of mud. No one
can see that under the sludge, Powder's temples begin to
pulse.

JOHN
(continuing)
Not much fight in you there, freak-show!

A VICIOUS CRACKLE from the clouds and the boys all flinch.

SKYE
Holy shit!

John leans into Powder's ear, a cutting hiss.

JOHN
You really think you could ever be like us? You think that freak-show, huh?

MITCH
Hey!

As Skye and Brennen hold Powder, their hair begins to stick out with static electricity. John finds this amusing and yelps out a laugh.

JOHN
Holy shit!

The boys are all laughing as John discovers the same thing is happening to him. His hair is also standing on end while the metal buttons on the fly of his jeans are moving out, straining the denim.

JOHN
(continuing; an awestruck smile)
What the fuck...

John laughs as the first button pops off his fly. Then another. Skye's earring is also magnetized and is trying to pull away from his ear.

SKYE
Hey...

Another snap pops from John's pants as Powder's head drops back, his temples throbbing and his eyes starting to roll over white. The boys are panicked by this and release him as another button snaps off John's fly.

BRENNEN

Hey freak-show...

Then last snap pops off and KAAAA-OOOOOSSSSHHHH!!!! THERE IS A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT AND THE PUDDLE ERUPTS UNDER POWDER LIKE A DEPTH CHARGE! WATER BLASTING OUT AND KNOCKING THE BOYS OVER AS THEY SCRAMBLE. BUT THE MAIN FORCE OF THE ENERGY IS FOCUSED ON JOHN WHO IS LITERALLY BLOWN OFF HIS FEET AT A TERRIFYING VELOCITY BACKWARDS.

SLOW MOTION: JOHN IS PROPELLED VERTICALLY OVER THE GROUND AS POWDER'S COMPLETELY WHITE EYES BURN OUT AT HIM. THE OTHER BOYS ARE FALLING OVER EACH OTHER AS MUDDY WATER FROM THE EXPLOSION RAINS DOWN ON THEM. JOHN'S FACE IS WIDE WITH TERROR AS HE PICKS UP SPEED, SCREAMING AS CATATONIC POWDER FALLS BACK INTO THE MUDDY WATERS AGAIN.

In a moment the puddle erupts again, but this is only Powder dragging himself out. The others are running ahead. He can't make out what they move toward at first. Then he sees it is John. Thrown some twenty yards, he lies motionless, face-first in the grass. Mitch and Brennen roll John over. The boy's head drops limply to one side and his eyes stare out blankly as rain begins to spatter his face. His friends stand around him, silently as Mitch frantically tends to him.

MITCH

Jesus!

They all look to his panicked face.

MITCH

(continuing)

His heart's not beating!

Brennen looks from John's pale face to Mitch. It is a moment before they realize Powder is standing there too. The rain starting to wash away his mud. Skye and Mitch look to Powder with horror as Brennen advances on him.

BRENNEN
You son-of-a-bitch!

SKYE
Don't touch him man!

Brennen and Powder face off in the rain.

BRENNEN
What the fuck are you?

MITCH
(screaming)
Just get some help asshole! Now!

Powder moves past Brennen and stares at the body as it gets wetter. In the next second Powder drops to his knees at John's side and sets his alabaster palms on John's bare chest.

SKYE
What the Hell you doing?!

POWDER
Stay back. Everybody.

The boys exchange rabid glances and then watch as the impossible happens. Powder's hands spark where they touch John's chest- flashing a hot orange for a moment as the body buckles, surging with electricity. As the rain pelts the onlookers, they go into deeper shock.

BRENNEN
You gotta be fucking kidding me...

Desperation fills Powder. His eyes well as he jolts him again.

SKYE
Just get away from him, man!

Powder is frantic, the rain pelting him as he presses John again jolting the body.

SKYE
(continuing)
YOU HEAR ME, MAN!?

Powder is sobbing in the rain as his palms press down again delivering another jolt. Again, sparks and a jolt -this time tendrils cocooning Powder briefly and then fading. Mitch finally reaches out and stops it.

MITCH
Stop it man!

Powder stares at him with numb fear.

MITCH
(continuing)
He's gone!

Then a cough. Powder looks down. John Box is coughing, his eyes closed, but very much alive. The boys look on stunned. THUNDER RUMBLES again and Powder slowly stands. Mitch yells at Brennen and Skye.

MITCH
(continuing)
Go get help idiots!
(the others remain
stunned)
Do it!

Brennen and Skye hurry off toward the main building. John's eyes open. He stares up at rain pelted Powder.

MITCH
(continuing)
You better get outta' here.

Powder looks to Mitch. There is almost the voice of an ally in him.

MITCH
(continuing)
Get your ass outta' here!

The albino boy regards him a moment longer and hurries away into the rainy grayness.

47 EXT. STATE HIGHWAY. LATE AFTERNOON. AN HOUR LATER.

An old poultry truck rambles down the rainy highway. In the beaten up cab, the DRIVER fiddles with the radio without success. Static is all he can raise -his country western station barely audible. The more he adjusts the knobs the more the static blares. He might understand if he could see, like we can, his albino stow-away in the back of his truck, jostling with each bump in the road, among the nervous clucking of cargo fowl in wooden crates. Powder looks like some desperate vagabond in his muddy and tattered suit. Wearing his reclaimed stetson, he holds his coat over his head, to stave off the rain.

48 EXT. REED FARM. LATER AFTERNOON. (AN HOUR LATER)

The rain has ceased as Powder walks numbly down the drive toward his home. He stops at a distance, barely believing he is actually there. The old Reed farm has undergone several changes in the past month. It is even more colorless and wind worn than when we first saw it and all the windows are boarded up; the faded skeleton of an abandoned house ready for demolition. THUNDER RUMBLES now as Powder steps ahead, moving faster as he takes it in, faster until he is at the porch. Staring from the bottom of the steps, he reads the sign tacked on the front door: THIS PROPERTY IS CONDEMNED! NO TRESPASSING! This seems to stop him cold. He moves sadly up the steps and tries the front door.

It won't open but he stares at the tarnished lock for only a second before somewhere within it's rusty workings, it releases itself with a distinct CLICK!

49 INT. REED LIVING ROOM. LATER AFTERNOON. IMFO.

The front door blows open and Powder stands in the doorway. He is hesitant to come in and it takes him a moment. The room is so bare without furniture or rugs that Powder barely recognizes it. He stands just inside the doorway, staring with a sadness beyond expression.

50 INT. REED CELLAR. LATER AFTERNOON. IMFO.

At the top of the stairs, Powder pulls open the hatch and stares down. His expression is a sadly blank one as he peers into the empty cellar. His home, his world is gone. The barren walls and dark, dusty corners of a life that has somehow faded away forever. He closes the hatch and moves numbly through the kitchen and into the living room. Out the open front door, the albino boy sees Jessie's county sedan screeching to a halt in the front yard.

51 EXT. REED FARMHOUSE. LATE AFTERNOON. IMFO.

A very urgent looking Jessie Calder gets out of the car and moves toward the house.

JESSIE

Powder!?

She moves toward the steps and sees the front door open in the breeze.

JESSIE

(continuing)

Powder please, I know you're in there! I have to talk to you!

The boy's numb visage appears behind the tattered screen door.

JESSIE

(continuing)

Are you all right?

(she moves up the steps)

Powder look at me...

His sad eyes meet hers as she opens the screen door on him. His expression worries her. THUNDER rumbles overhead and Powder's eyes lift to it.

JESSIE

(continuing)

They're looking for you!

His eyes lower to hers.

JESSIE

(continuing)

I came to take you away.

(there is a

conviction in her we

haven't seen before)

Not to Hamilton. Not anywhere you
don't want to be Jeremy, but they're
on their way, so let's leave now!
Before it dawns on me I'm losing my
mind and my job!

Powder turns and looks at the barren room behind him.

JESSIE

(continuing)

Jeremy this is not your home anymore!
There's nothing here! You have a new
life beginning now. And you can live
it in a way, no one's ever been able
to.

Powder spots a commotion over her shoulder. Out on the
highway, various Police and State Trooper vehicles approach,
their lights flashing and sirens whooping.

JESSIE

(continuing)

Jesus! Come on!

She is dragging him to her car as the other vehicles take the
driveway. Powder sits watching them calmly out the rear
window as Jessie starts the car and squeals out of the drive,
just as THUNDER rumbles again and the power line to the old
Reed house again hisses with a small tendril of ambient
electricity, following the car as it speeds away, but
disintegrating halfway down the drive. Jessie cuts over onto
the shoulder of the property to avoid the oncoming cars,
headed by an intense looking Deputy Charley Duncan who's face
darkens when he sees Jessie and her passenger speed by.
Duncan rips a u-turn in the gravel drive and the others
follow suit. Out on the highway, Jessie speeds frantically.

POWDER

You don't have to do this.

She looks to him only for a moment. The other cars have easily surrounded them and she screeches to a halt. They watch as doors begin to open around them. State Troopers with rifles mostly. And ultimately Deputy Duncan.

JESSIE
(to Powder)
Don't get out.

Jessie stands now.

DUNCAN
Step over to the front of the car,
please. Put your hands on the hood.

JESSIE
What the Hell is all this?

DUNCAN
You heard what I said.

THUNDER RUMBLES. Jessie and he look to each other.

JESSIE
I'm not gonna let you hurt him,
Duncan so just back off! Let me take
him back to town.

DUNCAN
You're gonna do what I say or you're
gonna end up in the county jail, what
do you say about that, little lady?

JESSIE
I say kiss my ass!

BARNUM
I gotta take him back, Jessie.

Jessie turns to see Barnum approaching from his patrol car. He is back in uniform and from the back seat, Daniel Griffin and Donald Ripley stand. She stares into their faces, the hopelessness of the situation overwhelming her.

GRIFFIN
You okay, Jess'?

She sinks back into the seat next to Powder, who has watched everything with a look beyond expression.

 POWDER . .
I didn't mean to hurt him. John.
 (he looks to her)
Grandma said it was a miracle, the
first time I saved grandpa. She
said God had moved through me. That
He put the fire in my hands.
...Couldn't save him the second time.
Tried but I couldn't.

There are tears in his eyes as he looks to the old Reed place. Ripley has stepped up to the window. Powder rolls it down. His look to Powder is a kind one, but full of concern. He surveys the armed men around them and calls to Barnum.

 RIPLEY
He can't be out in this weather, Doug!

 DUNCAN
We ain't worried about him catching
cold there, Donald! Get him out of
the car.

There is a sadness in Ripley's eyes as he regards Powder now.

 RIPLEY
"Our technology has surpassed our
humanity."

 POWDER
 (recognizing the
 quote)
Albert Einstien.

Ripley presses out a sad smile and nods.

RIPLEY

I look at you and I think that maybe
someday our humanity might actually
surpass our technology.

Powder regards him a moment and is suddenly opening the car
door. Jessie stops him. Ripley is confused too.

RIPLEY

(continuing)

What're you doing?

But the boy's look is so calm, his face at peace, they can
only stare as he opens the car door and stands. Duncan
raises his rifle.

BARNUM

(to Duncan)

Oh for Christ's sake, put that
goddamned gun away!

DUNCAN

Got it all under control here, Doug.

The sheriff moves toward Powder now as do the others.
Powder's eyes meet Ripley's, then Barnum's.

POWDER

She didn't go some PLACE.

Silence as Barnum stops. THUNDER RUMBLES.

POWDER

(continuing)

I felt her go.

(shakes his head 'no')

Not away. Just out.

(his eyes skyward)

Everywhere.

Powder looks back to Barnum. No one knows what to say.
Barnum nods, sadly.

GRIFFIN

You need to come back with us, Jeremy.

Powder looks to him. There is a sadness on his face as THUNDER RUMBLES again. The albino boy turns finally to Ripley. It is impossible to say what is communicated in this look but in the next instant Powder dashes across the highway toward the fields.

DUNCAN

Hey!!!

The State Troopers, guns loaded, pursue. Two State cars speed off the highway and into the field after him as Griffin and Barnum join the mad dash. Jessie hurries from the car, but Ripley, with a gentle hand on her shoulder, keeps her from following. She looks to him who simply shakes his head 'no' watching the chase as Powder sprints into the vast field as THUNDER RUMBLES ANGRILY. The boy WAILS up to the angry sky, not out of fear, out of pure adrenaline. His call echoes over the countryside as the THUNDER RUMBLES BACK. RACING THROUGH THE WIND HE IS SCREAMING UP AT THE HEAVENS AS THE GRAY STORM CLOUDS BEGIN TO OPEN UP. Griffin watches this with awe, paling as he runs, understanding now Powder's plan.

GRIFFIN

JEREMY!!!

Barnum, Stu and Steven are screaming after the troopers and their leader Deputy Duncan, but Powder is fast. He is driven by a force that seems to echo in the next angry RUMBLE and flash that etches the eye tearing open in the clouds over him. HE THROWS HIS ARMS UP, WAILING LOUDER AS A JAGGED BOLT RIPS DOWN FROM THE EYE TOWARD HIM! POWDER'S EYES FLASH THE COLOR OF THE BOLT JUST AS IT STRIKES HIM CENTER IN THE CHEST, ROCKING HIS BODY AND HOLDING HIM THERE IN IT'S GRIP AS THE HORRIFIED OBSERVERS RUN TO HIM. THE ALBINO BOY WAILS AS IT LIFTS HIM OFF THE GROUND, THE WIND ROARING AND SWIRLING LIKE A TORNADO AROUND HIM AS HE ASCENDS INTO THE HEAVENS, JOLTING LIKE A PUPPET AT THE END OF A WICKEDLY HISSING STRING!

A FLASH IN POWDER'S MIND OF HIS FATHER GREG TURNING AND SCREAMING.

GREG

Anna!

GREG HAS SCREAMED THIS AT HIS PREGNANT WIFE WHO MAKES HER WAY DOWN THE WET WALKWAY TOWARD THEIR CAR. SHE IS HURRYING TIP-TOE THROUGH A PUDDLE OF RAINWATER WHEN THE CLOUDS FLARE WHITE. SHE STOPS WHEN SHE HEARS HER HUSBAND'S CRIES BUT NOT BEFORE THE JAGGED BOLT OF LIGHTNING STRIKES HER. THE PUDDLE AT HER FEET SHOOTING STRAIGHT UP IN A WALL OF WATER THAT COCOONS HER FOR A TERRIFYING MOMENT AS THE INFANT IN THE WOMB IS JOLTED. JOLTED IN POWDER'S MEMORY AS HIS FATHER'S SCREAMS DIE...

In the field, everyone watches in horror as Powder is lifted higher and higher by the jagged bolt. His head is dropped back and his eyes are rolling over white. Griffin runs out into the eye of the tornado, screaming upward.

GRIFFIN

Jeremy!

Jessie and Ripley step into the field now too, staring up at the spectacle. Horrified, Jessie runs toward it. Ripley with a calmer step moves too.

JESSIE

SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING!!!

THEY CAN BARELY HEAR HIS CRY NOW AS HE ASCENDS, HIGHER STILL UNTIL HE IS AT THE THE EYE AND INSIDE IT AS -BOOOOSSSHHHHH!!! A BLINDING FLASH, BLASTING OUT IN A BRIGHT BLUE RING THAT EXPANDS OUTWARD LIKE A SHOCK WAVE, A ROARING WIND AND LIGHT THAT BENDS THE TALL GRASS AND KNOCKS OVER EVERY ASTONISHED ONLOOKER.

In the next instant there is silence. It is a long moment before slowly, one by one, up from the tall grass of the field they stand, troopers and civilians getting their bearings as THUNDER RUMBLES AGAIN and the eye of the clouds flashes with white fire. Ripley stands awestruck as he moves toward a small piece of shirt wafting down from the heavens. He watches it fall before him and takes another breath as he studies the clouds. It is obviously a pleasurable act breathing in whatever is about, for he seems revived and though his eyes are damp he is smiling. Back at the porch, Powder's stetson blows in the breeze and we are suddenly in that breeze, moving over the ground in the field. They are small from our vantage point and we can just make out Steven Barnum putting a hand gently on his father's back as THUNDER rumbles it's approval and we lift skyward toward that eye in the clouds.

A flash -not a bolt- of lightning edges it with a white fire before we sail into it, gliding and whirling and spinning free, free into the heavens. We roll titles....